

battleship "Graf Spee" had been engaged by our cruisers. For weeks she had been attacking our sea lanes. It was the Fleet Air Arm that had tracked her down, the old, slow, steady Swordfish of the "Ark Royal," flying day after day over the vast spaces of the South Atlantic. By finding where she was not, they pointed to where she was. You remember Nelson used to call his frigates the eyes of the Fleet—that's what the carrier-borne reconnaissance aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm are to-day. But instead of having only a few miles of vision, a carrier can see hundreds of miles.

But don't imagine it is easy. The aircraft fly far out in the ocean without landmarks. They have to fly, like ships sail, on a dead reckoning. If the enemy is near, they cannot be guided by wireless, for that would give away their carrier's position. Their only aerodrome is a tiny moving speck covered perhaps by cloud or fog, to which they must return before their petrol is exhausted. Perhaps, while they are hundreds of miles away, she may be forced to alter course.

Unless they can guess her direction from their knowledge of fleet movements they may never find her again. The observer has to depend solely on himself—all he's got to guide him is his training and sea experience. Then he has got to know everything there is to be known about the appearance of ships, both ours and the enemy's. His eyes feed an Admiral's brain. He has got to get his news through by wireless, and up there with the clamour of the engine in his ears, cold and cramped for space, the telegraphist air gunner has got to tap the message out correctly. On the opinion of a single observer, perhaps only catching glimpses of the enemy in flying spume and cloud, the movements of a fleet may depend. That is why, though Fleet Air Arm pilots are partly trained in the great flying schools of the R.A.F., observers and telegraphist air gunners have to be trained from start to finish by the Navy. On no single body of men in the Service does more depend.

Now switch your mind to another year—to November, 1940. We are left



The deck landing officer guiding the pilot of an aircraft just about to land. This is done by means of "bats," which are reflectors containing lamps which can be seen easily.