

H. M. S. "PUNCHER"

To Herb Ashford
with my Sincere Regard

James B. Outbridge

DONATED BY
STAN COOMBS
EDMONTON



Editor . . .

THE REV. L. M. OUTERBRIDGE, M.A., R.C.N.,
CHAPLAIN, H.M.S. "PUNCHER"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We are indebted to the Naval photographers in Vancouver, Esquimalt, the Clyde and in other ports, but especially to Petty Officer G. Goulet, R.C.N.V.R., with the Canadian Naval Mission Overseas, and Petty Officer Edward Nichols, R.N.V.R., H.M.S. "PUNCHER," who took most of the photographs used.

Very great appreciation is expressed to the Censorship Division at Admiralty for the time given and counsel afforded in the early preparation of the material for publication.

To Lieutenant-Commander R. Roberts, M.B.E., R.C.N., (R), Staff Officer Intelligence, Pacific Coast, Esquimalt, B.C., is expressed the most sincere thanks for valued assistance both in censorship and final reading of proof copy.

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For the Ship's Company, H.M.S. "PUNCHER"
by

Leonard Mallory Outerbridge
Regina, Canada

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FOREWORD . . .

This volume published for the Ship's Company, portrays the "Commission" of one of the happiest Ships of the Royal Navy. It was its personnel that made H.M.S. "PUNCHER" unique. At one moment we were the Royal Canadian Navy and alternately, without batting an eye, we were the Royal Navy! When operations were over and the opportunity arrived when we could relax, the Ship's Company immediately reverted to type. Our Ship's Company was drawn from both coasts of Canada, from the mountains and from the wide prairies, from the teeming cities and from the lake shores of every Province of the Dominion. Some six hundred and fifty Canadians lived and worked together with a goodly number of over two hundred of the Royal Navy, officers and men from Britain who were loaned by the R.N. to the R.C.N. For seasoning we had a smattering of New Zealand, Newfoundland, Bermuda and Holland. In all, we were some eight hundred and fifty men including the Fleet Air Arm personnel. All serving in this ship were first attached to the Royal Canadian Navy for purposes of pay and allowances, and then everyone on board was attached to the Royal Navy for operational duty. The Ship, while manned by the Royal Canadian Navy, was throughout her Commission an operational unit of the Royal Navy.

Cooperation among men thus thrown together cannot be selective. It became the immediate responsibility of Officers and Men alike to cooperate on whatever task the path of duty presented. Obedience to command is synonymous with Naval tradition. Cooperation is glad obedience. That this was accomplished to a very high degree is evidenced by the complimentary signals received by the Commanding Officer on many occasions bearing testimony to the fighting efficiency of the Ship in action, and the good discipline of the Ship's Company when ashore. We have the high honour of serving at sea from D Day in 1944 to V-E Day and V-J Day in 1945. Our paths of duty called us into the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. After V-J the Ship served for several months as troop transport, facilitating the return to Canada of personnel of the Navy, Army and Air Force. The photographs and historical record in this volume give a panorama of the job we have done together. At all times every part of it was intricately dependent upon the devotion to duty of each and every man on the Ship. "PUNCHER'S" outstanding record is due to this thorough teamplay.

The Executive Officer is directly responsible to the Captain for the morale or discipline of the Ship. The men of "PUNCHER" salute Commander Dickson C. Wallace, D.S.C., R.C.N.R., who joined us as "X.O." at Norfolk in July, 1945. Coming to the Ship with the distinction of having sunk a German submarine while Captain of a Canadian Destroyer in the battle of the Atlantic, he was hailed as our fighting "X.O." His trust in his men and his understanding of a sailor's moods and whims drew from each one his best.

Officers and men alike pay tribute to our Commanding Officer, Captain Roger E. S. Bidwell, C.B.E., R.C.N., who took the Ship over during the final stages of construction, took her to sea with a green crew, trained us, led us into action against the enemy, and after Victory stayed in command for several months, facilitating the return of thousands of Canada's armed forces to their homeland for demobilization. His Majesty the King has conferred the C.B.E. upon Captain Bidwell. Every man who served in H.M.S. "PUNCHER" takes pride in honour so well deserved and finds joy in its recognition.

—L. M. Outerbridge.



Captain Bidwell addresses the Ship's Company

Dedication . . .

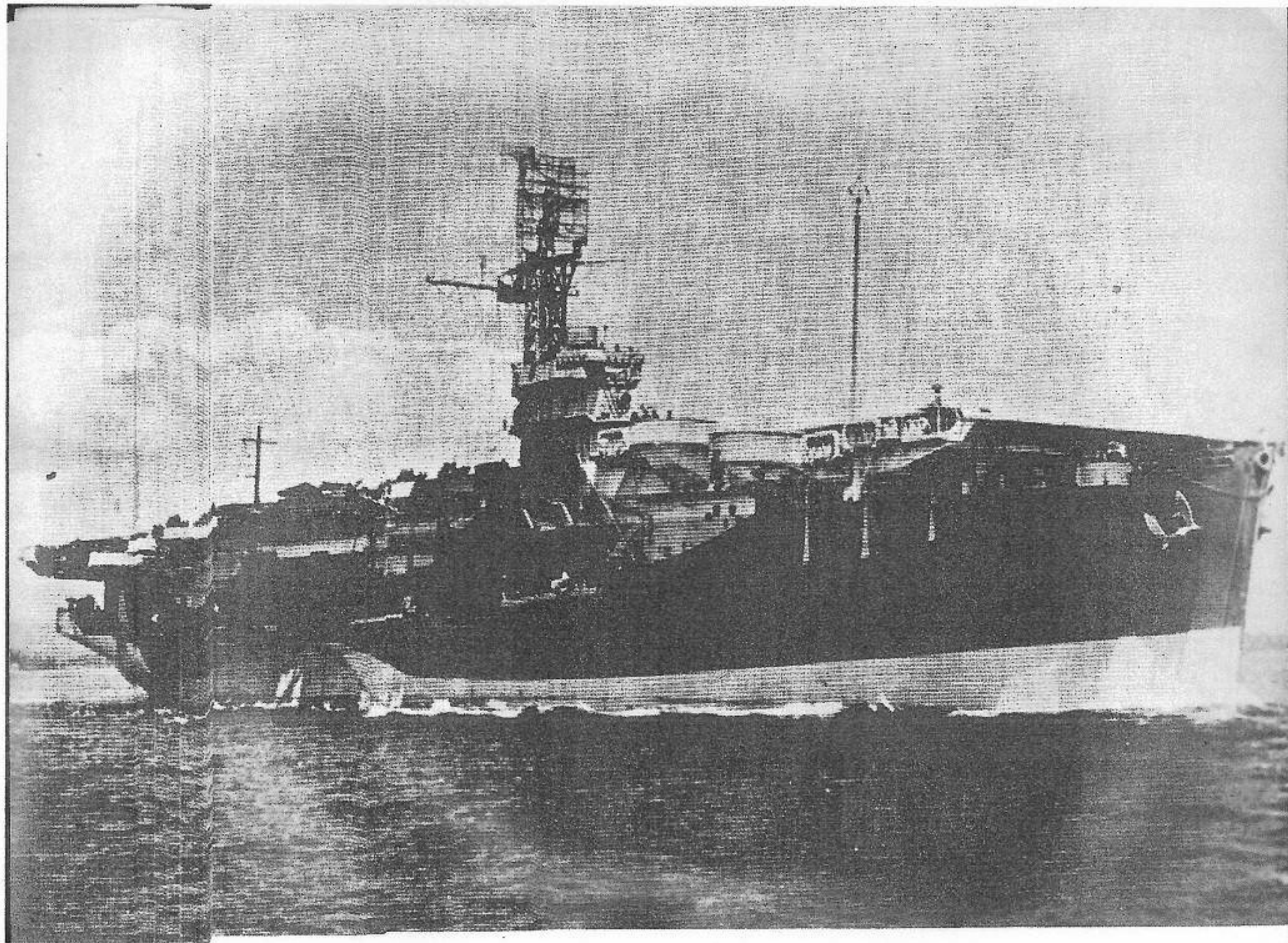
To the one who endeared himself to officers and men alike for his brilliant leadership and who continually dealt with his Ship's Company in the highest traditions of the Royal Canadian Navy:

To Captain Roger E. S. Bidwell, C.B.E., R.C.N., this volume is respectfully and affectionately dedicated.

Captain R. E. S. Bidwell,

C.B.E., R.C.N.

Capt. Roger E. S. Bidwell was born in Peterborough, England, in 1899, the son of Bishop Edward John Bidwell, who went to Canada in 1902 and later became Bishop of Ontario. Capt. Bidwell entered the Royal Naval College of Canada in Halifax, in 1915. As a midshipman, early in 1918, he was sent to the Royal Navy where he served in H.M. ships and was present at the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet. During the years between the wars, Capt. Bidwell, a torpedo specialist, served in Canada and abroad and in the years immediately before the present war commanded successively the Canadian destroyers H.M.C.S. *Champlain* and H.M.C.S. *St. Laurent*. In 1939-40 he was operations staff officer to the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies. He returned to Canada in 1940 and during that year and the following was director of operations at Naval Service Headquarters, Ottawa. In December, 1941, Capt. Bidwell was promoted to his present rank and was appointed to the responsible post of Chief of Staff to the Flag Officer, Newfoundland, and remained there through the vital years in the Battle of the Atlantic, 1942 and 1943. He was next appointed to Halifax as Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, Canadian North-West Atlantic, at Halifax. Capt. Bidwell was appointed commanding officer of H.M.S. *Puncher* in 1944 and commanded her through extensive operations in European waters. On the occasion of the King's Birthday in 1946 Captain Bidwell was awarded the C.B.E.



HMS Puncher – 79

The ship was obtained from the USN (USS Willapa)

Under the lend lease program to the Royal Navy Feb.1943

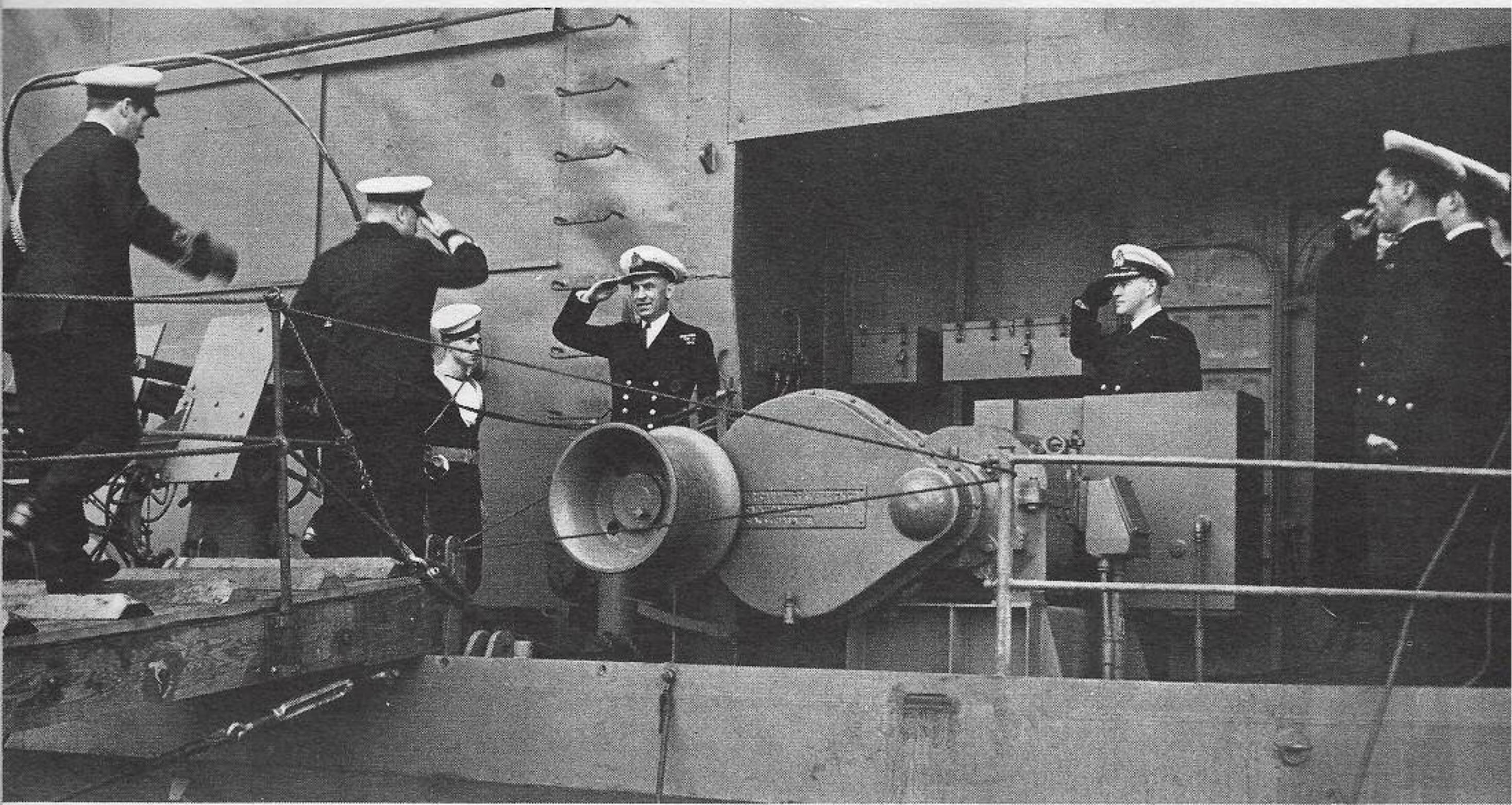
She was transferred to Vancouver BC in Mar.1943 to undergo

Conversion to Royal Navy Standards, On completion she sailed

Esquimalt BC for further updates and Manning. She then set sail for

England in June 1944 escorted by HMCS Beacon Hill with a Canadian

Crew of 650 Officers and personnel

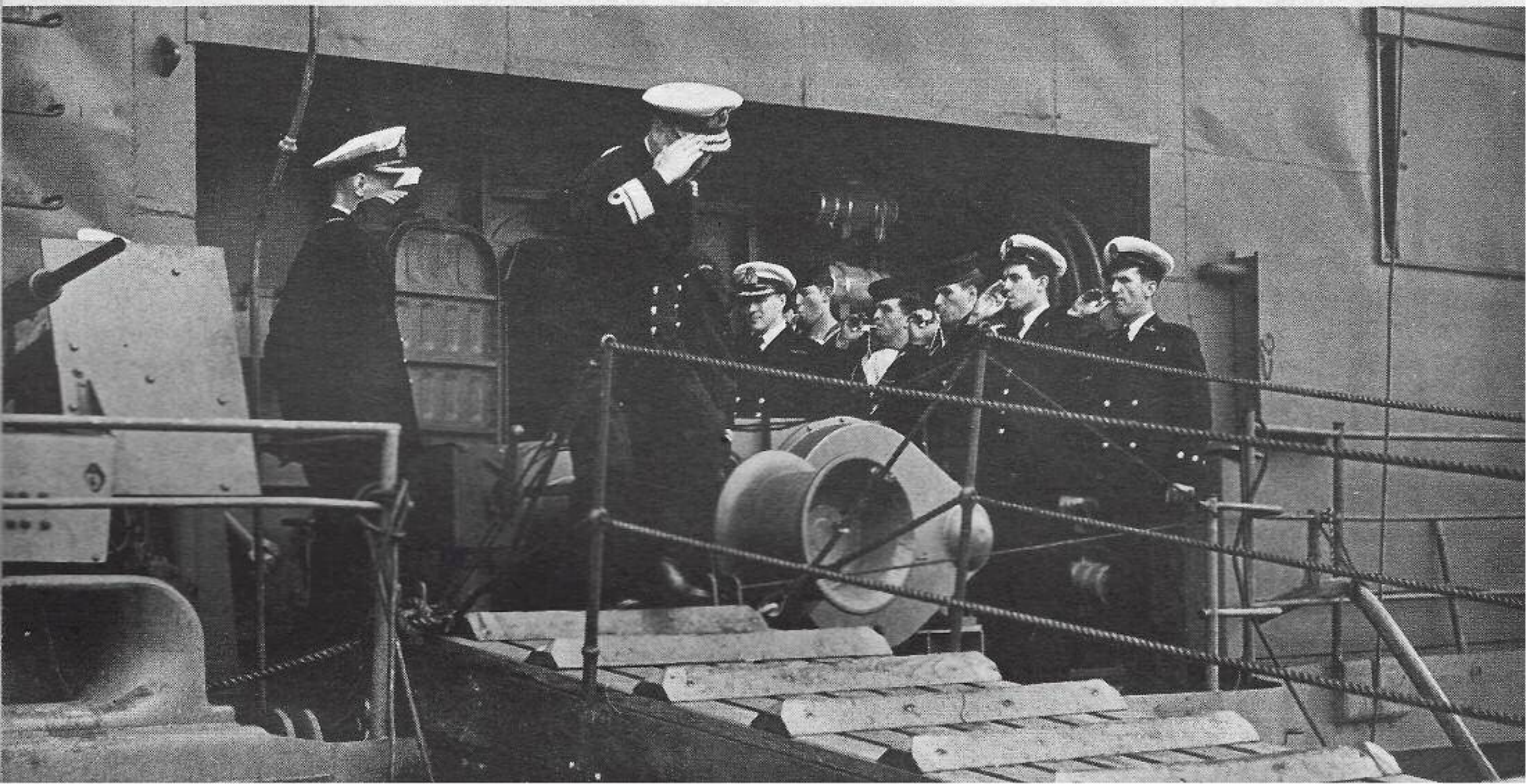


THE ADMIRAL IS "PIPED" ON BOARD

Captain R. E. S. Bidwell, C.B.E., R.C.N., aided by Commander F. A. Price, O.B.E., V.D., R.C.N.V.R., welcomes the Commanding Officer of the Pacific Coast, Rear Admiral V. G. Brodeur, C.B., C.B.E., R.C.N., in a farewell visit to the Ship before departure from Vancouver in May, 1944.

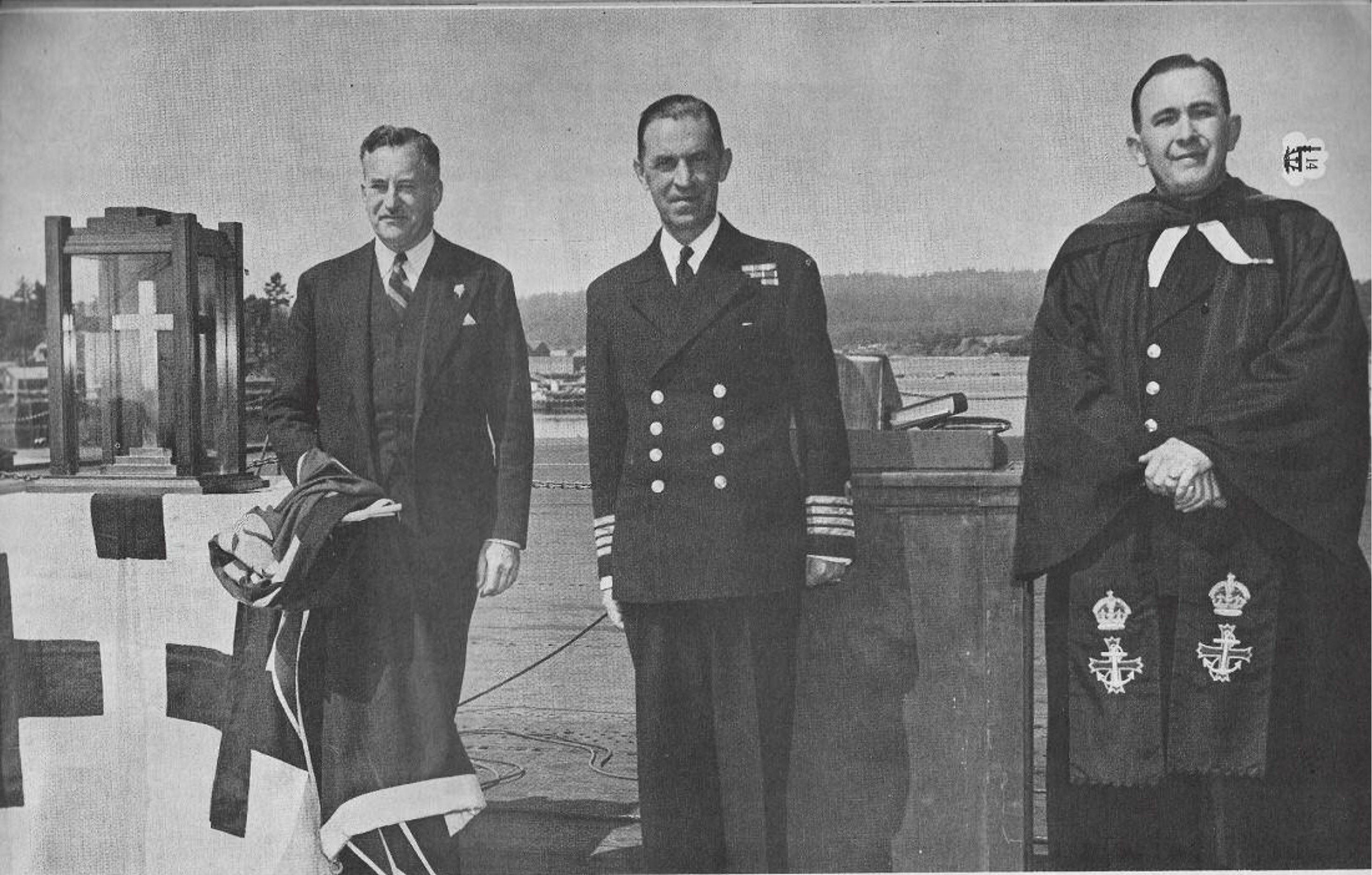
FAREWELL

Captain Bidwell bids The Admiral farewell as he is "piped" on shore.





The Commanding Officer of the Pacific Coast, Rear Admiral Victor G. Brodeur, C.B., C.B.E., R.C.N., is introduced to the officers of H.M.S. "PUNCHER" by Captain Bidwell.



Mr. C. A. Clements, Personnel Director of the Victoria Machinery Depot, has just unveiled the beautiful cross presented by the shipyard workers of V.M.D. to The Rev. L. M. Outerbridge, M.A., R.C.N., Chaplain. Captain Bidwell is in centre. The presentation was made at the Church Service on the flight deck in Esquimalt Harbour on the first Sunday of June, 1944, just before our final departure for operational waters.

THE CONVOY

VOL. 3, No. 1

VICTORIA, B. C., MAY, 1944

B eacon-2141

What more can we do than give them the best we have? What more can we hope for than that they will carry the Cross of free Christians to all the dark corners of today's oppressed world?

It all began with the Sixth Victory Bond Drive. The employees of the V.M.D. had their choice of speakers, entertainment units and other personnel of the publicity department of the War Loan headquarters, to come to the V.M.D. Plants Two and One, to assist in making the loan quota allocated.

There didn't seem to be much desire for the Hollywood type of sales promotion among the employees. Each glittering offer was turned down after scant deliberation. Just when a deadlock seemed imminent someone remembered a plain, straight-talking man who'd paid us a visit in 1943. He was a Naval Chaplain. He carried no fanfare; in fact, he seemed to deliberately suppress showmanship, and he'd given his message in few and well-chosen words.

He was proposed and immediate agreement was reached among the committee appointed to select. That was how the Rev. L. M. Outerbridge, R.C.N., came to Victoria the second time.

He told of the co-operation between man and man, sailor and shipbuilder, of the great co-operation between nation and nation in the crusade against Facism. Truly it was a crusade, and it was the straight manner of the delivery of his vivid words which lived after he'd gone.

We knew he'd gone to considerable trouble to come to us, and we wanted to express our appreciation. But how?

Naturally a gift was proposed, but the selection wasn't going to be easy. We wanted to be able to express how we felt about this war, about the corvettes we'd built, the men who took them into battle, and about the Padre himself.

Then came the great news that he was to have a ship of his own. Padre Outerbridge was being posted on active duty with H.M.S. Puncher. The ship would have a gift the like of none other.

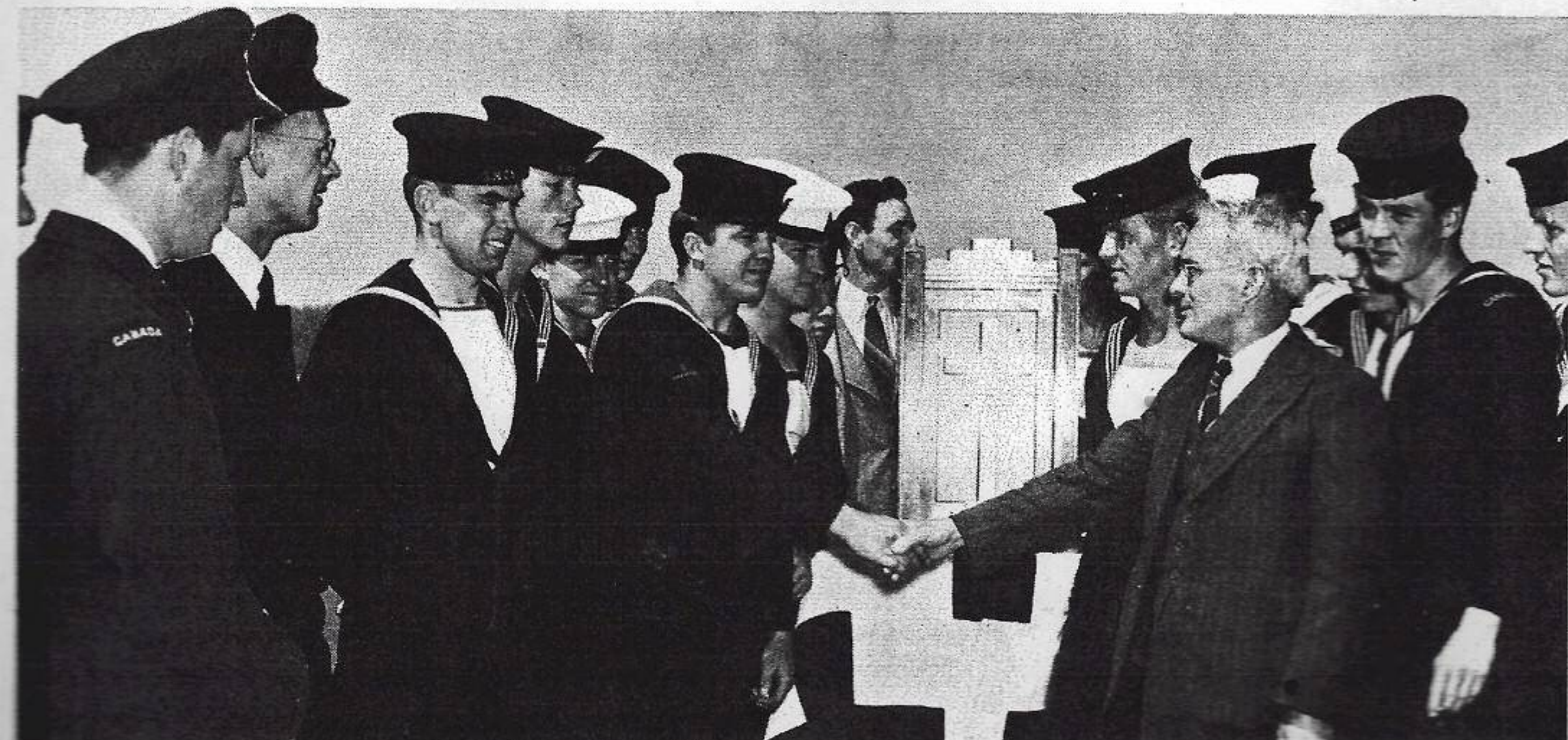
H.M.S. Puncher would carry the cross of Christianity in its battles against the forces of evil. From the shaft boring of a corvette propeller which the V.M.D. had cast came the bright and age-resisting manganese bronze. The mold was made in our own pattern shops, and to our own foundry, whose tasks had been to make casts up to many tons in weight, went the casting of the delicate cross and base. To our own metal craftsmen in the machine shop went the cutting and polishing of the metal.

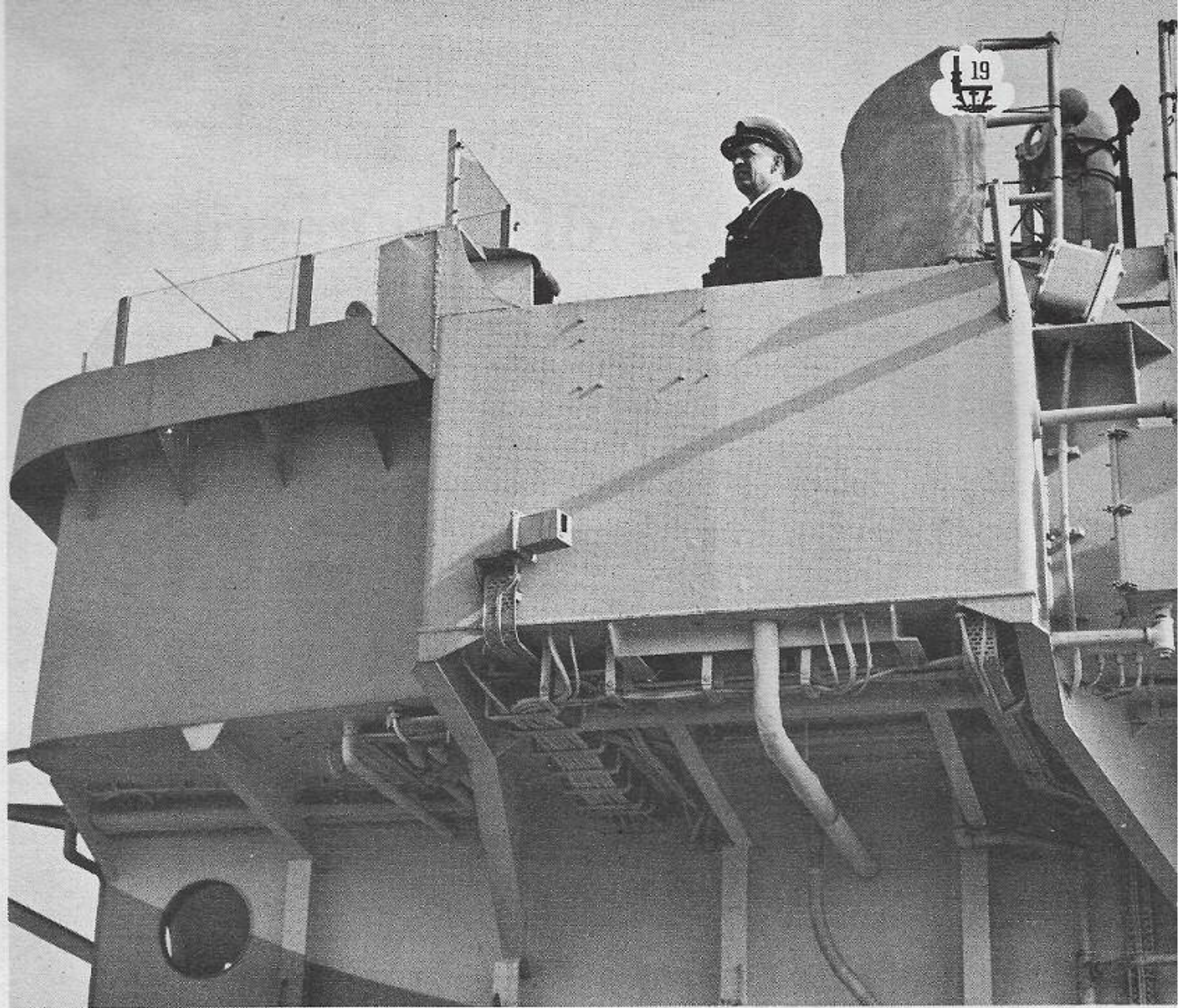
By now the joiner was busy. To these experts was entrusted the construction of the magnificent teak wood case. A routine job of precision work, carried out in minute exactitude. From the joiner shop the case was taken to the polishing shop, where another craftsman of the highest order took over. For sixty-five years the secrets and the art of French polishing had been in his family, and all that experience and ability went into the job so carefully that the dead wood seemed to live again. The glow on the wood, like the glow on the cross, seems to come from within.

On behalf of V.M.D. Plants One and Two, the presentation was made by Harry Nightscales, pattern maker; H. N. Whittemore of the machinists; Jack Diamond, machine shop foreman; W. Kaye, moulder; G. Davison, foundry superintendent; George Webster, joiner; A. L. Ronald, foreman joiner, and Percy Andrews, polisher. Padre Outerbridge accepted the gift and immediately presented it to the ship.

Even an ordinary observer could see that this wasn't "just a gift." It is something special.

