

HOVERCRAFT

by Major R. W. Holmes, R.A.S.C.

IN January 1962, the Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit was formed at H.M.S. Ariel, Lee-on-Solent. It consisted of a Lieut.-Commander R.N., Officer in Charge, and a representative of each Service in the same rank, plus eight ratings of the Royal Navy. The first Army representative was a R.A.S.C. Officer.

THE INTERSERVICE HOVERCRAFT TRIALS UNIT

The Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit came into being as a result of the Ministry of Defence directing the Admiralty to evaluate the hovercraft principle on behalf of all three Services. The Admiralty formed the Interservice Hovercraft Working Party which includes representatives of the three Service Departments—The Director of Equipment Policy and the Director General Fighting Vehicles coming from the War Office. This Working Party conducts its detailed work through two sub-committees, one Operational and one Technical. The Trials Unit works under the control of the Working Party and now consists of:—

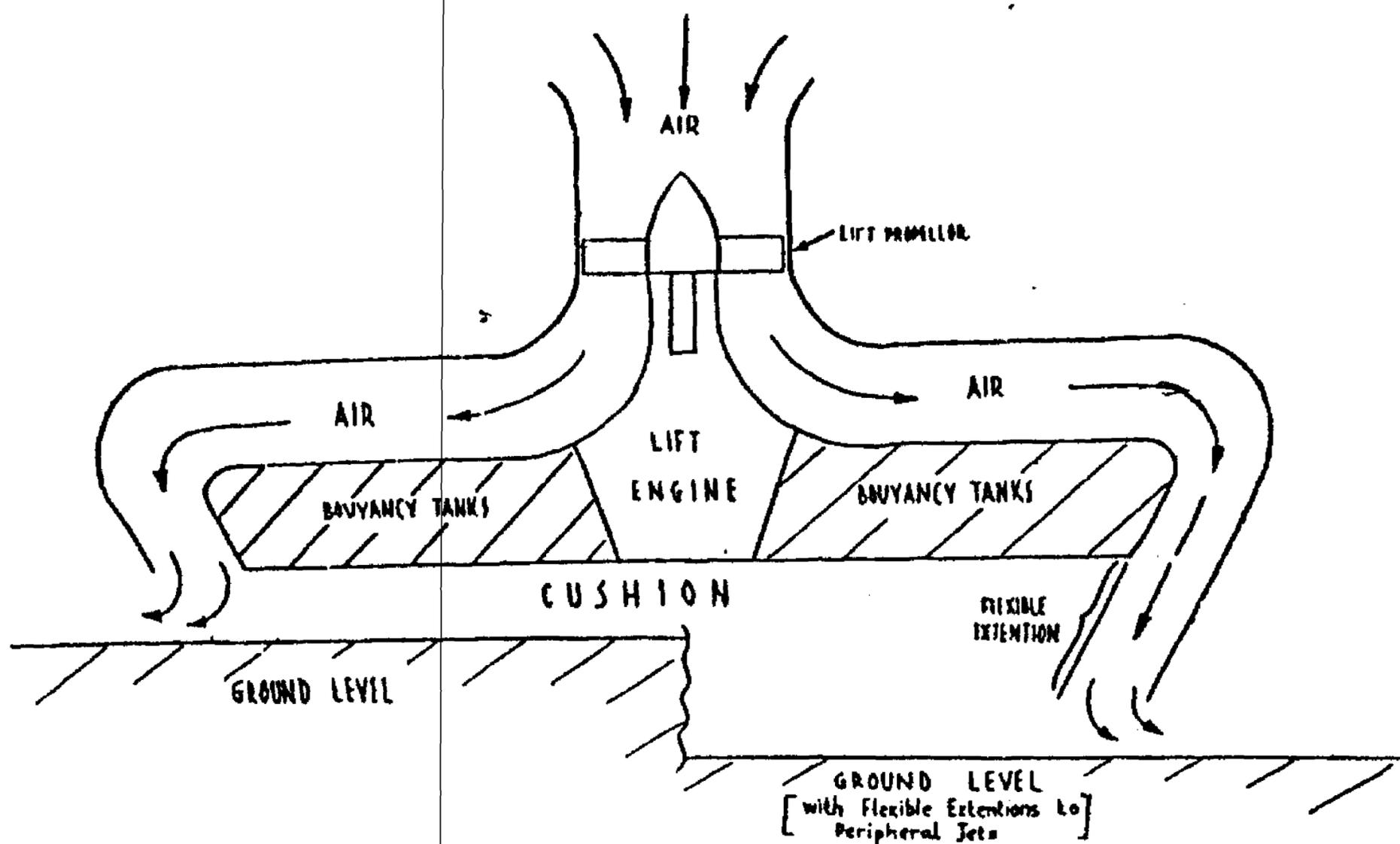
Lieut.-Commander R.N.	Officer in Charge
Lieut.-Commander R.N.	Navigation specialist
Major (Army)	T.S.O. II
Sqn. Leader R.A.F.	Test Pilot
Captain R.E.M.E.	Engineer Officer
A "ground crew" of 7 R.N., 2 Army (R.E.M.E.), and 3 R.A.F. personnel.	

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

Before considering where hovercraft transport will fit into the Army sphere it is necessary to understand how it works and what is involved in its operation. Furthermore the present state of development and future possibilities need to be kept clearly in mind.

A hovercraft is a surface-borne vehicle; any surface will do as long as it will contain the bottom of the cushion. Marsh, mud, water, quicksand all give a good seal and will support a hovercraft without difficulty whether it is in the hover or at rest on the surface.

The first point of importance is that hovercraft are not flying machines they are surface-borne craft just as trucks or ships. The cushions which support them clear of the ground are analogous to suspensions of vehicles. The cushion is sealed off by the craft on top, the ground surface underneath and an air curtain round the sides. This curtain is maintained by air expelled from the peripheral jet towards the centre of the craft. Once the cushion reaches sufficient pressure to lift the craft clear of the ground the air flowing through the peripheral jet is made to turn outwards to escape to the atmosphere. In order to turn this corner it requires an acceleration towards the centre of the turn; to obtain an acceleration a force is necessary; this force is supplied by the air pressure in the cushion. See Figure 1.



$$\text{Cushion Pressure} \propto \frac{\text{jet thickness} \times (\text{jet vel})^2 \times \text{jet angle}}{\text{height of jet orifice above surface}}$$

CROSS SECTION OF SRN I TYPE OF HOVERCRAFT

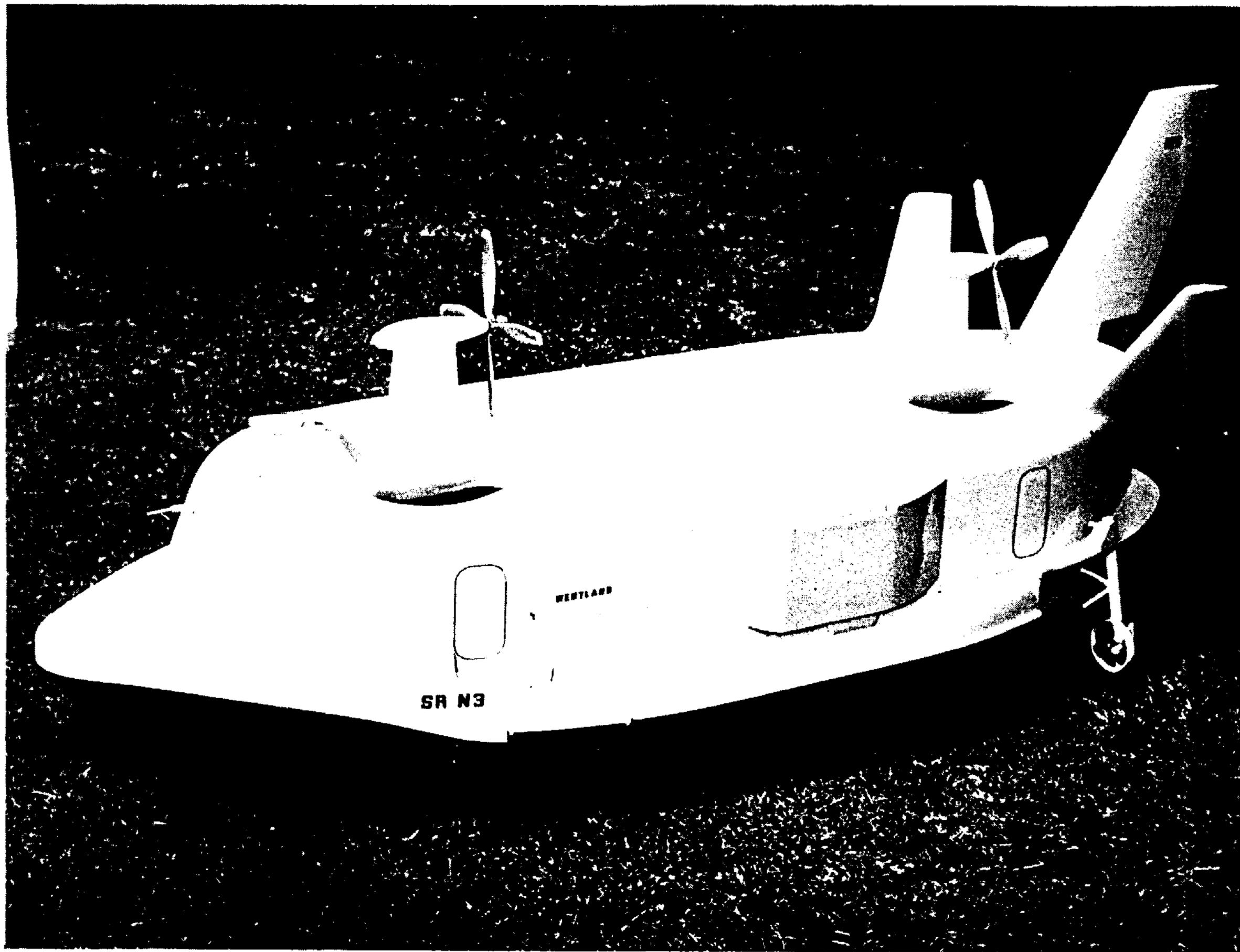
FIGURE 1

The cushion pressure obtained in this manner is currently about 70 lbs. per square foot. (This is about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per square inch which is within the day to day variation of atmospheric pressure).

The second important point to absorb is that the craft is supported by the cushion pressure acting over its bottom surface. The peripheral jet merely provides the seal to maintain the cushion pressure. As a result of this it becomes clear that the lifting force available is dependant on the area of craft bottom on which the cushion can act; the power required to maintain the cushion depends upon the length of peripheral jet required to enclose the cushion. The first of these, the area, varies as the square of the craft's dimensions, whereas the second varies as the linear dimension. Consequently the larger the craft the greater the weight which can be lifted for each b.h.p. put into providing the air curtain.

