



The Braemar Castle, flanked by H.M.S. Ark Royal and destroyers Corunna (to port) and Blackpool, steams towards Aden as jet aircraft fly past in welcome

FROM CAPTAIN J. B. JAMES and FIRST RADIO OFFICER P. THOMAS we hear the story of

## Taking the Salute

JUNE 1st was a big day in the life of *Braemar Castle*. A distinguished passenger, Lieutenant-General C. H. P. Harington, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., the new Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces, was approaching the headquarters of his command at Aden.

Arrangements for welcoming ceremonies had been made on the first two days of the *Braemar Castle's* passage south down the Red Sea and shortly after 9.0 a.m. on 31st May a Shackleton aircraft of R.A.F. Middle East rendezvoused with the ship about 300 miles north-east of Perim Island, which marks the southern limit of the Red Sea, circling round whilst greetings were exchanged by lamp and radio, before flying back to Aden.

Perim Island was rounded early the next morning and all was in readiness to meet a welcome from H.M.S. *Ark Royal* and two escorting destroyers, H.M.S. *Corunna* and H.M.S. *Blackpool*. When twenty-five miles off the port, at 7.30 a.m. precisely, the latter two craft took station, one on each bow, and proceeded as escort. The *Ark Royal* (Captain Pollock, R.N.), with Vice-Admiral Gibson flying his flag in that vessel, could be seen in the distance flying off aircraft; then at 7.50 a.m., as a steam-past salute, the carrier passed down the *Braemar Castle's* port side, made

a tight turn and steamed at high speed (estimated at 25 knots) close down the starboard side. Then there was a terrific roar as fourteen jets, flying in formation, came down out of the sun in a fly past, on a reciprocal course to the ship—a most impressive spectacle. Messages of welcome were being flashed back and forth and all the time there were two or three helicopters buzzing around like big dragonflies.

The *Braemar Castle* lived up to the occasion with gleaming white decks, brasswork brightly polished and every halyard flying new bunting. The passengers, who had been alerted the previous evening of the intended welcome, were out on deck in force to take full advantage of the proceedings.

The navy moved off about 8.30 a.m. and thirty minutes later the liner was met by a fast R.A.F. launch and two R.A.F. helicopters which provided the escort to the limits of the port.

At 10.00 a.m. it was back to business on the *Braemar Castle* as bunker fuelling pipe-lines were connected up, stevedores were opening hatches and passengers commenced disembarking. All in all, a most memorable couple of hours.