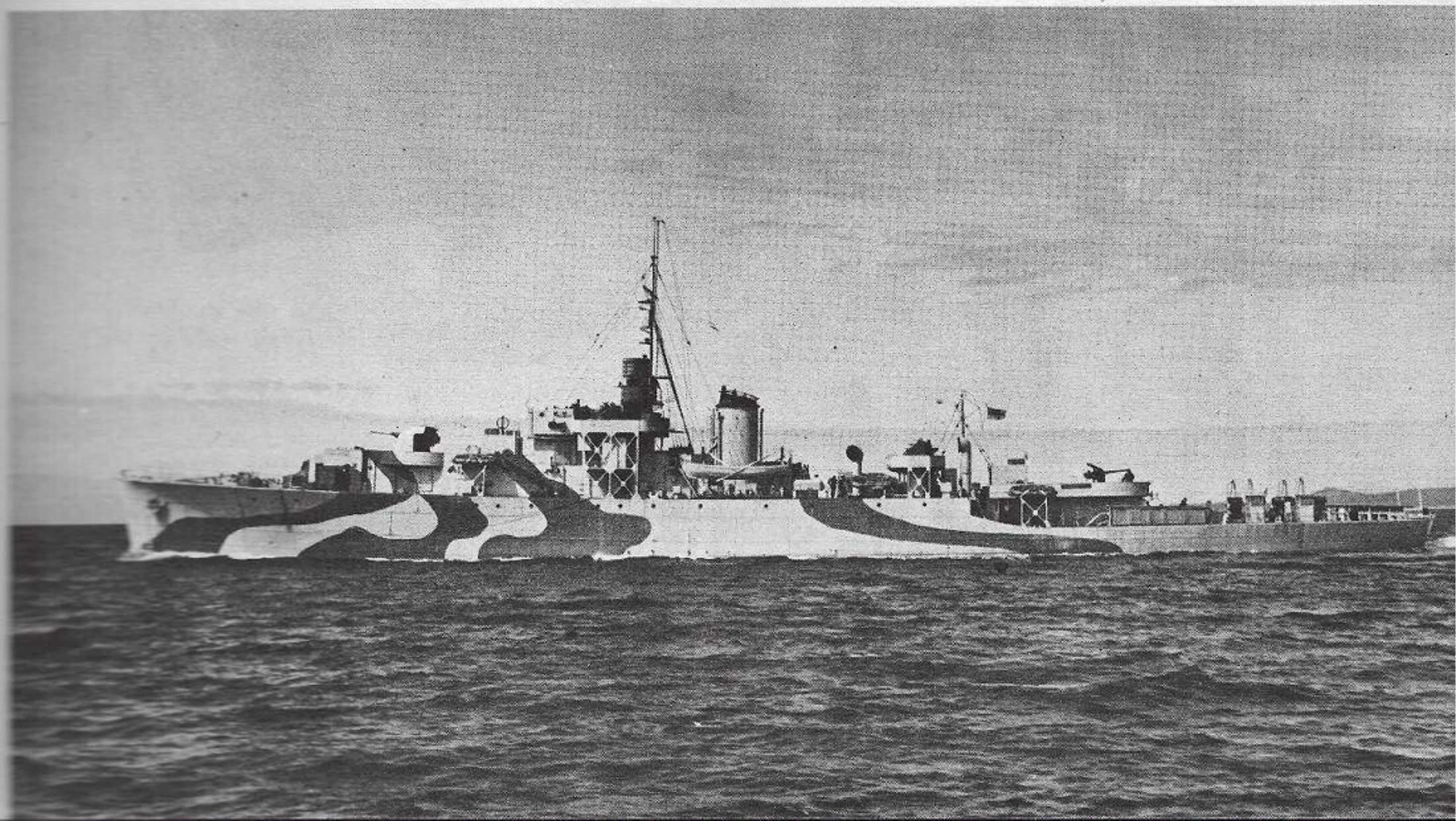
Sailors greet the shipyard workers who made the Cross.

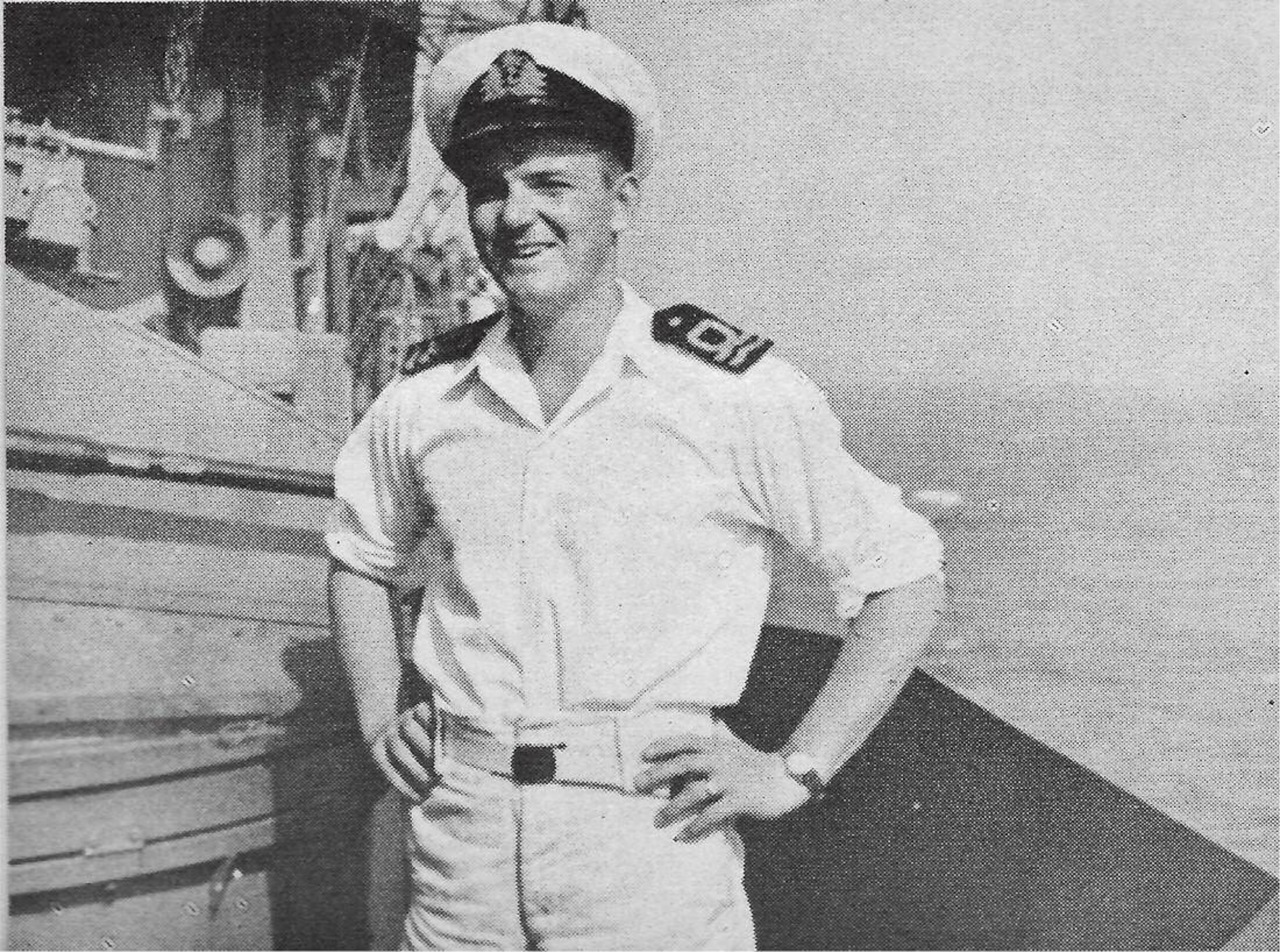




Our Escort

Captain Bidwell standing on the bridge looks across at one of our escorts, H.M.C.S. "BEACON HILL."

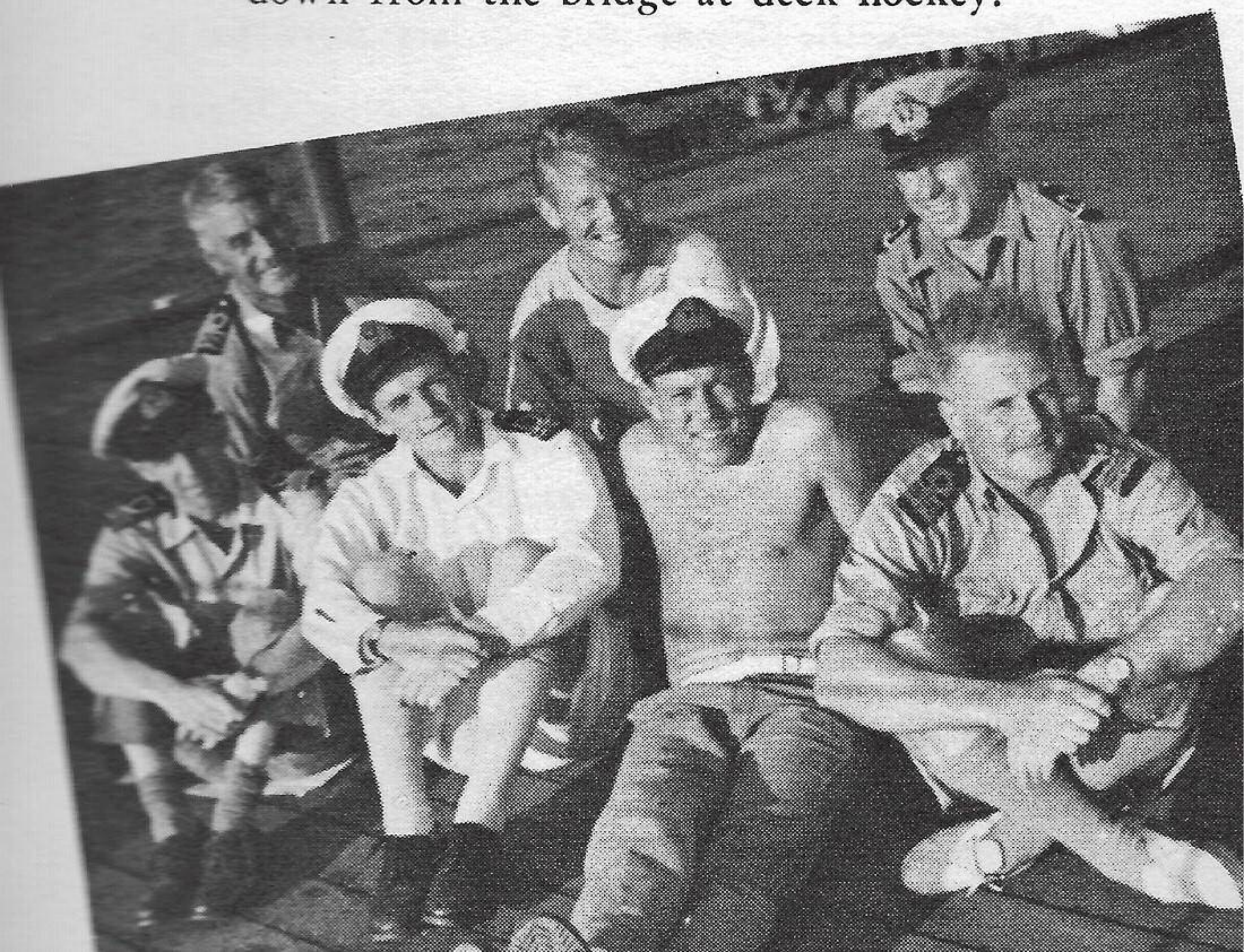




Lt J.D.J. McRae

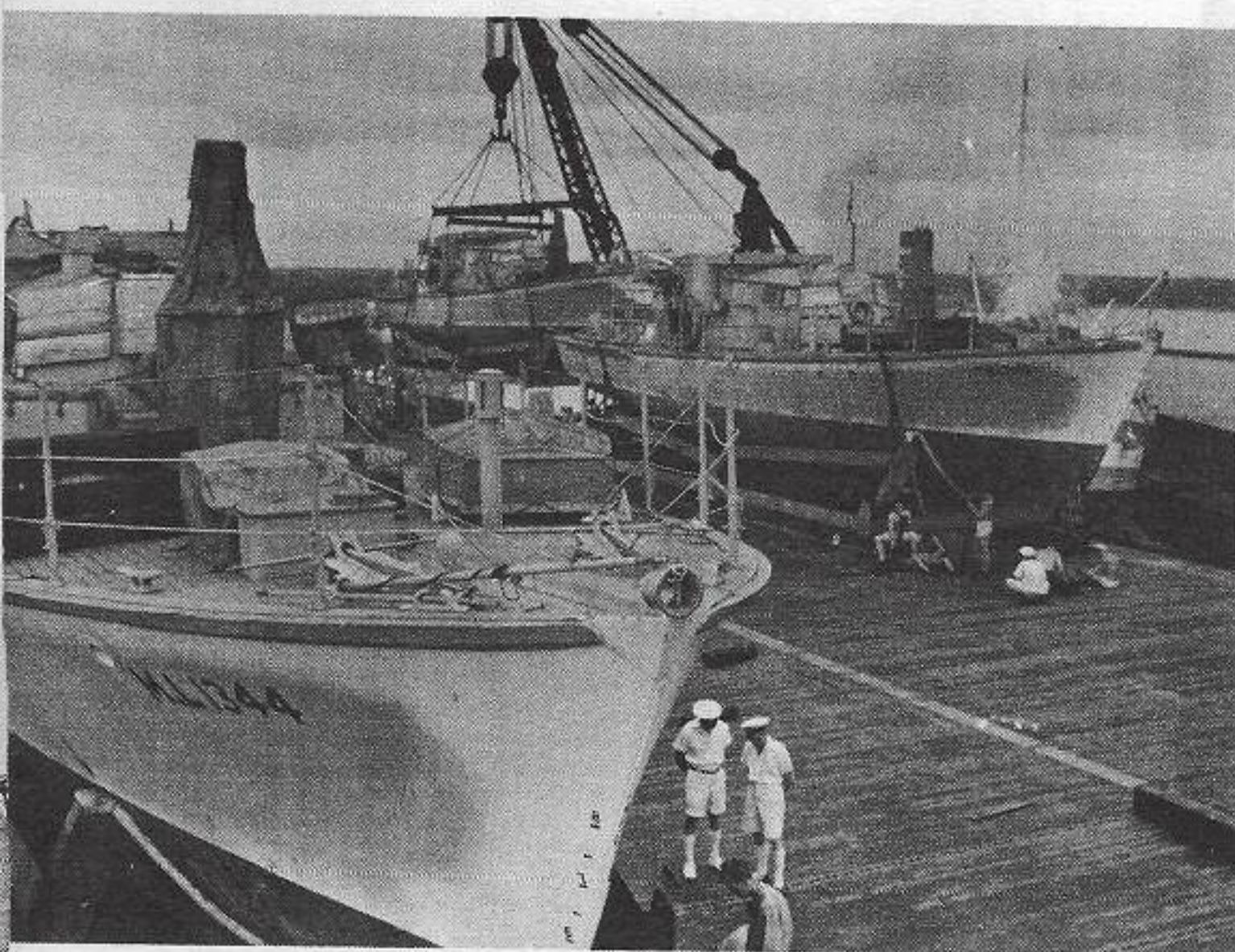


Our genial Officers of the Watch, Lieut. H. R. W. Shoup, R.C.N.V.R.; Lieut. A. A. MacDonald, R.C. N.V.R.; Lieut. S. D. L. Snelling, R.C.N.V.R., look down from the bridge at deck hockey.

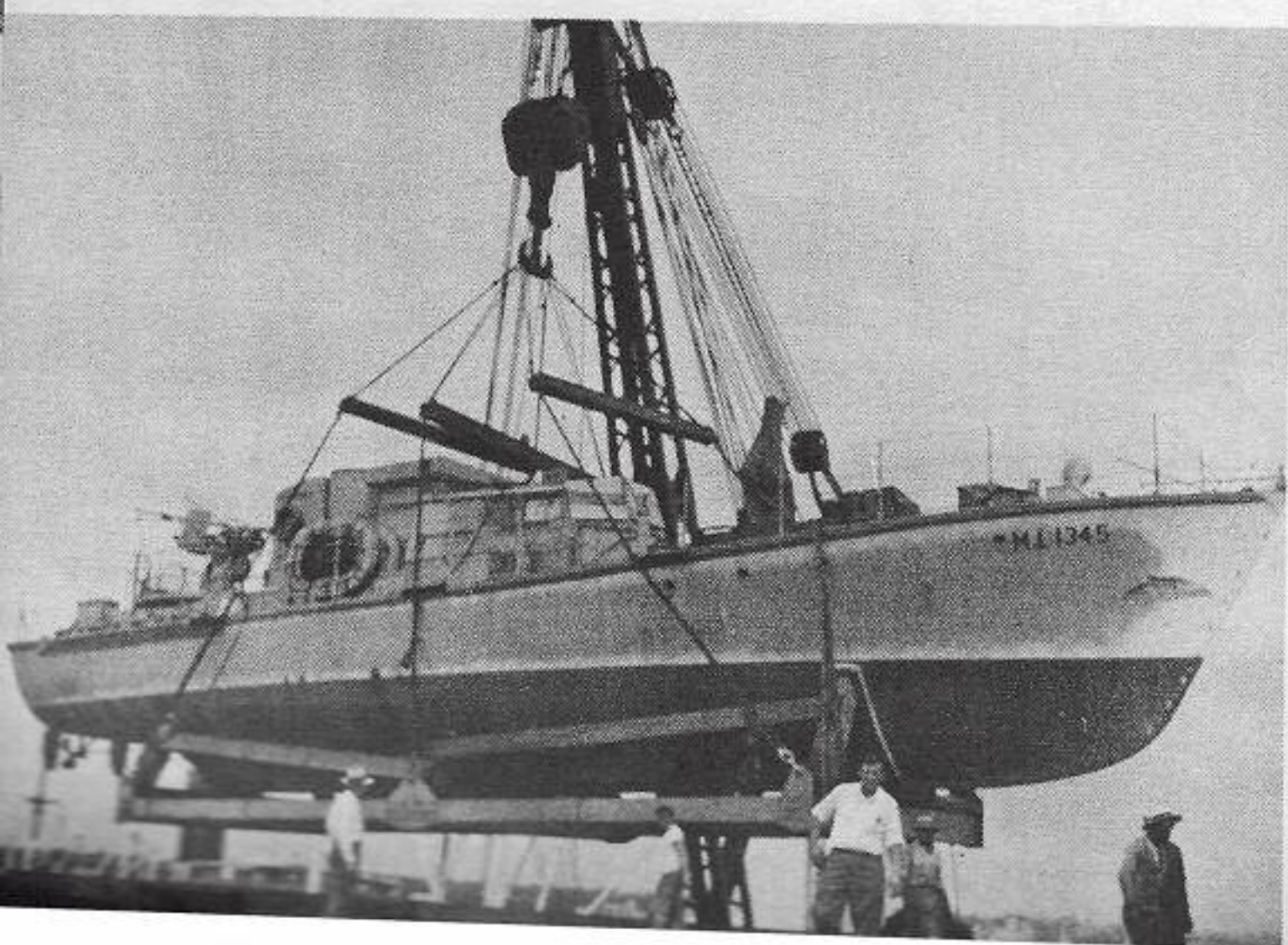




Port Admiral of United States Navy at New Orleans inspects the Ship and is escorted by the Captain.



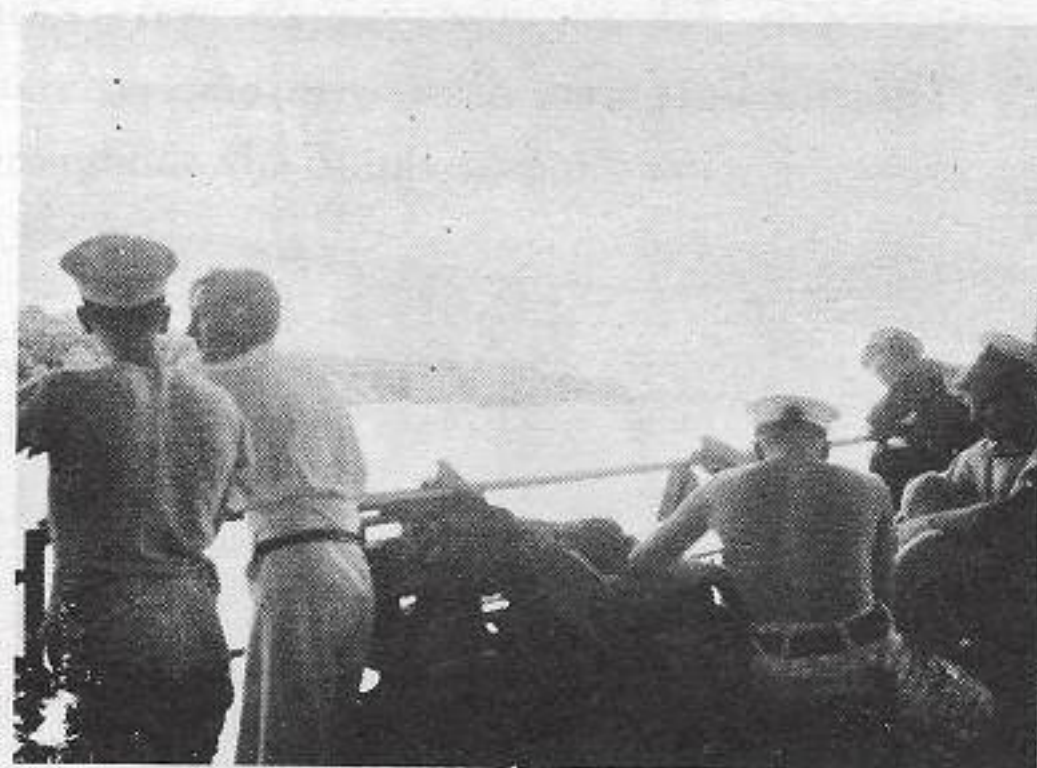
Loading M.L.'s on our Flight Deck at New Orleans. These were trans-shipped at New York for use in invasion of European ports.



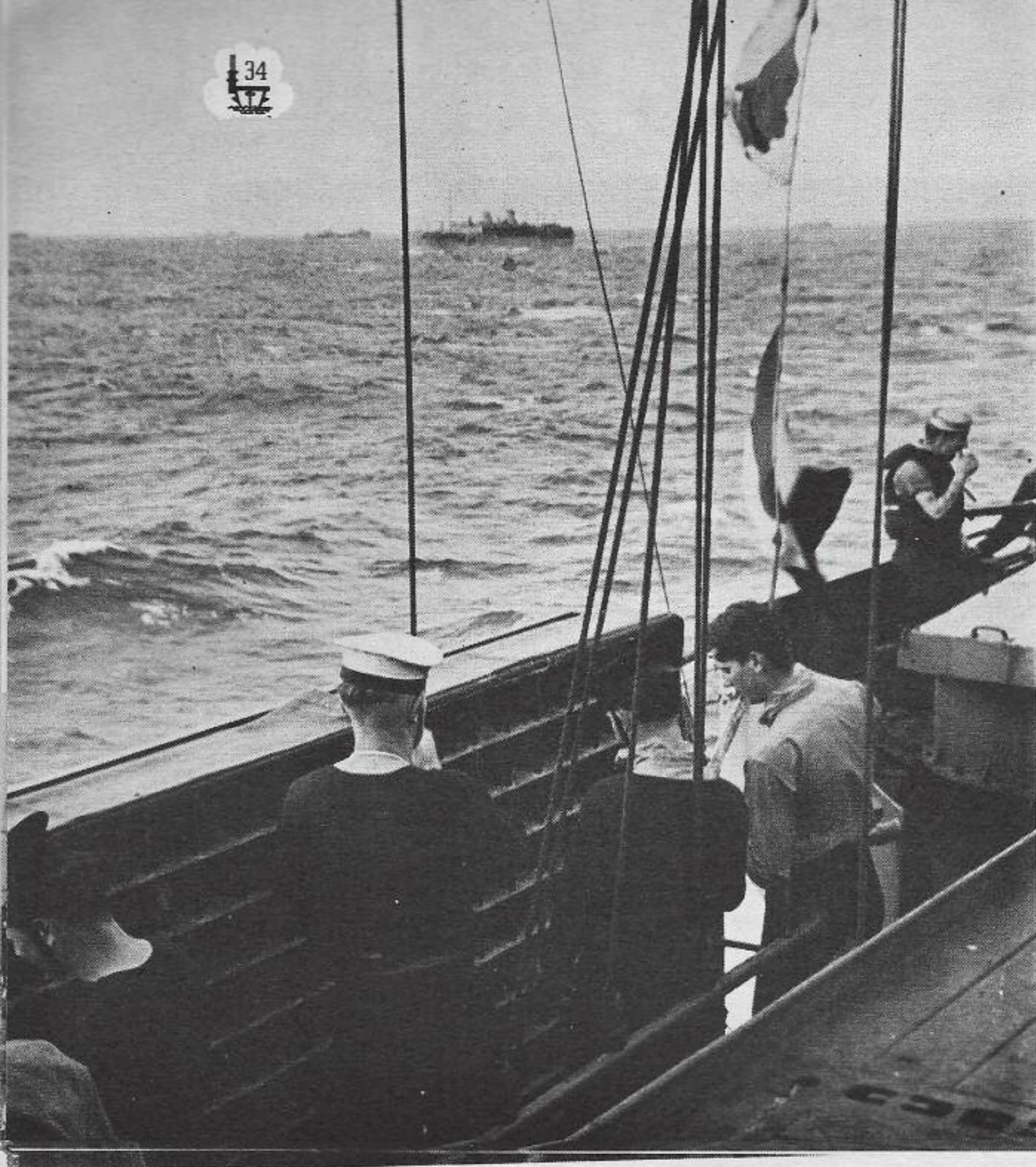
New Orleans

JUNE, 1944

Little did we dream on leaving Vancouver for the Clyde that we were first to visit so many American ports. We had visited the U.S. Naval Yards at Bremerton, San Francisco, San Diego and through the Canal Zone. Through the Canal our orders were to go ninety miles up the Mississippi to New Orleans. We began to understand how important every vestige of shipping was to the Allied cause. Up the Mississippi we found four high speed Motor Launches that had been built up in the Great Lakes for the invasion of Europe. They had floated down the river on barges. Only a Ship with a flight deck like ours could take them away. They were lifted on to our flight deck like toys and at New York we trans-shipped them to Europe.



Gazing at "Old Man River" in the Mississippi, June, 1944.



Signals

The convoys which moved secretly across the Atlantic were held together and guided by silent signals. The communications' branch was one of the most important of the Ship. Here is Yeoman of Signals Cyril Humphreys with part of the Signals staff.

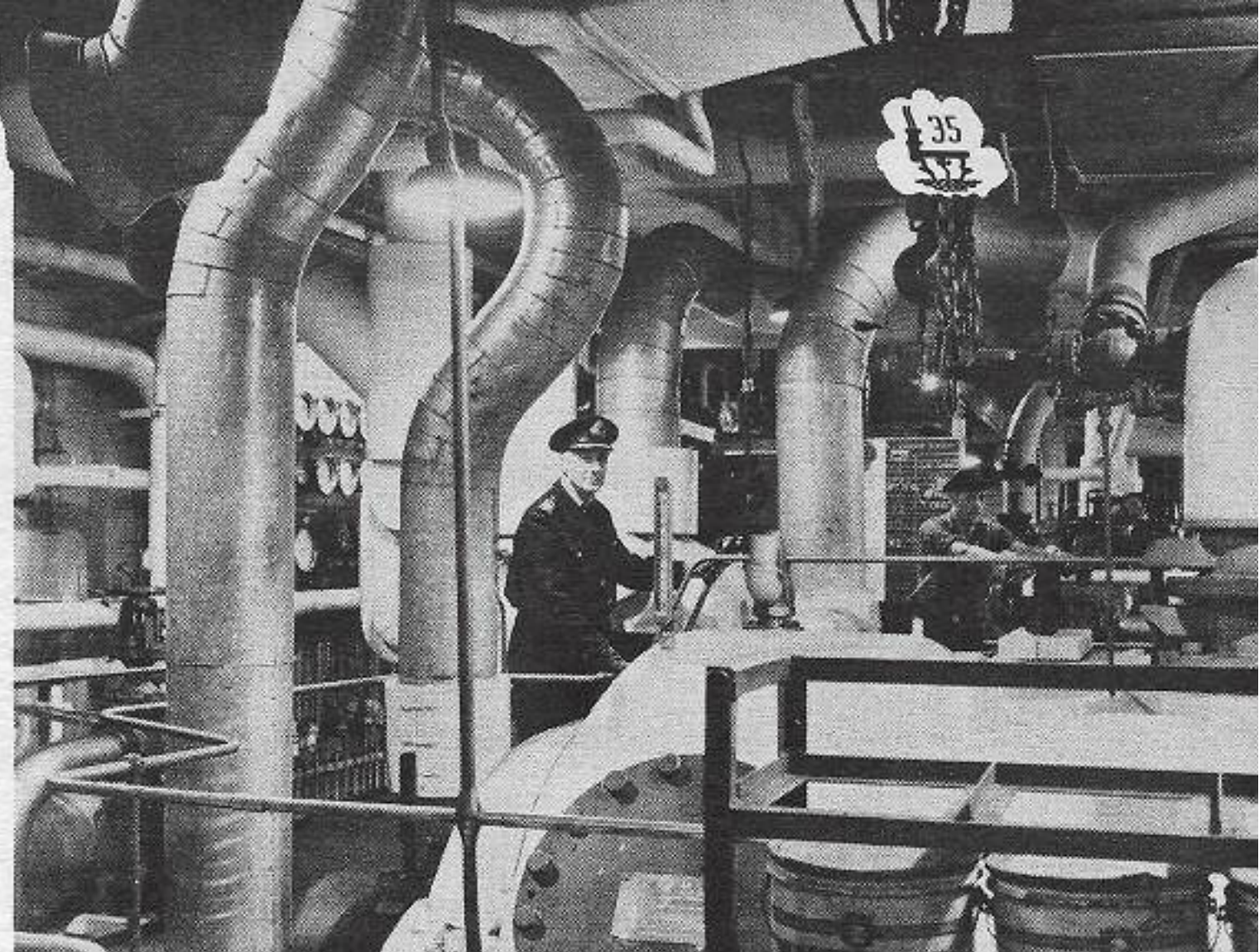


PUNCHER'S *Power*

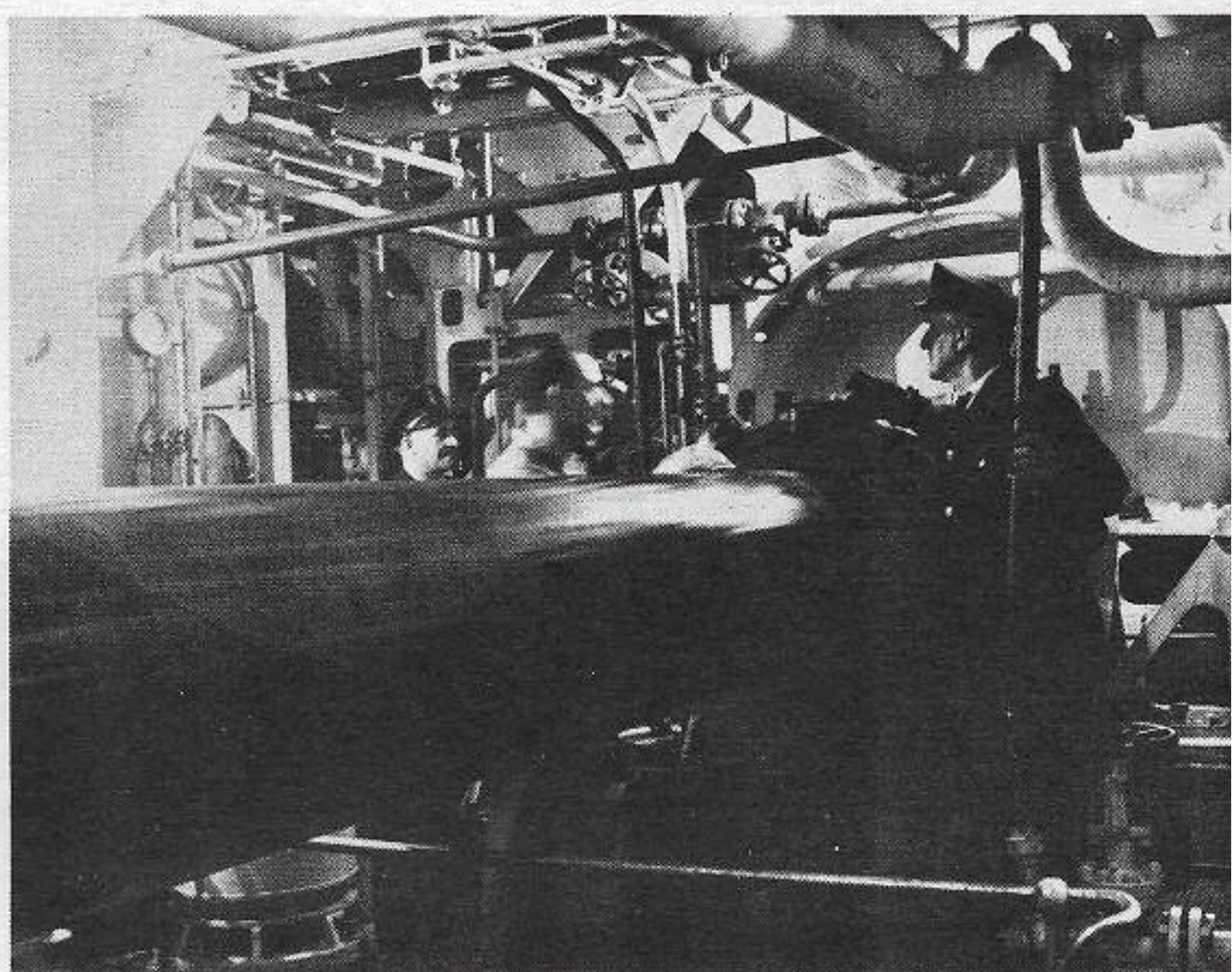
Aircraft carriers have, quite frequently been labelled "floating airfields" for the purpose of conveying some idea of their hugeness. The label is a gross understatement. Aside from being in all actuality a floating airfield, a carrier is nothing less than a miniature city, ready at a minute's notice to produce practically any comfort, or manufacture any article equally as well, and undoubtedly faster, than could be done in a small sized city. Any safety services aboard *Puncher* were far more modern and efficiently operated than they would be in many small cities.