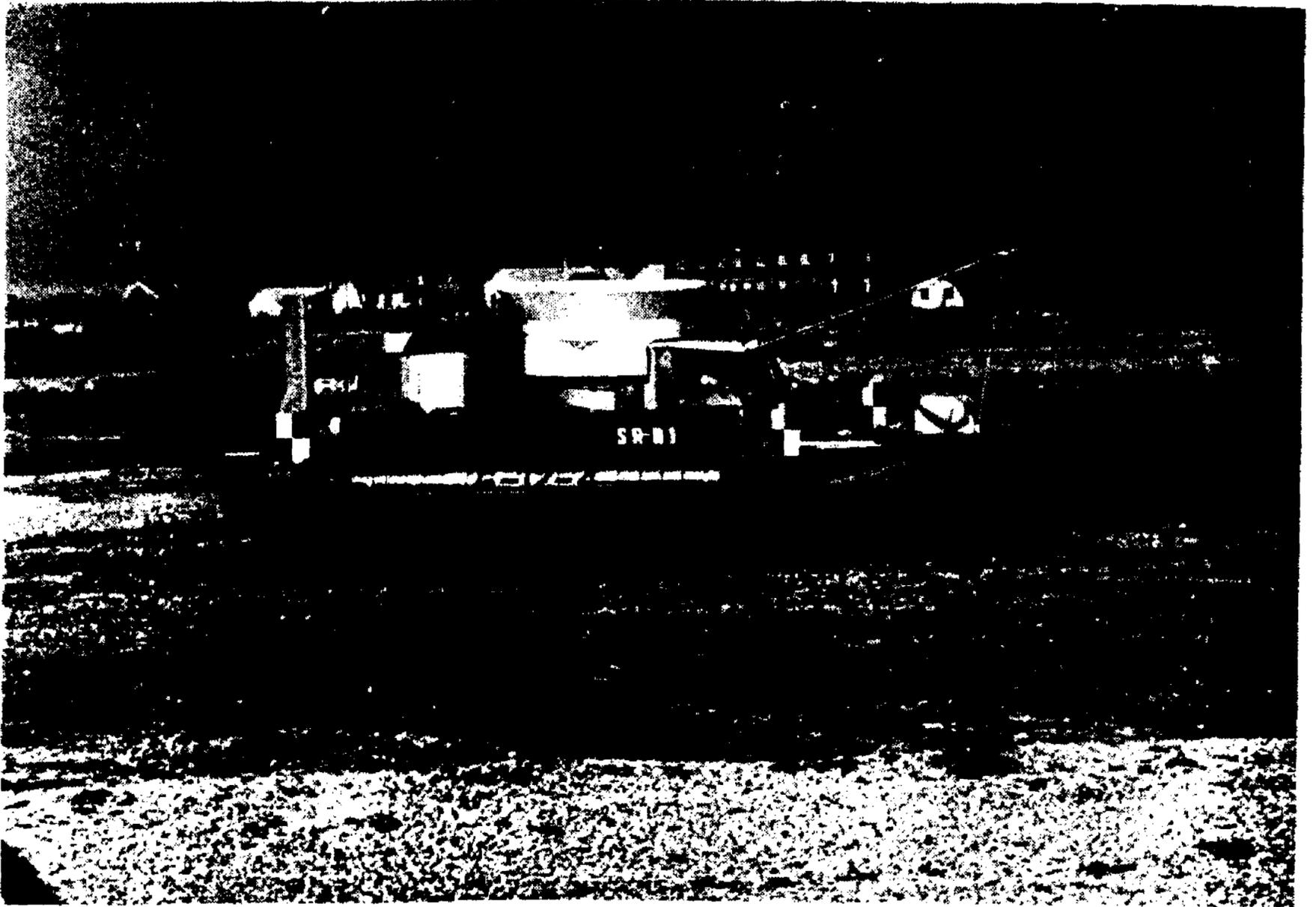
Adding 50% to the size of the craft in linear terms will approximately double the bottom area of the craft, and hence the lift force. For this reason small craft approximating to the size of trucks are not likely to be economical propositions for load carrying.

A third point of significance is the possibility of increasing the ground clearance of the craft's land structure by using flexible extensions to the air curtain jets. This has the effect of vastly improving obstacle crossing ability without the necessity of increasing the true hover height with consequent increase in lift power requirements. Small craft of the order of 40 ft. x 20 ft. can be fitted with flexible extension (skirts or trunks) up to 5 ft. in length, which will allow them to take a 4 ft. vertical step. There are disadvantages to these skirts in loss of stability and increase of weight but they are the answer to the problem of producing a suitable craft for overland, or rough sea, work. In the future it is possible that this flexibility will extend into the craft



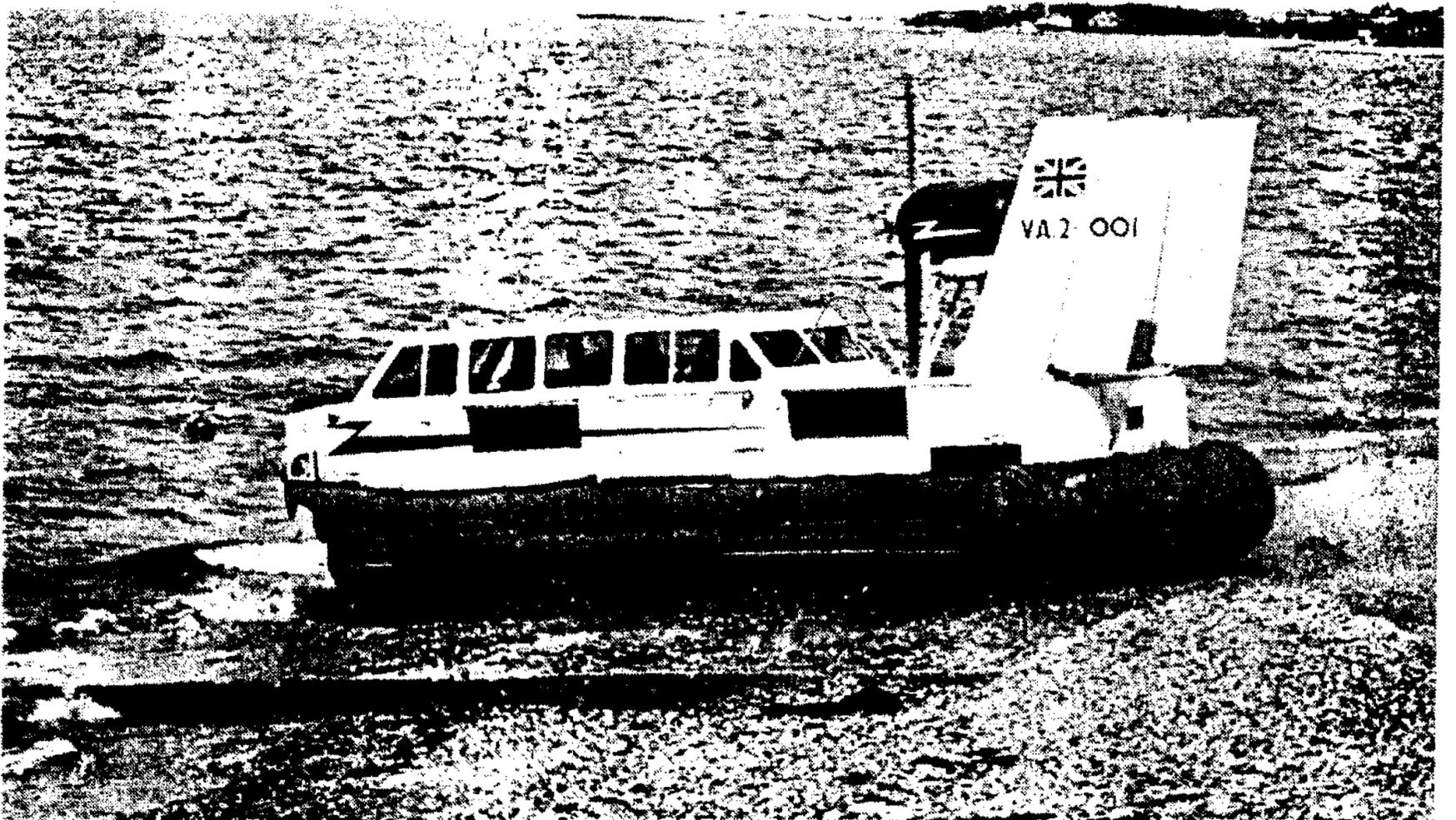
S.R.N. 3.

A scale model of S.R.N. 3. It is 75 ft. long, 32 ft. wide and has a gross weight of 37 tons. The outboard water propellers are for cruising on the surface at low speed.



S.R.N. 1.

S.R.N. 1., the grandmother of hovercraft, now has 4 ft. 6 in. skirts which have made overland travel a practical possibility.



V.A. 2.

The V.A. 2, with 20 inch flexible skirts. This craft 30 ft. long \times 15 ft. wide can be broken down for air transport in BEVERLEY or ARGOSY and is mainly intended for world wide demonstration. There are two driving positions and room for three passengers in the back seat.

itself giving the ability to bump into minor obstacles without any of the hard structure being affected.

So far we have mentioned only the air curtain type of craft. There are two others which should be watched. One is the wide-wall craft, of the Denny type, which retains its cushion along the sides with a solid side-wall which always penetrates the surface of the water. The other is the "plenum chamber" type in which daylight clearance is very small and there is no air curtain, but the cushion is retained by a flexible side-wall all round the craft. Both these types show economy in lift power but are slower and have a greater surface drag than the air curtain craft.

THE DRIVING PROBLEM

Now to move on to the problems of driving hovercraft. Once up on its cushion the craft can be propelled by very small forces. A man can push a heavy craft with ease on the level, and a very slight downgrade, or wind, will move the heaviest of craft. There is no "keel" effect as with a boat or wheeled vehicle. This adds up to the fact that control forces are required in all directions, even when stationary, so that winds and slopes can be counteracted in addition to having the ability to drive forward and execute turns which require a sideways acceleration towards the centre of the turn.

One system of obtaining these forces is to provide the ability to lower one side of the craft by reducing the hover height locally. This tilts the craft and it will then tend to move in the direction in which it is tilted. The drawback to this system is that hover height is reduced and the force produced is limited by the tilt obtainable before all the daylight clearance (on one side) is lost. The most powerful system to date is the use of two variable pitch propellers, each mounted on a swivelling pylon, one in front of the other. In this system the pylons can be turned to provide side force; this can also be obtained while stationary, using one propeller in reverse pitch and changing the direction in which its pylon is turned.

Given this control, which is of necessity obtained from the air and therefore rather weak, it is possible to conduct the hovercraft where you wish provided the winds, gradients and shape of the surface are within its capacity. Using the sideways force at present available a side slope of 1 in 15 or a side wind of 18 knots can be held. If the slope or wind is more severe it is necessary to point the nose of the craft uphill or up wind so that the full thrust power can be used. This sometimes results in the craft proceeding on the desired track, but with its bow point 30° or 40° to one side. The shape of the surface, ditches, steps, rocks, bushes, etc., which can be crossed depends largely on the length of skirt fitted and the daylight clearance. At present these lengths are limited to a proportion of the craft width. Daylight clearance may be up to 5% and skirt length up to 20%. In general the vertical step ability is equal to the daylight clearance plus $4/5$ of the skirt length but, naturally, allowance must be made for the pitch and roll of the craft caused by previous obstacles. This effect is most noticeable at sea where waves of the critical wavelength, that is those about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 times the craft length, can cause impacting even if their height is within the craft's ability for a single obstacle. The actual wave-length which causes this trouble varies with the speed of the craft, the effective parameter being the rate at which the craft meets wavecrests. Theoretically it should be possible to accelerate through the period of impacting to obtain a smoother ride in the same way as a vehicle passes through a bad period on a corrugated track. It should also be noted that the wave shapes on water move at an appreciable speed depending on the wavelength. Because of this the speed at which wavelengths become critical is different for travel into the waves and away from them. A point of interest to seamen is that the hovercraft has no problems of broaching to when travelling with the waves as it does not rely on the water for steering. Driving over water has one marked difference to overland driving. At low speed, under 20 knots the aircushion displaces water under the craft in the same way as a displacement craft and this causes a wave drag which is quite considerable. By the time the craft reaches 20 knots it has climbed out of this depression and is skimming over the surface

without displacing any water at all: in this condition, called "over the hump", the wave drag has reduced to negligible proportions except in cases where the skirts actually touch the water. The wave drag below the hump can be of great assistance in stopping the craft and manoeuvring at slow speed.

