

PERSONAL NEWS

Rear Admiral P. C. Taylor, C.B., who retired from the Navy in November, 1956, joined Dartmouth as a Cadet in May, 1916. As a Commander, he served in H.M.S. *Duncan* on the China Station from 1936 to 1939, and in June, 1939, was appointed Assistant to E.A.P. He served in H.M.S. *Kenya* from 1942 to 1944 and was mentioned in despatches. At the end of 1944 he became the First Assistant to M.E.D., Portsmouth. After promotion in 1946, he became the Captain-in-Charge of the Spare Parts Distributing Centre (U.K.). In 1947 he was appointed Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Imperieuse* and later, after the transfer of functions, continued as the Commanding Officer, H.M.S. *Raleigh* until 1949 when he was appointed Chief Engineer, H.M. Dockyard, Gibraltar, and for duty with the Flag Officer, Gibraltar. He became Assistant E.-in-C., London, in November, 1952. Promoted to Rear Admiral in 1953, he was appointed as Extra Naval Assistant to the Second Sea Lord for Engineering Personnel, later becoming the Deputy E.-in-C. (E.A.P.). He became a Naval A.D.C. to Her Majesty the Queen in 1952.

Rear Admiral R. T. Sandars, M.I.Mech.E., who was until recently F.E.O. and Deputy Chief Staff Officer (Material) on the Staff of the Flag Officer (Submarines), was promoted to Rear Admiral and took up his appointment as Deputy E.-in-C. (E.A.P.) on 12th November, 1956. As a Captain, a note of him appeared in Volume 8, Number 1, of January, 1955.

Captain E. J. H. Kirby, D.S.C., R.N., M.I.Mech.E., retired from the Navy, after forty years' service, on 31st December, 1956, while serving as Assistant Director, Naval Ordnance, in the Admiralty, Bath. A short note of his career appeared in Vol. 8, No. 1 of the *Journal*. He served in many ships and on many stations and his less usual experiences included service in H.M.S. *Renown* (1921-1922) when H.R.H. The Prince of Wales paid official visits to India and Japan and again, later, when the Duke and Duchess of York visited Australia. He was the Engineer Officer of H.M.S. *Glasgow* when she, in company with H.M.S. *Enterprise*, fought a successful action against eleven German destroyers in the Bay of Biscay in December, 1943, and for his conduct during the battle was awarded the D.S.C.

Captain Kirby has been appointed by Messrs. Vickers Armstrong Ltd., to their Naval Construction Works, Barrow-in-Furness, where he will be concerned with research into marine propulsion and it is unlikely, therefore, that his long connection with the Navy will be completely severed.

Captain I. O. Backhouse was, until his retirement at his own request on 15th August, 1956, S.E.O. on the Staff of Flag Officer, Scotland. He joined the R.N.C., Osborne, in 1917 and two years later entered the R.N.C., Dartmouth. After a period in H.M.S. *Thunderer*, a battleship of the First World War, he joined the R.N.E.C., Keyham, in 1922. He served in H.M.S. *Vindictive* on the China Station for about two years and in 1928 was appointed to the *Emperor of India* and in 1930 to the monitor, H.M.S. *Erebus*, then the Special Entry Cadet Training Ship. From 1932 to 1936 he served with or in destroyers leaving them to become the First Lieutenant of H.M.S. *Fisgard*, then at Chatham. In 1938, he joined H.M.S. *Repulse* where he remained until January, 1940, when he joined the R.N.A.S., Lympne, evacuated in May, 1940, to Newcastle-under-Lyme. The remainder of the war he spent in *Welshman* and *Aurora* in the Mediterranean and in *Caledonia*. Since the war he has served on the staff of

the R.N.C., Dartmouth and, after promotion to Captain and a Senior Officers' War Course, as A.E.O., Midland Area and Commanding Officer H.M.S. *Raleigh*.

Captain Backhouse has now joined the firm of Sydney Smith and Sons (Nottingham) Ltd., and has his headquarters in London where he will no doubt discuss things other than business with his associate of the same firm, Captain R. W. Marshall.