All power is, of course, generated from the ship's own power plant. It carries its own water purifying system and deals with garbage in its own incinerator plant. Nothing was allowed to be thrown overboard for purposes of security.

Electrical and engineering machine shops are practically self-sufficient for repair work, or replacement of smaller items of machinery. They have to deal with such unusual articles as tractors, mobile cranes, elevators and even a jeep operating aboard.



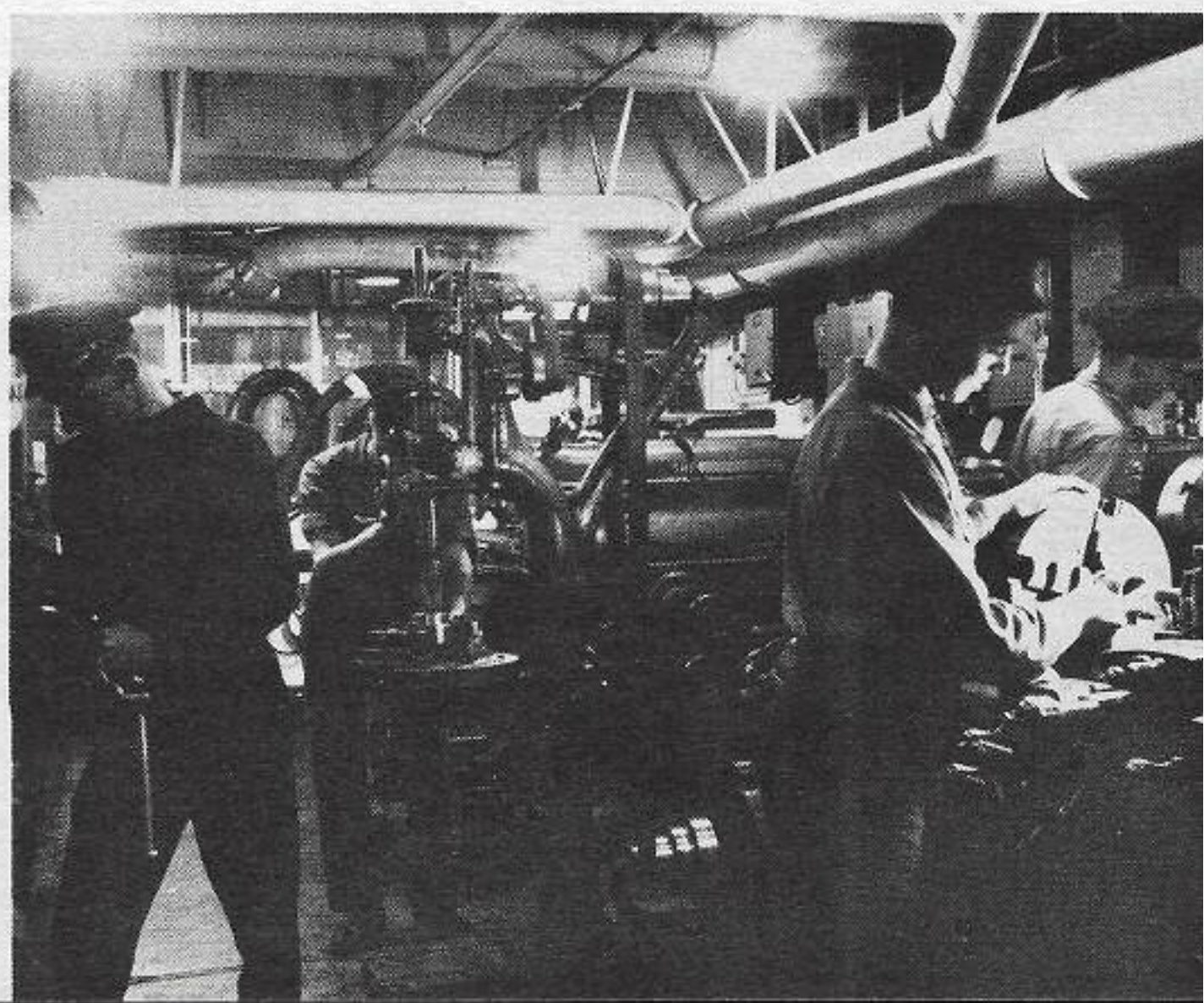
The Chief Engineer inspects the propeller shaft.

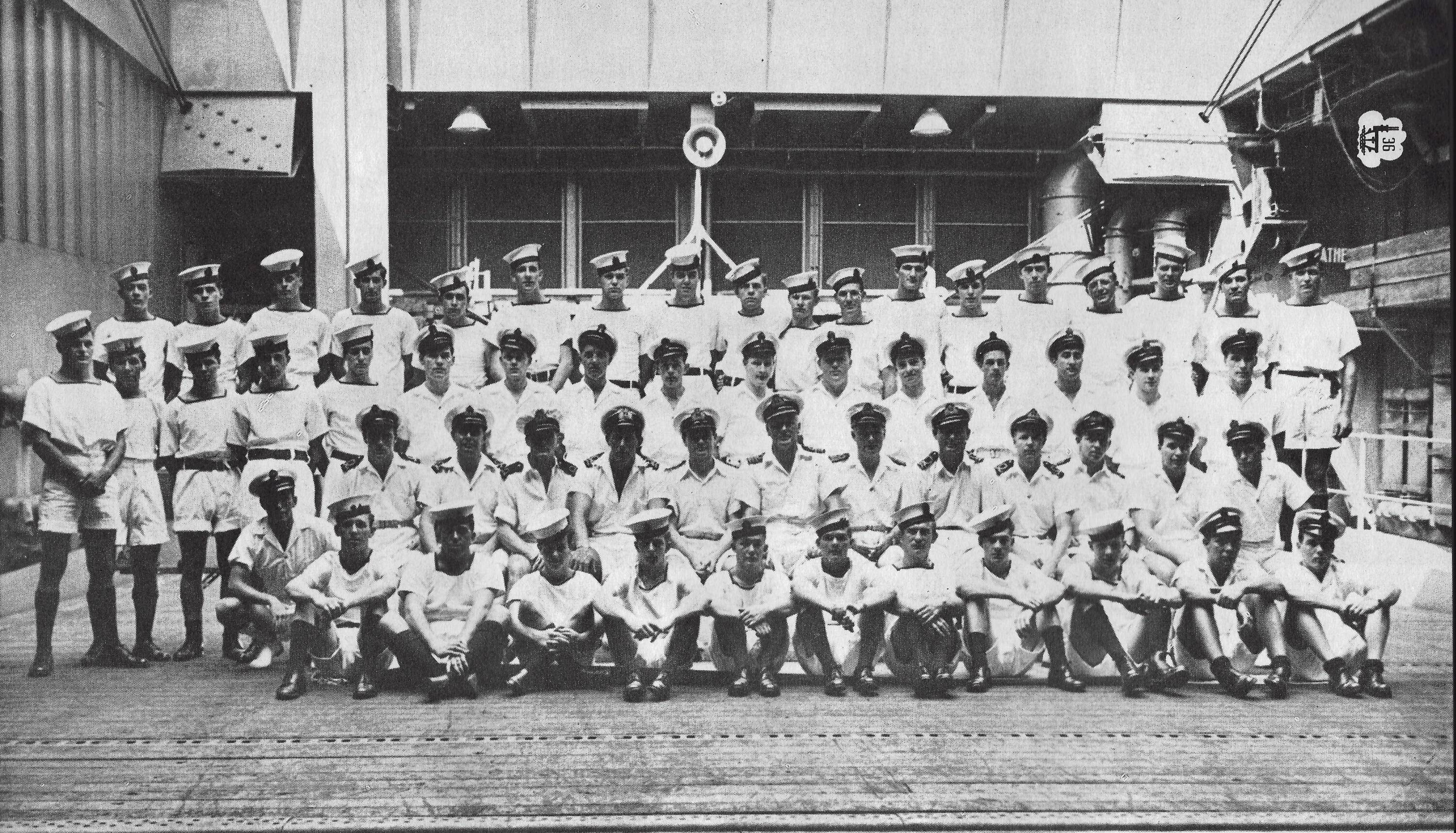


The Chief Engineer, Commander (E) G. G. Armit, R.C.N.R.

The Machine Shop.

Commander Armit with his corps of Chief E.R.A.'s.





STOKERS ALL

Commander (E) G. G. Armit, R.C.N.R., seated in centre, with engineer officers and engine room personnel. Officers, E.R.A.'s and Stokers gave "PUNCHER" the finest team play both in the engine room and in deck hockey.



MEN OF ALL TRADES

The efficiency of the Ship was in great measure due to the constant oversight of the Shipwrights, Painters and Plumbers. The five Chiefs in this branch of the service are C.P.O. Albert Woods, C.P.O. Ted Allison, C.P.O. Jack Spidell, C.P.O. William MacDonald and C.P.O. Leo De Wolfe.



This squadron joined us at Norfolk for passage to U. K.



The Rev. A. B. W. Wood, R.C.N., Command Chaplain (RC) of the Pacific Coast, joined the Ship at Vancouver for passage to U.K. In our odyssey to Glasgow via Africa and three trans-Atlantic crossings, Father Wood served as Chaplain RC and assisted in censorship. We were very sorry to have to bid him goodbye on our arrival in Scotland. He left many friends on board.



It costs money to operate an aircraft carrier and there's quite a bit of it here between A/Cmdr (S) Geoffrey Tullidge, R.C.N.V.R., of Vancouver (left) and Lieut (S) Stuart Tregaskes, R.C.N.V.R., of Toronto. They're handling part of "PUNCHER'S" payroll which amounts to over £10,000.

It is the first pay day in U. K. aboard H.M.S. "PUNCHER." Here Lieut. (S) Stuart Tregaskes, R.C.N.V.R. of Toronto is piling the pounds on the pay-book-capped top of a seaman's cap.



"PUNCHER" DHOBEY FIRM

Canada's largest sea-going laundry concern, an eight-man company, was based on board.

When the Royal Canadian Navy manned H.M.S. "PUNCHER" one of the most agreeable surprises in store for the ratings was the ready-made laundry, or Dhobey Room, complete with every conceivable piece of laundry equipment.

Up to the acquisition of "PUNCHER" Canada boasted mainly of a small-ship navy. Large in number, small in structure, with no particular attention paid to laundering facilities. Each man did his own Dhobeying, whenever the mood struck him, his time was his own, and someone didn't beat him to the meagre space allotted for the chore.

No such scramble has been necessary aboard "PUNCHER." The eight-man Dhobey Firm, which includes one P/O Writer as bookkeeper, operates so cheaply that it no longer is a profitable saving for a rating to do his own laundry. Not when bed sheets and blankets are done freely; towels and seamen's collars for 2 cents, shirts for a nickel, and pyjamas for seven cents. Officers' suits were cleaned and pressed for twenty-five cents.

The monthly volume of business hit some pretty high figures. Picking one month at random, the Dhobey Firm handled, among other items, 230 bed sheets, 900 suits of underwear, 985 towels, 665 white shirts, 385 white collars starched, 150 suits of pyjamas, 160 pairs white trousers, 100 blankets, 215 table napkins, 125 white coats, 125 aprons, 90 work shirts, 85 pairs of dungarees and 65 suits cleaned and pressed.

Laundry facilities include an automatic

washer, an extractor which serves the purpose of a wringer without involving the work, an automatic drier, a dry presser for shirts, special cuff and collar ironer for shirts, and another one for ironing sleeves. There are also two steam pressing units.

The Dhobey Firm "president" was A/B Vernon Duck of York, P.E.I. On his staff were A/B Albert Dirrado, Montreal; A/B Roger Latreille, Montreal; A/B Ken Allison, Saint John, N.B.; A/B Robert Horne, Ottawa and Montreal; A/B William Yawney, Sudbury and Toronto; Stoker Rupert Cooper of Windsor, Ontario, and P/O Writer George Gomeroy, Victoria, B.C. The profits on operation of the laundry met most of our expense for motion pictures.

On the long journey back to New York the empty hangar became our motion picture theatre.

We had a motion-picture projection room on the port side of the hangar deck. For a movie, which may be for training or entertainment, a screen is lowered from the hangar deck ceiling, and benches and chairs are brought up to form a theatre. The entertainment movie menu is the same as for civilians, only often the carrier crews saw the films first.

We had both 16 m.m. and 35 m.m. projectors and secured our films from the R.C.N. Film Society, Ottawa, and from the R. N. Film Society in Britain.

On evenings when conditions permitted enough aircraft were taken to the flight deck to leave the forward end of the hangar deck clear for motion pictures.

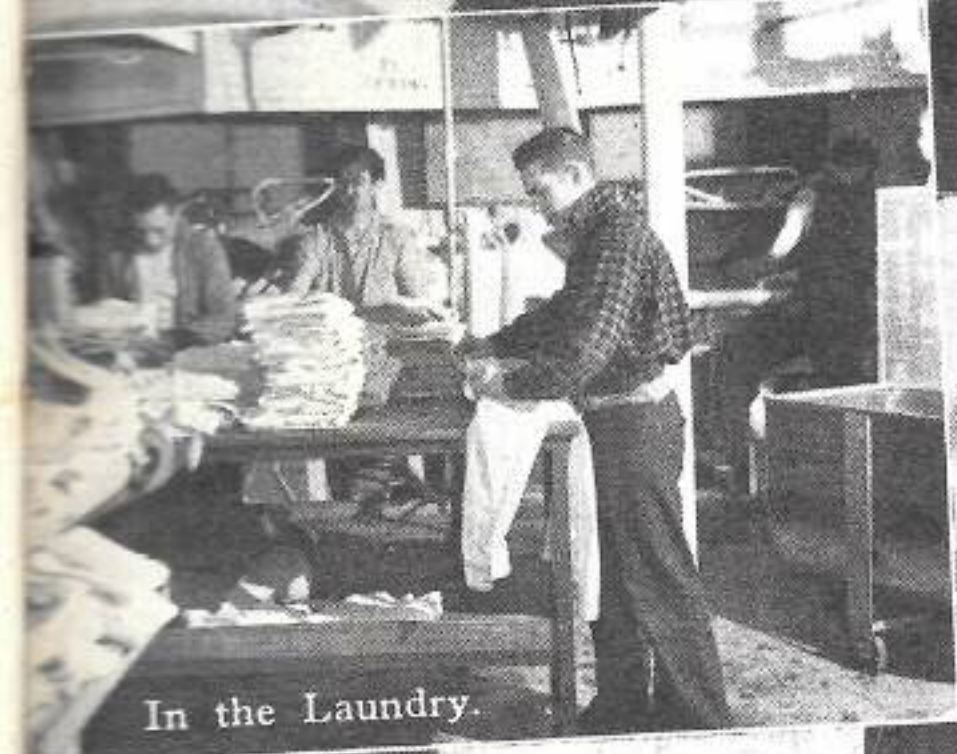
—G. W.



Biggest bottleneck of civilian laundry, the problem of drying clothes, is unknown on "PUNCHER." Here Stoker Rupert Cooper of Windsor, Ontario, feeds blankets into the high-pressure "Drying Machine."



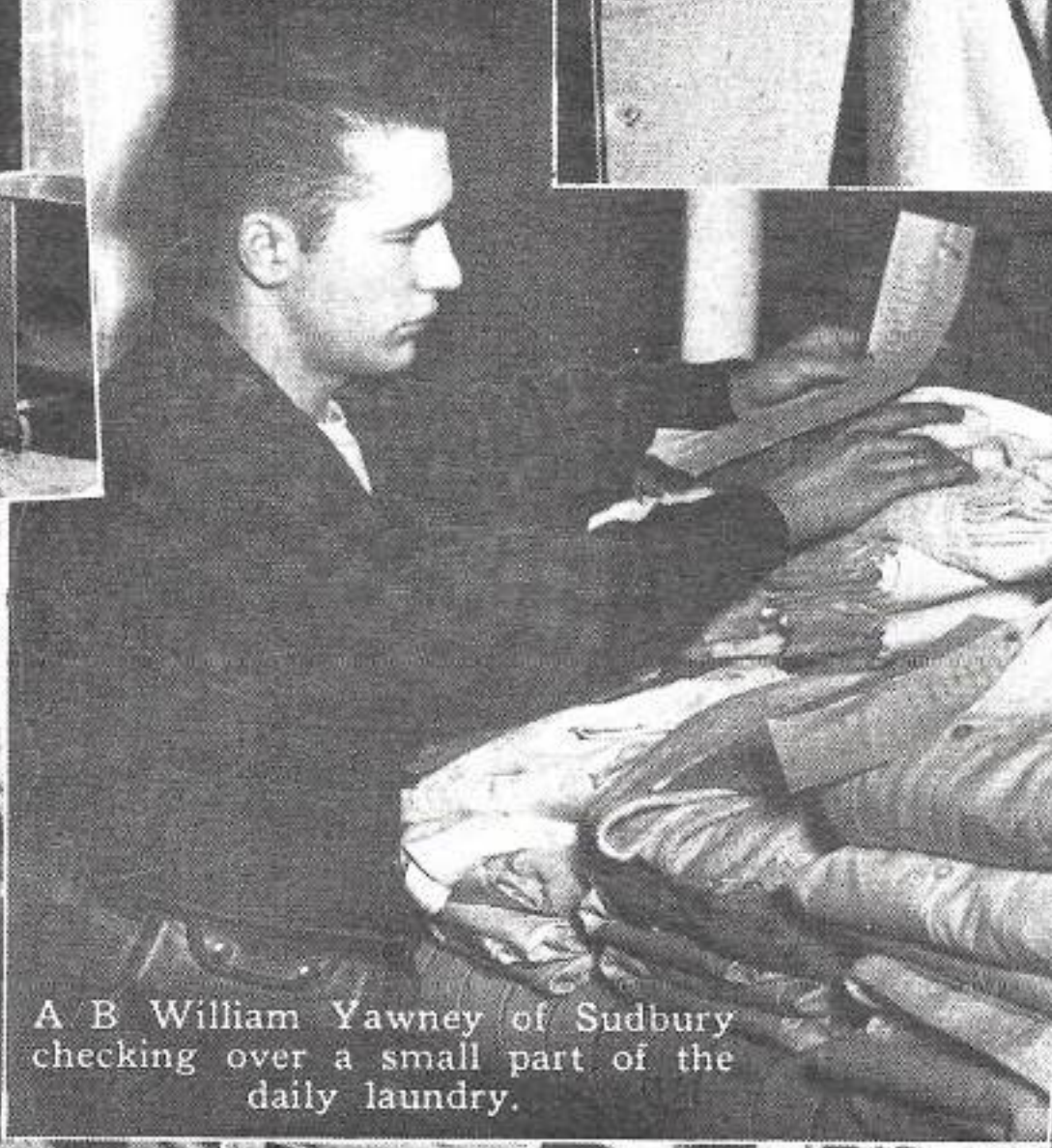
Manager "Duck" receives Laundry.



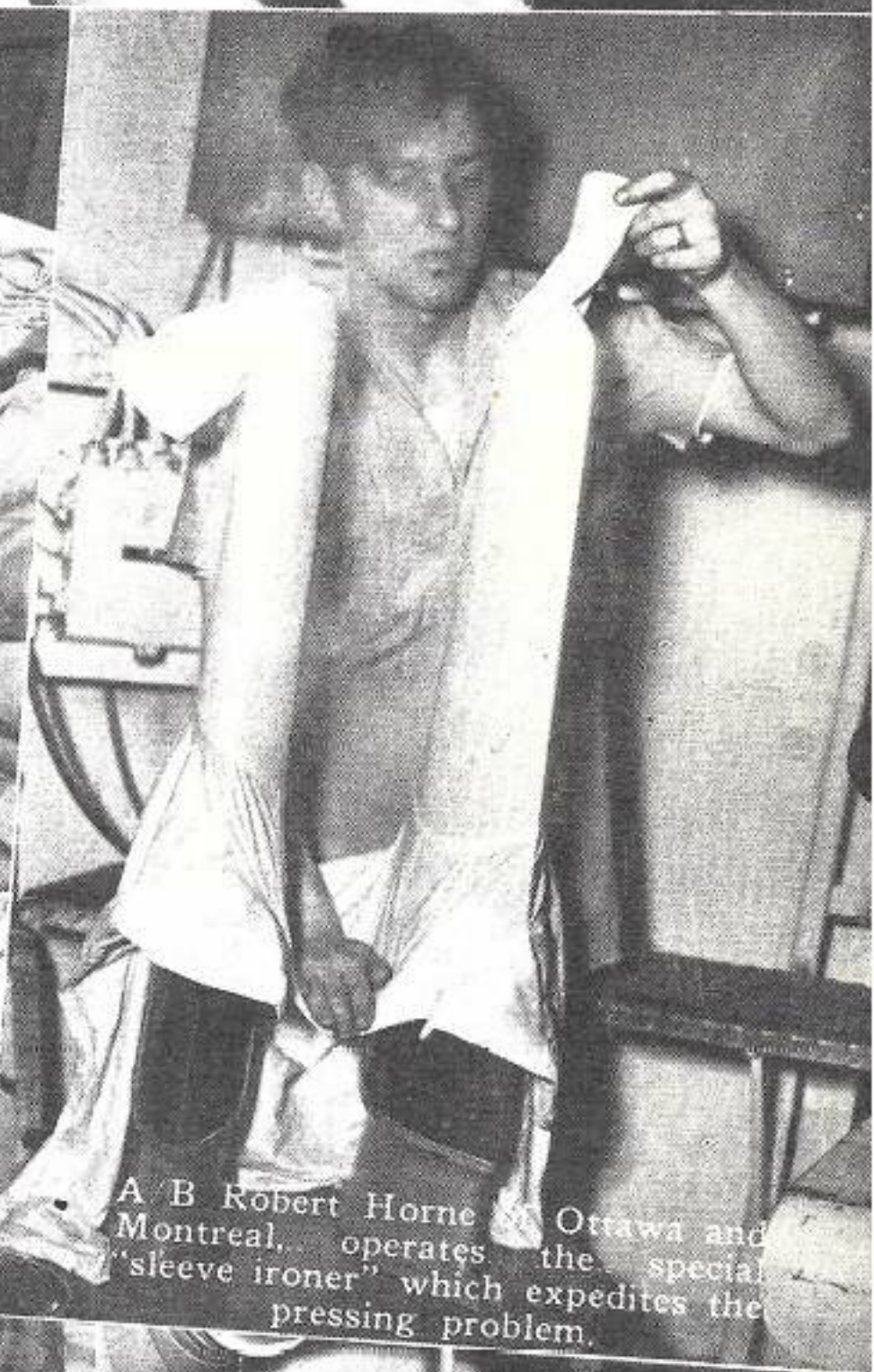
In the Laundry.



A B Albert Diraddo of Montreal is shown cleaning an officer's uniform resting on the steam presser.



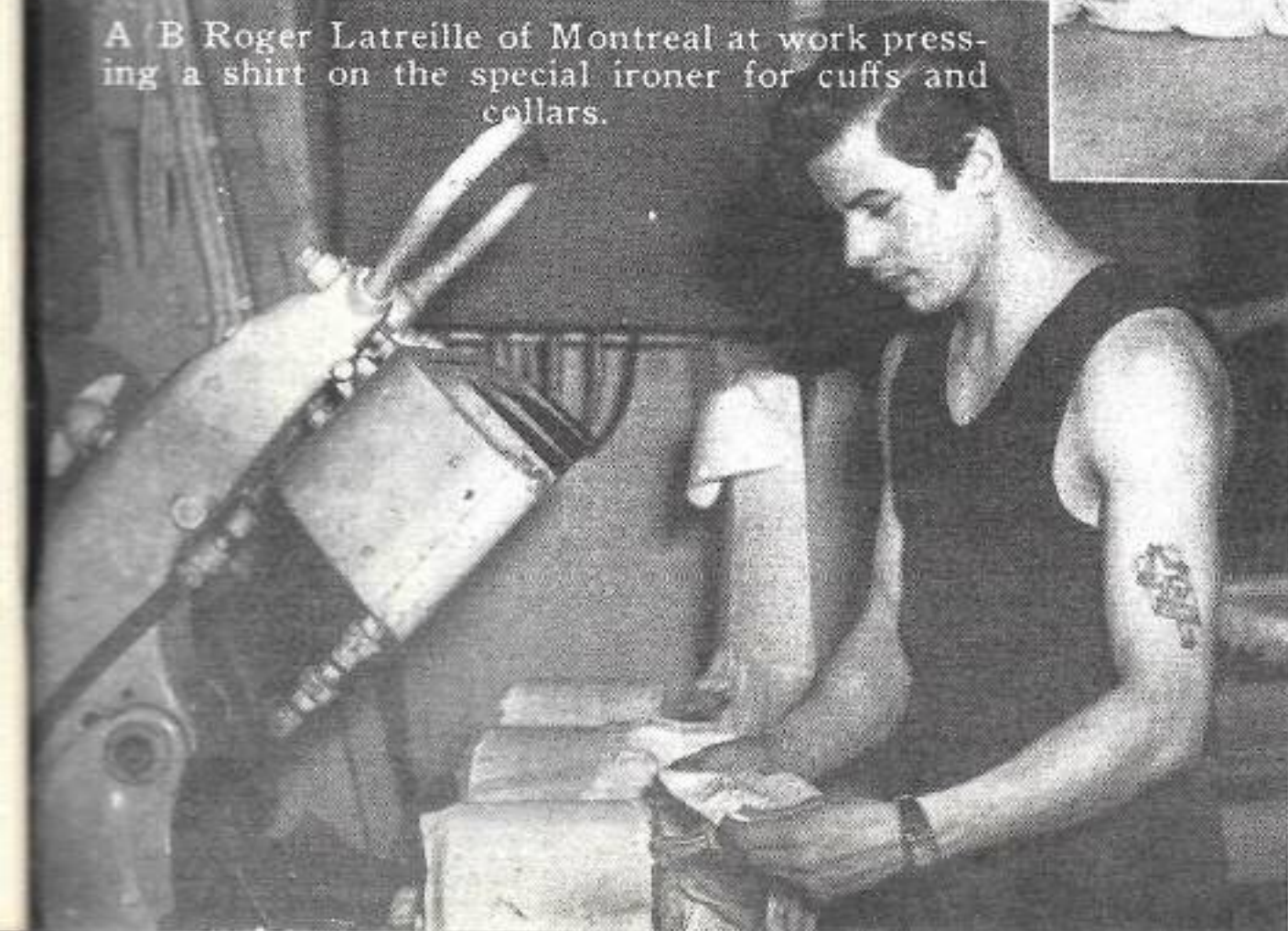
A B William Yawney of Sudbury checking over a small part of the daily laundry.



A B Robert Horne of Ottawa and Montreal, operates the special "sleeve ironer" which expedites the pressing problem.



"When Red Meets Red."



A B Roger Latreille of Montreal at work pressing a shirt on the special ironer for cuffs and collars.

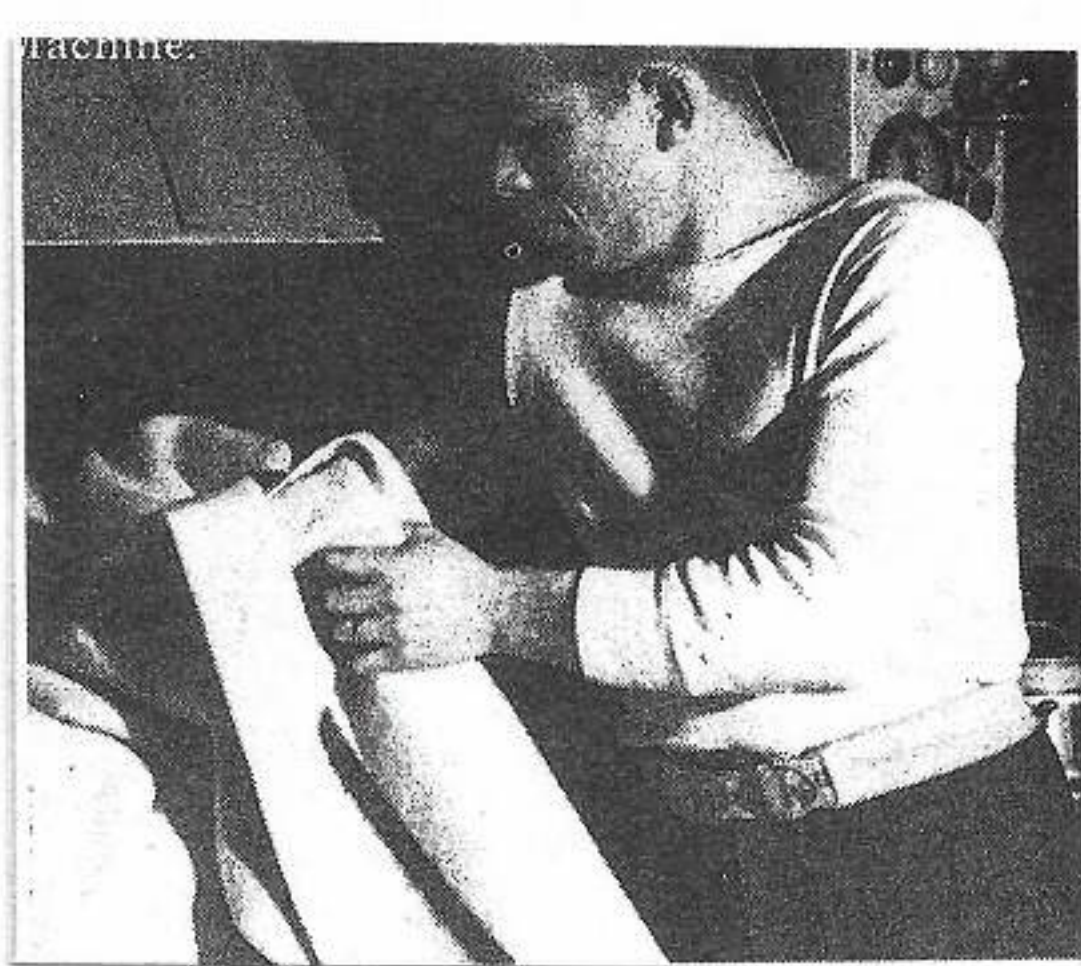


Here is a general view of the "Dh"



Manager "Duck" receives Laundry.

