



SLIPSTREAM



The Journal of H.M.A.S.
Albatross

No. 1

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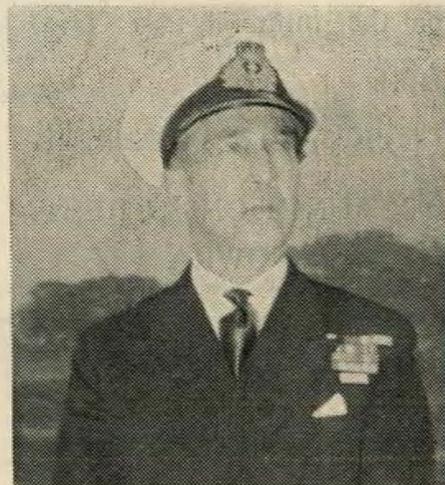
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A MESSAGE

I am very happy to see this first number of Slipstream in print and I congratulate the Editorial staff. A magazine's interest is dependant solely on it's contents, and, therefore, as our magazine should cover all sections of the station's activities I hope that people in all sections of the station will make contributions and criticisms.

Slipstream will be as good as we make it — so let us make it very good, not only for our own benefit and enjoyment but also for the many people interested in the Fleet Air Arm's activities.

V. A. T. SMITH, Captain.

Congratulations for such a fine
magazine and best wishes
for the future.



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Station Personality No. 1. Captain V.A.T. Smith, D.S.C., A.D.C., R.A.N.

Occasionally I have been asked: "Whatever made you specialise in the Fleet Air Arm?" My answer has always been, "Because it is the best Branch in the Service."

That reply, I believe, is as true today as it was when I began observing in 1937. At that time things were rather different — five aircraft took off with my course for their first air training. Almost immediately, three of the five were forced landed!

In 1938 and 1939 I served in No. 825 Squadron in H.M.S. "Glorious" in the Mediterranean. Happy days with petrol at 1/- a gallon, cheap and serviceable second-hand cars, good weather for both flying and games — altogether life was very pleasant.

In 1940, I left the Swordfish — those wonderful aircraft — and joined a Fulmar squadron, a two seat fighter in which the Observer's main task was to make the R/T equipment work. The set was very temperamental and success was sometimes obtained by a blend of curses, kicks and aerobatics (with the pilot's assistance). After that, some more Swordfishing, some Walrusing and a little Avengering and then came Staff appointments. These meant the Atlantic, Normandy, London, Melbourne, London, Melbourne, London and then a break as Executive Officer in the "Sydney" from 1950 until early 1952. That appointment made me realise that there were occasions when "Fishheads" were right and "Flyboys" wrong.

Next came 14 months starting off "Nirimba" and then to Navy Office as D.A.W.O.T. A breath of sea air was welcome in mid 1955 when I was appointed as Captain (F)1. This brings me to 1957 and "Albatross".

There have been interesting and enjoyable times ever since I began in the Fleet Air Arm — moreso, I think, than if I had specialised in any other Branch.

The future of the Air Arm remains as bright as ever. The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord Mountbatten) said last year, "Although Australia is very big, however big it is, it still remains an island and as such must still depend upon the Navy Carrier borne aircraft are, of course, part of our Navies and they have a very vital part to play in the war at sea."

Such a statement makes the importance of the Air Arm very clear and enables us to realise the value of the work we do at Albatross.

AUSTRALIAN JOINT ANTI SUBMARINE SCHOOL

AJASS. was formed in 1952, and has been a "lodger" unit on this station since that time.

Being run jointly by the R.A.N. and the R.A.A.F. it may seem a bit unorthodox by Naval standards; even so, about 600 officers and men from the R.A.N., R.A.A.F., A.R.A., U.S.A.F. and R.N.Z.A.F. have passed through A.J.A.S.S., as well as a number of civilians.

For the amount of space taken up by us on this station this is most impressive. Now that the "Palace of Gems" is well established life is a lot easier on everybody concerned.

The ratings are called upon to perform some very odd duties, from Chart making to heavy dramatic acting, (no "Oscars" by request) and we even have a sound effects man! Still the acting doesn't call for any mental strain as all the lads here are "born actors."

