

# THE PASSING OF M.I.M.S.O.

Another milestone in the history of communications in Malta was reached on 6th June 1958, when Manoel Island M.S.O. closed down. The small signal station serving Marsamxett continues to function, providing a visual link with shore, displaying weather and boat traffic signals, and transmitting practical V.S. exercises.

This is one of the effects of the closure of H.M.S. *Ricasoli*, and the subsequent transfer of the S.T.C. to the Fleet Training Centre at Manoel Island. It is also occasioned by the abolition of the appointment of Flag Officer, Second in Command, and the institution of the appointment of Flag Officer Flotillas, whose flag (and staff) are to be afloat, except for short periods.

The last Flag Officer, Second in Command was Vice Admiral Sir Robin Durnford-Slater, K.C.B., who, assisted by Captain C. P. Mills, C.B.E., D.S.O., R.N., was the Allied Naval Task Force Commander during the assault on, and withdrawal from, the Suez Canal area in the closing months of 1956. As C.T.F. on that occasion he had what was probably the largest staff of (C) officers ever to serve afloat on one staff.

When he hauled down his flag as the last of an illustrious line of Flag Officers, Second in Command, Mediterranean, his staff transferred to the new Flag Officer Flotillas Mediterranean, who is Rear Admiral R. A. Ewing, D.S.C. This staff will be accommodated in H.M.S. *Sheffield* for sea exercises and cruises, and for short periods will come ashore to Manoel Island. The staff of the late Manoel Island M.S.O. will be absorbed elsewhere, or returned to U.K. without relief.

Manoel Island M.S.O. has provided the small ships of the fleet with easily accessible facilities, which will no doubt be missed. It will be a long trek to Lascaris to check logs and obtain local information. Besides, that Mighty Comcen has no C.Y.S. Rainsbury to cosset, cudgel and encourage the young Petty Officer who finds himself in charge of his own department for the first time. And even if there is, he cannot spare the time.

So Manoel Island M.S.O. has closed down. We thank Malta Comcen for being such a good and patient "big brother", and all at Malta who helped us and put up with our shortcomings. Had we been permitted to make just one unnecessary signal, we would have wished "Good Luck to all Communicators, and in particular to our closest friends the small ships".