AB. Vernon Duck



ABSM . Rupert Cooper



AB. William Yawney



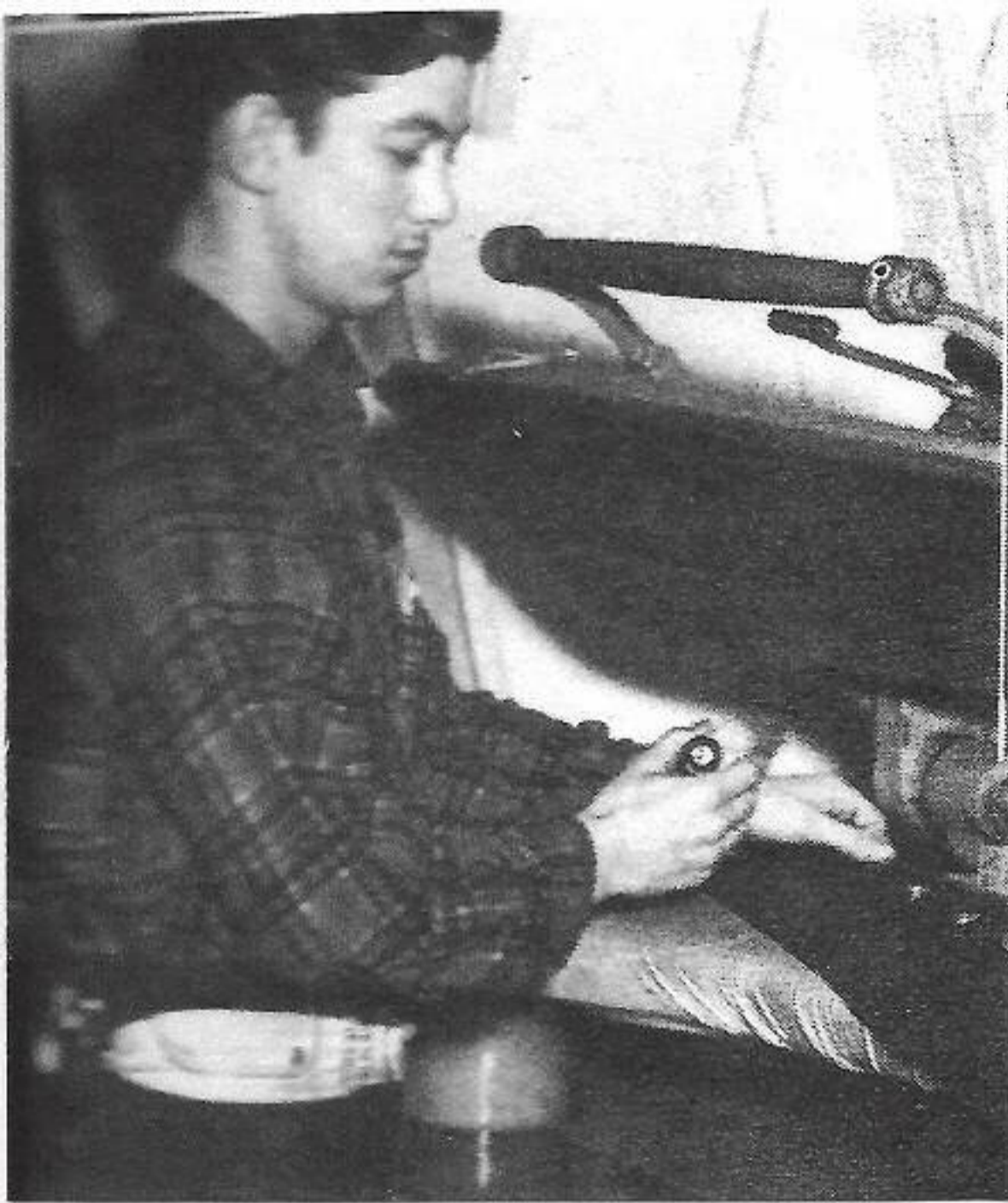
AB. Robert Horne



AB. Roger Latreille



A. Dirrado, Ken Allison, William Yawney



Able Seamen Dirrado



Able Seamen Roger Latreille



"When Red Meets Red"

Able Seaman Rupert Duck
(Dobey Firm Manager)



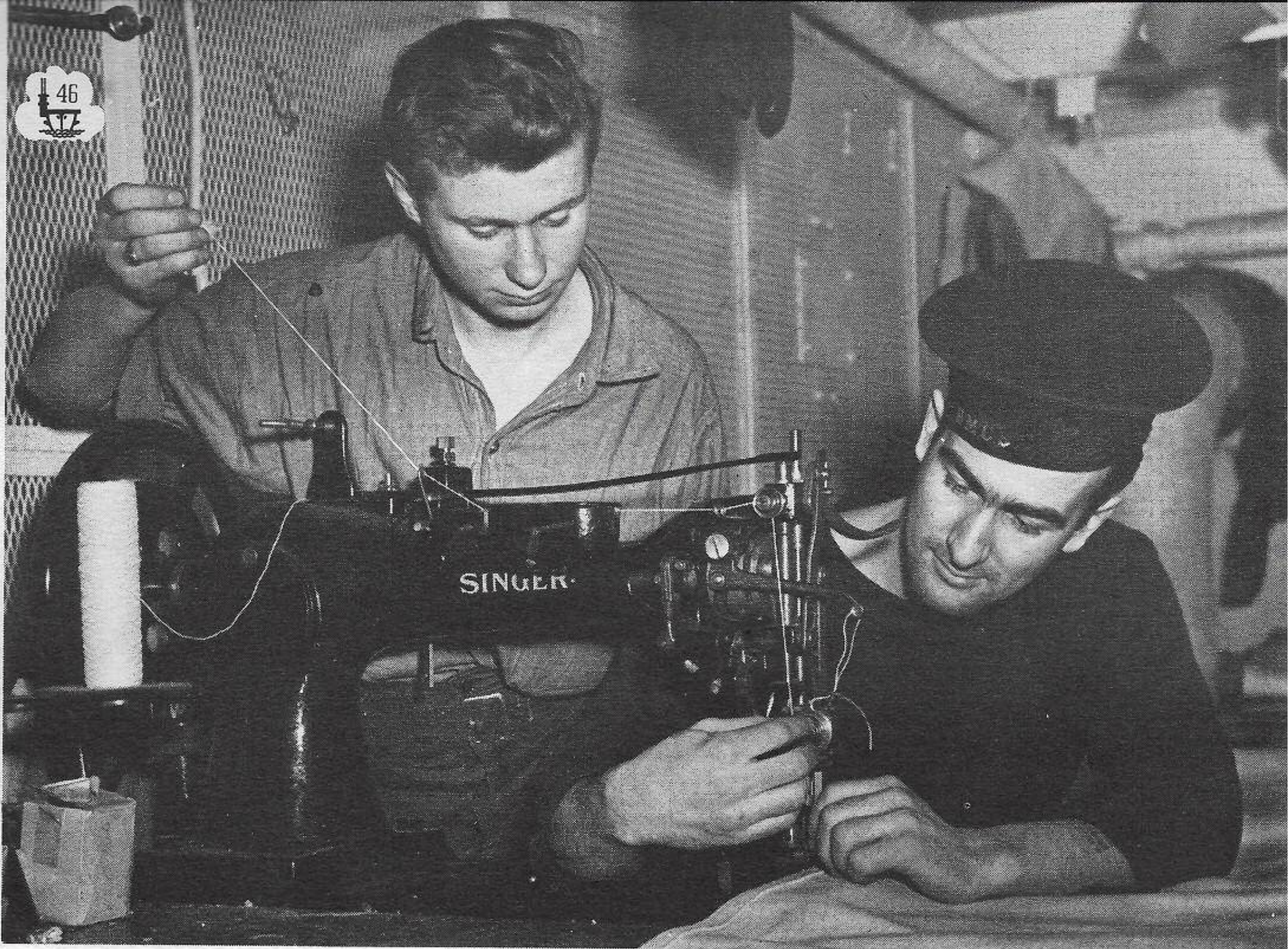
From "Wakey, Wakey" at 0600 until "Out Pipes" or "Pipe Down" at 2230, Bugler A/B Kenneth Barker of Toronto was an active man. All "pipes" over the P. A. system in the ship are preceded by Barker's bugle or a Bosun's call.

PIPE DOWN

It's "Up Spirits" time aboard and here is a shot of the spirits emerging from the rum barrel. Master-At-Arms Angus MacDonald, R.C. N.V.R., of Fort William, is pumping up the rum into a can held by Supply Petty Officer Gerald Spark of Victoria, B. C. The officer of the Watch, who must be present at the ceremony, is Lieut. G. B. Wadsworth, R.C.N. of Montreal.

UP SPIRITS





SAILMAKER

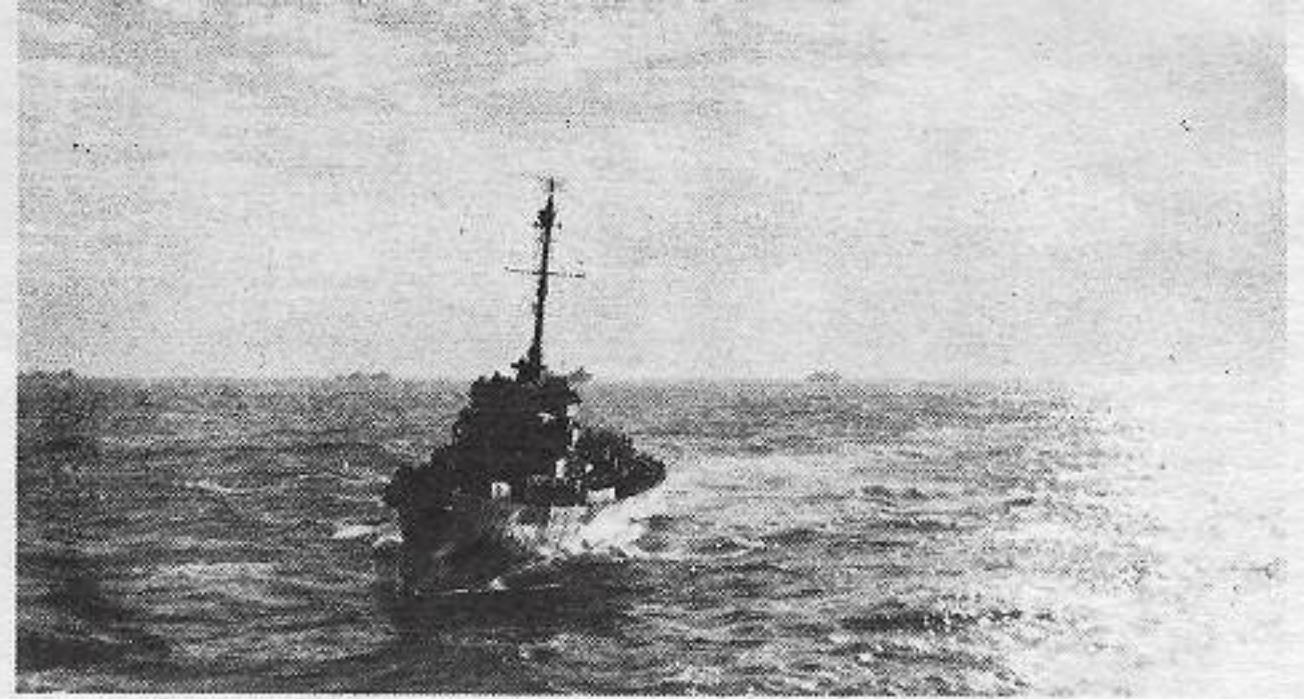
One of the unusual jobs aboard is that carried out by the Sailmaker's Mate, A/B Joseph Albert Fraser (right) R.C.N.R., of Sydney, Cape Breton. Helping him thread the sewing machine to hem a hammock, is A/B Charles Middleton of Montreal.

TAILORING

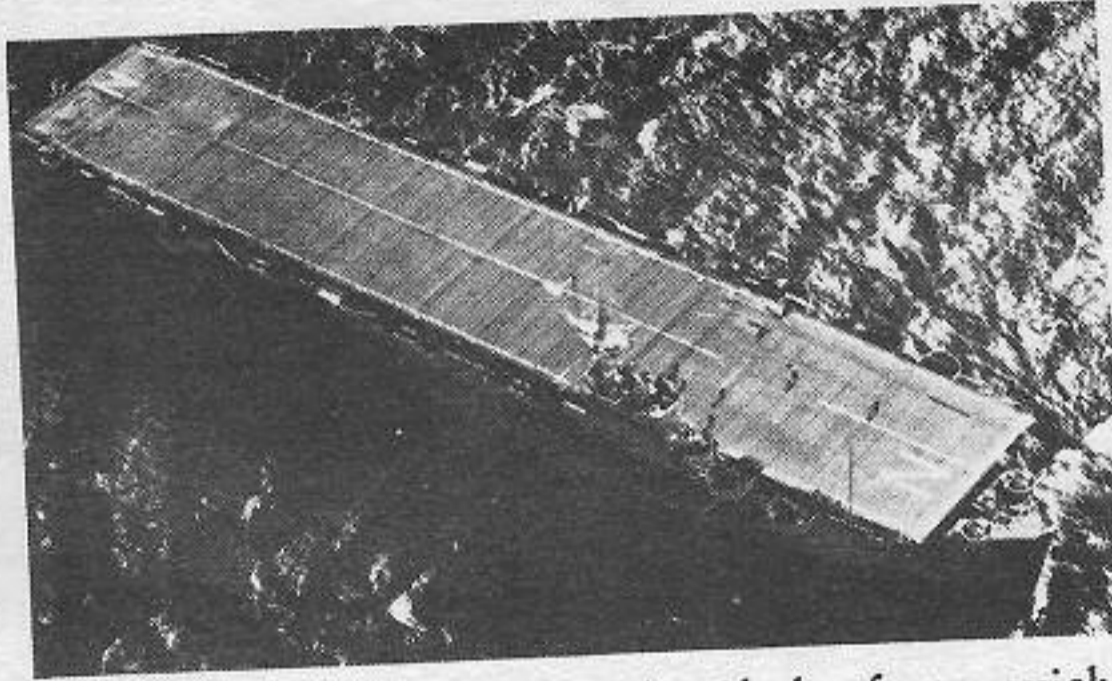
If the suit doesn't fit, don't wear it, until you've seen A/B Albert Zelionka, of Govan, Sask. That was the slogan aboard H. M. S. "PUNCHER," where Zelionka (left) ship's tailor, measures the bottom of a pair of pants for A/B James Amundsen of Claresholm, Alta., before inseting a "tiddley" wedge.



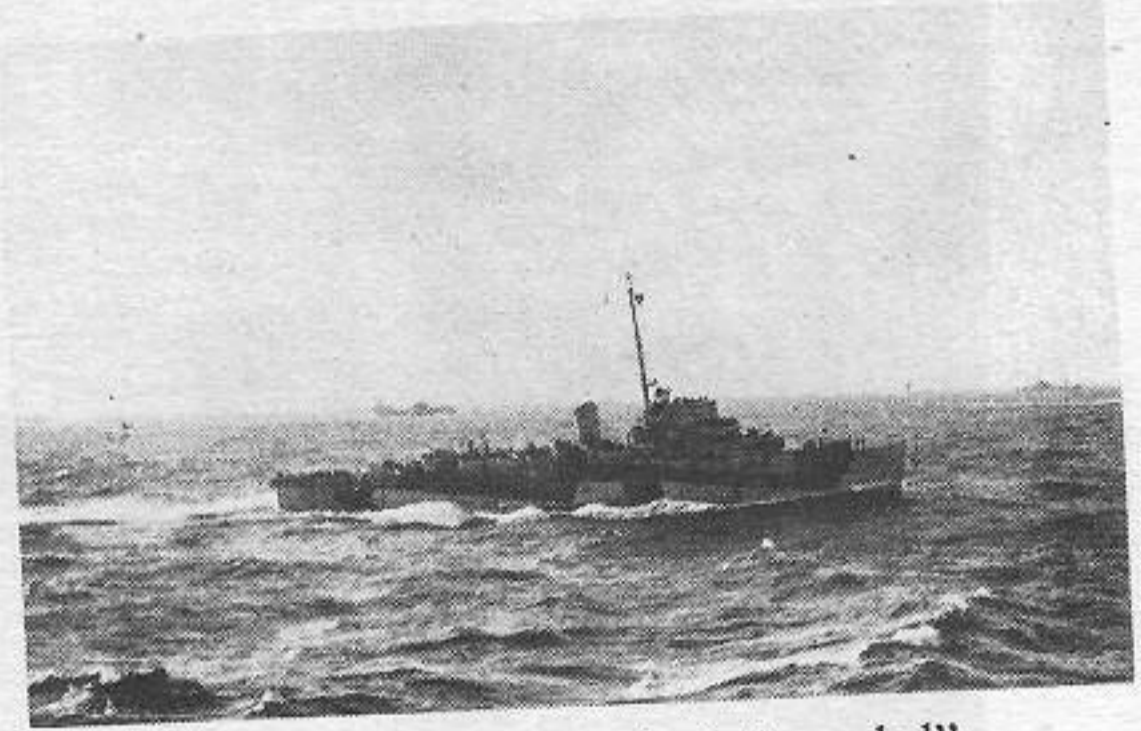
WE'RE OFF AGAIN TO NEW YORK



One of our escorts rounds up convoy.



In late September we leave the Clyde after a quick turn around to get another load of planes.



One of the escorts had "sounded" a submarine.



Gun drill in one of our twin-Bofors.



The convoy goes on while the escorts strike with depth charges.

The stormy North Atlantic in late September.



The empty tankers in our convoy are returning to U.S.A. for urgently needed fuel.





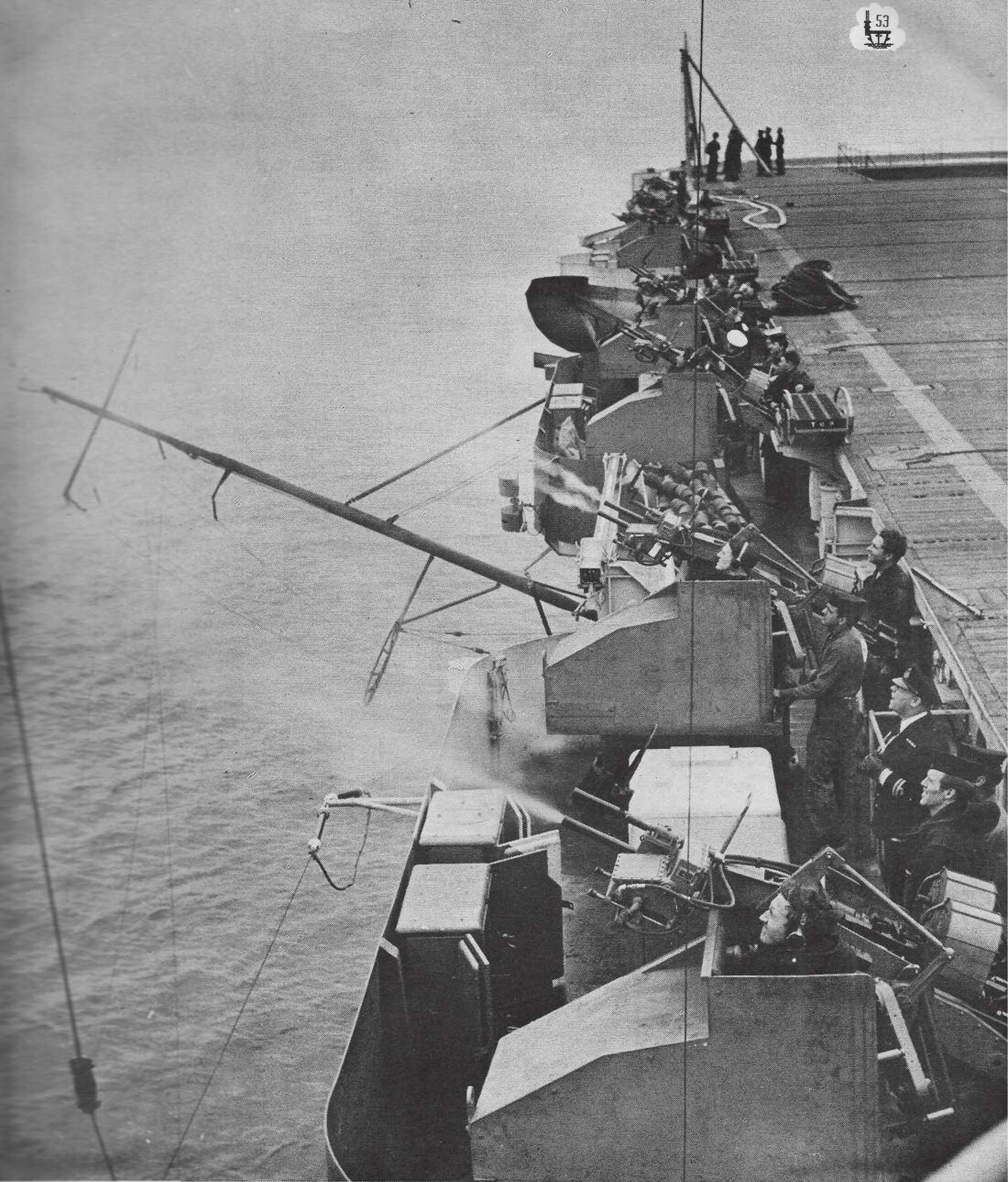
New York Bound



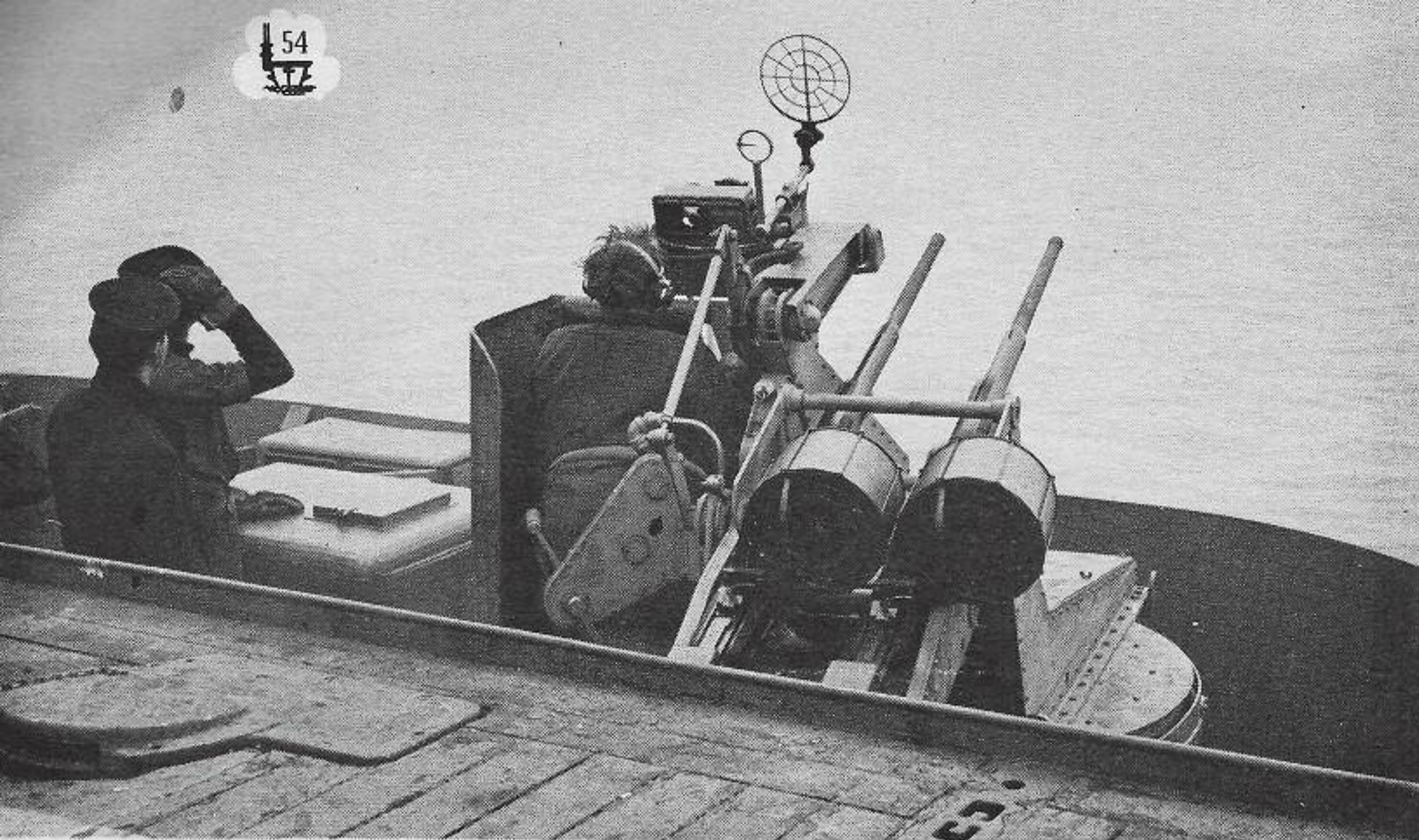
Lieut. (SB) Gordon Munn, R.C.N.V.R., of Ripley, Ontario, gauges the wind speed from the aerological Plotting Board aboard H.M.S. "PUNCHER," Canadian-manned aircraft carrier. Lieut. Munn, Meteorological Officer aboard "PUNCHER" is checking the Anemometer and repeating Gyroscope for correct readings.

Met. John Nott of Toronto prepares to take the reading as Met. Ronald Chorlton of Vancouver gets ready to release the wind balloon, aboard H.M.S. "PUNCHER." This was a bi-daily procedure aboard "PUNCHER," where weather observations are of vital importance.

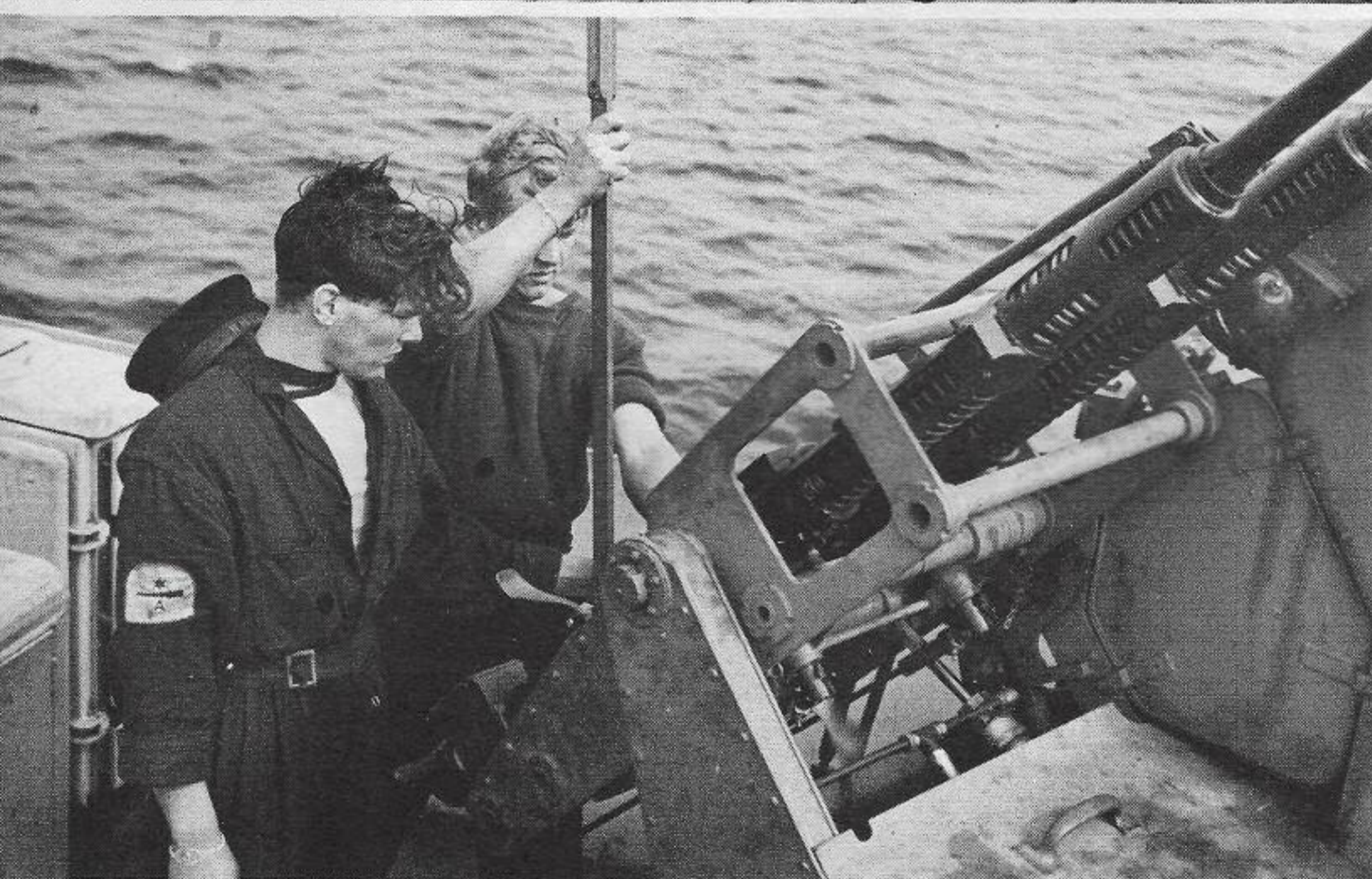




Making it too hot for any approaching enemy aircraft, the Signal Officer, Lieut. J. B. Wadsworth, R.C.N., exults in the hit.



A constant alert is maintained day and night by all gun crews while in operational waters.



Cocking the twin oerlikons.



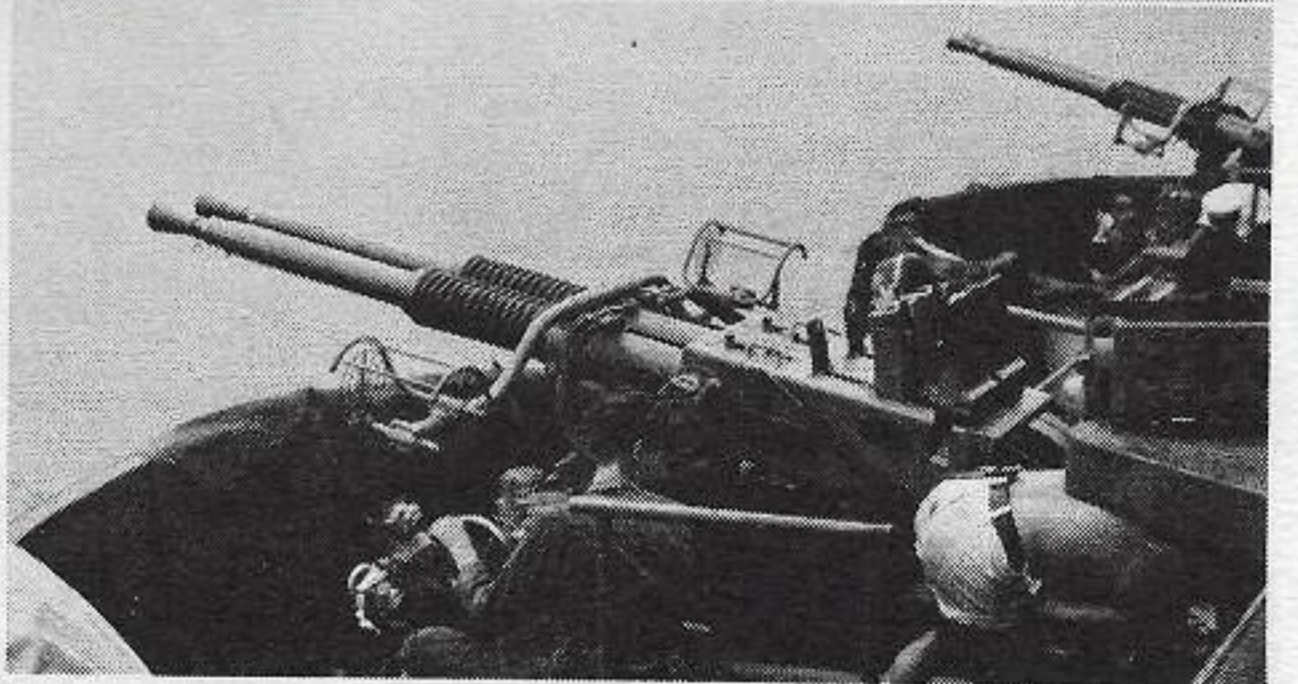
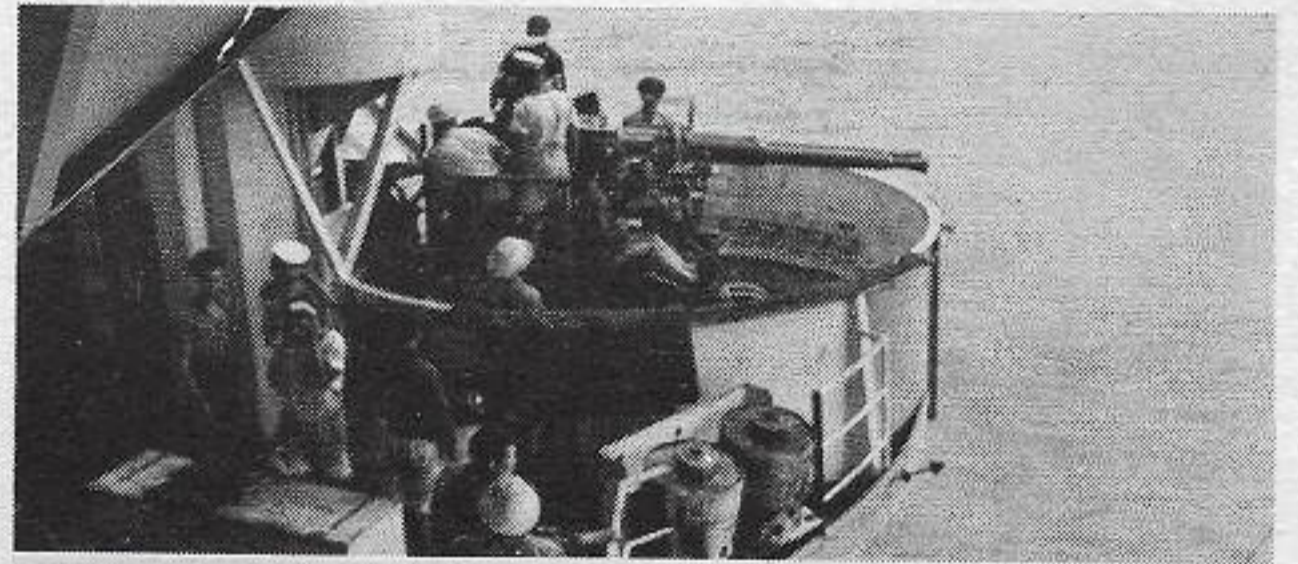
Gun crews cleaning up after action.



Loading the Bofors Ammunition storage racks.

