

HMS *Victory* 11 December 1937 to 3 January 1938

With *Glorious* still undergoing a refit in Portsmouth Dockyard, VAT was appointed to a holding billet for three weeks during which he took leave. Thus, he found himself borne briefly on the books of *Victory*, Nelson's famous 1805 flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar. Still in commission after 160 years, *Victory* was flying the flag of the Commander-in-Chief Portsmouth.

HMS *Glorious* 4 January 1938 to 23 May 1938

Joining *Glorious*, VAT had two weeks onboard to become familiar with his ship's duties before the carrier sailed. He would have been intrigued to see that after her last major refit the carrier now had arrestor wires fitted and the upper hangar doors forward had been welded shut after a storm had breached them and destroyed six aircraft. The flight deck and round-down had also been extended aft over the quarterdeck. At 27,560 tons and with a crew of 1,260, *Glorious* had an operational range of 3,000 nautical miles at 24 knots.

On 16 January 1938 *Glorious* sailed for Weymouth Bay where she embarked No. 802 Squadron (Nimrods and Ospreys) and No. 825 Squadron (Swordfish) from RAF Abingdon in Oxfordshire. There the other change that VAT would have noticed from 1932 was that a batsman, or Deck Landing Control Officer, had been introduced to carrier operations in 1937, guiding the pilot in his curving final approach. *Glorious* then headed for Malta via Gibraltar where she had left her other two Swordfish squadrons, Nos. 812 and 823, ashore at RAF Hal Far. These were embarked on 7 February as she left Malta for Alexandria, Egypt. These four squadrons would alternate between *Glorious* and Hal Far, with occasional disembarkations to Dekheila near Alexandria.

Over the next eighteen months, as he had in 1932-33, VAT saw much of the Mediterranean and its contiguous countries, but this time it was mainly from the air. Ports in Corsica, Yugoslavia, Greece and Cyprus were visited where time alongside could often be a week or more. Longer periods were spent in her homeport of Malta (nine weeks from November 1938 to January 1939) and in Alexandria.



Glorious, having disembarked all squadrons to Hal Far, entering Grand Harbour, Malta. Her aft flight deck extension is prominent, with the "GL" identifying letters just visible near the lift well.