From our roving reporter comes a little bit of news. Evidently our last course nearly didn't get away, and there was talk about a last ditch stand around the Lincolns. (Shades of Custer.)

Has anybody here seen Marilyn?

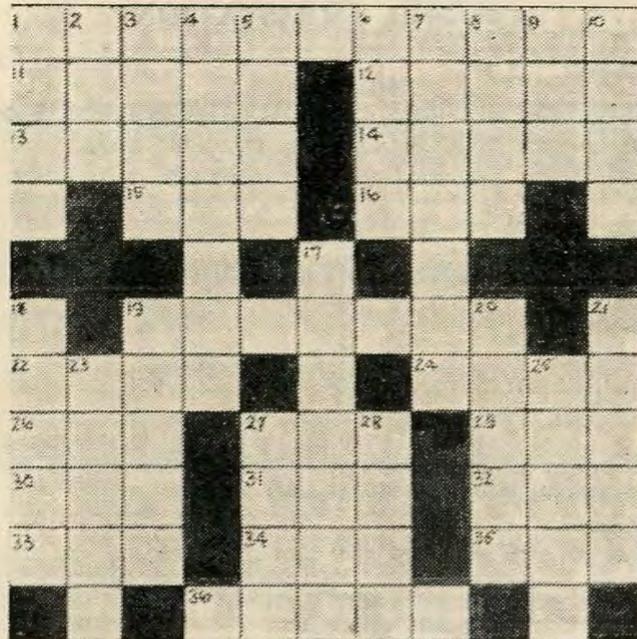
In the sport line comes the most amazing news — we had a win at cricket (the first in five years) against the Communicators.

TOC H CORNER

An urgent need exists today to bring back into men's lives a sense of purpose, a faith to live by and thought for others. Toc H is a Christian fellowship working to these ends.

In quiet villages and busy towns here and overseas, Toc H members of all ages, creeds and political views meet in small groups week by week. Few Movements can claim a cross-section of society as complete as that of the Toc H membership — brought together in a common purpose to serve their fellow men. They share opinions, laugh and pray together and seek to know and to care about the minds, lives and needs of others.

Born in Talbot House in Flanders in 1915 Toc H today must be reckoned a vital force for good with a great record and a greater task in which you are invited to share.



ACROSS

- 1 Copying.
- 11 Foreign.
- 12 Cut.
- 13 Slumbered.
- 14 Raise the Spirits.
- 15 South Amer. City (abb.)
- 16 Study
- 19 Repeated from memory.
- 22 Happy.
- 24 Shrivelled.
- 26 Power unit (abb.).
- 27 Limb.
- 29 Fresh.
- 30 Day before a holiday.
- 31 Past.
- 32 Pose for an artist.
- 33 Number.
- 34 The forefront.
- 35 Printers Measures.
- 36 Ventures.

DOWN

- 1 Wood file.
- 2 Cloth Measure.
- 3 Wharf.
- 4 Grumbled.
- 5 On the top of.
- 6 Employed.
- 7 Island group.
- 8 Cruel Tsar.
- 9 Fish Trap.
- 10 Cultivated.
- 17 Malt product.
- 18 The lesser white heron.
- 19 Large black bird.
- 20 Compact.
- 21 Efts.
- 23 Pry.
- 25 Checks.
- 27 Volcanic rock.
- 28 Departed.

AROUND THE STATION

Our chief gendarme, convalescing at Balmoral Naval Hospital, should be up and about and on the prowl again in the next few weeks.

☆ ★ ☆

Must be hot work having to walk everywhere in the Station this weather — especially with one's arm in a sling.

☆ ★ ☆

Wonder what wierd and wonderful features really are beneath the unusual (or is it usual) assortment of face fungi moving around amongst us?

☆ ★ ☆

A certain scribe is an awful blighter,
The way he bawls one out,
You get more info from the Leadin' Writer,
But from the tubby subby — NOWT!

☆ ★ ☆

We were always led to believe that a certain type of rating was to be recognised (when on duty) by the fact that he would be wearing boots and gaiters. However, recognition seems to be easier if you just look for a small black pooch of doubtful ancestry.

☆ ★ ☆

Secret Dreams Department: After thirty years of crime-smashing you, too, might want a nice quiet Recruiting job.