“PUNCHERS” PUNCH

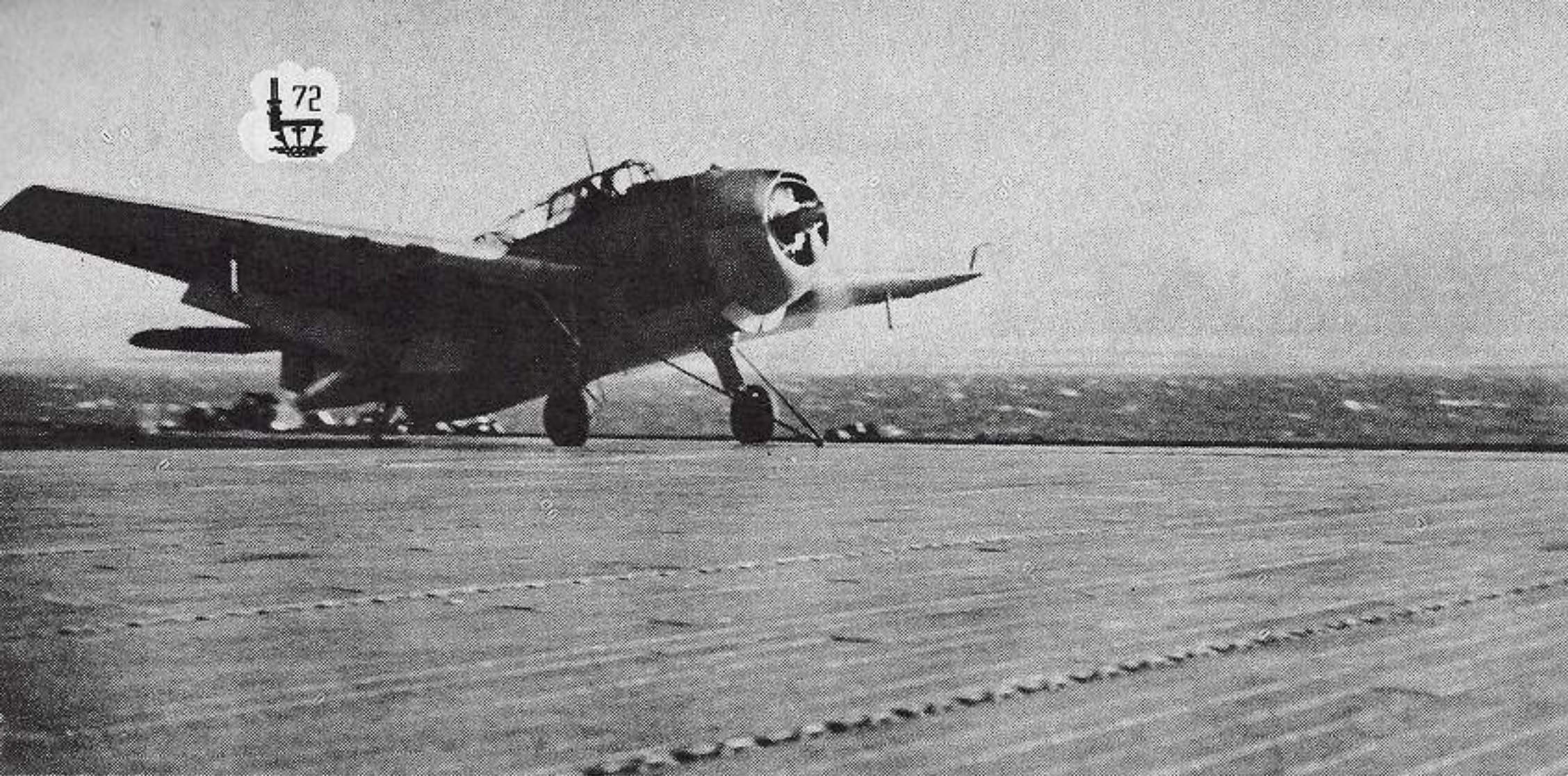
TWIN BOFORS INTERSPERSED WITH OERLIKONS THAT RINGED HER SIDES



From under flight deck the rear Bofors “speak” with effective anti-aircraft range.

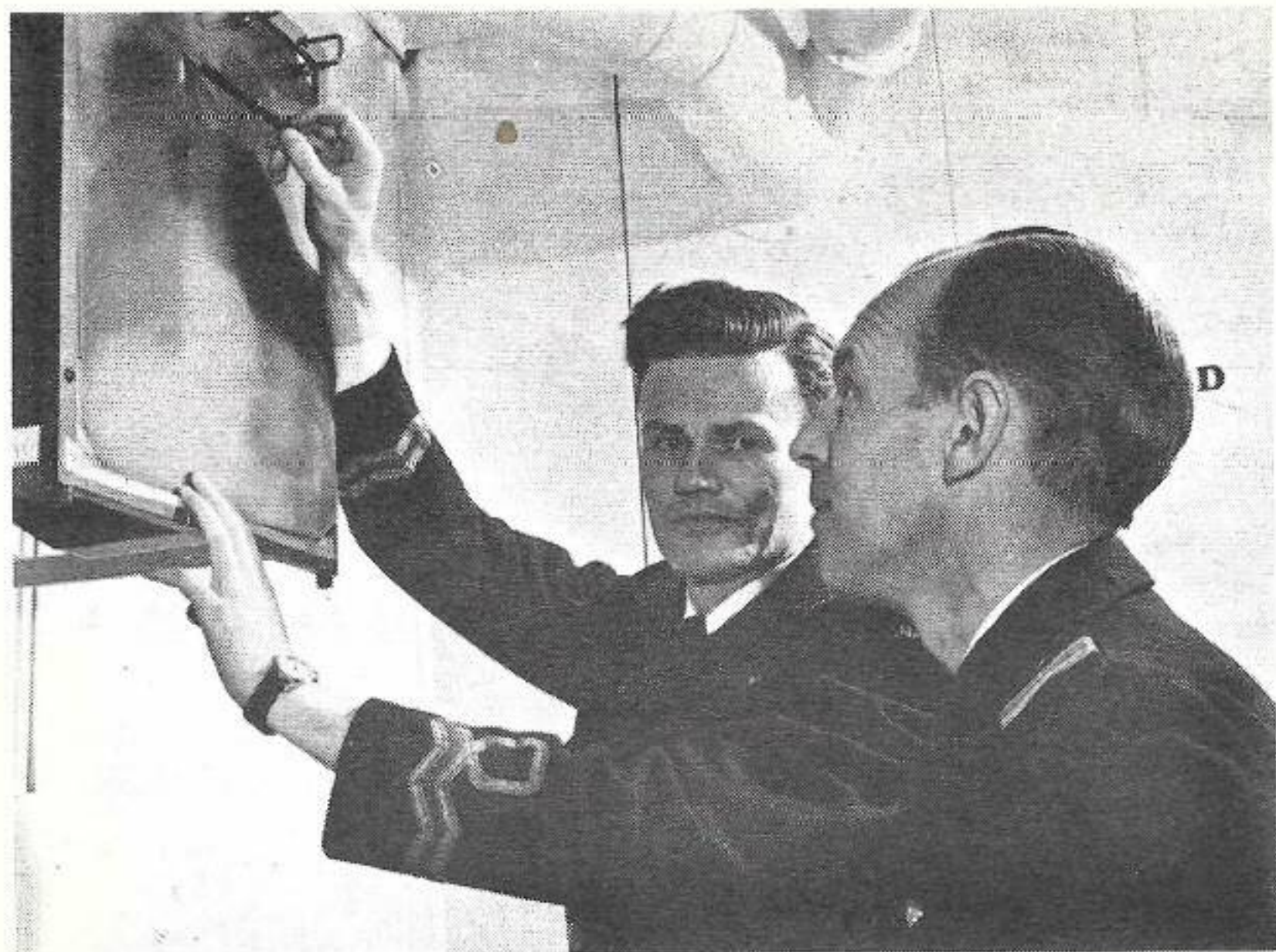
One of our five-inch anti-submarine guns.





Lieutenant (E) D. MacAskill, R.C.N.V.R. goes aloft

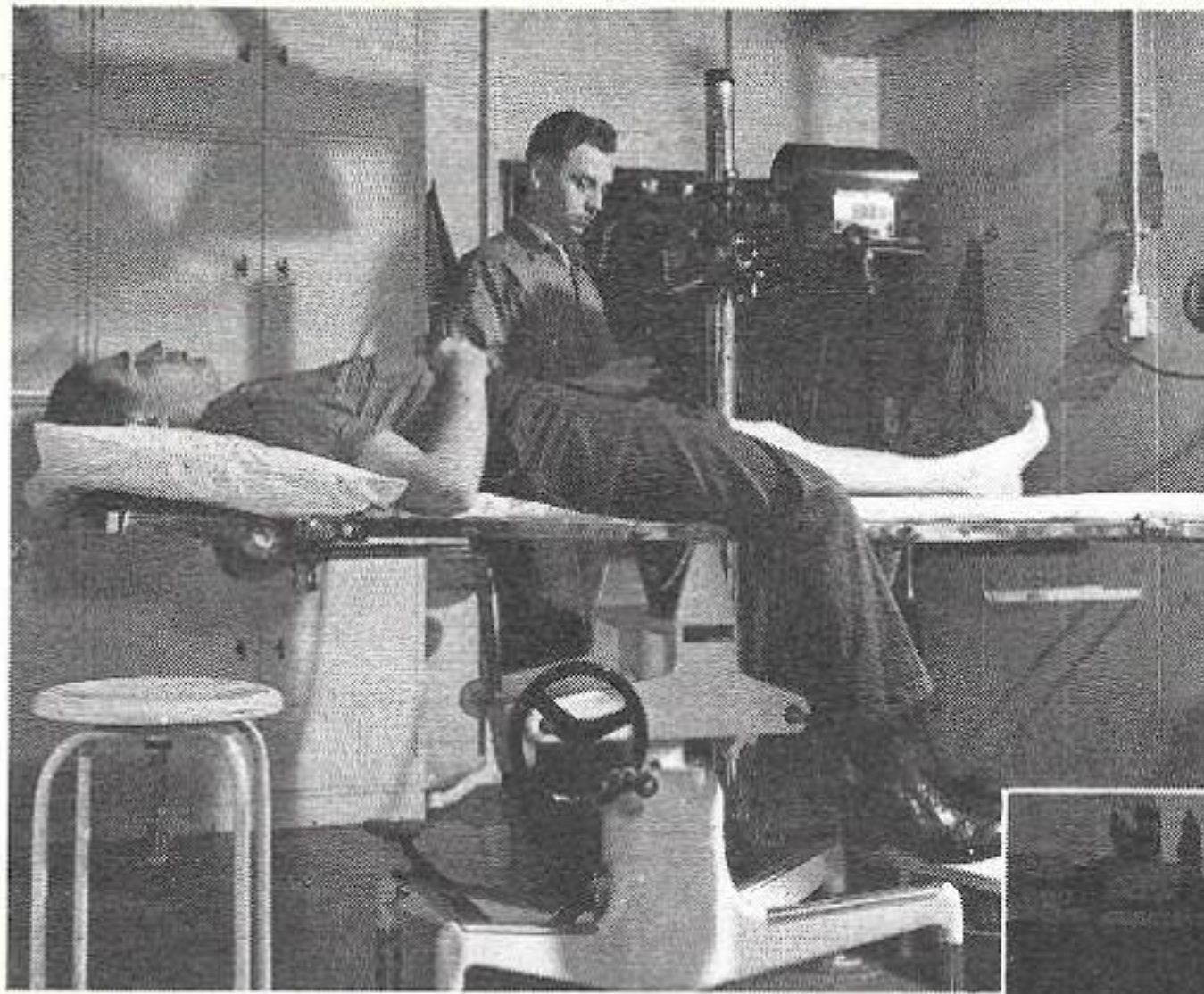
When the Ship goes into operations against the enemy it must carry fighters as well as bombers, unless in a strike force one carrier is assigned the responsibility for the strike, and another carrier supplies the protective fighter cover. In this picture a Wildcat is attached to the catapult, ready—



SURGEONS

Surgeon Lt.-Cmdr. James Calder, R.C.N.V.R., and Surgeon Lt. W. J. Hart, R.C.N.V.R., examine X-ray plate before operating.

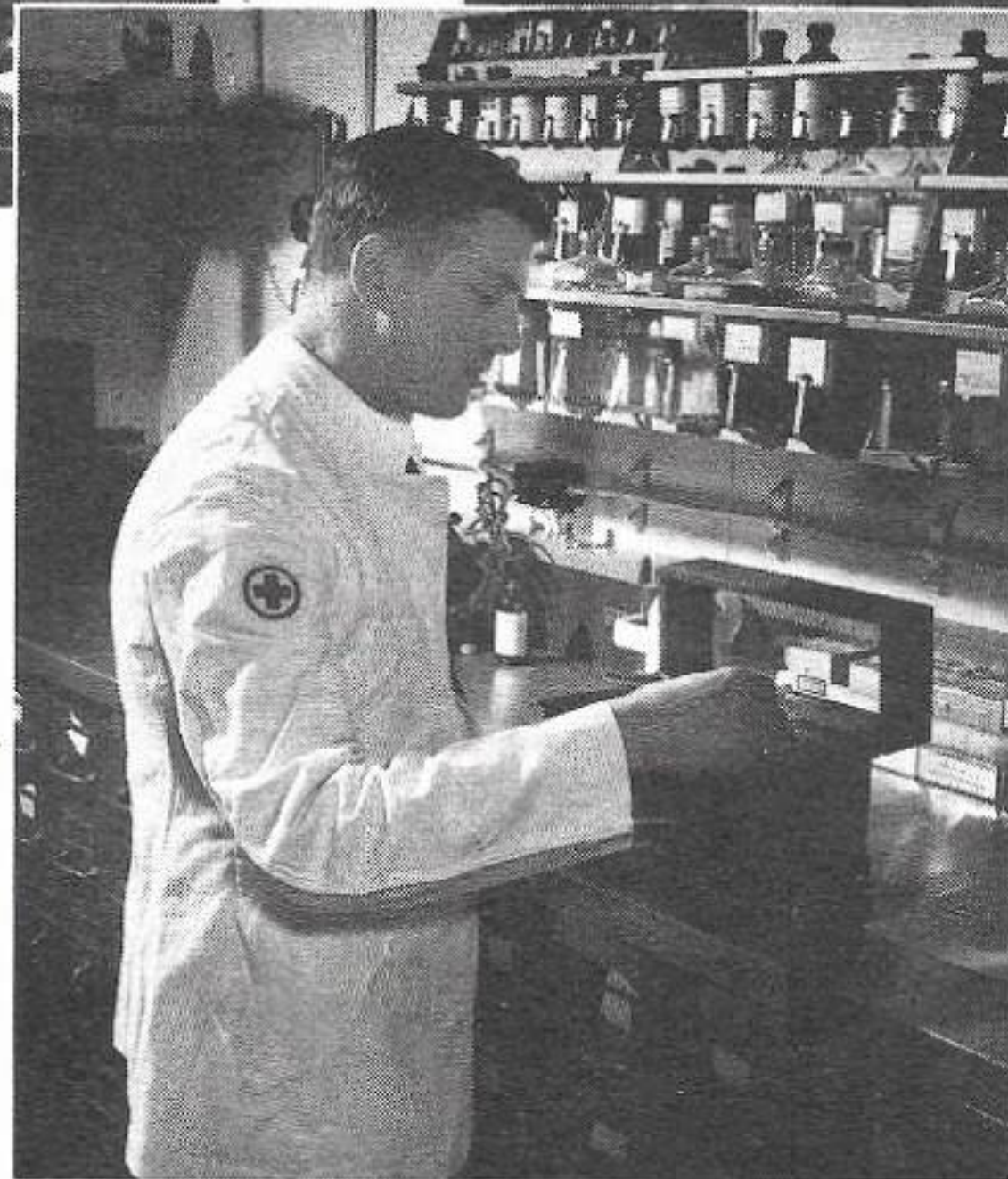
Although not so spacious, possibly, as a land-built hospital, the Sick Bay accommodation aboard PUNCHER included the very latest in medical supplies and equipment. The Ship carried two surgeons from Vancouver through the training period and now on eve of operational duty a third joined the Staff. Surgeon Lieutenant M. C. Malone, R.C.N.V.R., joined us in the Clyde. Some eight hundred men running the hazards of naval warfare needed three Surgeons with the Sick Bay attendants. An aircraft carrier in particular had increased risks in hazards of deck landing in addition to enemy action.



S.B.A.'s were always on deck at action stations and ever ready to give attention to needs of the men.



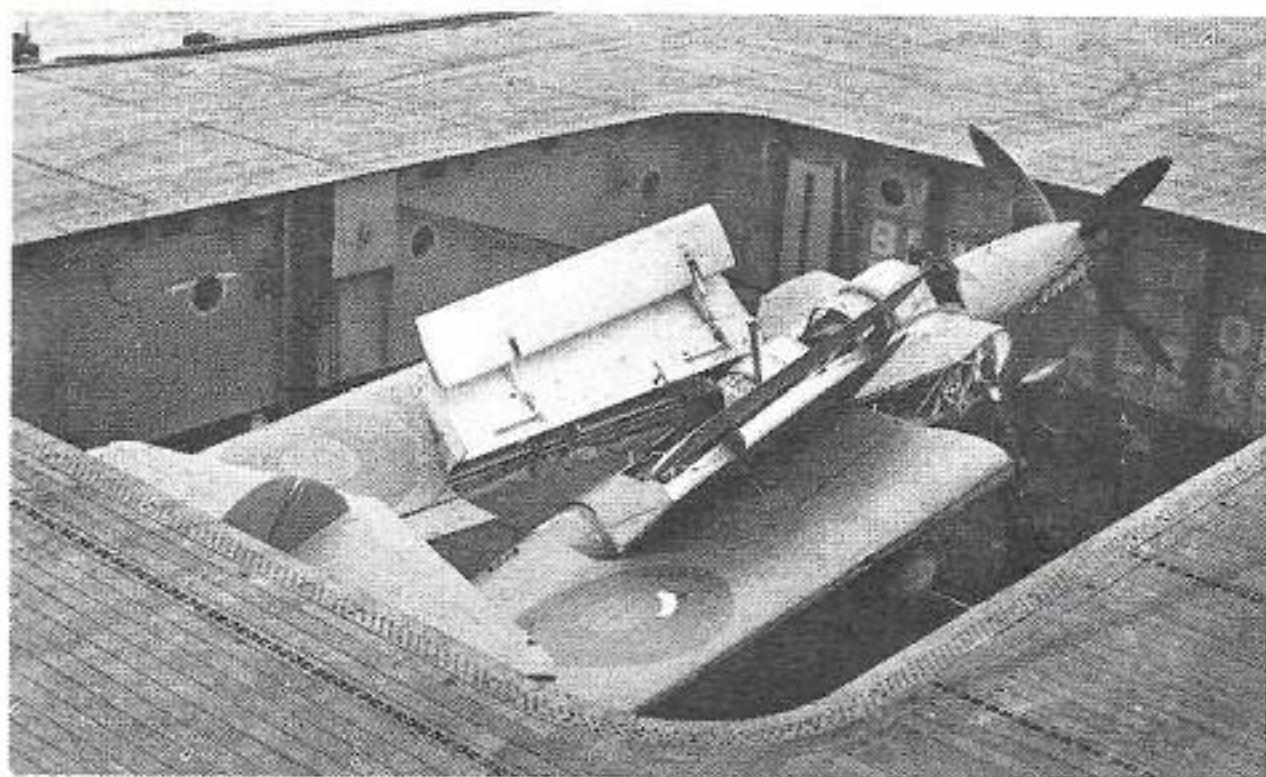
Dental needs are looked after by a dental officer, who, like the Surgeons, has his own X-ray machine and the aid of dental technicians for the making of dentures when required. The Dental Officer, Captain C. Hutchinson, and Sgt. Teepoorten are shown below. With Sgt. Morris they were the only sailors in the Army's uniform since the Canadian Dental Corps is attached to the Canadian Army and personnel therefrom are loaned to the Canadian Navy. Captain Hutchison was affectionately called the Toothwright in Puncher parlance.



The Ship's Pharmacy.

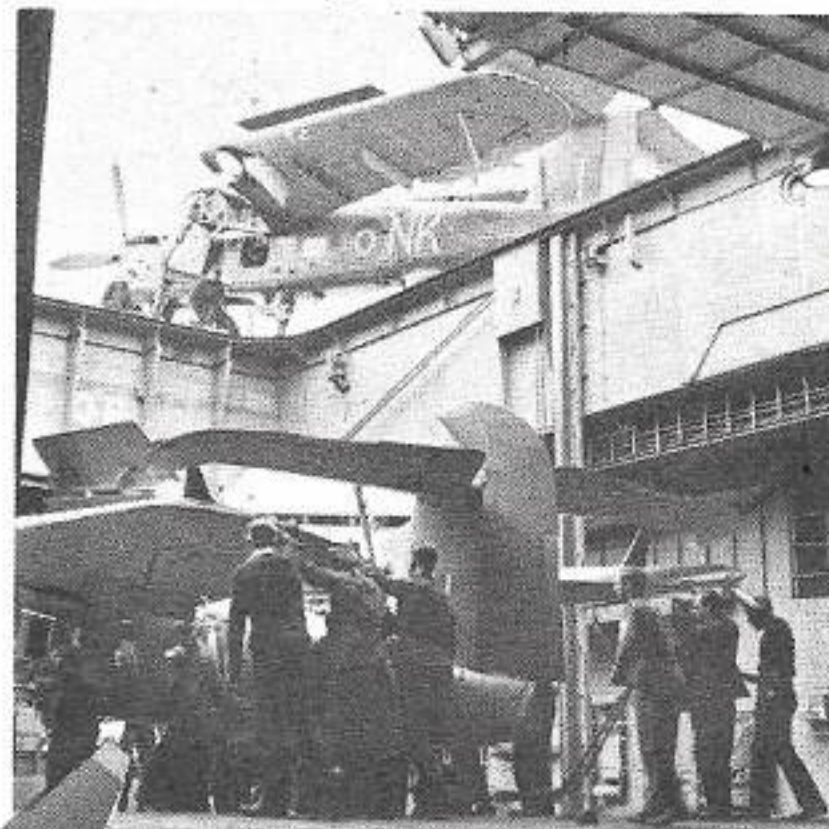


With all planes landed, wings folded, the deck handling party wheels the aircraft toward the forward elevator which takes planes below to the Hangar Deck. Commander D. C. Wallace, D.S.C., R.C.N.R., and Lt.-Cmdr. (F) Paul G. Godfrey, R.N., look down from the bridge.



The huge "Barracuda" snugs down in the elevator with only inches to spare.

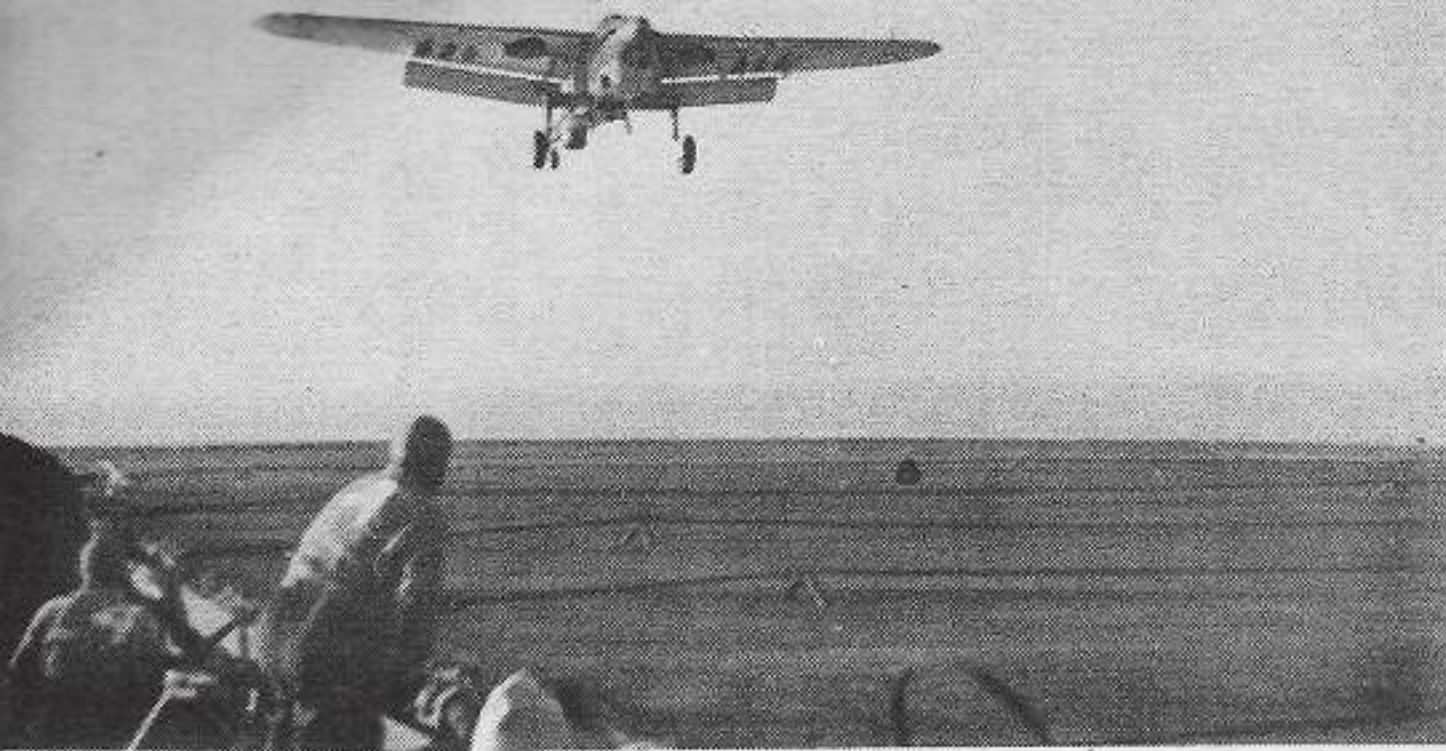
Bringing "Barracuda" into Hangar Deck.



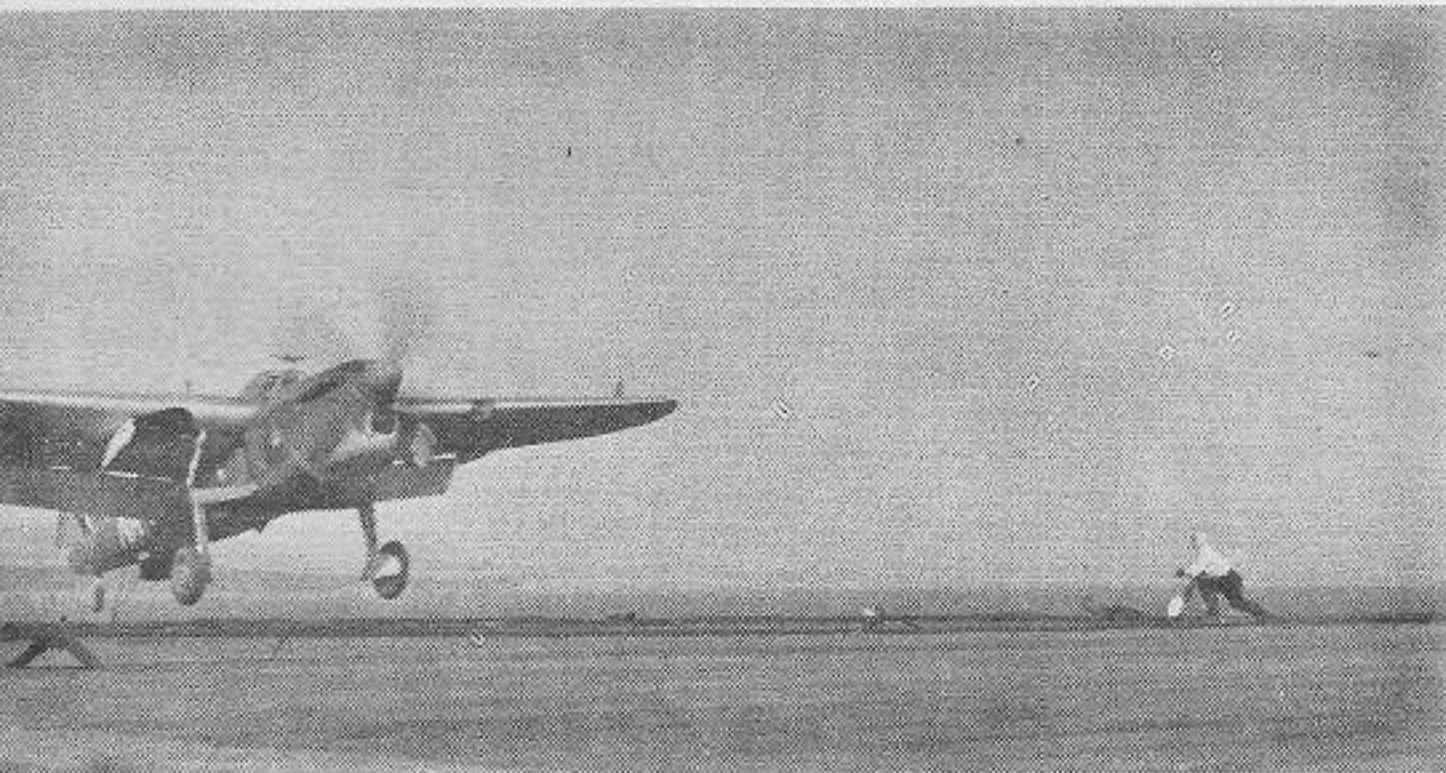
OUR

SQUADRON





Our first "BARRACUDA" coming in!



Gets signal to "Cut".



Safely hooked.



Aircraft Handling Party closes up and inspects our first Barracuda.

The Fleet Air Arm

thing to do with this."

Other classic Line Book tidbits include:

"Six days after joining, Sub-Lieut. Hutchins made a forced landing . . . Government property in the form of telegraph poles and aircraft "L" will never be the same."

Typical example of Gremlin humour: "In the dead of night, a large number of Gremlins (estimated at over 5,000) took aircraft 'G' and pushed it on the runway as Sub-Lieut. Crowe was landing . . . In the ensuing clash . . . it is believed many Gremlins were injured."

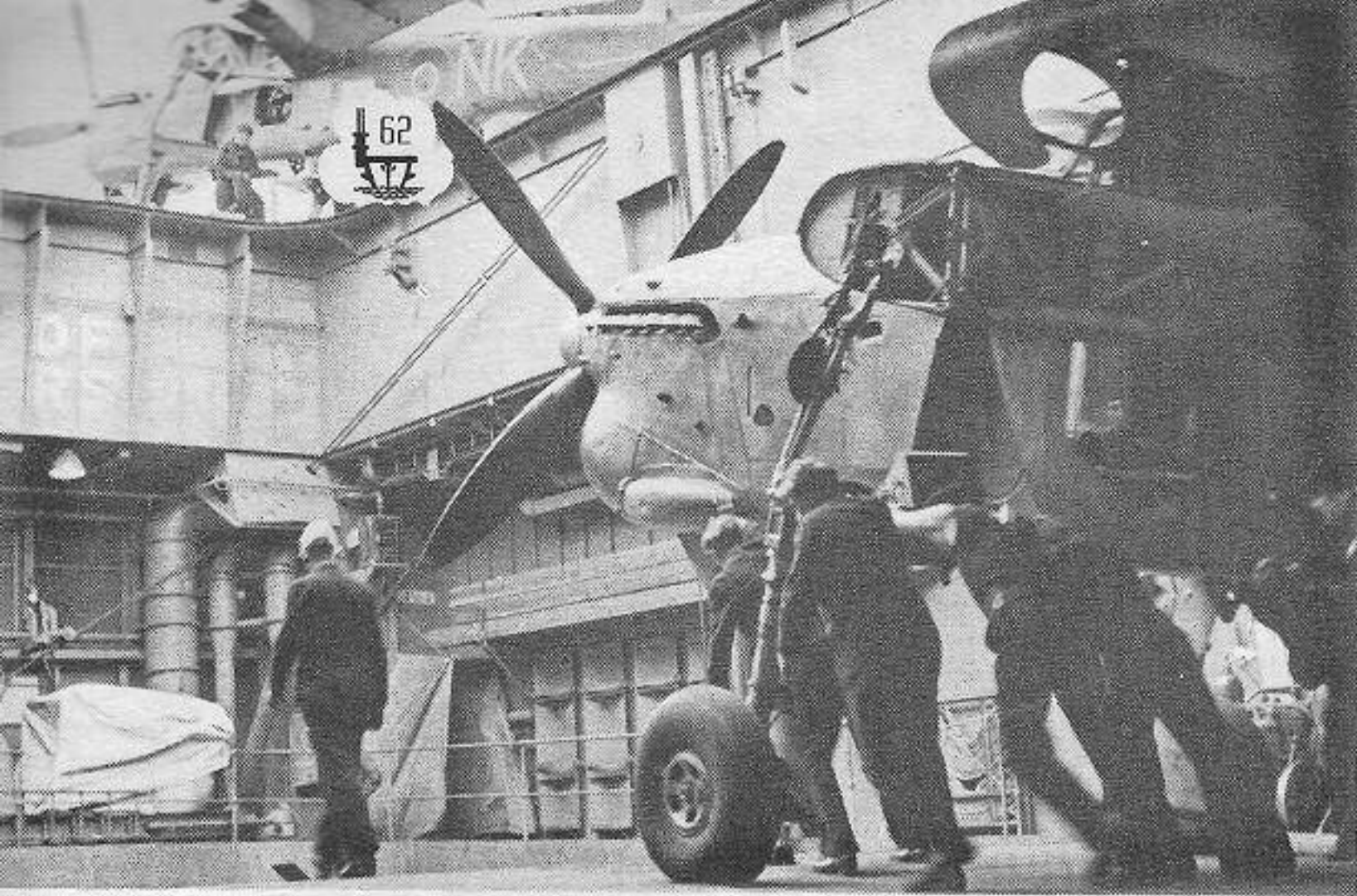
"It is regretted that this morning's exhibition of flare-dropping failed owing to an attack of Digitis Non Extractus on the part of the pilot. The ambitious object was to drop 12 consecutive flare failures into a barrel on the roof of the workshop. Unfortunately the only score was one near miss on Commander (?) and a praiseworthy attempt to annihilate the armament officer which was only frustrated by the latter's high class evasive action."