THE MANAGEMENT OF HOVERCRAFT OPERATIONS

The million dollar question is "when does it pay to use hovercraft transport instead of current types?". To reach valid conclusions there are some basic factors to be considered. First the ton m.p.g. situation: the cry of the transport experts! Considering S.R.N.3, which is the most advanced hovercraft today, once it comes into the hover to move away its engines will be operating at normal cruising power and changes of speed will not vary the fuel consumption per unit of time. Hence if the craft operates at 30 knots the ton. m.p.g. will be half that given at 60 knots. It follows that the faster the craft can travel the more economical it will be. The hourly consumption rate is expected to be about 300 gallons of AVTAG per hour which will carry 10 tons up to 70 miles.

Another factor sometimes arising is the cost of provision of terminals for the journey. Hovercraft can cross the shore line and alight on hard ground without any need for harbours or piers, a very important factor in undeveloped areas where facilities do not already exist.

The hovercraft route from A to B may be only a fraction of the distance to be covered by alternative methods of transport. A prime example of this is across a river estuary which might be a ten minute journey compared with a 50 mile diversion up river to the first bridge for road transport. Again the "going" must be considered, this can reduce the load carrying ability of a truck by 50% but the hovercraft will carry its rated load over the softest surfaces. In the worst cases of bad going for trucks, perhaps swamp or jungle, the hovercraft may have a suitable route such as a river and can do the job whereas other surface transport cannot.

A more nebulous, but nevertheless concrete advantage of the hovercraft speed is in cases where the possibility of speedy response to a demand for stores or troops can be met from a base further back from the scene of operations. Stocks of items do not then have to be moved backwards and forwards with the ebb and flow of the battle, nor do occasionally required items have to be held forward in case they are required quickly. Also with the hovercraft's amphibious capability it will be possible to use islands offshore or in rivers as forward bases for operations on the mainland. These bases will be more easily defended against infiltrators or mere pilferers, thus saving equipment and manpower necessary for defence.

Finally, of course, to operate a hovercraft economically it is necessary to "keep the wheels turning". On short runs a greater percentage of time is spent in load handling and manoeuvring at the terminals, thus reducing the ton miles of work done by what is, after all, a very expensive piece of kit.

WORK LEADING UP TO HOVERCRAFT ENTERING SERVICE

You have read some fairly sweeping statements about hovercraft, what they will do and how to employ them. These will give rise to some thought and scepticism, but it is also necessary to bear in mind the relative state of development. The first craft (SRN 1) first hovered in 1959, only five years ago. Compare this with motor cars (circa 1895), and aeroplanes (1903); we are still learning about and improving the performance of these old stagers.

The Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit has, in the last 18 months, conducted trials on six hovercraft namely SRN 1 and 2, VA 1 and 2, CC 1 and Denny 2; that is all U.K. craft except Denny 1 and CC 2. Follow up trials of long skirts on SRN1 and VA 2 have taken place. All these craft are only the first and second efforts by the several firms and it is on this meagre experience that today's opinions are based. It is

true to say that all the snags have been encountered and in spite of this there is a glowing future visible ahead. It is to achieve this that future work is directed.

The first hovercraft to belong to the unit was completed in October 1963. This is the SRN 3, payload 10 tons, 75 ft. long, 32 ft. wide, 34ft. high, 4000 h.p., 70 knots cruising speed (78 m.p.h.). In addition a movement is afoot to obtain a smaller craft of about 2 tons payload, 40 ft. by 20 ft., on long skirts with a higher power weight ratio and improved manoeuvrability. This, in conjunction with SRN 3, will bracket the sizes of craft likely to be of use to the Army and will allow service trials to establish the world wide uses of hovercraft and the characteristics required of them. Trials with these machines will range from deserts in Libya and Arabia to coasts and rivers in the Far East, Greenland's ice cap and Canada's northern territories.

There is a long way to go yet, but it will involve work of great interest and presents a goal well worth achieving.

POSTINGS

IN the December edition mention was made of a new feature; it would perhaps be more correct to say that there is a revival of a former practice, as older readers of THE WAGGONER will know.

No claim for completeness is made nor do we accept responsibility for accuracy. These names have been extracted from unit notes as submitted.

Officers :

Capt. Baker—17 Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut. Baker—90 Squadron, Middle East Command.
 Capt. L. I. Barnard—42 Squadron, U.K./Cyprus.
 Major D. Bell—H.Q. Northern Ireland Command.
 Capt. A. L. Bridger—FARELF.
 Major D. A. Brown—School of Transport, U.K.
 Capt. L. Bryant—Middle East Command.
 2/Lieut. Burt-Reid—26 Squadron, U.K.
 2/Lieut. Clare—56 Squadron, FARELF.
 Capt. J. A. Collar—27 Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut. C. Constable—Middle Wallop.
 Lieut. C. R. G. Davies—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut. J. S. Davies—37 Squadron (33 Regiment), FARELF.
 Capt. C. F. Douglas—H.Q., Eastern Command.
 Major D. A. English, H.Q., A.E.R.
 Major A. M. Farmer, 14 Air Despatch Regiment, U.K.
 Major P. C. Field—H.Q., Scottish Command.
 Capt. Frost—Middle East Command.
 Major M. D. Gallagher—H.Q., B.A.O.R.
 Major (Q.M.) R. Gordon—Junior Leaders' Regiment.
 Capt. S. F. Haste—31 Squadron, Gurkha Transport Regiment, FARELF.
 Major J. G. Hatherell—15 Air Despatch Regiment, FARELF.
 Lieut. F. G. Holroyd—2 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Major M. C. Hughes—10 Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut. B. J. B. Innis—2 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Capt. I. R. Jones—3 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Capt. M. S. T. Keen—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Capt. R. A. A. Lees-Low—Junior Leaders' Regiment.
 2/Lieut. D. Lucas—60 Squadron, Middle East Command.
 Capt. A. K. May—Sultan of Muscat Armed Forces.
 Capt. M. G. McIndoe—200 Hovercraft Squadron.
 Lieut. G. N. Neal—Army Youth Team, Edinburgh.
 Major J. R. G. Nicholas—16 Air Despatch Squadron, Middle East Command.
 Lieut. A. Norris—51 Port Squadron, U.K.
 Capt. P. I. Palmar—School of Transport, U.K.
 2/Lieut. M. Ponikowski—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut. R. Powell—28 Squadron, Gurkha Transport Regiment, FARELF.
 Major M. Randall-Smith—Maritime Group.
 2/Lieut. Robyns—17 Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 Major E. Rose—51 Port Squadron, U.K.
 Capt. D. J. M. Sankey—Junior Leaders' Regiment.
 Capt. J. R. D. Scrimshaw-Wright—200 Hovercraft Squadron.
 Lieut. M. R. Stevens—31 Squadron, Gurkha Transport Regiment, FARELF.
 Major R. Stocker—Gurkha Transport Regiment, FARELF.

Capt. A. R. Swain—26 Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Thomas—27 Regiment, U.K.
 Lieut.-Colonel R. R. L. Thomas—M.O.D. (Tpt. 3).
 Major J. M. Tippet-Isles—32 Regiment, FARELF.
 Major J. Tulloch—32 Regiment, FARELF.
 Capt. E. R. L. Wade—401 Troop, Cyrenaica.
 Capt. A. Whittall—FARELF.
 Lieut. White—Junior Tradesmen's Regiment, Rhyl.
 Major E. A. Wiles—10 Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Major G. F. J. Williamson—27 Regiment, U.K.
 Capt. R. E. Wills—H.Q. 3 Division, U.K.
 2/Lieut. Wilson—90 Squadron, Middle East Command.
 Capt. H. K. C. Winskell—FARELF.
 Major N. O. E. Witt—School of Transport, U.K.

Warrant Officers and Sergeants :

W.O.I Allen—H.Q. 3 Divisional Regiment, U.K.
 Sgt. Archibald—FARELF.
 W.O.II Baker—42 Squadron, U.K./Cyprus.
 W.O.II Boot—6 Training Regiment.
 Sgt. Bridges—11 Training Regiment.
 S/Sgt. Cope—2 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 S/Sgt. Downington—56 Squadron, FARELF.
 S.Q.M.S. Green—56 Squadron, FARELF.
 Sgt. Greenwood—6 Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 Sgt. Halford—43 M.C. Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 Sgt. Harmer—50 M.C. Squadron, U.K.
 Sgt. Harry—Naples(?).
 Sgt. Horrocks—School of Transport, U.K.
 W.O.II Irving—2 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Sgt. Jary—23 Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 Sgt. Kirk—Junior Leaders' Regiment.
 W.O.II Lavery—B.A.O.R.
 Sgt. Monger—Junior Leaders Regiment.
 Sgt. Moran—Junior Leaders Regiment.
 Sgt. Morris—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 W.O.II Nangle—H.Q., A.E.R.
 Sgt. Nash—10 Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 W.O.II Packwood—484 M.C. Troop.
 Sgt. Pierce—37 Squadron (33 Regiment) FARELF.
 S/Sgt. Robinson—16 Air Despatch Squadron, FARELF.
 W.O.II Scott—43 M.C. Squadron, B.A.O.R.
 S.Q.M.S. Sharpe—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 S/Sgt. Stanley—11 Training Regiment.
 W.O.II Steer—School of Transport, U.K.
 Sgt. Tisdale—37 Squadron.
 Sgt. Trenfield—56 Squadron.
 Sgt. Turner—1 Divisional Regiment, B.A.O.R.
 W.O.II Waldis—200 Hovercraft Squadron.

As you will observe the initials of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants were omitted—it would assist if contributors would give these in future as well as the unit to which posted.

Where there is a particular reason for leaving names in the text of unit notes this has been done, equally a nominal roll in the unit notes can be a little dull to all but the owners of the names!

NEXT FOR "THIS IS YOUR UNIT"

For the April issue of THE WAGGONER this series returns to B.A.O.R. to call upon 1 Divisional Regiment.

Political or financial necessity may enforce changes in the number of troops currently stationed in B.A.O.R. but until relieved of their commitments 1 Divisional Regiment adheres to the slogan "business as usual".

To find out what this business is will be the aim of the article in the April issue.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

These are inserted free to all serving or past members of the A.S.C., R.A.S.C. or R.C.T.

The notification can be made with unit notes or direct to the Editor. The particulars required are date, place, rank and full name of person or persons, and in the case of a baby, the registered fore-names.

REGULAR FORCES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION

There is a Branch of the Regular Forces Employment Association operating in the locality of your home.

It is only waiting for a personal call from you, or a ring on the telephone or a postcard, to get busy with your employment problem.

You can always get the address of your Area Jobfinder from your local Post Office or from your Regimental Association.

no more than a long weekend and work began in earnest on 28th December, 1966. Trials with the Mexeflote Pontoon equipment were most successful and the shortened programme was completed by 13th January when loading started. Loading of general cargo, vehicles and ships provisions was completed with the assistance of a freight handling section from 51 Port Squadron.

The most notable event which we have to report in this issue of THE WAGGONER is the award of the Commander-in-Chief's Commendation to Cpl. Nicholson, Dvrs. Dunn (334), Dunn (227), Harris, Hydes and Spink, all of whom were serving on detachment in Salalah in November last year and earned their commendations for the work they did there during a hurricane. All members of the Squadron are extremely proud of their achievement and will look forward to congratulating them personally, when they return in February having been replaced by Cpl. Corrihan and his detachment.