☆ ★ ☆

There is no truth in the rumour that Bugle-Toting Blacksmiths are to be incorporated in all Bush Walking Parties.

SPORTING NOTES

CRICKET:

Air Station cricketers entered the Shoalhaven "A" Grade Competition this season with the conviction that Albatross could show local teams a thing or two with bat and ball. Yet, in this same competition a couple of years ago, Albatross players unsettled and unhappy amongst themselves, thought it better to withdra. Different thing this time though, at the time of writing the Station team is leader of the final four — much to the credit of Hathaway, McCulloch, McWhirney, Vine and Nugara.

WINTER GAMES:

Never in the past have Albatross footballers been catered for as they have this coming winter. Two rugby league teams are in Group 7 district comp., rugby unionists will again compete in the Dempster Cup draw in Sydney and at home; and soccer enthusiasts will be able to "kick it with their heads" in the Illawarra Association once more. And the "Rear Admiral Showers Trophy", which reclines in our trophy case, will have to be taken from us over our dead bodies. This is a grand trophy — seen it? By the way, last year was the first time Albatross Union team played for the Dempster Cup. We were defeated in the final by Destroyers and Frigates team.

Bad luck there is no local Aussie Rules comp., otherwise we'd have a lash at that, too. It's usual for the Station to be in the Wollongong Basketball League. All intending players please contact the P.T.I. or the Sports Officer, pronto!

1957 INTER-SERVICES SPORTS:

As the Host Service for 1957, the Air Force held many major events at Richmond, particularly the Athletic Meeting on the final day, 29th March. The Women's Services also competed on the same programme. Albatross personnel numbered 82 officers and men in representative Navy teams for all events, ranging from boxing to bowls. The Air Station has been nominated as the venue for the sports when next Navy is the host Service. This would present no difficulty as the Station and the Nowra area is quite well appointed to hold the Sports in 1959.

— "BOBBO"

HOW TRUE !

It took Sir William Ramsay 16 years to discover helium, and the Curries 30 years to isolate radium — but it only takes a boring speaker at a meeting about 5 minutes, as a rule, to produce tedium.

"SEE WHAT I MEAN . . . ?"

(Short Short Story by S/Lieut. SHERIDAN)

The short fellow snorted, turned and placed his threadbare elbows heavily on the bar.

"I don't care what you say," he said definitely, blinking at the rows of bottles on the shelves opposite. "Size for size, weight for weight — same as horses — small men have more "guts" than big men!"

Oh, so it had come to this, eh? Getting personal! His companion, a head taller and much bulkier, flicked ash off a shiny suit which had seen better days, cast a withering look at the smaller man and sighed. Not satisfied at getting licked on every subject they had argued upon during their afternoon's "crawl". Shorty had now broached an argument deliberately intending to make him look a "dope". No doubt about it, the man had reached the stage of becoming "personal".

Still, he'd endeavour to carry his drink like a gentleman — as he always did — and debate this question with his tormentor, keeping coldly aloof from any discourtesy.

Lofty drained his "middle" and in the grand manner, pushed both glasses forward for refill. Although the honour should have been Shorty's, small change trickled through Lofty's fingers as elegantly as the sands in an hour-glass. He cleared his throat in the accepted parliamentary manner before speaking.

"My dear friend, size has nothing to do with it. Your small man with lots of abdominal fortitude might easily have grown to be a big man — just a trick of nature, that's all. Also, it's something greater and more complex than we realize, that brings to the surface a man's courage — whether it be love, pride, a challenge to his ego, or sometimes just plain swank - -"

During the short silence which followed, both men became conscious of the white-capped, blue-collared figure who had edged toward them along the bar. The sailor's voice drew their reluctant attention.

"- - don't usually butt in on peoples' talk, especially in hotels. But I've been listening to you two, and I think Lofty's got something there."

Shorty licked his lips and glared. Well, speed the crows, what did HE know about life in general — a sailor!

"How'd you get that idea?" he half jeered.

"You can take it for what it's worth," the tar began, "but I can recall the instance of old Stripey Timmins. He was always thrilling the young fellows aboard our ship with tall yarns of his service, brave deeds he'd done years ago and hosts of hair-raising things he'd seen happen in strange lands. But us older blokes just used to give each other a shrewd wink and go on our

way. Of course we could've given the game away any old time — but why bother? He was their nautical hero and almost on a par with Nelson."