During practice tactics, one pilot inadvertently pressed the wrong switch when intending to drop a smoke float. Instead a depth charge went down. His letter of explanation is pasted in the Line Book, headed by one word—"Cause."

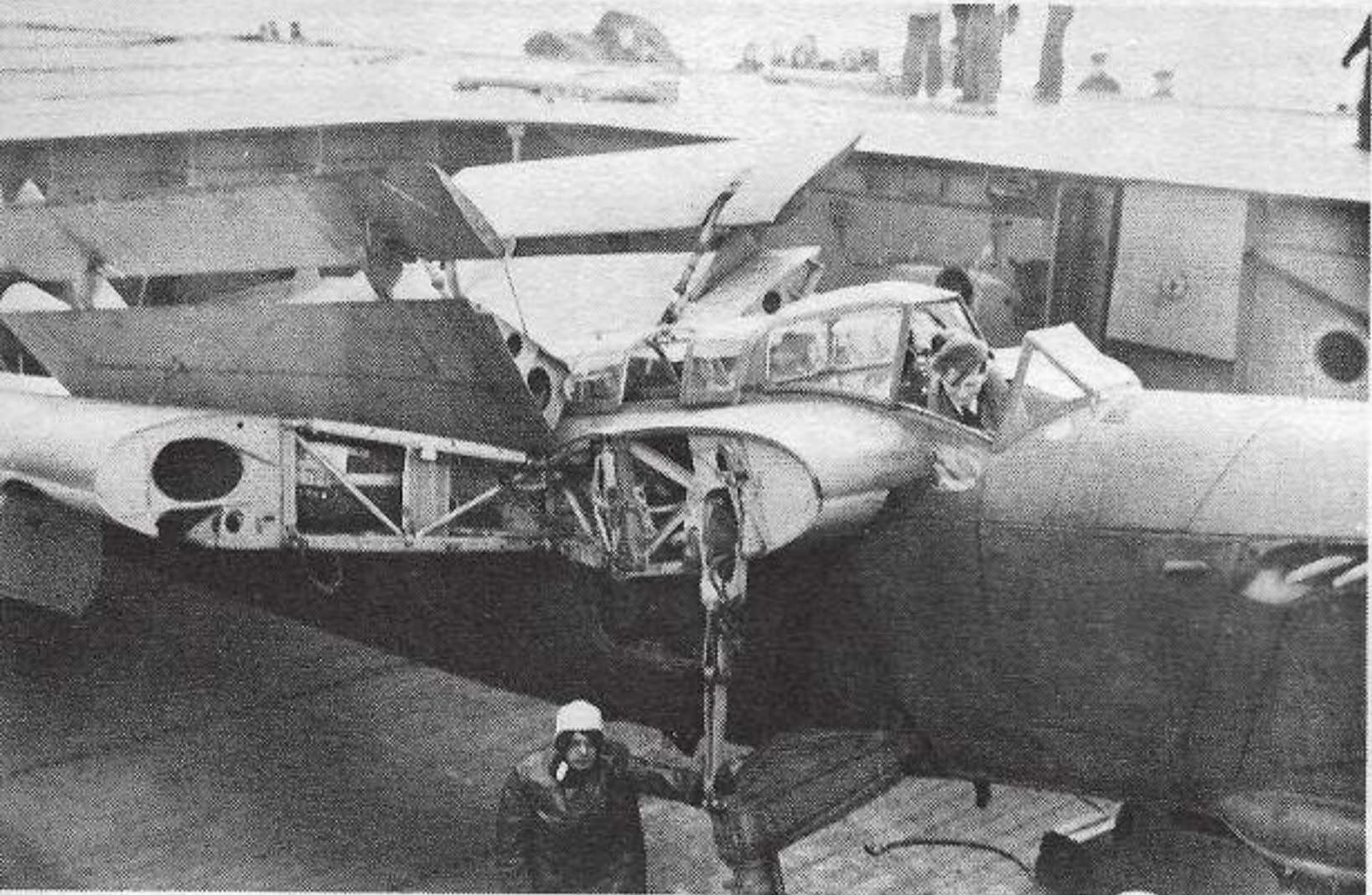
Below, under "Effect," is posted the following official signal:

"Fishing by explosives on the coast of Egypt is absolutely forbidden."

But don't be misled into thinking life was one huge joke for the intrepid airmen. While humour is liberally sprinkled through the pages, in some cases it barely hides recent history. There was joking reference to the frequency in which they



Bringing a "Barracuda" out of hangar to elevator for ranging on flight deck.



"OPTICAL ILLUSION"

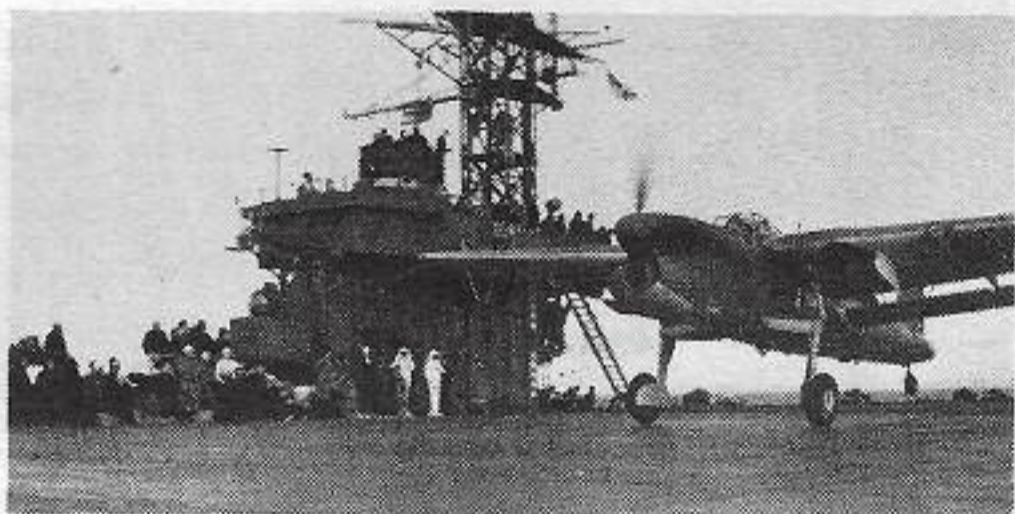
This plane is just up from the hangar and is about to be wheeled away while elevator has gone down for another plane.

IN THE FIRTH OF CLYDE

Deck landing training went on day and night for six weeks.



Squadron ready to take off waits for signal from Commander Flying. (Lieut.-Commander Godfrey is in lower left corner of the Bridge.)



Away with a roar under its own power.

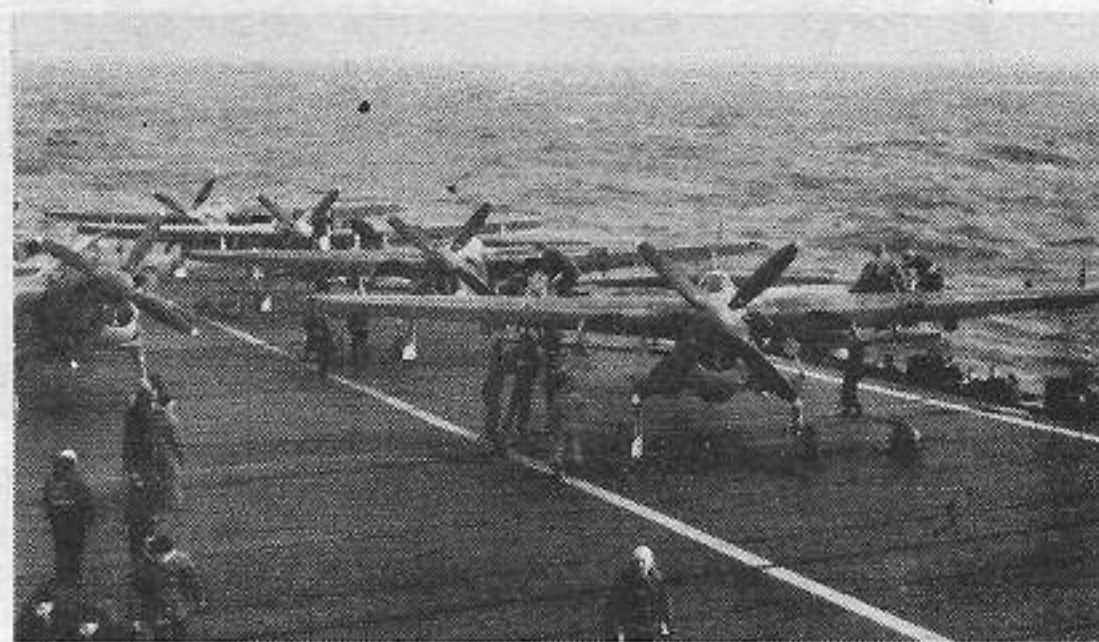
With her hangar loaded with planes that can be moved to the flight deck instantaneously in either of two huge elevators, planes can be ranged on short order to cope with whatever the enemy presents. The same planes that carry mines to menace the enemy's shipping, can also attack his ships with aerial torpedoes or bomb his submarines with depth charges. Other planes, like the Wildcats, are fighters to intercept and combat any enemy aircraft that may attempt either to prevent the operation of our own striking planes or which may attack the carrier.



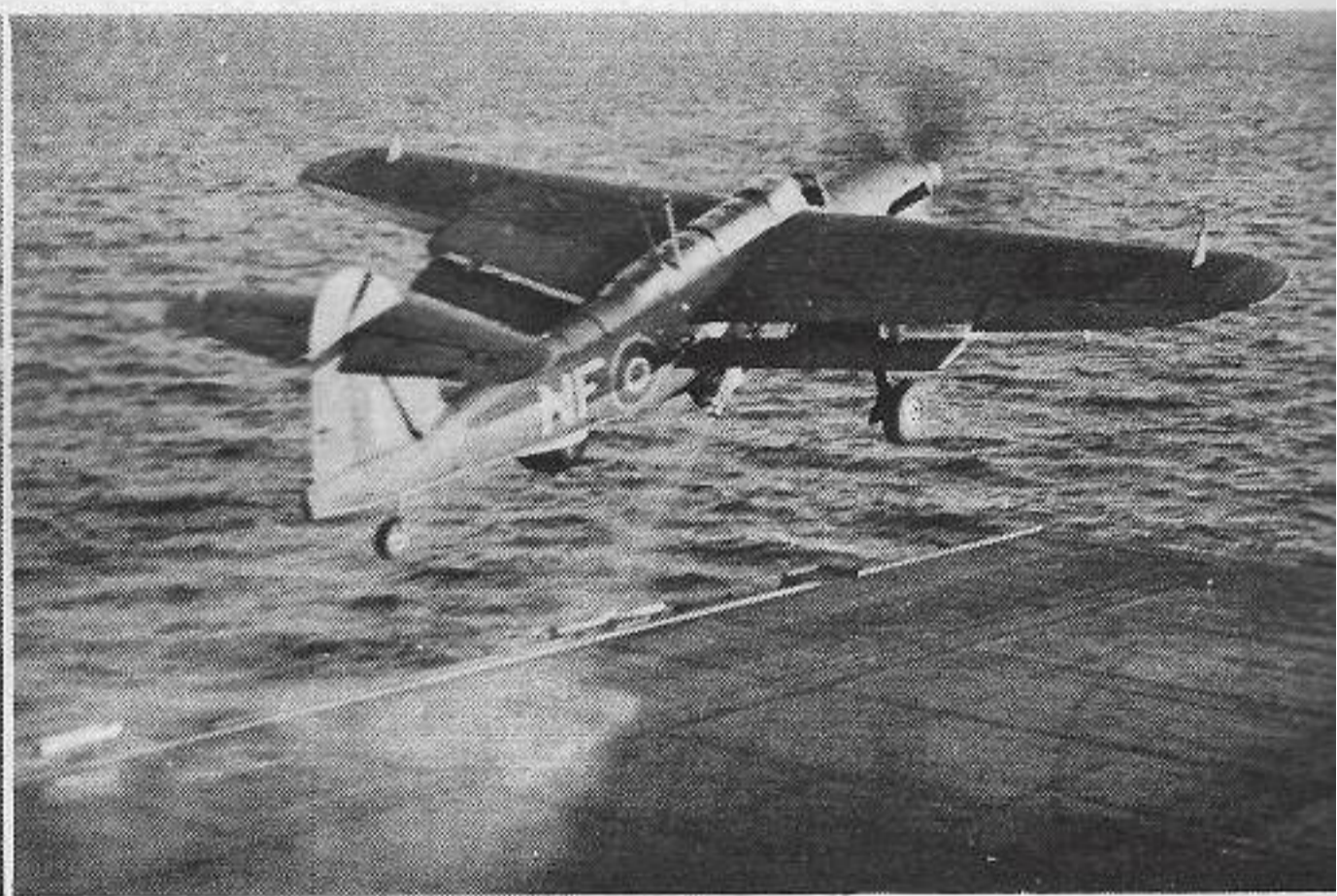


ROCKET TAKE OFF

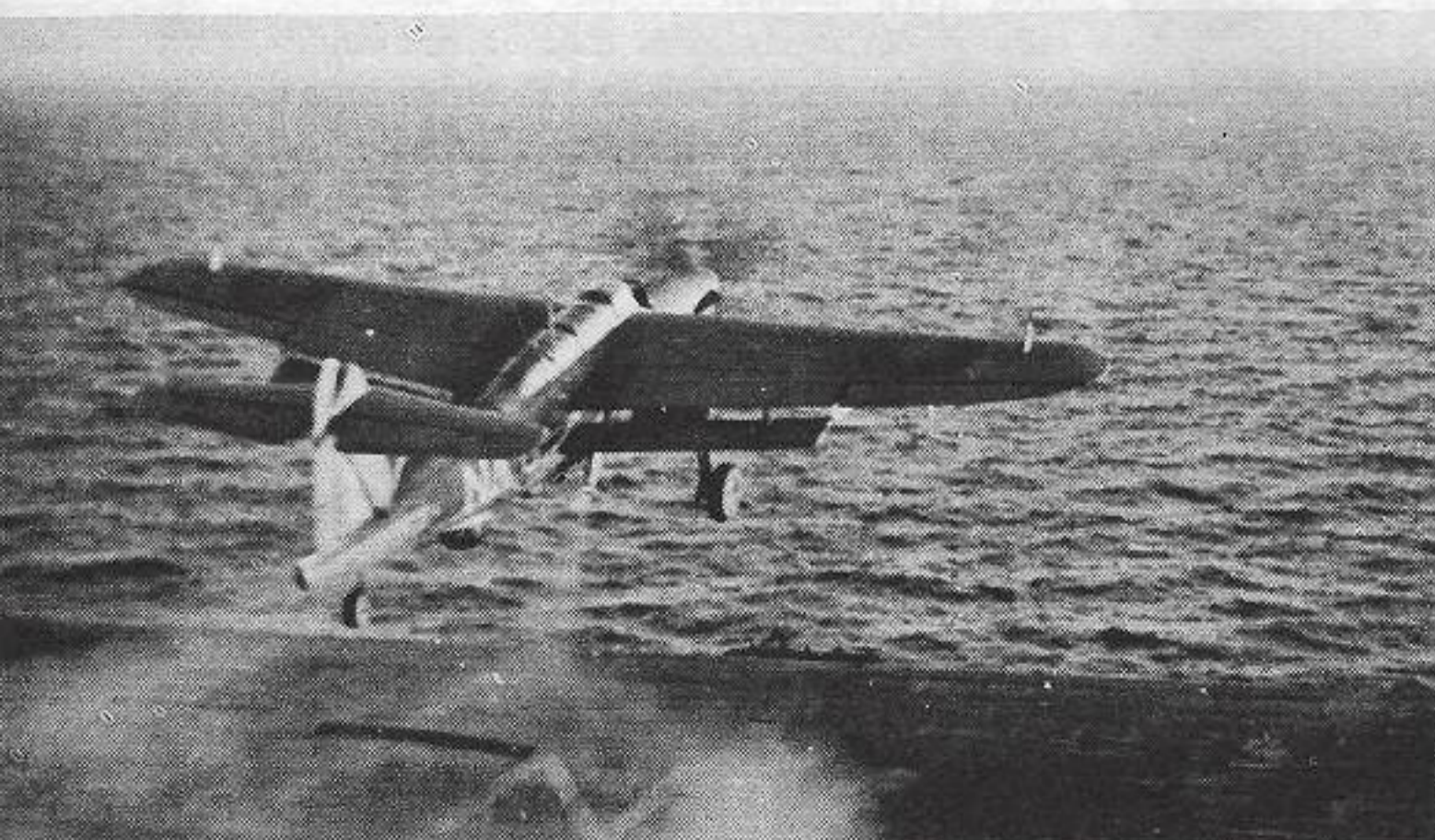
A major problem presented itself. We were not satisfied with the successful take off of Barracudas under their own power. H.M.S. "PUNCHER" was the first carrier of the Royal Navy to develop successful use of rockets to aid take off of planes, thus enabling the carriage of heavier bomb loads.



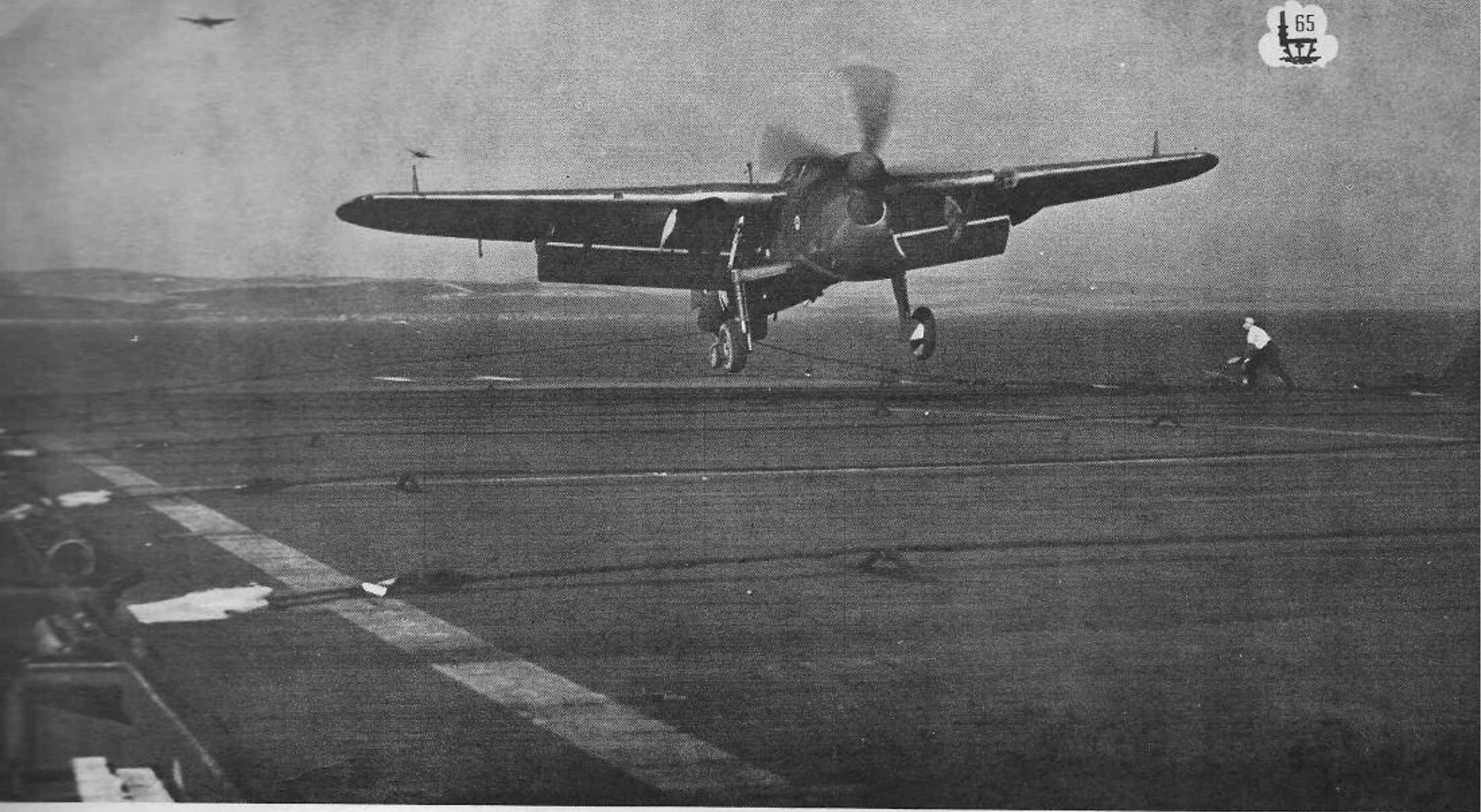
The planes equipped with rockets are loaded with a bomb load for test of lifting capacity



Barracudas aided by rockets in faster take off.

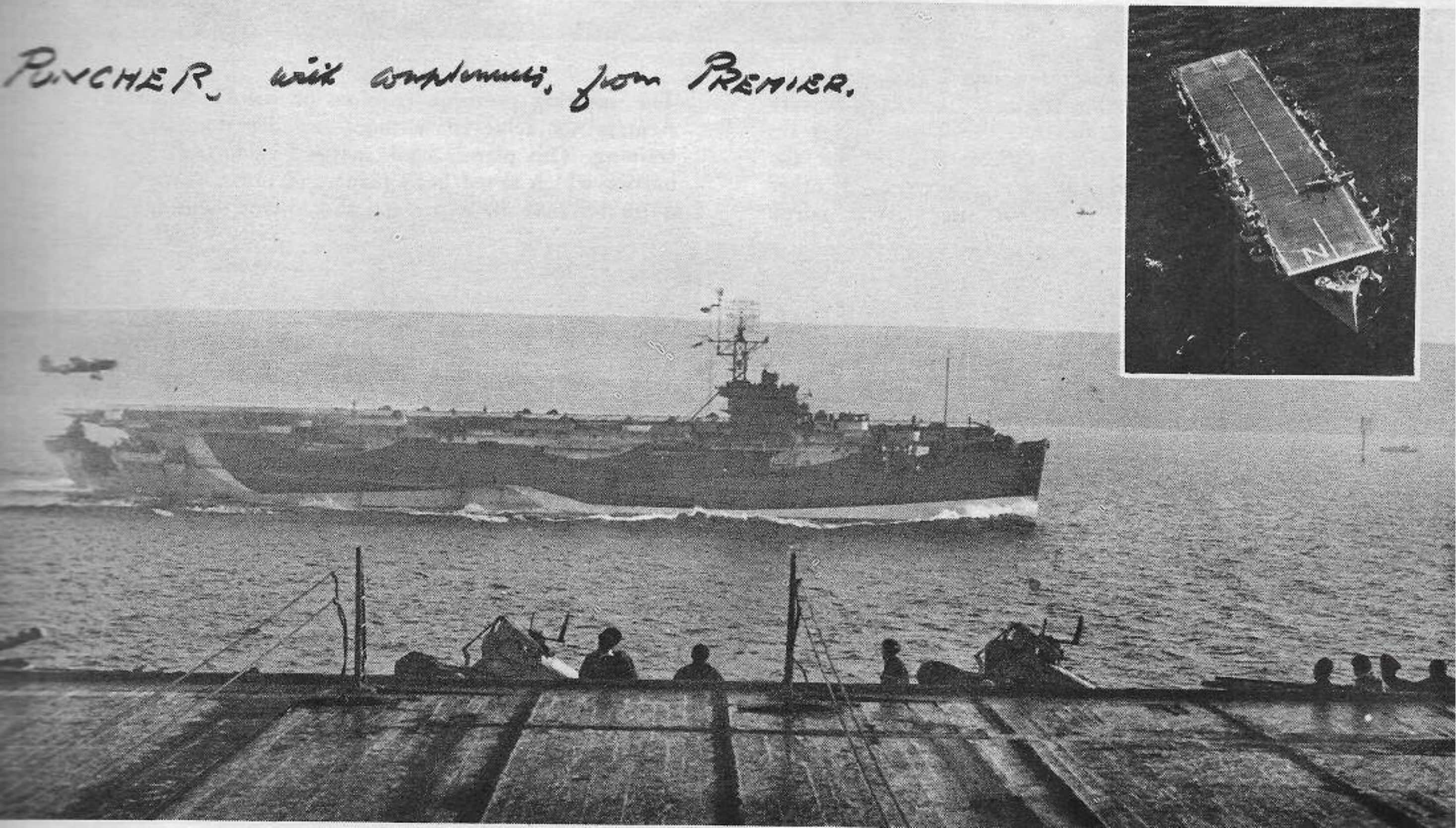


Barracudas are well away with a roar from rocket take off.

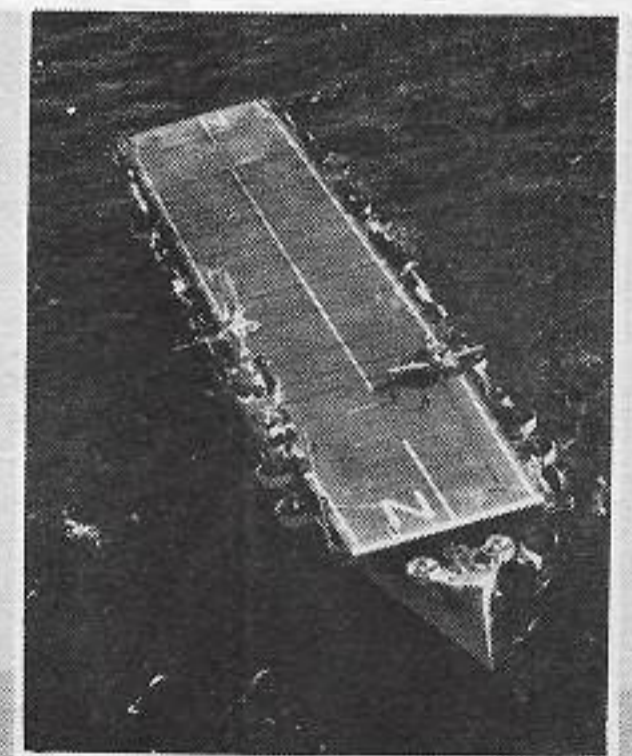


Safe Landing. This aircraft, returning safely to the flight deck of H.M.S. PUNCHER, has just received the "cut" signal from the white-sweatered batsman (right) as the plane's trailing "claw" hooked onto one of the Arrestor Wires which serve as a brake. Two other approaching aircraft are awaiting their turn to land.

Plane landing on H.M.S. "PUNCHER" as seen from the flight deck of one of our sister ships, H.M.S. "PREMIER."

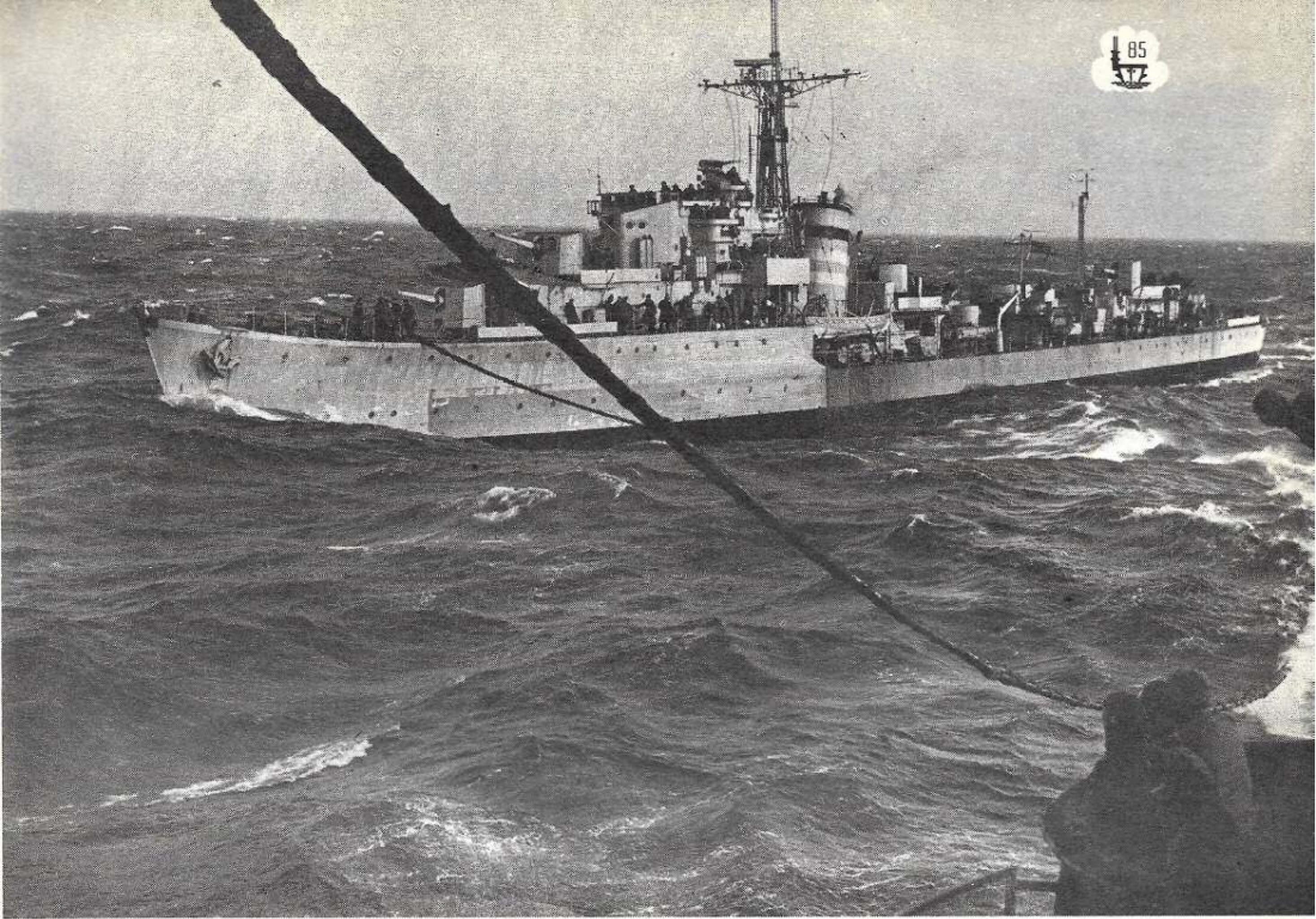


PUNCHER, with compliments, from PREMIER.





Captain Bidwell at his desk with his Secretary studies a signal from the Admiral commanding the Strike Force. "We are to sail with the Tenth Cruiser Squadron before dawn." The Captain's Secretary is Lieut. (S) E. B. Fraser, R.C.N.V.R., since promoted to Lieutenant-Commander (S).



REFUELING AT SEA

H.M.S. "PUNCHER," Canadian-manned aircraft carrier unit of the Home Fleet, acts as a floating fuel dump for this Royal Navy destroyer during operations in Norwegian waters.



Honoured by Visit . . .

Upon return from operations in the Arctic Ocean H.M.S. "PUNCHER" was honoured by a visit from Rear-Admiral Rhoderick R. McGrigor, C.B., D.S.O., R.N. (since promoted to Vice-Admiral). Here, accompanied by Captain R. E. S. Bidwell, R.C.N. (since awarded the C.B.E.), Admiral McGrigor is shown meeting PUNCHER'S officers. This picture shows but part of the line of senior officers. From left to right they are A/Commander (E) G. G. Armit, R.C.N.R., A/Commander G. H. Tullidge, R.C.N.V.R.; Lieut. Commander W. H. Koughan, R.C.N.R.; Lieut. Commander J. A. McDonnell, R.C.N.R., and Lieut. Commander C. F. Piers, R.C.N.V.R. In the picture below the Admiral inspects the Guard of Honour accompanied by the Captain in rear. The Officer of the Guard is Lieut. J. D. McRae, R.C.N.V.R.