Captain C. B. Pratt sailed on October 1st to take up the appointment as Naval, Military and Air Attaché in Rio de Janeiro. He has served for the last three years as Chief Staff Officer to Flag Officer Reserve Aircraft. A scholar of King's School, Canterbury, he joined H.M.S. *Thunderer* as a cadet in 1925. After leaving Keyham, he served in the *Enterprise*, *Furious*, *Frobisher* teaching cadets, and on the R.N.E.C. staff and in H.M.S. *Garland*. Having stood by the *King George V*, he served in her as Senior Engineer until promoted to Commander in December, 1941. His subsequent appointments have all been connected with the Fleet Air Arm and included the Command of H.M.S. *Nuthatch* (R.N.A.S., Anthorn).

Captain T. G. B. Pearce, A.M.I.Mech.E., A.M.I.N.A., was promoted in June, 1956, while serving in Chatham Dockyard as the Professional Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent (Industrial) and is at present doing a Tactical Course at Woolwich where, sitting next to a Navigating Officer he gets the hard bits interpreted for him. In December, 1956, he became the Ordnance Engineer Overseer, Northern Area. He learnt 'the trade' under his predecessor twenty-one years ago, has since served on his staff and is looking forward to occupying the Chair this time.

Captain J. G. Little, O.B.E., A.M.I.Mech.E., M.I.Mar.E., promoted to his present rank on 1st January, 1957, was appointed Deputy Manager of Devonport Dockyard on 10th September, 1956, after serving for about three years in E.-in-C.(L). From 1950 to 1953 he was assistant to M.E.D. at Devonport, first as Commander II and finally as Commander I, virtually, but not then so-called, the Deputy Manager. By properly constituting the post of Deputy Manager in the Marine Engineering Department, the management will generally be strengthened and the load of day-to-day business which has fallen upon the Manager will be reduced and the links between men and management will be strengthened by providing a channel for better human relations.

Captain T. H. Maxwell, D.S.C., A.M.I.Mech.E., was appointed Assistant E.-in-C.(N.C.) on the 10th December, 1956. He was, until recently, the Squadron Engineer Officer of the Fifth Submarine Squadron at H.M.S. *Dolphin*, in which appointment he was promoted to Captain. As the Engineer Officer of H.M.S. *Newcastle* he took part in the operations in Korean Waters. From 1948 to 1952 he served in E.-in-C. Department, Bath, as Inspector of the Submarine Section. During the War he served in submarines, a cruiser and Chatham Dockyard and has, more recently, held appointments in the Royal Naval Barracks, Lee-on-Solent, and in H.M.S. *Maidstone*. He has also taken the Joint Services Staff Course and the Senior Officers Technical Course.

Commander W. A. Haynes, O.B.E., has been appointed Deputy Manager, Engineering Department, H.M. Dockyard, Chatham (in the acting rank of Captain), after serving for two-and-a-half years as Executive Officer, H.M.S. *Fisgard*. This is his second appointment to Chatham, where he served as

Assistant for catapults from 1942 to 1944. He was in E.-in-C.'s Department administering the development of the steam catapult from 1948 to 1951. His seagoing service includes H.M. Ships *Dorsetshire*, *Leander*, *Glasgow*, *Gabbard* and *Ceylon*.

Commander K. W. Spooner was appointed Assistant to M.E.D., Chatham, on 22nd September, 1956, after serving for a year as the Engineer Officer of H.M.S. *Wakeful* and as E.O./O.E.O. of the Fifth Frigate Squadron. He was Assistant to M.E.D., Rosyth, for O.E. duties from 1946 to 1948, and was on the Staff of S.O.R.F., Forth and Clyde, for similar duties from 1948 to 1950. In 1950, he was appointed to H.M.S. *St. Kitts*, was promoted to Commander in December, 1951, but remained in the ship until 1952. From 1952 to 1955 he was the last naval officer to serve as T.E.O., Chatham.

Commander J. O. Wigg took up his appointment as Junior 1st Assistant to the Manager, Engineering Department, Devonport Dockyard, on 9th July, 1956. On leaving the Royal Naval Engineering College in August, 1943, he was appointed to H.M.S. *Nelson*. During this commission, he took part in the Normandy landings and, later, was present at the Japanese surrender at Singapore. In 1946, he was appointed to H.M.S. *Fisgard* and in 1948 joined H.M.S. *Wild Goose* in the Persian Gulf where he was Divisional Engineer Officer of the three frigates of the Persian Gulf Division. In 1950, he became Departmental Secretary to E.-in-C., Bath, and, two years later, the Flight Deck Engineer Officer of H.M.S. *Eagle*. After one year as F.D.E.O., he became Senior Engineer, remaining until November, 1954. His appointment as Assistant to F.E.O., Mediterranean, in January, 1955, lasted until his return to the United Kingdom in June, 1956.