The sailor hid the half-smile at his attempt at humour and went on.

"We didn't notice any special change in Stripey until the ship was suddenly switched, from peaceful convoy jobs, into the Mediterranean where everybody had heard the going was tough. Then straightaway he became sort of preoccupied and pale and drawn-out looking. About once a day only we'd see him, in the mess for eats and then he'd scoot away out of it to keep to himself. As far as the yarn spinning was concerned he had shut up shop completely — just like that!"

The snap of his fingers seemed to herald a short interval, and with mutual consent glasses were raised and tilted.

"Came the day of our first bombing attack," the tar continued, offering cigarettes round, "and it thoroughly put the fear of God in us, too. Stripey wasn't seen on the upper-deck for weeks after that — in a real blue funk, poor beggar. Tragic part of it all, though, was that the youngsters wiped him completely because of it.

"Then one day, after things appeared pretty quiet, Stripey came to me kind of crestfallen, and confided: 'I can't take it like I thought I could, pal. Even the boys can see it. You'd think I had the plague.'

"I didn't have the heart to tell him that it was the big build-up he'd given himself previously that had caused his downfall. We are all built different, aren't we? So I consoled him by saying he wasn't the only bloke with jitters on board — but that we all had a job to do though we didn't always relish it.

"He seemed slightly relieved at getting something off his chest, anyway, and as he left me he said, 'I — I'll get over it somehow. They think I'm a squib, but I'll show 'em.'

"Our little talk was forgotten, until a few days later I had cause to remember it. We'd been under a terrific air attack for over an hour and the decks were drenched from the heavy spray of near-misses. And yet there, out on the upper-deck sweating his insides out, was Stripey — passing extra ammunition up to the A.A. guns!

"And there's no boloney about this — the amazing part was that he looked like as if he was enjoying it all! That night I passed a group of youngsters squatting in the dark and I heard the unmistakable voice of Stripey telling 'em: '- - and I been feeling pretty crook these last couple weeks -- bit of the old trouble come back, I think. Course it mighta been billousness - -"

The sailor shrugged to signify the end, turned and emptied his glass. Following suit, Lofty poked a finger of his disengaged hand into Shorty's chest.

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THE CHAPLAINS' CORNER

(By CHAPLAIN J. A. WILLSON, R.A.N.)

HOW'S THE PARISH? That is a question which a Chaplain is often asked. It comes always as a friendly inquiry, and never fails to result in just as friendly an invitation to be present at the next Church Service. One of the encouraging things about the Church "on board" at present is the distance, which some of our married folk travel in order to worship with us here. Some come from as far afield as Jervis Bay. This is a healthy sign that the Church "on board" is on the way to becoming the centre of our community life. That is always a good thing, because the happiest communities are those, in which the Church is the centre of life and interest, for in the resulting fellowship the well-being of every one comes to matter to everybody else.

The final answer to the above question, of course, depends ultimately on the attitude of any Church community to their Christian responsibilities. While we all enjoy the conditions of life in a Christian democracy, we must remember that unless we all do something to ensure that the Christian way of life will be preserved in this land, a generation could arise which is completely unchristian. It is not enough to use the Churches solely as places where our babes may be baptised, where our children may be married and where we may find comfort in times of sorrow. We must so live that we make a contribution to the advance of Christianity and the straightening of Christian forces in our time. The danger in this country is that too many have no faith. No faith is almost worse than a bad faith, for no faith always seems to invite a swarm of bad faiths. Hitler enters when men cease to believe in God, for no life remains empty of worship. What happened in Germany in the decade between 1930 and 1940 and since then in Communist dominated countries, is a solemn warning to us how swiftly and easily the gains of many generations can be thrown away in less than one.

The words of Chas. Dinsmore are worth remembering. "Religion by deepening the soul of man has been the prolific and fostering mother of music, architecture, letters, drama, and all the arts. Atheism writes no hymn; agnosticism does not burst into song; Scepticism constructs no institutions. The singing and building eras of the world are periods of stalwart belief."

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH — It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

DRAWING OF A LOTTERY

Every week, tens of thousands of people invest fortunes in Australian lotteries, but comparatively few persons know how the lucky numbers are drawn.