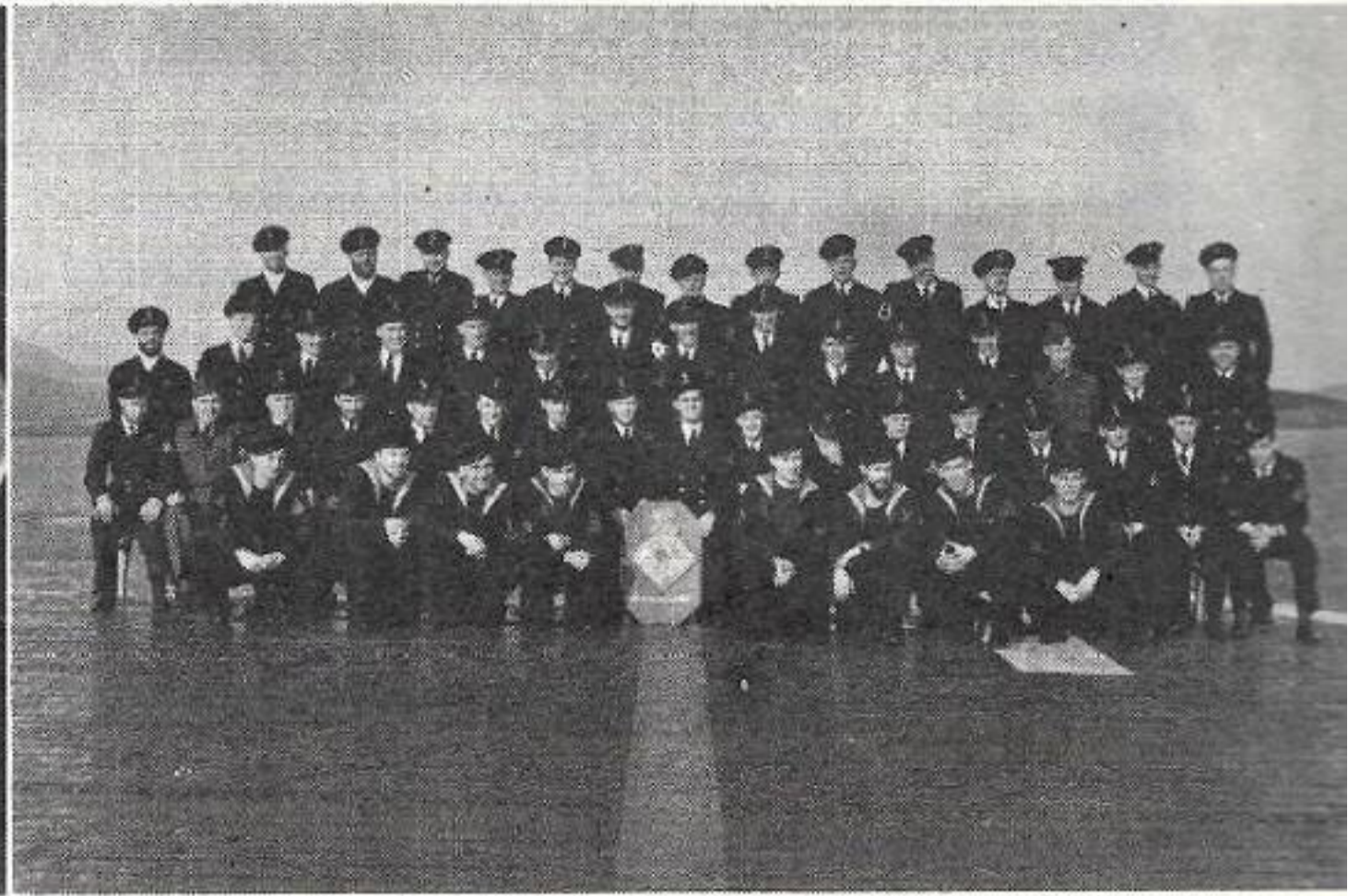
OFF CAPS

Rear-Admiral Rhoderick R. McGrigor, C.B., D.S.O., R.N., with Captain R. E. S. Bidwell, R.C.N., Commanding Officer of H.M.S. "PUNCHER," inspects the Ship's Company on flight deck after return from operations which the Admiral personally commanded in the Arctic Ocean.

GROUPS



Executive P.O.'s throw a party. Guests included Captain Bidwell, in centre. Lt. Cmdr. Koughan sits at the Captain's left and Lieut. O'Neil at the Captain's right.



"PUNCHER'S" Petty Officers.



E. A.'s Party.

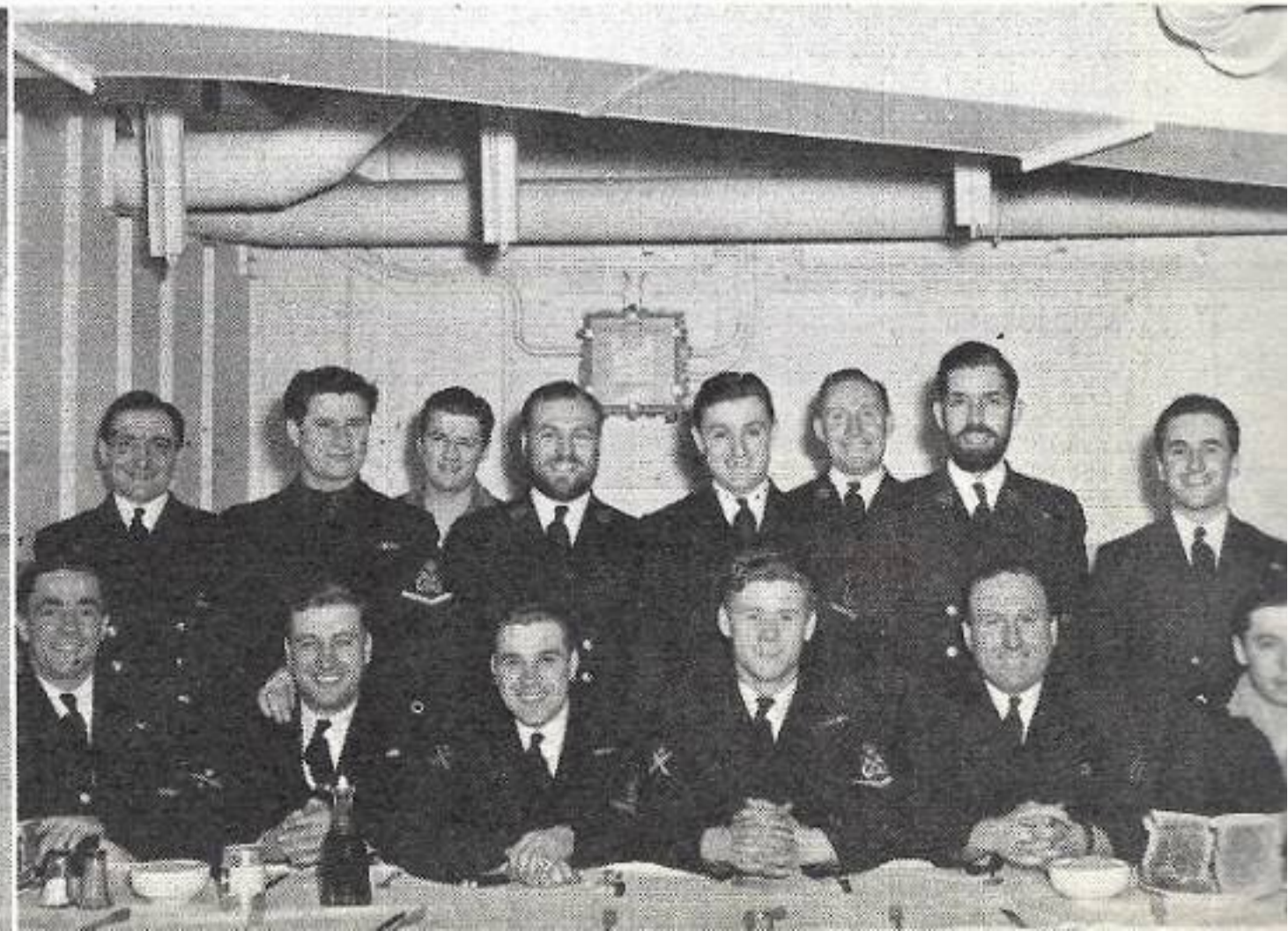


The Shipwrights.

An experienced team.



Commander Wallace dines with the Executive P.O.'s.





OFFICERS

Captain R. E. S. Bidwell, R.C.N. (holding Ship's Crest) with forty-seven of his officers in an informal group. The total number of officers borne on H.M.S. "PUNCHER" including pilots of Fleet Air Arm exceeded ninety. Seated to the Captain's right is the Executive Officer Commander D. C. Wallace, D.S.C., R.C. N.R. On the Captain left is Commander (E) G. G. Armit, R.C.N.R.

In lower picture are the bearded members of the Ship's Company, seventy-six officers and men developed successful growth. Whether it was the experiences in the Arctic which accelerated the development of beards or not, H.M.S. "PUNCHER" claimed the laurels of being the most heavily bearded ship in the Royal Canadian Navy.

CANADIAN BEAVERS





Masters at Arms

H.M.S. "PUNCHER" for a brief period claimed the distinction of being the only warship afloat with three Masters-at-Arms. Normal complement is one to a ship. The three beaming faces here belong to M. A. A. Nelson Crisp R.C.N. (left) of Victoria, B.C.; M. A. A. Angus MacDonald, R.C.N.V.R., of Fort William, Ont., and M.A.A. Stanley Park Reid, R.C.N. (right) of Victoria, B.C. M.A.A. Crisp and M.A.A. MacDonald received their promotions on our return to Scapa Flow. Soon after M.A.A. MacDonald and M.A.A. Reid were drafted for other duties.



A. B. Keith Hope, R.C.N.V.R., of Vancouver, on duty in Southern waters, July, 1944.

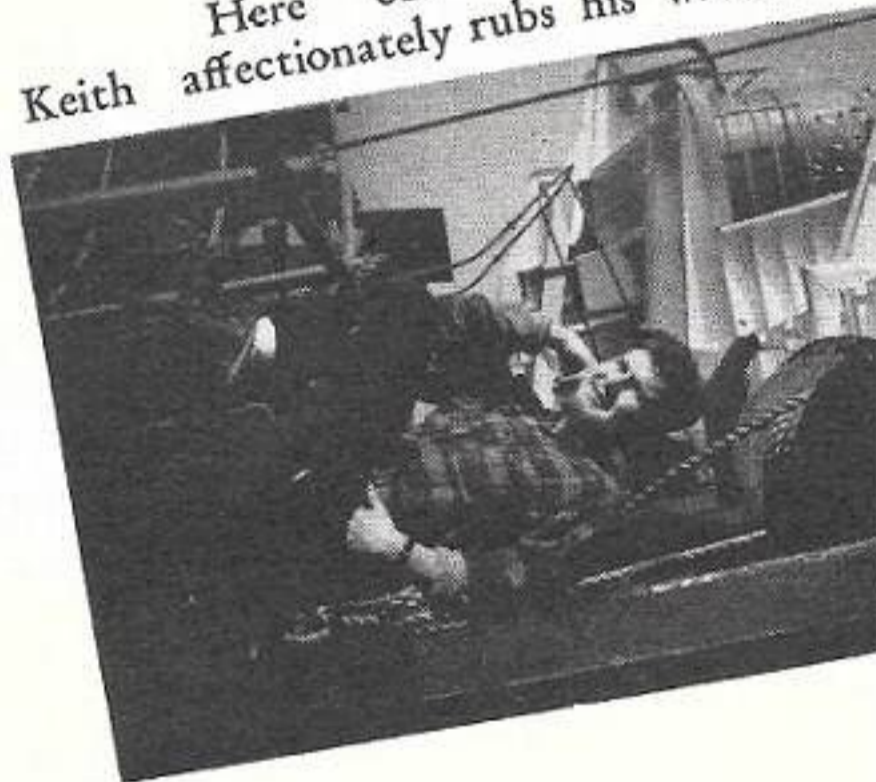
THE CHANGE THAT THE NAVY MAKES IN A MAN

Keith Hope is off watch.



The same Keith Hope with his hope fulfilled, April, 1945.

Here off watch, Keith affectionately rubs his whiskers.



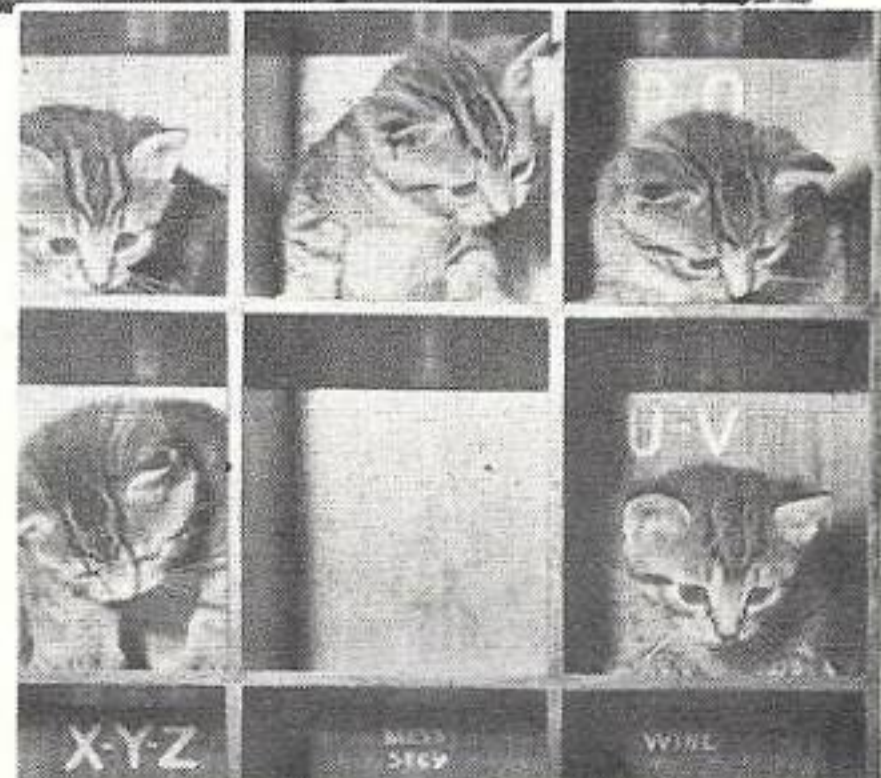
"A Real Puncher Gang."

Right to left: Jim Logan, P. O. Waskett, Mother Doyle, L/Smn Nicholson, Ken Barker, youngest on board; Winger Brown, Legatt (phones) P. O. Starkey and Red McKenzie.

"Spot" was discovered and rescued out of New York harbour.



The Ward Room Stewards were a merry gang.

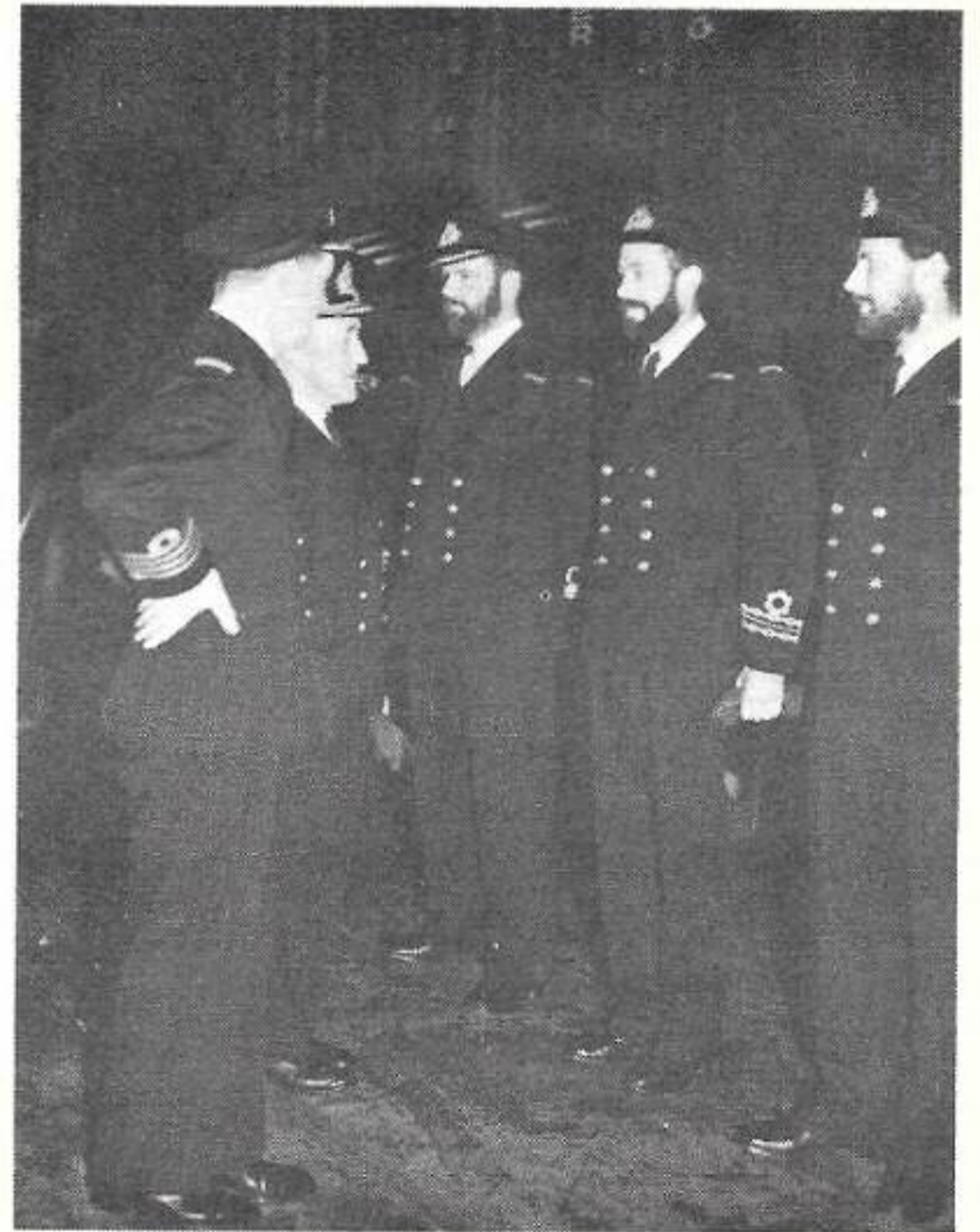


Born in a storm off Norway. Five kittens were born to wash their mittens in the Ward Room.



Between raids on Norwegian shipping, Puncher's "Commando party" maintained shooting practice ashore.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

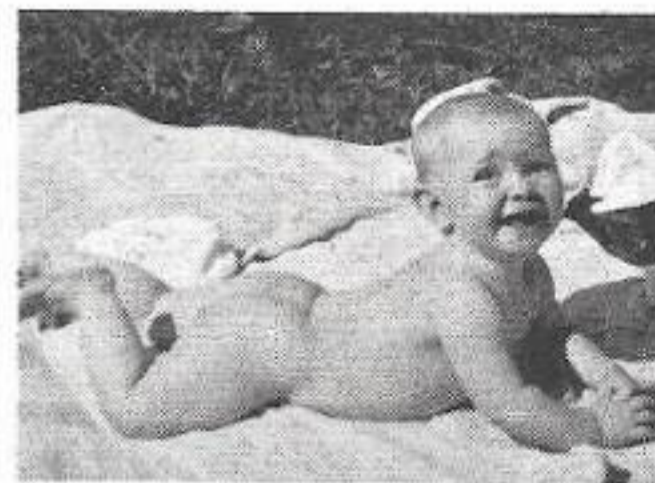


Even Admiral McGrigor marvels! Truly a sight to behold!

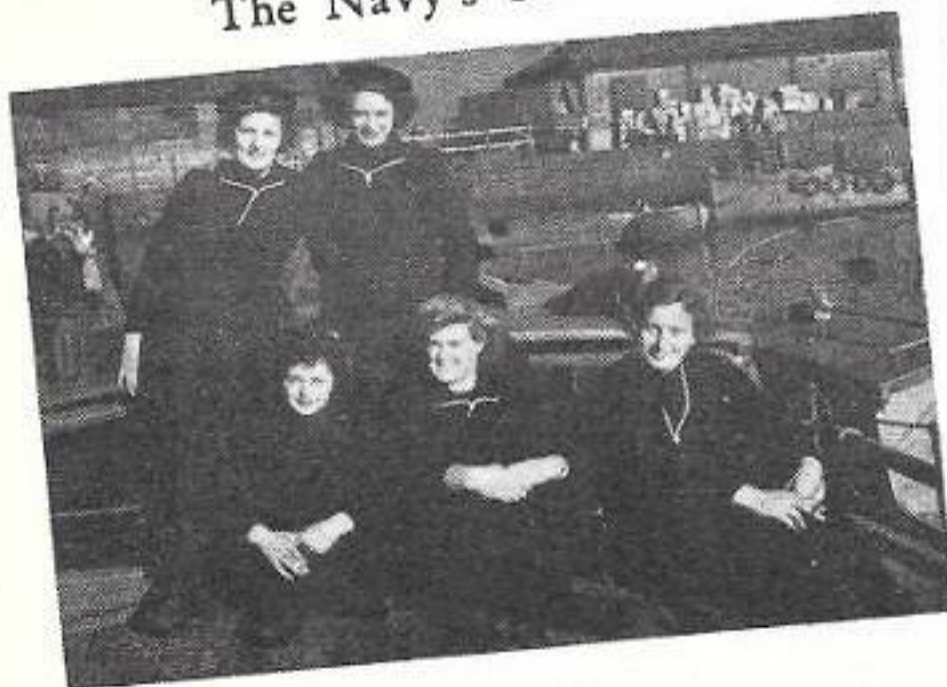


and there were other attractions ashore.

The Navy's best Wrendevous.



Small wonder S.B.P.O. Norman Whitson wants a draft to Vancouver!



Encouraging each other's Sprouts.





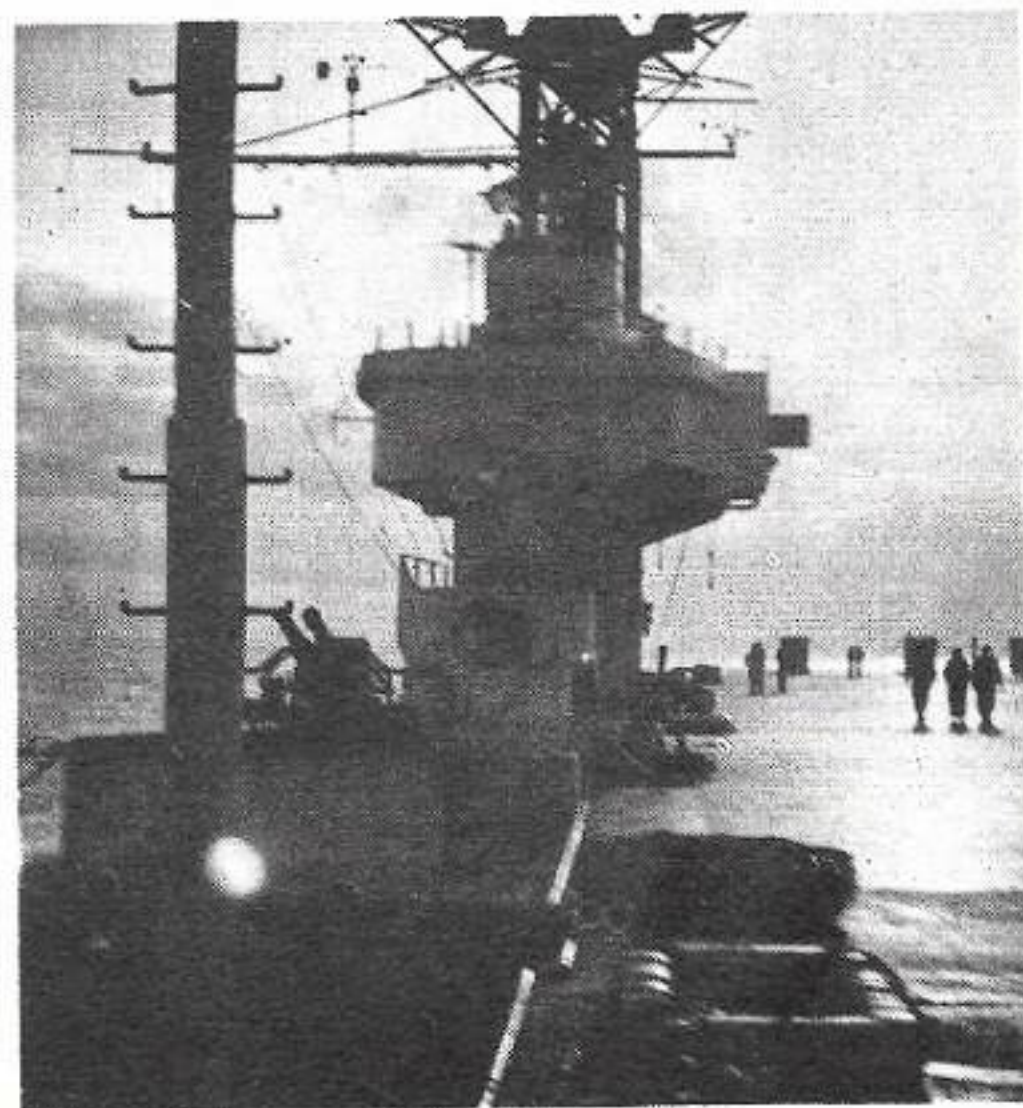
This historic record of H.M.S. "PUNCHER" would have been impossible without the photographers. In this picture the Photographic Officer of the Ship, Sub. Lieut. (A) D. E. Thomas, R.N.V.R., examines a strip of film revealing the indisputable evidence of what caused a prang in deck landing. The photographs were taken by P. O. Edward Nichols. The Ship maintained its own dark room for photographic work.



CAPTAIN R.E.S. BIDWELL, R.C.N.

inspects the men at Divisions aided by the Captain's Secretary, Lieut. (S) W. J. Thorpe, R.C.N.V.R. After Divisions the Captain breaks the good news that the Ship is to make a trip across the Atlantic to secure a load of planes needed for the Far East, and that on the westbound voyage the hangar will be filled with bunks to facilitate the return to Canada of Naval personnel who are volunteers for the Far East and who are entitled to leave in Canada before going to the Far East. The Ship will go to Halifax before proceeding to Norfolk.

The Bridge Island in Moonlight while we wait to enter Halifax Harbour.



H.M.S. "PUNCHER" ARRIVES AT HALIFAX

HALIFAX, July 3. — (CP) — Back from action in the Atlantic, the North Sea and far northern waters with the British Home Fleet, the auxiliary aircraft carrier H.M.S. "PUNCHER" docked here for the first visit to a Canadian port in over a year. She is one of the auxiliary carriers built in the United States Pacific Coast yards for the Royal Navy and commissioned in Vancouver in 1943 and 1944.

The largest ship manned by the Royal Canadian Navy ever to enter Halifax harbour, her decks were lined with hundreds of naval personnel in addition to her own crew, as every possible space had been utilized to return personnel from service in U.K. It was understood that preference had been given those who had volunteered for the Far East.

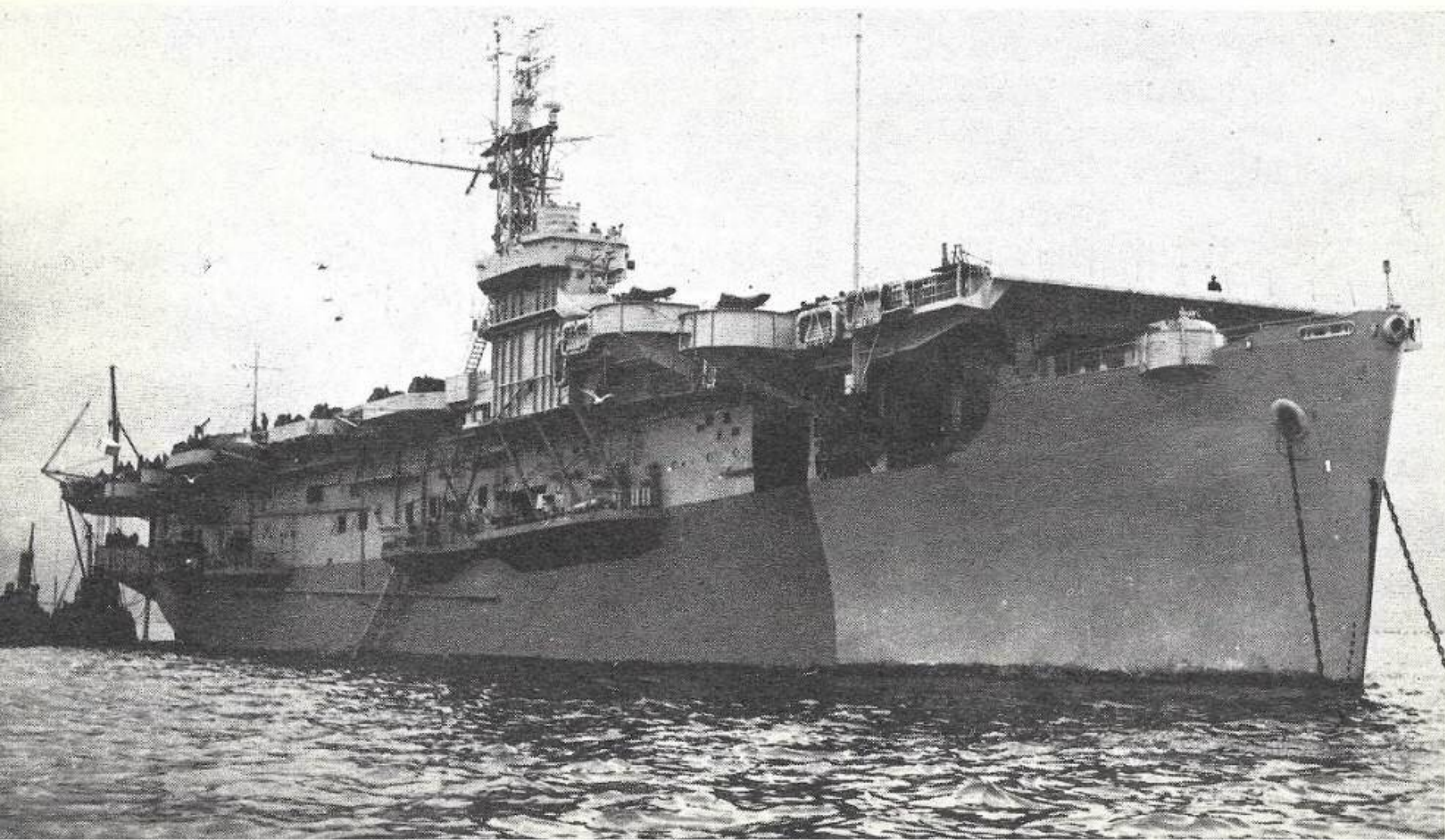


V. E. DAY

V-E Day in May, 1945, came while we were high and dry in dock at Glasgow! Some of the Ship's Company were on leave in London and had the thrill of a lifetime. Others saw Scotland give vent to pent-up emotions. The greatest tribute was paid by Scottish police authorities in Glasgow and all down the Clyde in that not one Canadian sailor fell foul of the law in all the V-E celebrations in Scotland. Within the first week after VE-Day the Commanding Officer received a signal from Ottawa to this effect: All officers and ratings of the Canadian Navy can derive the utmost satisfaction from the fact that the Germans in Europe have laid down their arms. It appeared necessary for the Department of National Defense to point out, however, that although the German land forces have given up, many of their U-boats have not yet been accounted for and there is the imminent possibility that some may continue offensive operations against Allied shipping. Therefore, until such time as it could definitely be established that no

more U-boats were operating in the Atlantic it would not be possible for the R.C.N. to reduce its convoy commitments and thus the Royal Canadian Navy continued at full war strength.

We came quickly out of dry dock and proceeded down to the Tail of the Bank opposite Greenock. We were not to stay there long. Instead of returning to Scapa Flow, as we had expected, V-E Day had suddenly changed everything. PUNCHER'S crew were destined to go to the Far East in a new light fleet carrier. Our Barracuda Squadron was composed of planes suitable for fighting in the Arctic. These would not do for engagements in the tropics. We were ordered to train a new squadron of Fireflies for the Far East and with new intensity to get on with the job we soon found ourselves operating in training exercises off the Isle of Man and in the Irish Sea. We made our anchorage between exercises off Douglas, I.O.M., and later off Bangor, Ireland.





Popular ACCLAIM

By popular acclaim of officers and men on H.M.S. "PUNCHER" the laurels for a combination of thoughtfulness and faithfulness to duty fell on Able Seaman Roy J. McKenzie, R.C.N.V.R., of New Westminster, B.C. "Red" served on board PUNCHER from the time of commissioning to the

end. During most of this period he served as Mailman. He was one of the few original crew that served long after V-J Day, during the many ferrying trips across the Atlantic with personnel of the Canadian Navy, Army and Air Force. At the decommissioning in 1946 he was one of the "originals" who was thanked by the Captain for faithful service to the end. Here in this picture "Red" is looking beyond H.M.S. "BIRMINGHAM" in Scapa Flow on our return from the Arctic. He looks as though Neptune's welcome to the Arctic with introductions to Mermaids had left him with a nostalgic feeling.