53 Port Squadron.—The Squadron has taken on a slightly more high-powered aspect since the promotion of the Officer Commanding, Major E. J. Bechamp, T.C. (U.S. Army) to Lieut.-Colonel.

The Squadron was represented this month in the Corps football team by Cpl. Corlette.

Amongst those who are leaving us are Cpl. Golding and Dvr. Coote for Aden and Cpl. Corlette and Dvr. Smith for FARELF. Sgt. Perry returns to his own Corps with 1 Training Regiment, R.E.

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron now

officially exists, but has not yet reached an operational state. The O.C. and the hovercraft drivers arrived in October, 1966. The hovercraft navigators, Chief Clerk (Sgt. Whiteside), vehicle drivers and driver-operators trickled in during January.

All the hovercraft drivers and navigators promptly left on courses throughout southern England and will not be seen again until April, when the Squadron will really begin to take shape. By then our D vehicles, as hovercraft are now classified, should be nearing completion and we shall be able to move to our operational location at Browdown between Lee-on-Solent and Gosport.

The Solent is full of hovercraft these days, with the British Hovercraft Corporation at Cowes and Itchen, Britten-Norman at Bembridge, the Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit at Lee-on-Solent, British Railways at Cowes and Itchen, Hovertravel at Ryde, Portsmouth and Gosport and now ourselves in the middle of it. The competitors in the R.C.T. Yacht Club Regatta in May will be hard pressed to find any clear water!

The Squadron is designed to extend the trials carried out in FARELF by the Hovercraft Unit (Far East) in 1965—a detachment of two S.R.N. 5—from I.H.T.U. commanded by Major R. N. Harris. Our D vehicles will be one S.R.N. 5 and three S.R.N. 6 modified to take advantage of the lessons learned from the earlier trials. After our training is complete and the Squadron is worked up we shall eventually go to the Far East and find out for ourselves if the stories we have heard are all true.

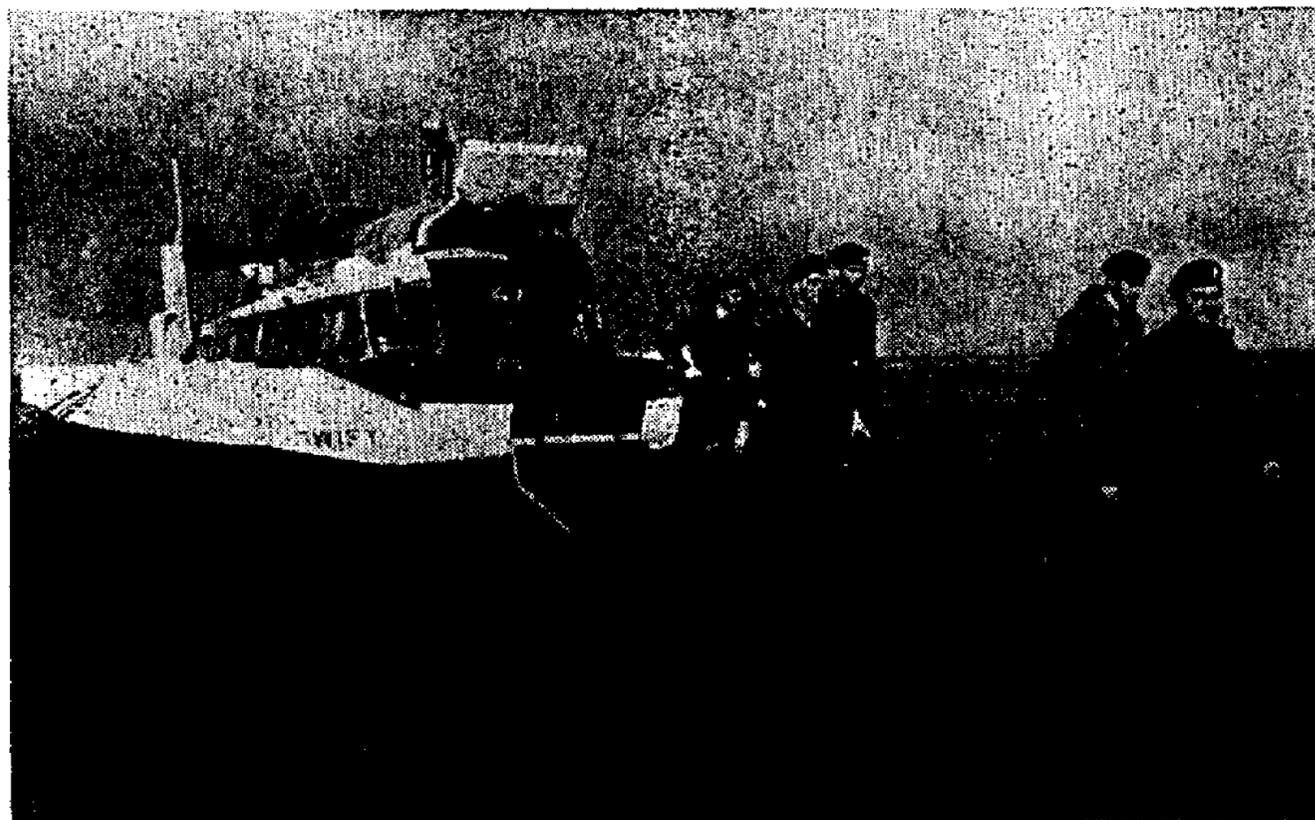
18 Amphibian Squadron.—On 6th December, 1966, Brigadier J. H. S. Majury, Commander 2 Infantry Brigade and Devon and Cornwall Sub-District, became highly newsworthy when he inspected the Squadron Parade. After inspecting the Quarter Guard, commanded by Sgt. Barren, the Brigadier was whisked from Fremington Camp to the beach at Instow, where the Squadron vehicles were lined up by troops and sections under the command of the Captain Operations—Capt. D. B. Porter. After the inspection of the parade, the Brigadier took the salute at a drive past of vehicles. Mounting the last D.U.K.W. the Inspecting Officer, accompanied by Major J. D. Payne, the Squadron Commander, then reviewed a sail past of amphibians in the estuary of the Rivers Taw and Torridge. The local press and B.B.C., T.W.W. and Westward Television cameramen were all present at the parade. Westward TV news re-started the whole question of the meaning of the word "D.U.K.W.". This became an item of interest in their newscasts and reviews for the next few days. The actual meaning is given separately in the Tattler section of this issue—together with some of the variations suggested.

At the time of writing a T.W.W. camera team is making a documentary film about the Squadron. Prospective members of 18 Squadron should note that the O i/c Records has been asked to check the photogenic qualities of reinforcements.

The Mayor of Barnstaple kindly agreed to the unit Christmas cake being given to the Devon County Council's Families Service Centre at Braunton. This is a home for separated and distressed families. The cake is traditionally given to the Mayor of Barnstaple each year for presentation to a local deserving cause in Barnstaple.

We were pleased to welcome Major R. N. Harris, M.B.E., of the Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit to Fremington in January. Another welcome caller was Major P. Lawson, R.A.O.C., a former Officer Commanding. He looked in en route from Singapore to Osnabruck. It is good to know that he is enjoying life in his new Corps.

The Regimental Dinner Night in the Officers' Mess in January gave us a chance to entertain the Deputy Chief Constable of the Devon and Exeter Constabulary, Mr. A. McCartney, D.F.C., amongst others. As he was given overnight accommodation our old friend Superintendent Pill of the Barnstaple Constabulary who is an honorary Mess member of long standing, was unable to use breathalyser tests at the Mess gates!



Officers and N.C.O's of No. 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron, leaving a S.R.N. 6 Hovercraft on the Goodwin Sands during training in handling the craft. (Photograph by courtesy of the Daily Telegraph.)

already taken part in three civic ceremonies in either Swansea or Penarth and is getting well established.

Whilst on exercise at Sennybridge in May the Squadron had the rare privilege of joining in a night "battle" between the Royal Marines and the Royal Dutch Marines. As it was without an invitation the ensuing confusion was purely temporary but very entertaining.

Capt. F. S. A. Ford has been transferred to another post in the Midlands and we shall miss his cheerful and regular presence. A welcome to Lieut. J. Thomas who has just joined and congratulations to 2/Lieut. A. G. A. Wells on being commissioned.

237 (Midlands) Squadron. — The attendance for weekend training at both West Bromwich and Stoke-on-Trent has been most encouraging. It seems very likely that the Squadron will get the Freedom of West Bromwich in the near future which will secure our already good relations with the Borough.

The Squadron held a most successful cocktail party in the West Bromwich Officers' Mess at the beginning of June. The magnificent silver collection inherited from our old Regiment, was on display in glass fronted wall cases especially built for the purpose.

265 Maritime Squadron

265 Maritime Squadron came into being on 1st April, 1967, as the successor to 163 (Fast Launch) Squadron. Appointments made are: Officer Commanding, Major J. W. W. Augar, E.R.D.; second-in-command, Capt. A. B. S. White, E.R.D., Capt. W. A. Wilson, Lieut. P. C. W. Morris, Lieut. J. P. Kistner, and Lieut. R. J. Marchmont. We hope to carry forward and build upon the best of our predecessor's spirit and competence.

In common with the other newly formed Units and sub-units, the Squadron will train this year at Central Volunteer Headquarters, Kempston. For many volunteers, camp at the end of October and the beginning of November will be the first training inland for many years. However, there is no doubt that they will put as much into and derive as much benefit from, their soldierly activities as their sailorly pursuits. Even so, if 270 Port Squadron should lay down its Bedfordshire—brick built landship (vide THE WAGGONER, June 1967)—we should be happy to take her into commission.

On the sporting side, 265 Squadron provided a crew for the Central Volunteer Headquarters entry of four crews in the R.C.T. Annual Regatta at Seaview, Isle of Wight on 25th

May. Our entry skippered by Major J. W. W. Augar, E.R.D., with Capt. A. B. S. White, E.R.D., and Lieut. J. P. Kistner as crew members (under sail together for the first time) was fortunate enough to qualify for the final in which we secured fifth place. Other members of the Squadron competing were S.S.M. Moss and Sgt. Foice with an ex-163 Squadron officer, Lieut. R. P. S. Mussen at the helm. Despite the weather the final provided exhilarating sport which was made even more enjoyable by the fact that we were competing alongside our Regular Army colleagues on equal terms. Next year we hope to put forward a larger entry including, we hope, a crew which will sail four places better than in 1967.

Army Department Controlled Units

(continued from page 239)

one of the new military S.R.N. 6's with which the Squadron will eventually be equipped. This is a much more sophisticated craft designed specifically to meet the Army's requirements and drew large numbers of interested spectators.

In the sporting field we have yet to show our paces, and in view of the fact that our total strength is only 58 we are thinking of forming a league for mini units. However, as our previous notes have shown we seem to be bristling with individual talent and on this occasion we would like to congratulate Cpl. Nealer on being selected to play cricket for the Corps.

Also on the domestic front we compete quite well with larger units and are happy to announce the birth of a son to Cpl. and Mrs. McLaren and a daughter to L/Cpl. and Mrs. Harker, mothers and babies all doing well.

NEXT FOR "THIS IS YOUR UNIT"

For the next issue of THE WAGGONER this series returns home to The Solent to visit 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.

Hovercraft offer an exciting challenge to conventional methods of transportation and it will be instructive to find out the progress being made in this modern form of movement with minimum friction.

Sport

(continued from page 230)

YACHTING

ROYAL CORPS OF TRANSPORT YACHT CLUB

Sailing

THE Annual Regimental Regatta was held at Seaview on 25th May. Somewhere about 100 officers and soldiers were afloat. There were three heats and the final was won in an exciting finish by 26 Regiment (L/Cpl. Long) with 6 Training Regiment (Colonel Elliot) second.