In its early years Australia's largest sweepstake had a staff of twenty and operated a hand-cranked barrel containing 2,000 marbles. Since then, five different sizes of drums holding 10,000; 25,000; 50,000; 100,000; and 200,000 have been used. Today, this organization employs over 400 people and its large power-driven machine makes it the most up-to-date lottery in Australia.

At 8.30 on the morning of the drawing the stage is set for the withdrawal of the first marble. Layout is like a theatre, seating about 500 persons who face the platform, indicators and the large electrically driven bronze barrel. Of the marbles contained therein, numbered from 1 to 200,000; the Government Supervisor and Treasury officials check and re-check the number on each marble as it is withdrawn, retaining the manuscript of the result slips which circulate to the Press and subscribers.

Seals placed on the drum after completion of the previous lottery are inspected and broken by the government official who alone holds the key. The barrel controlled electrically by forward, reverse and stop buttons, is revolved to ensure a thorough mixing of the marbles; the mixing process being helped by fins inside.

When stopped and unlocked, a long tubular spring-loaded "gripper" — specially designed to grip one marble only — is plunged into the drum. Neither the hand of the operator nor of any other person is allowed inside. On withdrawal, this special "gripper" drops the single marble it contains into a ladle from which the government representative takes it, calling its number aloud.

Two lottery officers repeat the call and so the operation goes on until the ten major prizes are dispensed with, when the drawn marbles are returned to the barrel via a velvet-lined funnel. Owing to the large number of smaller prizes that follow, the special extractor is replaced by a long-handled ladle.

After the completed lottery and all marbles are returned to the barrel, the Government Supervisor locks it, seals it and returns the key to the Treasury strong-room where it reposes until required for the next lottery.

So, though the ethics of many may not hold with lotteries in any form, its genuineness, reputation and continuity of operation is ample proof of its being the most desirable form for those who cannot resist a "flutter".

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HONEST

(With Yourself)

The flying task of an Airfield is, and always has been, the most important reason for its existence. This must be realised by everyone connected, either directly or indirectly, with the station.

And believe it or not, each and everyone of us is just as important as the next man. The "driver" of the aircraft would be no use without a crew to keep it in one piece, and they in turn, would be severely handicapped without the food supplied by the Victualling staff to the cooks.

How many of us would work without pay supplied by the Writers? How many of us would arrive in time for work were there no Regular Staff? How many of the Aircrew would continue flying were there no rescue facilities and no Sick Quarters staff?

Having ploughed your way through the above you may be saying, "What a lot of drivel!" But don't dismiss the idea for a minute, just think about it. It's logic, isn't it?

So don't let anyone tell you that the "Birdies" are the most important boys—they aren't, but neither are you!

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THE RUNAWAY

On the 30th of August, 1955, at Banktown Aerodrome, Anthony Thrower, an ex R.A.A.F. navigator was landing in a hired Auster aircraft when his engine cut ten feet above the ground. He completed the landing successfully and with cruising revolutions still set, climbed cut to swing the propeller. The engine started with a roar and before Thrower's startled eyes it commenced to move across the field. Suddenly it was airborne!

Two and a half hours later the aircraft, still pilotless, was flying in an almost supernatural manner. Two and a half hours in which a worried city anxiously awaited news of its destruction. Two and a half hours in which the R.A.A.F., Navy, Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade Departments stood by waiting until they might be required for their own particular type of duty. A story which one would find incredible even in the pages of an adventure magazine.

As if in warning of its future movements the Auster, on taking off, twice circled Bankstown's grass airstrip — on each occasion narrowly avoiding the Control Tower. The startled Air Traffic Control staff evacuated their building immediately and informed Mascot (the Sydney Master Civil Aerodrome) of the phenomenon.

At 9 a.m., only two minutes after the Auster's take-off, Mascot directed another Auster, which was airborne at the time, to follow the runaway and report its position. Commander Groves, Royal Navy, its pilot followed and five minutes later reported that the runaway was drifting in a easterly direction towards Mascot (some five miles away). Five minutes after his first information was received, he again reported, this time that it was now at 3,500 feet and was still climbing.