PUNCHER

ARISE AND DESTROY

ALL SEAMEN, GREETINGS!

Know ye by these presents that
ABLE SEAMAN ROY J. MCKENZIE, R.C.N.V.R.
sailing in H.M.S. "PUNCHER" under
command of Captain R. E. S. Bidwell,
Royal Canadian Navy, did on April 7th,
1945, appear in the northernmost
reaches of my realm in Latitude 66°
33' N., Longitude 2° 40' W., bound
for the dark and frosty domain of
The Land of the Midnight Sun, and did
with our Royal Permission enter this
dread region by crossing the *Arctic Circle*.

WHEREFORE, WE, NEPTUNUS REX,
Ruler of the Raging Main, do by these
presents give this ROYAL WARRANT in
token that the above-named is henceforth a
loyal and trusty BLUENOSE having been
this day elected to the Order thereof, and
WE do call upon all Mermaids, Polar Bears,
Whales, Narwhales, Sea Lions, Icebergs and
other inhabitants of the Frigid North to give
him a tumultuous welcome and show him
all deference and respect that is his due.

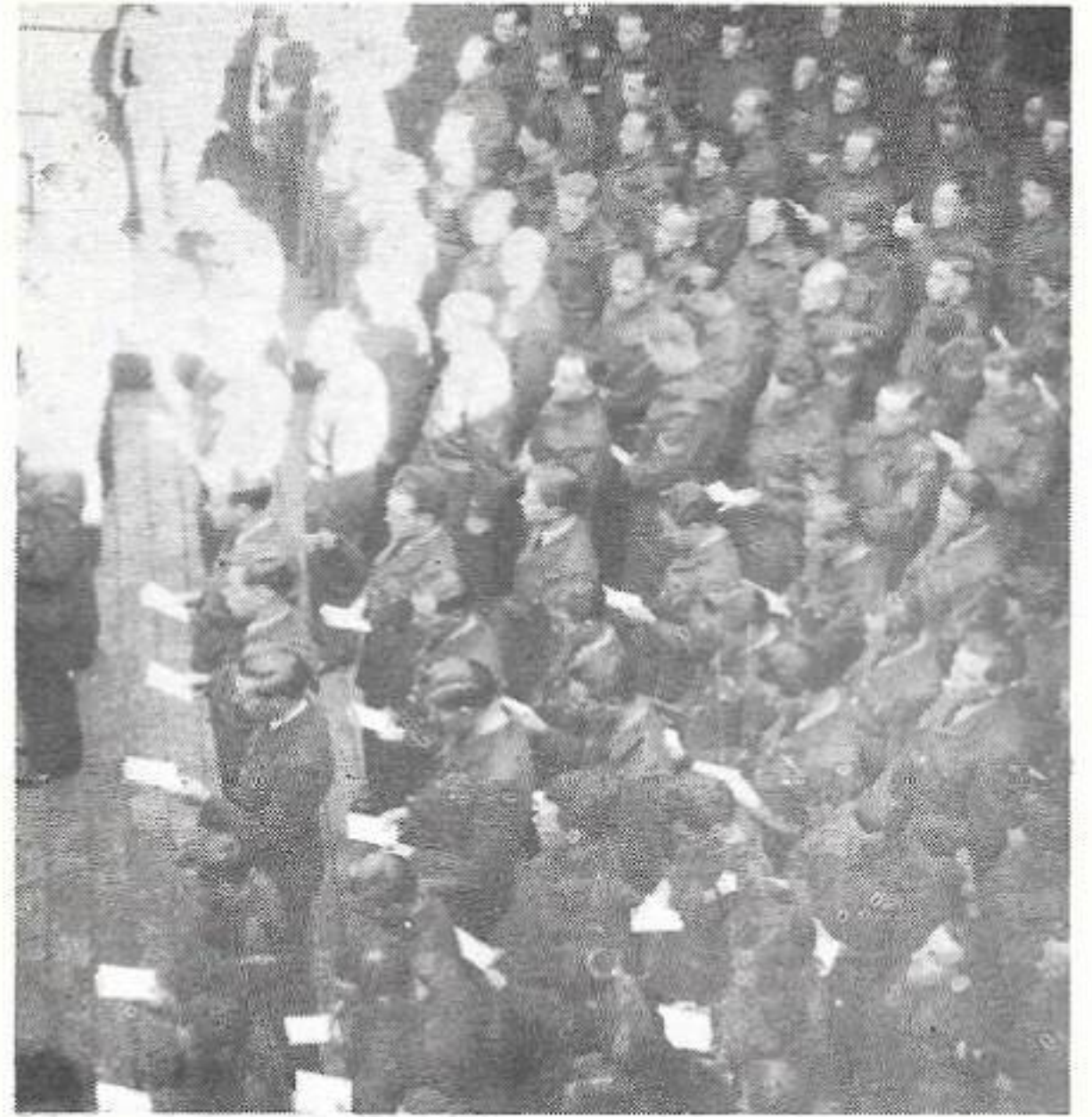
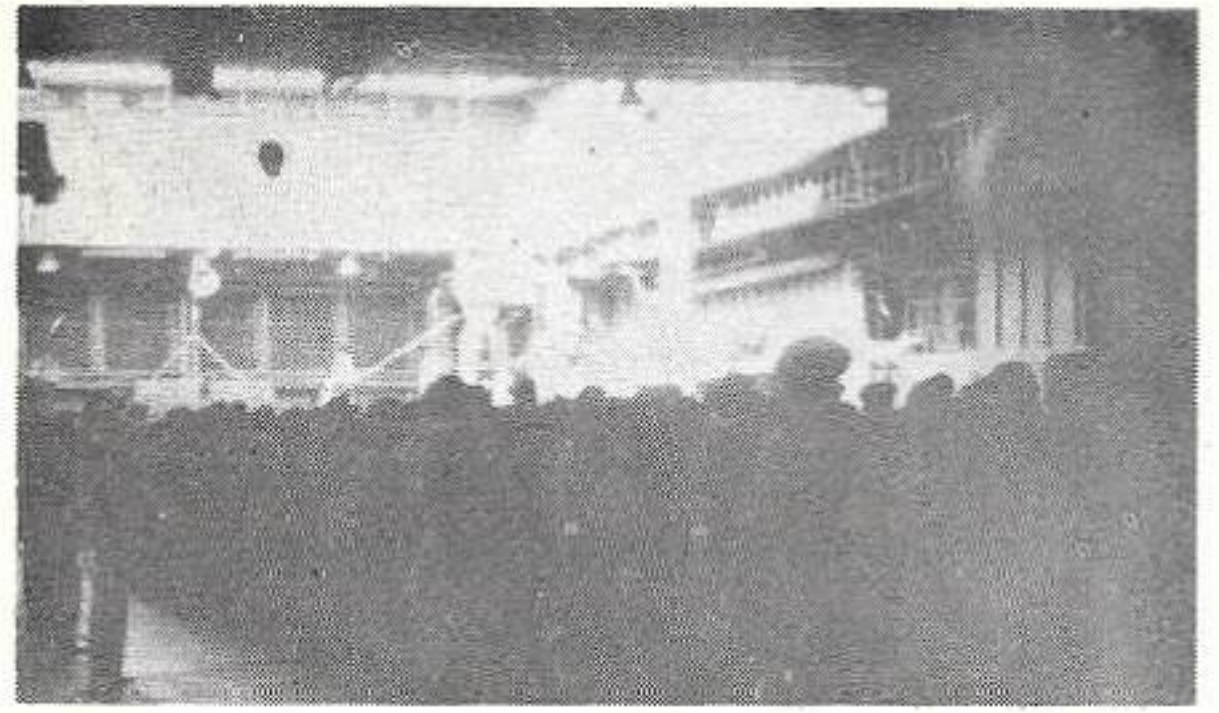
Neptunus Rex.

Ruler of the Raging Main.

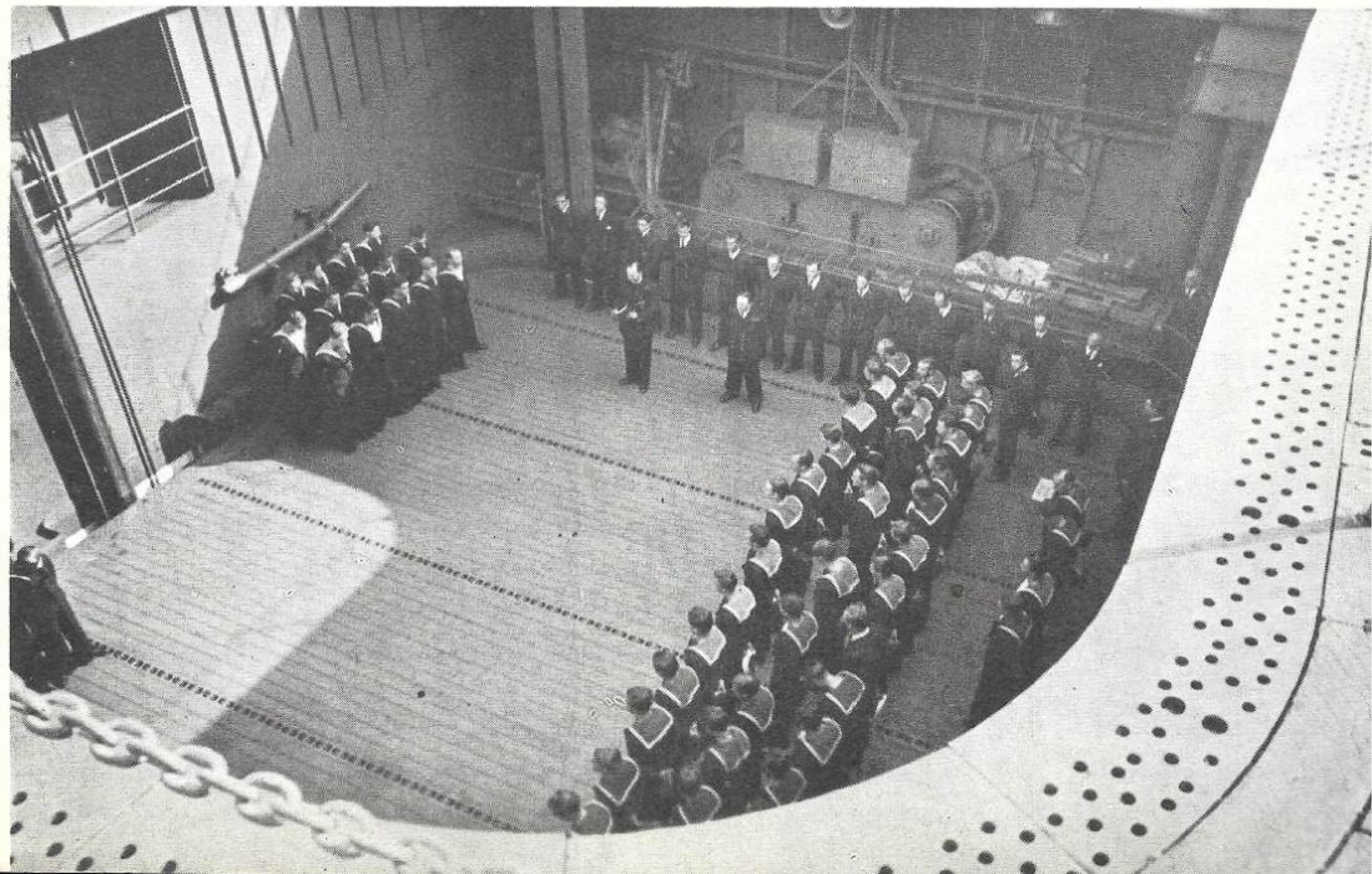


THE MEN SING WITH JOY— HOMEWARD BOUND

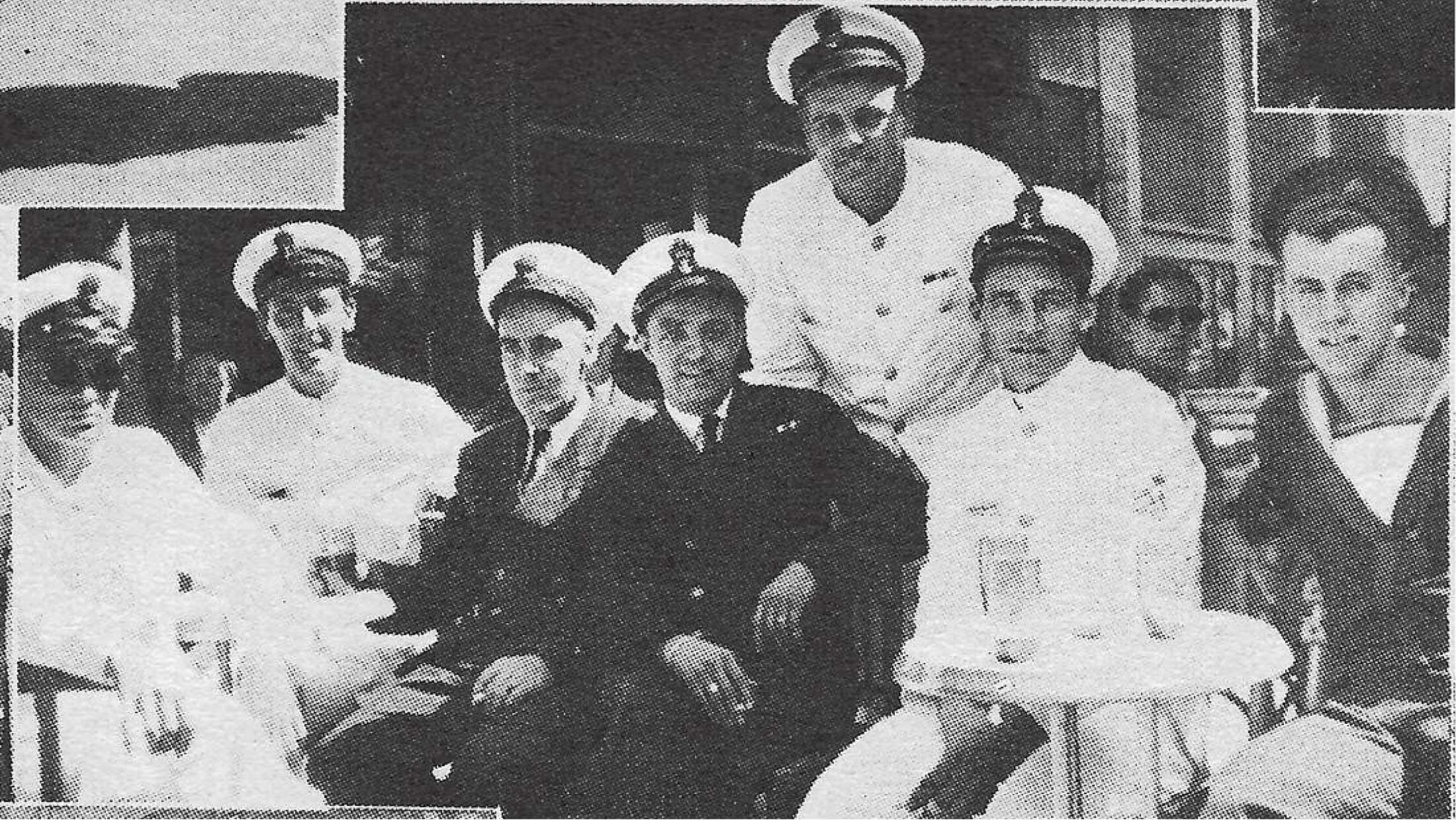
The Service is held by the Ship's Chaplain, The Rev. L. M. Outerbridge, M.A., R.C.N. In front row Captain R. E. S. Bidwell, C.B.E., R.C.N., is in centre. Senior army officers are at the Captain's right. Commander D. C. Wallace, D.S.C., O.B.E., R.C.N.R., stands at the Captain's left.



Looking down the elevator well at morning prayers. Prayers were held daily during the Ship's Commission.



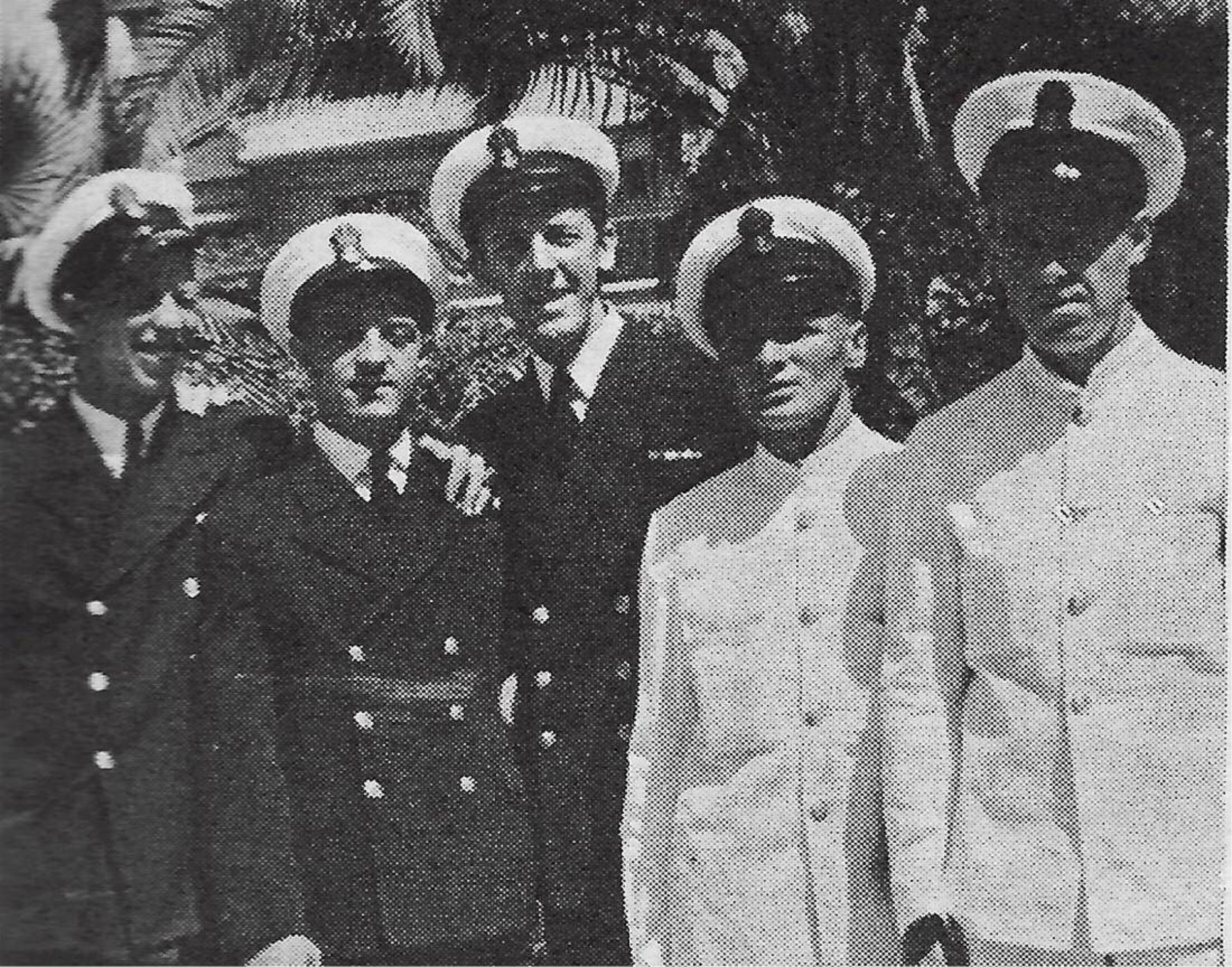




Ashore in Morocco



Ashore in Morocco

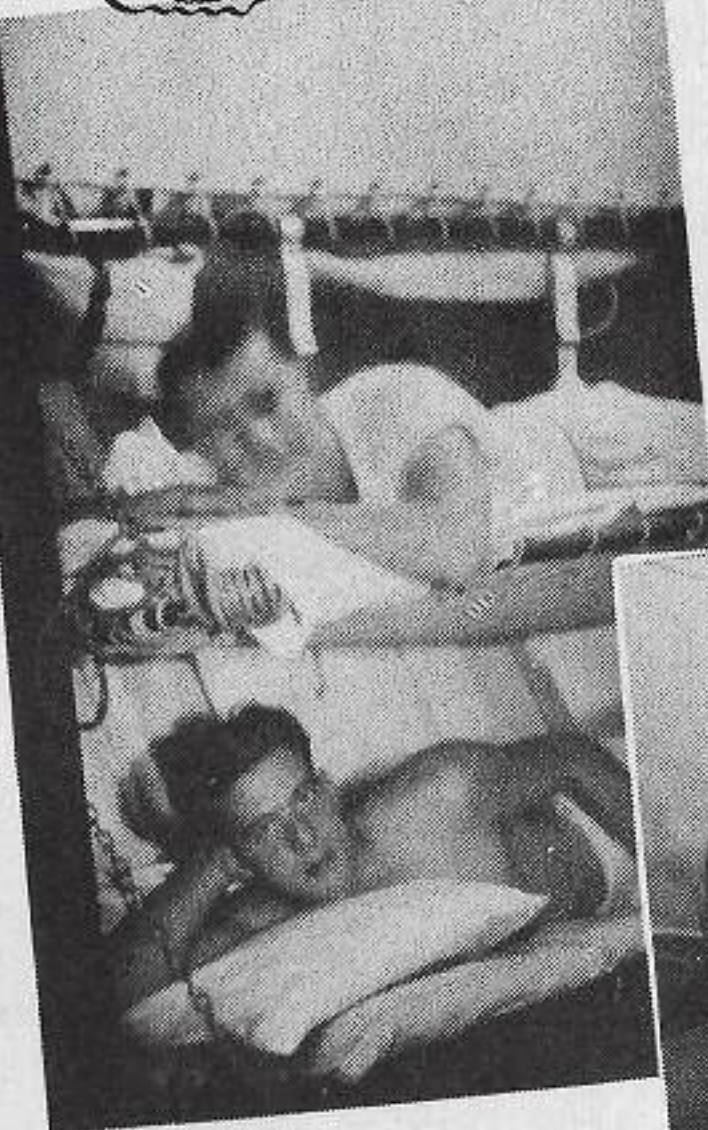


Ashore in Morocco

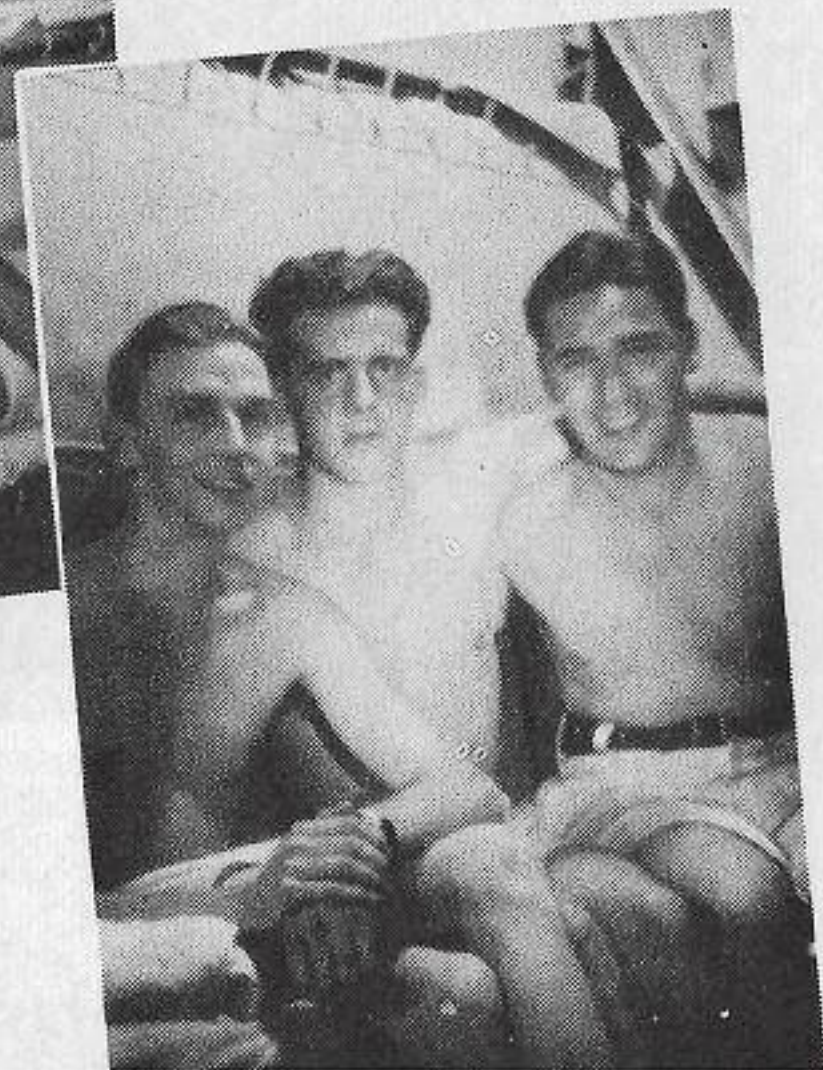


O FOR THE LIFE OF A SAILOR

The "Mick" was not used on "PUNCHER." Every man had his own folding bunk. These could be folded up in the day time when not in use. They became very popular to men accustomed to the hammock. The chief advantage was the opportunity for a quick "shut eye" when off duty or in "pipe down." The compartments of the Ship for sleeping quarters were all air conditioned. The Ship had no portholes. Below decks was a small electrically illuminated city, the same day or night.

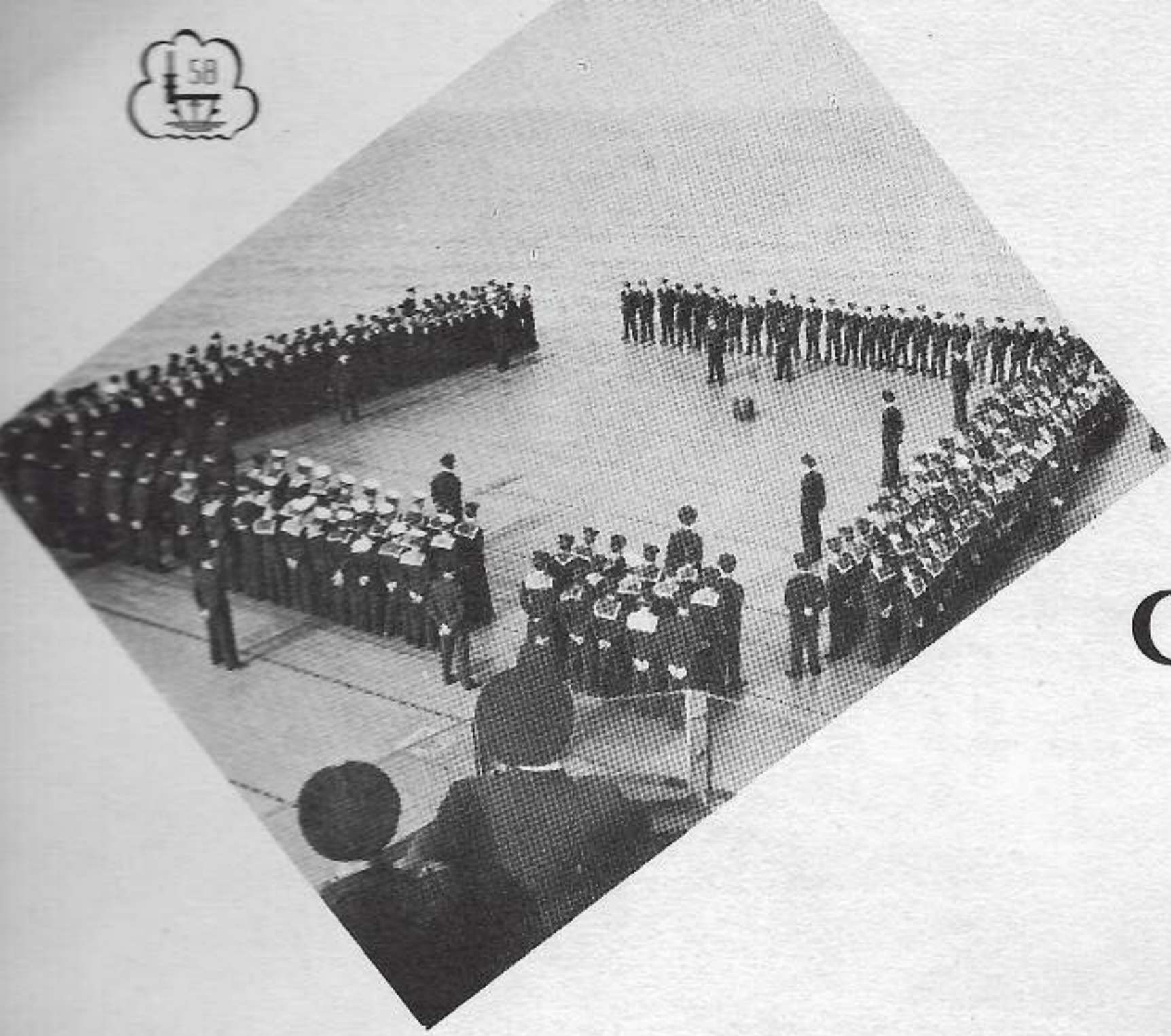


O for the life
of Riley.





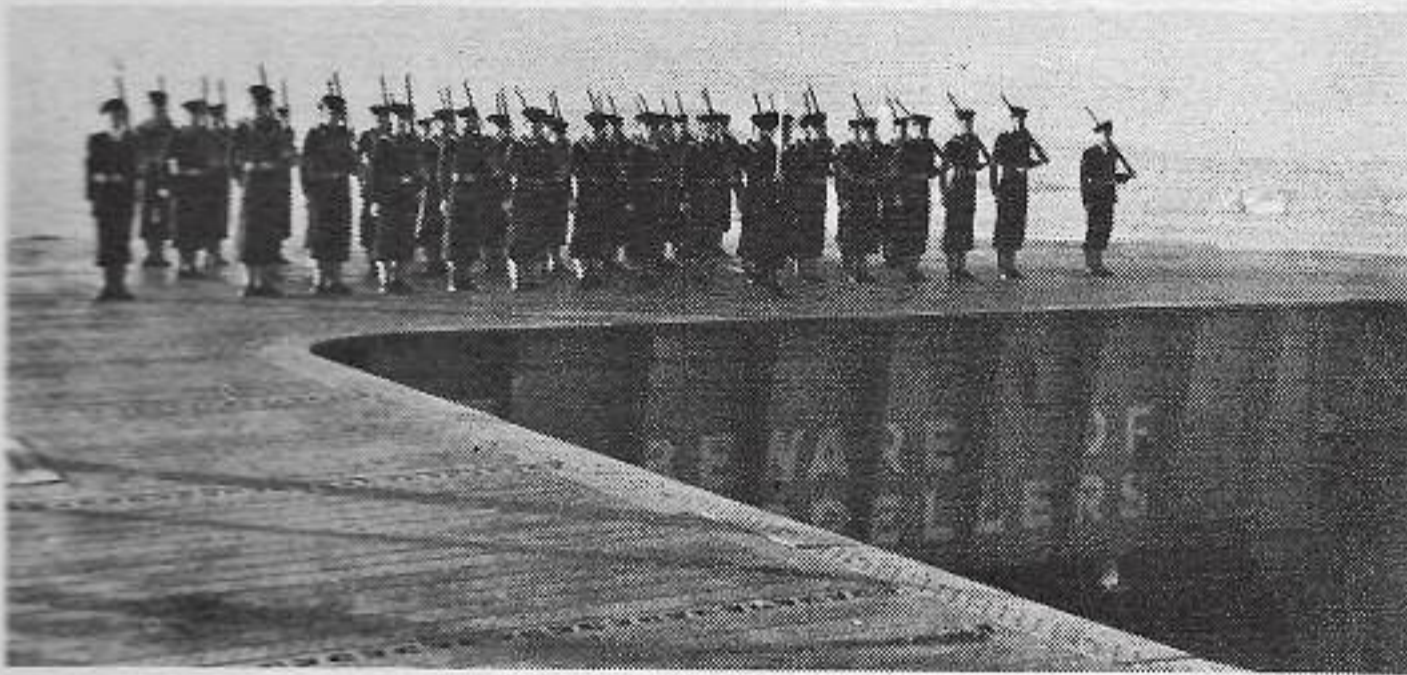
CPOs ready to go ashore



GREAT NEWS

Captain Bidwell tells the Ship's Company that our ferrying days are over. After unloading in Glasgow, we will undergo a ten day boiler clean. Everyone has five days' leave with a free railway warrant to anywhere in the British Isles. At the end of ten days the Ship engages in deck landing training under the Flag Officer of Carrier Training.

Guard of Honour at rear of flight deck awaiting the elevator with the visiting Admiral in charge of Carrier Training.



Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur St. G. Lyster, C.B., C.V.O., D.S.C., R.N., Flag Officer in charge Carrier Training, inspects the Ship's Company.

Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Lyster addresses the Ship's Company and expresses his delight in having the Canadians in PUNCHER join his command preparatory for action with the Home Fleet.