St. George of England and *St. Christopher II* are by no means being fully chartered. Any qualified Club member or ordinary member finding his own recognised skipper is invited to put in a bid to Lieut.-Colonel A. J. Spicer, Charter Secretary *St. Christopher II* or Lieut.-Colonel G. H. Worsley, Charter Secretary *St. George of England*. The address in both cases is St. George Barracks, Gosport, Hants.

The R.C.T. Yacht Club Regatta is to be held at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, 2nd September. Details of this will be circulated shortly.

Overseas Newsletters

(continued from page 278)

against the senior Q.G.O. "Sahib's selection". Fast and furious is the pace and the writer notes that with the passing of the weeks the British contestants are less red faced and puffed, waist lines are becoming decidedly slimmer. Capt. Falle, the regimental cricket representative is busy collecting the team together in readiness to do battle in the 17 Division/Malaya District Major Units Knock-out Competition. We hope to retain the magnificent Clifford Cup which was won last season.

Rumour hath it that during Exercise "Hastings" the Headquarters of the transport troop were plagued with snakes on setting up camp after a beach landing. We are hoping the Officer Commanding will have a few anecdotes to relate on his return.

Sgt. Kamalparsad Limbu has returned to the Squadron after his courses in the U.K. and would like to thank all those officers and senior N.C.O.'s of the Corps who made his visits in England and to B.A.O.R. a memorable experience.

can now see him, or at least his fluorescent bats. That was lucky—or could it be skill? This track should be just about right. "Half a mile to the beach." Track still O.K., too fast perhaps? No we're at low tide and we will need a good run. A quarter of a mile to go and suddenly everything is changing rapidly, the beach is leaping at us and begins to look more like a cliff. A hundred yards to go, back to zero pitch, maximum power, skirt lift back and still at 40 knots we cross the beach. A roar from the propeller as the pitch change takes effect, a spatter of shingle from the bow, a series of lurches as we climb the terraced shingle and we're at the top. As we reach the crest our speed has dropped to almost walking pace, reverse pitch to stop, throttle down, swing into wind and settle gently onto the landing pads.

Nicely placed now, a thumbs up from the Marshall as he pronounces himself satisfied and turns his attention to the refuelling tanker which is edging up to us. Radar off, radio off, wipers, ballast pumps, and trim indicator off. Switches off H.P. cock. For a long minute the engine winds down then there is a blissful silence. Open the hatch and then jump down onto Chesil beach, the sea looks a long way down, 50 perhaps 60 feet of steep soft shingle. It would be interesting to see a D.U.K.W. or Stalwart try that! Walk round the craft—everything O.K., then join the rest of the crew in impromptu discussion on sortie so far. Already an enormous crowd has gathered from seemingly nowhere to view the Army's latest mode of transport refuelling in mid-sortie. 200 Hovercraft Squadron R.C.T. is at it again.

For those of us lucky enough to be serving in the Squadron the unique characteristics of the hovercraft are already beginning to be taken for granted, so perhaps we should start this article with a brief history.

First of all it must be emphasised that in comparison with all other forms of transport, the hovercraft is very much in its infancy. Only nine years have elapsed since Christopher Cockerell first demonstrated a working model of a hovercraft. Even in these early days it was thought to have some military potential and progress was held up for a while as it was put on the secret list. This restriction was eventually removed, however, and a study contract was soon placed with an aviation firm, and several prototypes were built. The manufacturers of hovercraft have produced successive generations of craft since the beginning of the industry. They were in the main fairly small craft, built with the intention of acquiring practical experience, and trials took place in climates ranging from deserts to Arctic wastes.

The results of these trials, together with the experience gained by limited commercial operations, led to the manufacture of the Westland SRN.5 hovercraft. A small, fast and highly efficient craft capable of carrying 18 people. After satisfactory proving of the craft, Westland introduced their SRN.6 hovercraft, which is, like the SRN.5, in current production. Some examples of the way in which these two craft can operate more efficiently than conventional ships may be seen in the firms now using them. The Portsmouth-Ryde route by Hovertravel takes seven minutes instead of 40 minutes by ship; Southampton-Cowes, 20 minutes instead of one hour; and Ramsgate-Calais 40 minutes instead of three and a half hours.

On the military side, the Inter-service Hovercraft Trials Unit (IHTU) was formed in 1961 and evaluated a number of first and second generation hovercraft. In June, 1964, the IHTU commissioned the SRN.3, the world's largest hovercraft, for operational experience. During the following nine months, three SRN.5's were added to the Unit's complement.

Two SRN.5's were allocated to a second military unit, the Hovercraft Unit Far East (HUFE), which operated in 1965 in North Borneo in a logistic and supply role from

Tawau base. Following these successful trials, the Ministry of Defence announced in June 1966 that an operational Squadron (200 Squadron R.C.T.) would be formed with four SRN.6 hovercraft, and a larger logistic craft and a fast patrol boat were to be developed from BH.7.

The United States Navy also acquired three British-built SRN.5's in 1965 which after trials in the U.S.A. were sent to South Vietnam. Using either an improvised shore base or the well deck of a landing platform dock, they operated day and night patrols in the Mekong delta, with great success.

Thus, to cut a long story short, the hovercraft has finally been approved and accepted for military purposes. It has obvious limitations in jungle and mountainous areas, but there are many other regions where its ability to combine high speed over both land and water can be fully utilised. It has been fully proven as suitable for naval and military use at sea, present craft can cope with 10 foot waves and 12 foot surf, up rivers and over rapids, across beaches, deserts, mud, ice and snow. Their use on roads is, of course, limited by the width of 23 feet.

The craft with which 200 Squadron will eventually be equipped are one SRN.5 and three SRN.6 Mk. II. The role of the Squadron will be to establish where the hovercraft will fit in the present Order of Battle by carrying out extensive trials and exercises with field force units. The craft are designed mainly as logistic support craft for this role, but they can easily be employed as troop and weapon carriers.

The SRN.5 is 39ft. 9in. long and 23ft. wide, its basic weight is 4.7 tons. It is powered by a Bristol Siddeley Marine Gnome gas turbine engine with a continuous rating of 900 shaft horse power, which gives a maximum calm water speed of 66 knots or 80 miles per hour. Its normal load is approximately two tons or 15 troops, or two 81mm. mortars and crews. The hovercraft crew consists of a driver, a navigator who operates the Decca 202 radar, and a seaman/gunner, the craft armament being one GPMG fired through a hatch in the roof.

The SRN.6 Mk. II is 10ft. longer than the SRN.5 and has a basic weight of six tons. It has the same engine giving a maximum speed of 56 knots. It has wider bow doors, a loading hatch in the roof, long range fuel tanks, and facilities for handling hover pallets in the cabin. With a normal disposable load of four tons it can carry 30 troops, or one 105mm. pack howitzer and crew, or one 120mm. anti-tank gun and crew.

Both craft can be armour plated and carry HF, VHF and UHF radios. Although the weights and loads given are the normal that would be carried, the craft can operate satisfactorily in excess of these weights.

There then is the equipment, what of the personnel?

The Squadron was officially formed on 1st November, 1966, although at this stage it consisted of only the Officer Commanding, Major S. B. Ball, and two clerks, the whole unit being housed in St. George Barracks. Major Ball had come from the Interservice Hovercraft Trials Unit (IHTU) at Lee-on-Solent, as had the Chief Clerk, Sgt. A. J. Whiteside. The third member of the unit, Cpl. P. E. Nealer had come from R.A.F. Changi where he had been a clerk in the Air Transport Movement Control Centre.

In addition to this, there were 17 potential hovercraft drivers from Sergeants to Captains who had assembled in mid-October 1966 from postings all over the world to start their course. These drivers included a fair cross section of R.C.T. trades such as Drivers, Marine Engineers, Navigators, Clerks, Air Despatchers and Traffic Operators. The course consisted of nine weeks Basic Seamanship and Navigation, two weeks on Radar, and one week with Bristol Siddeley Engines. The group then split up for actual driver training with six being trained at Ramsgate by Hoverlloyd, and six at Ryde, Isle of Wight, by Hover-

work, the remainder had either been thinned out by this stage or were waiting in reserve. The driving course took six weeks, after which the whole group went to 12 Training Regiment for a four week Joint Signals Procedure Course, followed by one week at HMS *Mercury* learning the Naval Communications systems. After these 23 weeks they were considered to be capable of operating a hovercraft under ideal conditions but still had a lot to learn.

Whilst all this had been going on, the navigators, seamen, vehicle drivers and driver operators had arrived in January, with the workshops personnel arriving in early April. The navigators went off to a series of courses on signals, radar navigation and sea survival, the seamen went to learn all about the GPMG, and the vehicle drivers to learn about operating our refuelling tankers. It was not therefore until mid-April that everyone came together at Lee-on-Solent and the Squadron could start training together. For about a month we operated two SRN.5's from the IHTU location, and on 22nd May we at last took over our specially built hangar on Browdown beach. By this time the Squadron was fully up to strength and everyone was settling into their respective jobs.

The unit is organized into Squadron Headquarters, A and B Troops each with two hovercraft, and the Squadron Workshops, the total strength of the unit being only 55 all ranks. Squadron Headquarters contains the O.C., who, with his tour in IHTU behind him is (for the present), the Squadron expert in driving the "device". With over 200 hours to his credit Major Ball with obvious reluctance now does most of his driving from behind a desk. He seems to know who is driving a craft—and how—simply by ear, which is most disconcerting for any driver who thinks a misdemeanour has not been noticed.

Occupying the office next door is our second in command, Capt. J. M. Flood, easily recognised by some ginger hair behind a pile of paper and a distinctive scratching noise of a pen. An ex-L.C.T. Captain, and more recently, Adjutant of 3 Div. Regt., he has trained as a navigator, but has spent most of his time to date in fighting the paper war. However we seem to be luring him away from his desk and he is now threatening us with driving a craft. He fills in the odd moment playing squash for the Corps.

Occupying the room adjacent should be W.O.II G. F. Bradnam late of 906 Squadron (T.A.). As S.S.M. we have yet to find out whether he owns a pace stick, perhaps he will bring it to a working parade one day. As one of the qualified hovercraft drivers he is more often than not, to be found in mid-Solent "getting some hours in". In case anyone thinks we are giving him an easy life, however, just consider the problems involved in getting a hangar ready for inspection, when the first craft that comes in brings half Browdown beach with it.

Undisputed head of the Chartroom/Briefing Room is our Master Navigator W.O.I A. Hodson and his second in command S/Sgt. B. Mercer. This pair are kept busy keeping all the other navigators up to scratch, doing beach recesses and in running our ever expanding chart and film library. They also act as relief navigators, an essential requirement as anyone can tell who has seen one of these chaps after four hours inside a radar set in a choppy sea.

The remainder of the Squadron Headquarters consists of Sgt. Whiteside, Capt. Flood's right hand man, and Cpl. Nealer whom we have already mentioned. A pair rarely seen outside their file-filled cubby hole except when the latter emerges to play Corps cricket, or former to play soccer. There is also to be found our storeman Cpl. G. Mullins, a gentleman of extremely interesting shape who can be heard coming from a long distance by cries of "Please can I have a signature". These, together with Cpl. A. T. McLaren, L/Cpl. D. Squire, and Dvrs. W. Haynes, D. Bowling, R. R. Bland, V. J. Adams, and G. A. Brown make up the R.C.T. complement. The two latter in addi-

tion to their duties on the refuelling tankers run the Squadron canteen, considerably harassed at times by Lieut. Hellberg's arithmetic. We must, however, make mention of Cpl. A. W. Boag R. Sigs and his band of three signalmen, who, together with our Driver/Operators manage to keep our voice procedure up to scratch.