By 10 a.m. the Auster was out to sea just off North Head at 6,000 feet with Commander Groves still in pursuit. During that hour it passed over many of Sydney's harbourside suburbs and the public were repeatedly informed of its whereabouts over the city's many radio stations. Fire engines in nearly all Sydney's suburbs were constantly ready to move to the scene of what might have been disaster had the aircraft run out of fuel or crashed due to any of the many possible changes in wind or aircraft trimming.

It was at this time that I became interested in the unusual occurrence. I took off with my pilot in one of the Navy's Helicopters on a normal training flight and

heard the many radio messages which were being passed. The first was an amusing sidelight as Sydney Radio asked for a message to be passed to Schofields (Commander Groves' base) to the effect that he was in the runaway. Immediately Groves radioed that this was not so, "Commander Groves is not in the runaway but in the aircraft following. This is Commander Groves speaking!"

Meanwhile, 6,000 feet below, Department of Civil Aviation chiefs held an emergency meeting as R.A.A.F. headquarters despatched two jets to intercept and down the hazard.

The two Sabres unfortunately, were unarmed but they quickly volunteered to try to down the aircraft with the jet streams. Commander Groves wisely decided that their target was still too close to the coast, and by the time that conditions were safe the Sabres had had to return to base. At 10.22 a.m. a Wirraway aircraft of the R.A.A.F. arrived armed and ready to dispense with the menace.

A general survey of the area was then carried out to be certain that no fishing boats or small craft were in the sea below, but at 10.56 a.m. the Wirraway called in a Meteor jet as the hands of the gunner in the rear seat had frozen and he was unable to move. At this time Commander Groves regretfully returned to his base due to shortage of fuel.

The jet had much the same luck as his predecessor, and although he made several attempts to accomplish the task his guns jammed and he found it necessary to call for another aircraft.

By now two Seafury aircrafts of the R.A.N., piloted by Lieutenant Robert Bluett and Lieutenant Peter McNay, were in the area and without further ado they contacted Sydney Radio and asked for permission to try to shoot it down. This was granted and again a careful check was made of the sea which, fortunately, was still quite clear of shipping.

Listening in, I could hear the cheerful note in Bluett's voice as he made his way along the coast to the position which, by now, was seven miles East of Broken Bay. For a fighter pilot to have a chance to shoot down a pilotless aircraft and watch it crash into the sea there is a certain amount of sensation and one could almost sense the friendly rivalry that must have existed between the two Navy pilots as they winged their way in their fighters towards the target.

At 11.40 a.m. Bluett called "Am running in now" with an almost impetible pause before he added "Got it." Close behind, Mac Noy fired as the target came into his sights and he, too, was successful.

After what seemed hours to we, who were listening, Bluett called "There is nothing left, we will now go home."

Two hours and forty two minutes had elapsed since the "THING" had taken off, and during that time many people made many statements but one which summed up the feelings of all during that worrying time was made by Mrs. F. Lenn of Vaucuse, who said, "It was a bit frightening to think it could have landed on a house!"

And from the pilot's point of view, Commander Groves said, with typical British understatement. "It was the most intriguing flight I have ever encountered in peacetime."

THE BRISTOL SYCAMORE TROPHY

On April 1st the Bristol Aircraft Company presented the Captain with the Sycamore Trophy in recognition of the work done by the Royal Australian Navy's helicopters in flood rescues during recent years.

We were lucky enough to have Mr. Cyril Ewens, the Chairman of Bristol Aircraft and this year's President of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors, to present the trophy.

At this stage I feel I should point out that Mr. Ewens (who has been awarded both the O.B.E. and the A.F.C. for his work in aviation fields) was himself a very well known pilot from the time of his entry into The Royal Flying Corps in 1916. He was, for 28 years, Test Pilot for Bristols, and was responsible for test flying no less than 53 prototypes. In 1932, he set the World's Altitude record of 43,000 feet — no mean height, even to-day.

The model, made of solid silver, is of the Sycamore with which we have become so familiar, and in his address, Mr. Ewens pointed out that the Sycamore is the largest helicopter made outside the U.S.A.

Mr. Ewens congratulated 723 Squadron on the outstanding work that they have done since the "choppers" arrived here, and said, as did the Captain, that we should be justifiably proud of their work.

We at Albatross are very proud of them, and wish the "infuriated palm trees" all the very best in serviceability and flying hours.