OBITUARIES

On 5th September, 1956, **Engineer Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald Skelton, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.**, Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet from 1928 to 1932, died at the age of 84. In 1887, he joined the Royal Naval Engineering College, Keyham and, leaving in 1892, started upon a career of great distinction which led him to the highest post in the Engineering Branch. He served neither in dockyards nor, until his final appointment, at the Admiralty, but his appointments varied greatly and his work reflected always that devotion and dedication that marks a leader, not only of men but of thought and endeavour. In 1900, he was appointed to stand by the building of the *Discovery*, being constructed for the National Antarctic Expedition and to be commanded by Captain R. F. Scott, C.V.O., R.N., who later requested that he should accompany the expedition as Engineer Officer. His service on the expedition was characterized by diligence, adaptability and skill, and his work and interests extended far beyond those of an Engineer Officer.

He joined submarines in 1906, a year before he was promoted to Engineer Commander and remained with them until 1912. Four years later he rejoined them as Engineer Officer on the Staff of Commodore, Submarines, at H.M.S. *Dolphin*, remaining in that appointment until 1918. This service in submarines had been broken by two appointments to battleships, H.M.S. *Superb* (1912–1914) and H.M.S. *Agincourt* (1914–1916) then in the First Battle Squadron, in which he was present at the Battle of Jutland. For his devotion to duty and efficiency in that action he was awarded the D.S.O. In 1918, he went to Archangel in North Russia, on the Staff of the Senior Naval Officer, White Sea, and was promoted to Engineer Captain in the same year. He remained there for

about twelve months and received the C.B.E. for the services that he rendered. In 1920, he became F.E.O. (Med.) and, in 1922, F.E.O. (Home Fleet), during which appointment he was promoted to Engineer Rear-Admiral. Admiral Skelton was the Engineer Rear-Admiral on the Staff of the C.-in-C., The Nore, from 1925 to 1928 and from that appointment became the Engineer-in-Chief of the Fleet.

Admiral Skelton's duties carried him from the arctic to the antarctic, through great changes in propulsion and great changes in ideas and ideals. To the problems that arose he addressed himself with characteristic devotion and gave to the Service, and to any task that he undertook, his integrity and loyalty.

Captain Ralph Russell Shorto, D.S.C., R.N., died suddenly in Naples on 22nd November, 1956, at the age of 48 years, while on a visit in connection with the N.A.T.O. Defence College, Paris, to which he was appointed earlier in the year.

Educated at Downside College, he joined the Navy as a Special Entry Cadet in September, 1926, and went to the Royal Naval Engineering College, Keyham, the following year. His first seagoing appointment was to H.M.S. *Durban*, then on the West Indies Station, in 1931. In 1934 he was appointed to H.M.S. *Rodney* in the Home Fleet and, in 1936, to H.M.S. *Emerald* on the East Indies Station. In 1938 he returned to the R.N.E.C., Keyham, as a member of the staff. He joined H.M.S. *Punjabi* in 1940, was wounded in action in the second Battle of Narvik, and was awarded the D.S.C. for his services. On recovery, he was for a short time A.F.E.O., Liverpool, but was soon transferred to Avalon, Newfoundland, to look after the escort forces on that side of the Atlantic. He returned to the United Kingdom as A.B.E.O., Londonderry, in January, 1942, becoming an Acting Commander, and was promoted to Commander in 1943. After service in H.M.S. *London* he became Assistant E.A.P. from 1946 to 1949 when he was appointed Executive Officer of H.M.S. *Thunderer*. In 1951, he became an Acting Captain on the Staff of the Controller (N.A.3. S.L.) and in December, 1951, was promoted to Captain. He became the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Condor* in January, 1954.

Captain Shorto had a widely varied career and his ability and devotion to the Service had been recognized by the anticipation of his promotions both to Commander and to Captain by acting rank. His service in training establishments and as A.E.A.P. gave him a very wide circle of friends and acquaintances throughout the whole structure of the Navy. Not least of his attributes were his memory for names, faces and personalities, his ready understanding and his genial personality. Throughout 30 years, he gave unstintingly his devotion, integrity and ability to the Service and by his example led others to do the same.