Coming to the workers of the world we have A and B Troops, commanded by Capt. M. W. H. Branch and Lieut. I. J. Hellberg respectively. A Troop will eventually be equipped with one SRN.5 and one SRN.6 Mk. II these driven by W.O.II Nelson and S/Sgt. B. Webster. W.O.II Nelson, who used to drive a typewriter, regales us with many tales beginning "when I was with the Royal Marines . . ." and drives our sailing dinghy in his spare time, whilst S/Sgt. Webster, an ex Marine Engineer is more down to earth with "When I was in L.C.T. No. . . ." These are assisted or otherwise by navigators W.O.II R. H. Little and Sgt. P. Bandey and seaman/gunners Cpls. J. A. Sheppard and B. B. Halliwell, all with considerable maritime experience. Sgt. Bandey is particularly well known for his unerring navigation—he must be the only navigator to be able to see a bikini on a radar set. Apart from being Unit Fire Officer, no one knows what Capt. Branch does with his time, except for occasional cries of "Does anyone play hockey" and "Anyone want to come free falling".

B Troop will eventually be equipped with two SRN.6 Mk. II's. The Troop Commander who was prised off a mountain in Wales to join the Unit can usually be found when not driving engaged in trying to add up the P.R.I. account, hanging over the side of a sailing boat, or scaling any convenient cliff. The drivers of B Troop are S/Sgt. Hickling our Air Despatch expert, and Sgt. J. D. P. Poyntz our walking encyclopaedia on public transport—we rarely consult timetables if he is around. Navigators S/Sgt. Kantharia and Sgt. D. Robertson and seaman/gunners Cpls. F. R. Skene and R. Dawson complete the crews.

No article on this Unit would be complete, however, without mention of our Workshops. Commanded by Capt. R. Dawson with A.S.M. S. Mason, the world's arch scroungers, they, and their gallant band, manage to keep the craft going despite all the drivers can do, for which we are extremely grateful.

Although we have been in existence for such a short time and have not yet acquired all our "D" vehicles, we have been far from inactive. The first few weeks after formation we were occupied in working up together as crews and establishing our operating procedures. As the crews began to get the feel of things we started to venture further from base on our various exercises, and at the moment cover from Brixham in the west to Dungeness in the east. Exercises come in various shapes and sizes, we demonstrated at Exercise "Waggon Trail", and had a craft on static display at exercise "New Envoy". Immediately after the latter we were involved in an exercise with the L.P.D., H.M.S. *Intrepid* which culminated in a long trip back from Plymouth under our own power, and with hardly time to draw breath we are now going off to show our paces in Exercise "Unison".

Looking ahead now, however, it would seem that we have done in the past few months is just a small taste of what is to come in the future years. It is bound to be some time before the novelty wears off and the SRN.5 and 6 become just another means of transport. By this time we hope SRN.4 will be operating successfully in the commercial field, carrying 63 tons of freight or 30 cars and 250 passengers. If that works we may well have our own 40 tonners—the BH 7, and perhaps we shall have established our own hovercraft school?

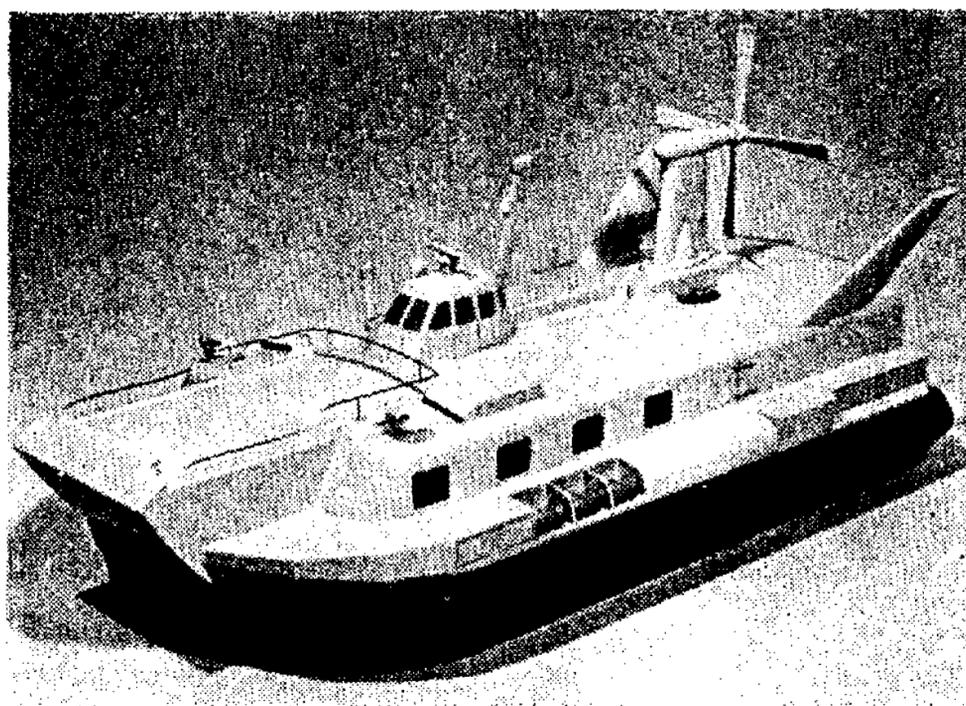
There then is 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron, R.C.T.

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Warrant Officers and Sergeants

	From	To
T. Stuart	W.O.I	50 M.C. Squadron
Sutton	S/Sgt.	U.K.
L. Tate	Sgt.	14 A.D. Regt.
F. E. Thomas	W.O.I	33 Maritime Regiment
Thomas	S/Sgt.	Malta
Trett	Sgt.	6 Training Regiment
Tucker	Sgt.	School of Transport
I. Turpie	Sgt.	12 Training Regiment
F. Ward	S/Sgt.	90 Squadron
J. F. Watson	S/Sgt.	49 M.C. Squadron
B. E. Wevill	S/Sgt.	U.K.
R. Wheatman	S/Sgt.	H.Q., FARELF
K. Whiteley	S/Sgt.	2 Squadron
E. P. Williams	Sgt.	6 Training Regiment
P. Wood	S/Sgt.	10 Port Squadron
H. Wright	S/Sgt.	A.A.T.D.C
	4 Div. Regt.	
	74 L.C.T. Sqn.	
	15 A.D. Regt.	
	72 Squadron	
	B.A.O.R.	
	8 Regiment	
	18 Squadron	
	130 Flight	
	6 Training Regt.	
	Malta	
	Cyprus	
	32 Regiment	
	19 Tk. Tptr. Unit	
	Hong Kong	
	17 Port Regt.	
	F.E.S.J.W.	

THIS IS YOUR UNIT (continued from page 320)



200 Hovercraft Squadron of the future—the B.H.7 in its logistics configuration.

It is of necessity far too brief to cover all the things one would like to, and the history of the Unit cannot be written because we are in the midst of creating it. However, those interested enough may follow our adventures (and misadventures) month by month in the Unit notes elsewhere in this magazine, and if you are ever near Browdown Beach we are in that shiny new building on the shore.

BY ROAD TO ISTANBUL FROM VENICE

(continued from page 321)

sight of the old city walls of Istanbul and then the Santral Oteli in Beyoglu across Galata Bridge. Our hotel was just off the Istikal Caddesi (formerly Grande Rue de Pera) and we soon met the Turkish courier for the party, a colourful personality who called himself Capt. Mahomet.

Next morning we took the coach, proceeding via Kabatas Landing Stage to

Tophane and Galata Bridge for a visit to the Sultan's Palace at Seraglio, the Mosques and other places of interest. Firstly, St. Sophia now a museum, then to Sultan Ahmet (The Blue Mosque) and from there to the Yerebatan Sarayi, the former Cisterna Basilica, said to have been constructed by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian to provide this part of the city's

water supply. The cistern is well below ground level and has 336 columns in 12 rows of 28 to support the roof. The electric light gives some idea of the great size of the cistern. When I first saw it in 1920, a Turk lit the interior with a paraffin torch. Now it is greatly commercialised. Capt. Mahomet then led the way to the Seraglio Palace, now known as Topkapi Palace Museum. This is quite a fantastic place. Here we saw displayed on shelves priceless treasure of all descriptions from ancient Chinese porcelain to jewelled swords and many gold and silver objects, all presents to Sultans from time to time. Later in the day we visited the Grand Bazaar which covers some four acres and has 14 ways in and out.

Next day we made for the ferry station to cross the Bosphorus. In our coach we were driven on to a large vehicle ferry loading many cars and lorries as well as taking foot passenger. A shuttle service is operated to Uskudar opposite. We passed the U.S. Carrier *Saratoga* and several American warships on a courtesy visit of eight days. On the other side after a steep climb we reached the top of the high ground beyond the town. Here we admired the view up to the Bosphorus and took photographs. On now to Scutari past Turkish barracks and the large hospital built on the site of Florence Nightingale's hospital. We then reached Haidarpasa and Moda the British colony,

and afterwards went to the British Cemetery, beautifully maintained by the War Graves Commission. I saw on tablets the names of a number of R.A.S.C. members of the Army of the Black Sea, Major C. D. St. Clair, S.S.M. Lindon, Sgt. Fairless and one or two others I knew. In the afternoon our courier had a launch waiting at the landing stage to take us up the Bosphorus Rumeli Hissar to Buyuk Dere. This is as far as the public is permitted to go since the north end of the strait is a military zone.

On the following morning we looked round the shops and later came to the entrance to the tunnel where for the equivalent of 4d. we went down to Galala in a carriage operated as a funicular. It is said to be the oldest underground in Europe.

After lunch we joined the party for an excursion to the Princes Islands and to land at Prinkipo. Since no cars are allowed on the island, Capt. Mahomet had a number of horse drawn carriages waiting for us to make a tour of the road circling the island. A very peaceful and attractive place, obviously the weekend retreat from the city of rich Turks.

Looking back we think it was a first class tour, strenuous at times perhaps on the days of long mileage, for there were considerable stretches of straight road, but for all that well worth the effort. Hotels were surprisingly good throughout and food plentiful.

his sailing course. North Devon provided good facilities for this sport and our six dinghies have been in constant use throughout the summer.

Our latest visitors are our friends from Browdown—200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron—under Major S. Ball. They are complete at Fremington except for the hovercraft itself, which is at present storm-bound at Falmouth.

The Army Section of the West Buckland School C.C.F. is shortly to be re-badged "R.C.T.". This follows the complete disappearance of the "Devonshire Regiment" as a result of the Reserve Army reorganization. We are delighted to be associated in this particular way with West Buckland School. The re-badging ceremony is probably to be held on 1st December—at the school. Meanwhile the Officer Commanding C.C.F. has forwarded a request for the school contingent to be known as "Dukwings". Permission has been readily granted.

On 27th September we were pleased to welcome Major-General T. H. Acton, G.O.C. South West District to dinner in Fremington House Mess. Also present were Brigadier P. H. Henson, and Colonel (Retd.) J. R. Burgess from R.H.Q. at Crookham.

Brigadier Henson and Colonel Burgess stayed on the following morning to visit the Unit. The Brigadier inspected a parade of unit D.U.K.W. on Saunton Sands. After a drive past S/Sgt. Kubinski demonstrated Flotilla Drill, during which a demonstration of "man-overboard drill" and a R.A.F. helicopter rescue was given. This is now almost a standard part of the unit presentation for visitors.

