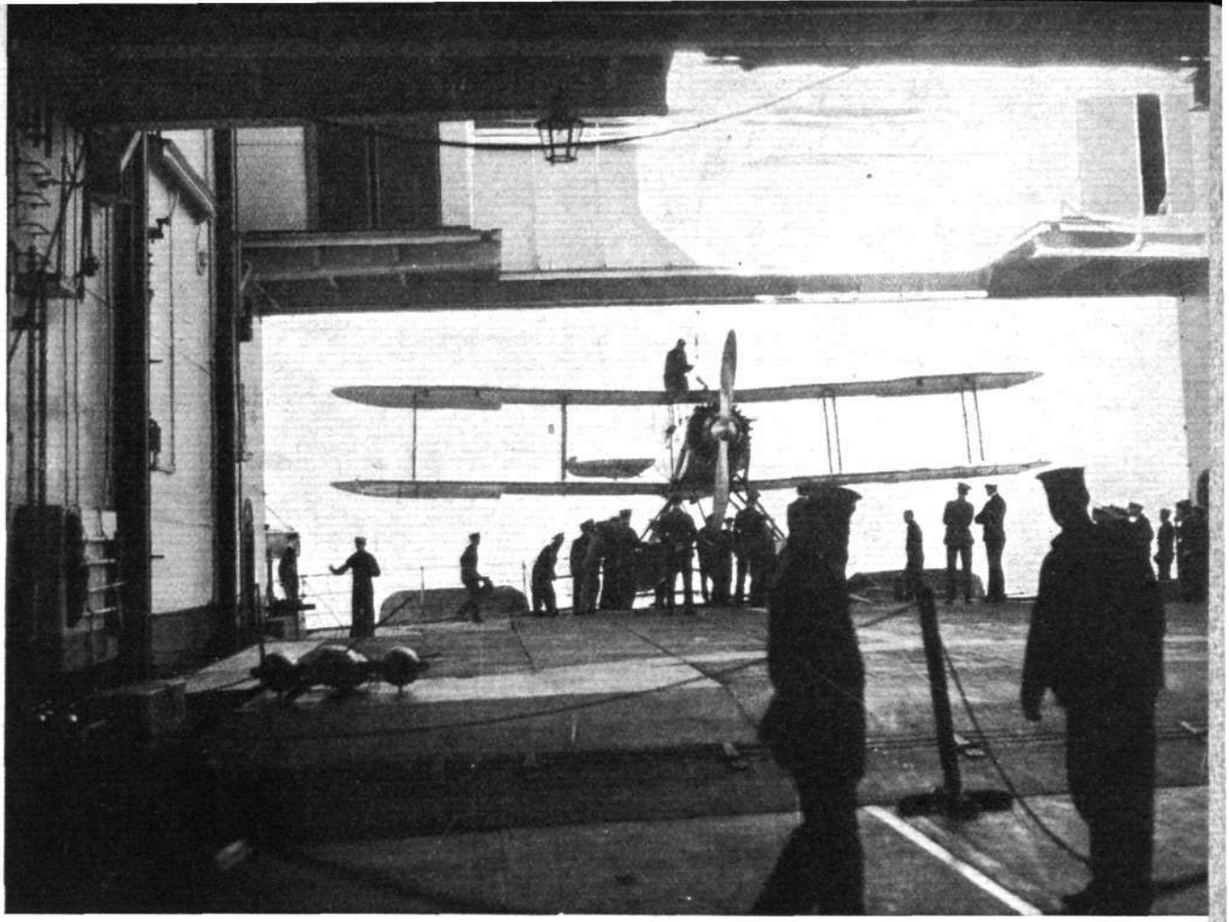

The immensity of the hangars of a modern carrier is well brought out in this view taken in the *Courageous*. (R.A.F. Official photograph.)

Fleet Air Arm to-day, is classed as a two-seater fighter-reconnaissance type and has a 600 h.p. Rolls-Royce Kestrel V engine. It is capable of 186 m.p.h. at 14,000ft.

Our standard single-seater fleet fighter is the Nimrod, another Hawker product which does 206 m.p.h. with the same power plant as the Osprey. There is a feeling in some quarters that the single-seater fighter is unsuitable for fleet work and that it should be abandoned in favour of two-seaters. It seems, in fact, that there may come into prominence a type adaptable for use as a two-seater fighter, for light bombing (particularly of the diving variety) and possibly for reconnaissance.

Designed some years ago for torpedo-bomber work, the Pegasus-engined Blackburn Baffin, a sturdy biplane of composite construction, also figures on the establishment of the Fleet Air Arm. Another well-established biplane type used primarily for spotting but serving also as a bomber, is the Fairey Seal with Siddeley Panther engine.

A particularly welcome addition to F.A.A. equipment during the past year or so, the Supermarine Walrus, is a Pegasus-engined amphibian flying boat suitable for spotting and reconnaissance work from carriers and other types of naval vessel with accommodation for aircraft.

Great Britain has frequently been accused of neglecting certain vital aspects of naval air work, particularly with regard to the provision of machines on battleships and cruisers, but, be that as it may, the fact remains that the British Navy has more vessels devoted exclusively to the operation of aircraft than any other power.

Flying-off and flying-on operations are controlled from a nerve-centre such as that shown. (*Flight* photograph.)

The *Courageous* and *Glorious* are our two finest carriers. Launched as cruisers in 1916 their final conversions for aircraft work were completed in 1928 and 1930 respectively. Of 22,500 tons displacement, they have a speed of 30½ knots. The major characteristics of the *Furious* are similar to those of the *Courageous* and *Glorious*, but she can readily be distinguished from those vessels by the complete absence of funnels and superstructure from her flight deck. She is not to be confused with the old *Argus*, which is almost completely void of top-hamper, and is a smaller vessel, displacing 14,450 tons. It seems that ships of approximately this size are destined for increased popularity as aircraft carriers. H.M.S. *Hermes* (10,850 tons) is of distinctive appearance, having a single funnel and a large superstructure with a good deal of top-hamper on the starboard side of her flight deck. A great deal of experimental work is conducted on H.M.S. *Pegasus*, an old seaplane carrier of 6,900 tons, no longer listed as a unit of the war fleet.

In service with the Royal Australian Navy is the *Albatross*, an unorthodox craft of 4,800 tons, equipped for the operation of six seaplanes.

H.M.S. *Ark Royal*, now building for the Royal Navy, will displace 22,000 tons, but, despite the fact that her tonnage is much less than that of the *Glorious* and *Courageous*, the finest carriers in commission at the moment, she is likely to have accommodation for a larger complement of aircraft. At present our best carrier vessels can house four squadrons each.

United States of America

Some indication of what may be expected from the *Ark Royal* is provided by the recently commissioned American carrier the *Ranger* (14,500 tons), which was designed for 29.25 knots and carries seventy-two aeroplanes—as many as the *Saratoga* and *Lexington*, the largest carriers in the world. Apart from this pair of huge vessels (33,000 tons, 33-35 knots, complement 1,962 officers and men), the U.S. Navy has the *Langley*, a slow, converted fleet collier of 11,500 tons accommodating thirty aircraft.

Construction is under way on three new American carriers, two of which, the *Yorktown* and *Enterprise*, are of 19,000 tons, while third, known provisionally as the CV7, displaces 14,700 tons. The completion of these ships will give the U.S. Navy a carrier tonnage of 146,500, which will be within two or three thousand tons of the total tonnage of British and Australian vessels, including the *Ark Royal*.

(*To be concluded.*)