81 Maritime Training Squadron.—With all minds refreshed after the summer recess, training re-commenced early September and so once again the School echoes to the sound of running engines, hammering and filing, with muttered curses coming from the "wire splicing" room, as a marline spike slips.

We have, with the use of the yacht *St. George of England* been able to carry out an Adventure Training Cruise. The yacht skippered by Lieut.-Colonel B. L. Franklin (Retd.) and crew of Sgt. Miller, Dvrs. Rickards, Merritt and Howard, were able, after a temperamental engine had been coaxed to run sweetly by W.O.I. Booth, to complete their planned itinerary.

Lieut. R. Brading, who joined from 72 Squadron is now Vessels Officer. We welcome Mr. C. Thompson (S.I. Marine Engineer) and his family, and trust their stay will be a happy one.

A recent attraction was *R.C.T.V. Mull* (Mr. E. R. Whanslow), berthed at the military pier for the purposes

of storing up prior to her departure for the Hebrides, where she will operate throughout the dark and stormy winter; the life-line between Loch Carnan and lonely St. Kilda. Already she seems to have had an excess ration of gales.

On 25th September the Master Superintendent, Mr. T. W. Thomas, visited the Pembroke Dock detachment where *F. L. Isinglass* (Mr. P. H. Gilbert) is employed on range clearing duties.

It is reported with deepest regret that Mr. A. Harvey, after 27 years' service with the fleet, lost his life in an accident at H.M. Gunwharf on 24th September. Mr. Harvey, who was a native of the Orkney Islands, joined in 1940 and has served on A.D.C's, *R.C.T.V. Mull* and *R.C.T.V. Yarmouth Navigator*.

Some nautical howlers from test papers:

Q. Describe a liquid compass.

A. In these compasses the bowl is filled with $\frac{2}{3}$ dehydrated water and $\frac{1}{3}$ alcohol. The card is submerged.

Q. How do you check a ship's draught?

A. Close all hatches and portholes.

17 Port Regiment

Headquarters.—The two L.S.L's *Sir Bedivere* and *Sir Geraint* have left us for sunnier climates, loaded with vehicles and stores. Our Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel J. D. Lofts has rejoined the Regiment after his tour as Port Commandant, Aden, and is now preparing to return there to supervise the withdrawal from the port in the final phase.

52 Port Squadron.—In addition to our normal B.A.O.R. weekly maintenance duties, we have dealt with a large five hatch freighter, and several loads to the L.S.L's *Sir Bedivere* and *Sir Geraint*. The freighter the *S.S. Anatolian*, which was loaded with vehicles and stores for a N.A.T.O. exercise, "Sunshine Express", was one of the biggest ships to use the military port at Marchwood that can be remembered.

The lighterage troops in the Squadron have also been busy. The Mexeflote, as well as providing the causeway for loading and discharging the L.C.T's has been used extensively for landing the hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Squadron in a seaway, and as a floating raft for flying off helicopter loads. We are running a ferry service to the Isle of Wight for vehicles of the Limmer and Trinidad Company who are doing construction work for the British Hovercraft Corporation.

We provided the L.S.L. and Mexeflote models for a static display at Camberley for Exercise "Unison" and a Michigan 175 D.S. fork lift

tractor for the vehicle display at Chobham. W.O.II McGowan, Cpl. Thomason and Cpl. Boyd did the honours standing by these exhibits, and put in long hours answering questions during the demonstrations.

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—"A" Troop is at present in the course of taking an S.R.N.5 around Land's End to Fremington. This will be the first time that the Squadron has operated west of Plymouth. In the face of navigational hazards not to mention the problems of communications and refuelling, all members of the crew seemed to be remarkably optimistic.

The same S.R.N.5 has only just been returned by "B" Troop from F.V.R.D.E. at Chobham. The craft was demonstrating its capabilities in the Exercise "Unison" roll past before a world wide audience. The sight of a hovercraft roaring down the main test track caused considerable alarm among the marshalls who seemed far more concerned for their safety—our driver, S/Sgt. Hickling, failed to understand their anxiety! Lieut. Hellberg the Troop Commander, has just returned from the Joint Services Climbing Meeting at Zermatt—much the worse for wear after a rather cold adventure on the Matterhorn.

The Squadrons bachelors are fighting a losing battle; Sgt. P. Bandy and Cpl. R. Dawson have recently married and we wish them and their brides every happiness, together with Cpl. C. Stephens, R.E.M.E., who has also taken the plunge. We also congratulate Dvr. and Mrs. Adams on the birth of a son.

Assault Ship (L.P.D.) Operating Troop H.M.S. Intrepid—As in the case of most new units this troop has certainly had its share of teething troubles, with establishments and equipment figuring high on the list. However, after much effort and a great deal of outside help it would seem that our aims have been realised.

Aboard *Intrepid* the pace increased as we started the first of the familiarization exercises at Devonport. Our embarked forces materialized in the form of companies from the Durham Light Infantry and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Both they and we learned a great deal from these exercises which will no doubt stand us in good stead for our future roles.

A number of trials were also carried out involving the movement and stowage of R.A. mobile radar stations. During the trials there was much heavy breathing from the equipment owners who obviously did not appre-

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Brigadier P. H. Henson, O.B.E., the Commander Maritime Group, R.C.T., talking to D.U.K.W. crews during his inspection of 18 Amphibian Squadron. with the Brigadier are Major J. D. Payne, the Squadron Commander, and Capt. I. G. M. Bamber, the Captain Operations.

and other craft and all arrangements connected therewith. When there is time away from port equipment, hovercraft and amphibians, as a side line they also deal with shows, displays and visits. In fact, never a dull moment!

The new signal centre has now come to life. At last, W.O.II Slater, Royal Signals has a purpose-built house for his staff and the job of communications throughout the Group by teleprinter and wireless to all ships and establishments of the Army and the Royal Navy—with world coverage if necessary.

We were very pleased to be able to entertain Dr. I. Luttig, the South African Ambassador, for a day; during his visit he had a voyage in a hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.

We congratulate Dvr. Blanche of 18 Squadron for being selected again to play football for the Army. Last year he played with the team against Southern Counties University and Cambridge University.

Ship Shop

H.M.A.V. *Audemere* (Capt. P. J. Hodgkinson) has spent the earlier part of the period having her starboard gear box "sorted out". This entailed two changes and the job caused near despair to Workshops. However, they won and the ship is in good fettle and has been on the Antwerp "milk run".

H.M.A.V. *Aachen*.—We welcome back Capt. John Venmore, who now has taken over command. She is fully commissioned and soon goes for a

"shake down" voyage to Milford to collect R.C.T. V *Isinglass* (48ft.).

H.M.A.V. *Agheila* (Lieut. D. Nicholas).—Capt. Frost has now handed over command. Lieut. Nicholas' first job was to have the foremast removed at Marchwood and take part in helicopter trials at Browdown with J.W.E.

H.M.A.V. *Akyab* has successfully completed nine Antwerp runs since September. Her schedule was slightly delayed at one juncture through the loss of a rudder somewhere in the buoyed channel off Dunkerque. Generator and radar failures caused further minor delays, but fortunately foul weather has not, as yet, prevented *Akyab* from sailing. With the advent of winter the officers of the watch and lookouts have been known to be unappreciative of the open bridge, however, they look forward next summer to some slight structure to curtail the rain.

18 Amphibian Squadron.—It is with regret that we have to report the very sudden death of Major (Retd.) D. C. Bastow on 25th October, 1967. Major Bastow had commanded the (civilian) Administrative Unit, Fremington, since 1st March, 1963. Before that he had served in the North Devon area for many years—including a tour as Officer Commanding the unit R.E.M.E. Workshops. He was, indeed, part of the scene at Fremington and was known to many in the Corps—he will be greatly missed. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Bastow and her two daughters.

The re-organization of the static

chain of command has had its effect locally. Administrative responsibility for 18 Squadron now rests with Headquarters South-West District at Taunton. The Headquarters of Devon and Cornwall Sub-District effectively closed on 21st November. The Sub-District Commander, Brigadier J. H. S. Majury, paid his farewell visit to the unit on 5th October. He inspected the unit (ceremonial) Quarter Guard commanded by Sgt. Coulson; and then inspected a Squadron parade under the command of Capt. I. G. M. Bamber. The Regimental Band of 1 Cheshires was on parade and made an impressive addition to the occasion.

The hovercraft from 200 Squadron arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor at just the right moment for Brigadier Majury to greet it. This conveniently filled the gap between the parade and the Ladies' Dinner Night at which Brigadier and Mrs. Majury were our guests.

Following on a departure, it is appropriate to mention some arrivals. Firstly we are pleased to welcome, as our Corps neighbours in the county of Devon, 60 Squadron. We have already made good and useful contacts and hope to see a good deal more of them. 60 Squadron has arrived at Plasterdown Camp as part of 24 Brigade. As this Brigade is to assume special responsibility for amphibious training we expect 18 Squadron to become heavily involved with it. Already the Brigade Major and G.III have made a fact-finding visit and booked all our free dates for 1968.

We welcome Capt. D. I. Jeremy, whose arrival from 47 A.D. Squadron on 13th November was unexpectedly early. He comes as the new Administrative Officer and Second-in-Command.

We also welcome Brigadier (Retd.) T. P. Keene as the new Officer Commanding, Administrative Unit, Fremington. He comes to us from Battle Camp at Okehampton. As a local Councillor (until recently Chairman of Northam U.D.C.) Brigadier Keene will be a most welcome addition to Fremington.

H.M.A.V. *Agheila* (Capt. R. T. Frost) visited North Devon early in October. This visit was in connection with the Annual Officers' Amphibian Course. It also corresponded with the prolonged, severe gales that struck the whole country. In spite of lack of sailing weather, we understand that the L.C.T. crew enjoyed their stay.

Other visitors in the recent past have included the Boat Section of 22 S.A.S. Regiment. It is with profound regret that we report the death by drowning of L/Cpl. Anderson, S.A.S.,



Major S. B. Ball, O.C. 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron concentrating during the orienteering competition.

the Squadron on 28th November. After the proposed defence cuts much interest was naturally attached to his visit concerning our future. Not to worry, great assurance was given by

the Minister—in his own words: "We are blazing a trail with development and use of hovercraft, other countries including the United States and Russia are envious of our lead. We have only scratched the surface of hovercraft potential. We are the pioneers and the Government intends to see that we stay at the front." On this visit he was accompanied by Major-General E. H. G. Lonsdale, Rear Admiral O. H. M. Steiner, the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff, and Lieut.-Colonel G. T. Athey representing H.Q. Maritime Group. The T.O.-in-C. received a rather personal acquaintance with the hovercraft after the Minister's visit; he too has registered his mark on the Dougal Rating by stalling the engine in mid-Solent!

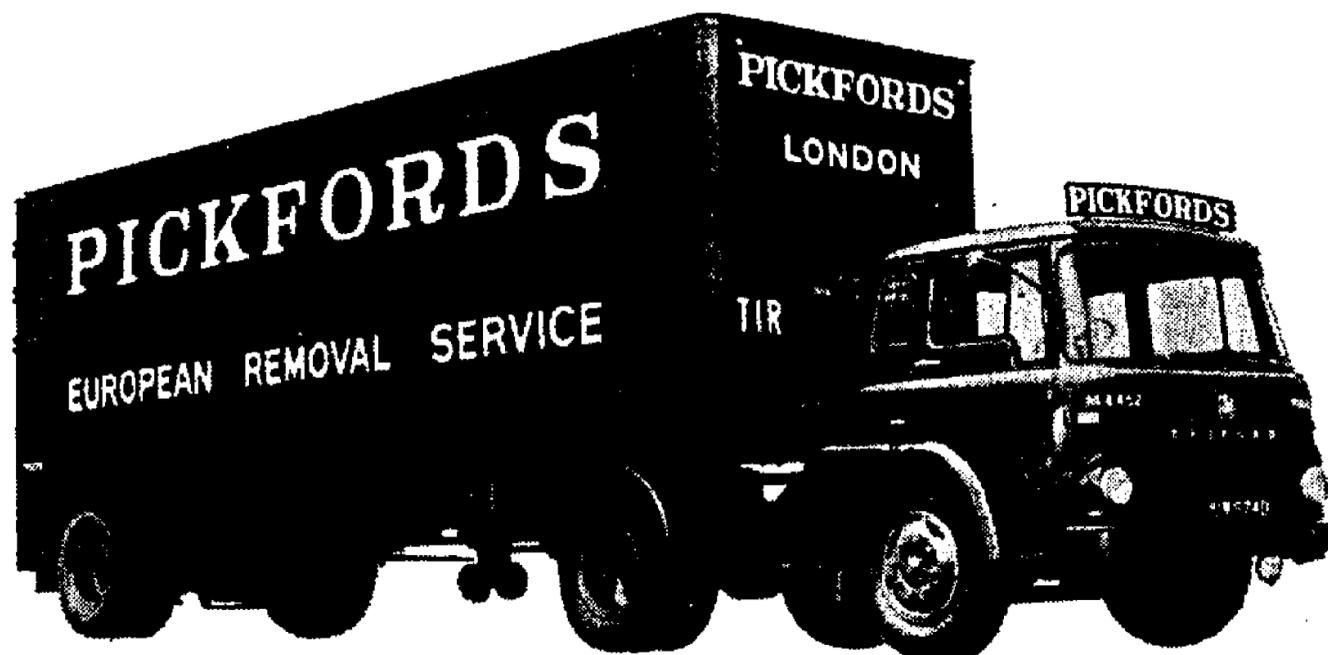
Sport is well and truly in full swing. The Chief Clerk seems to have written off or reduced to ruins an embarrassing high proportion of the Squadron's active members through injuries sustained during his weekly football matches. Our stars at present are Cpl. Henderson, Dvr. Haynes and Sig. Grimshaw, not forgetting our reluctant goalkeeper, Sgt. Bandy, who has recently been dragged out of retirement. Squash and badminton matches have recently been introduced as a regular feature. Our squash side is strengthened by Capt. Flood and

Lieut. Hellberg who currently play for the R.C.T. Corps team. Certain members of the Squadron have been press-ganged into rock climbing excursions by Lieut. Hellberg on the Dorset coast. Dvr. Brown exclaimed after his first climb (having regained his breath) "You all must be mad". He was later forced to admit he enjoyed his experience.

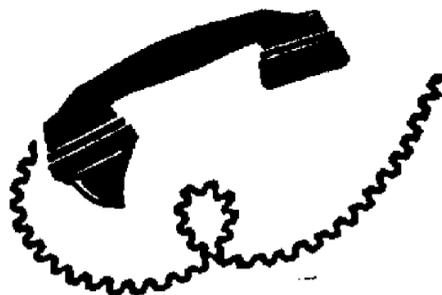
408 (L.P.D.) Operating Troop H.M.S. Fearless.—These notes are being written in Durban on our way home to Plymouth. On arrival, with the exception of the Troop Commander, we are all off on three months leave prior to posting to our new units. Capt. Brousson is moving to Marchwood to form up the new troop before they move to Poole for pre-embarkation training ready for the ship's second commission. In this he will have the assistance of two old members of the troop: S/Sgt. Spranger and Sgt. Britnell.

This has been a very interesting commission, we have visited many places in Far Eastern, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean waters. At present in Durban after three months without a run ashore we are finding the attraction of South Africa very much to our liking.

Assault Ship (L.P.D.) Operating Troop (H.M.S. Intrepid).—After the
(continued on page 22)



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PICKFORDS

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On 16th January, the Squadron had bestowed on it the privilege of conveying Admiral Sir John Frewen, Commander-in-Chief Portsmouth, during his tour of the Maritime Unit, Portsmouth.

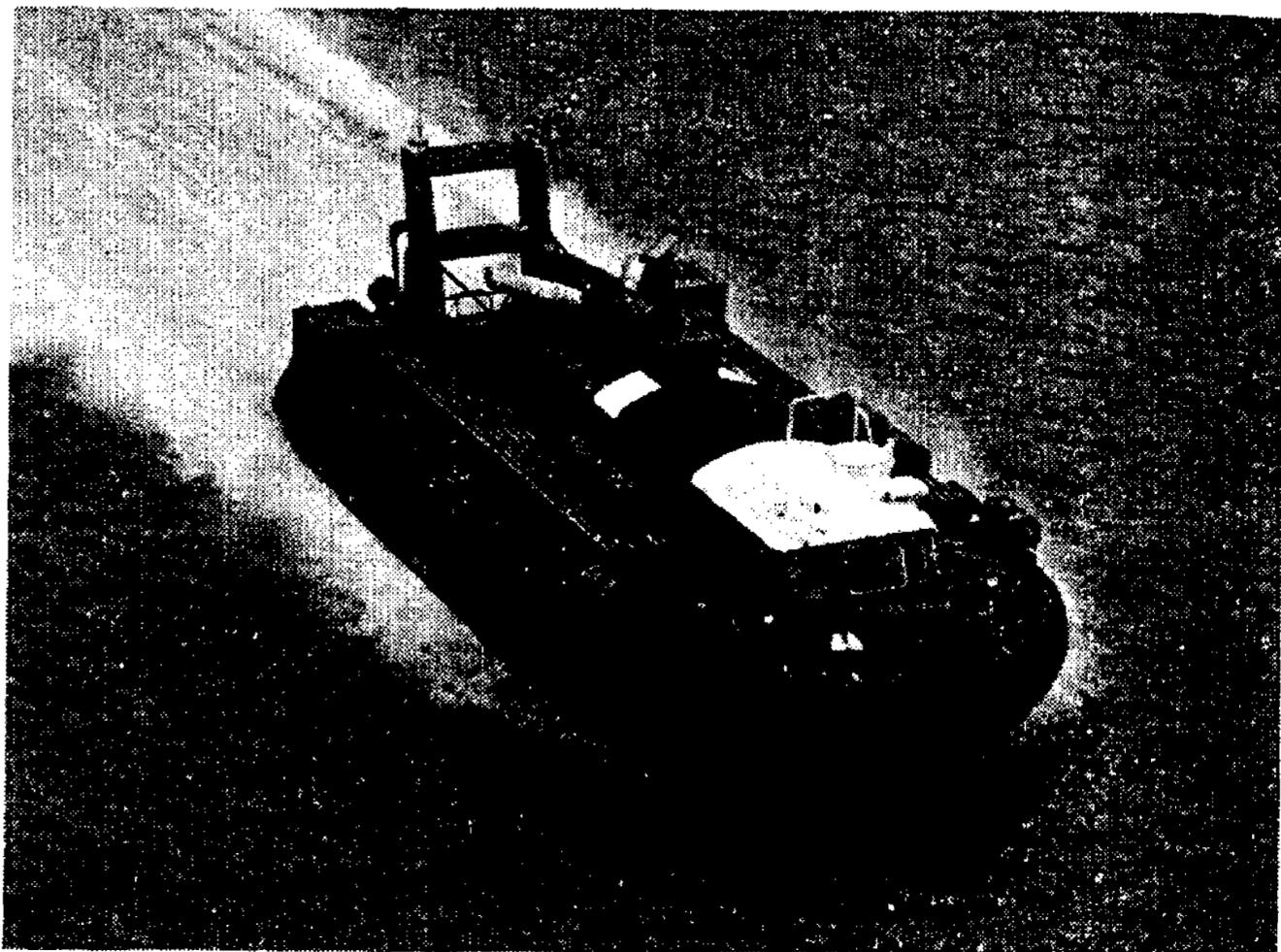
17 Port Regiment

Headquarters. — 51 Squadron returned from Aden in time for Christmas with their suntans making them easily identifiable amongst the remainder of the Regiment. The Commanding Officer and Major Coney have also returned to the confines of R.H.Q. Soon the whole Regiment, with the exception of one troop will be assembled in Marchwood. Whether this state of affairs will last long enough for the suntans to fade is unpredictable.

51 Port Squadron. — Forgotten Army returns—H.Q., 426 and 473 Troops arrived in England on 8th December, 1967, having been the last units to leave Aden by sea. The massive air evacuation from Aden via Bahrain had been completed when 51 Port Squadron sailed into Bahrain on 5th December having spent the last six days sailing from Aden in the L.S.L. *Sir Geraint*, confidently expecting an aeroplane to take them home. Two days later one was found; we got to Marchwood just as the snow arrived. The "war heroes" stories are now wearing a little thin as we examine the tonnages that our sister Squadron (52) pushed through Marchwood with the aid of 51 Port Squadron (Rear). Much has and will be written about the Aden evacuation suffice to say that the Squadron loaded some 80,000 M.T. freight, 2,200 vehicles, 13 horses, five baboons and six tortoises in the six months of the emergency. Life we thought would be dull in Marchwood until we saw the shipping programme.

The final phase in Aden was conducted from Obstruction Pier (473 Troop's location) with the support of the R.M., from H.M.S. *Intrepid* and the Naval Task Force. Those members of the Squadron not actually working lived aboard the L.S.L. *Sir Geraint* and 423 Troop (10 Port Squadron, Singapore) lived on the L.S.L. *Sir Bedivere*. We would like to thank 423 Troop publicly for their invaluable help and also 518 Company, R.P.C. (Port Section) for theirs. As we settle into our new office accommodation in Marchwood we find a number of old faces from J.S.P.U. Aden.

52 Port Squadron.—The Squadron is now more complete than it has been for a long time, with the exception of 428 Freight Handling Troop who are still operating the ports of the R.A.F.



S.R.N.6 saunters by.

Route Station at Masirah and Salalah. 427 Freight Handling Troop took over this commitment in February, and 12 men from 471 Lighterage Troop left recently for the same destination. The whole detachment will be commanded by Capt. A. R. Allum, our operations officer.

One of the more interesting tasks which has fallen to us is to provide a military team for the L.S.L. *Sir Tristram*, which is now permanently assigned to Marchwood. Dependant on the task the team included a ship's commandant, ship's warrant officer, and crane operators, freight handlers and a clerk. We have already operated in this role for the recovery of troops from Exercise "Overdale" in B.A.O.R. last October, and are currently engaged in redeployment of 6 Infantry Brigade and 36 Hy. A.A. Regiment, R.A., from B.A.O.R. to the United Kingdom. The team is responsible for administering the embarked force, and for the loading and discharging of the cargo.

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—The Squadron is busily preparing to move to FARELF in March. The first of the new S.R.N. 6 Mk. II hovercraft has just arrived, this craft has been given to W.O.II E. Nelson of "A" Troop and his crew, W.O.II R. Little, navigator, and Cpl. J. Sheppard, seaman. "B" Troop, who are still without a craft, are green with envy—acutely aggravated by the O.C. who won't allow them near the craft.

On Thursday, 7th December, the Squadron held another orienteering competition within the Browndown

training area. The course consisted of ten check points spread over 3½ miles. Capt. M. Branch emerged from his promotion exam to win the competition in a time of 55 minutes, he was hotly pursued by Sig. J. Hutchinson and Dvr. Morfoot. All the competitors finished the course well within two hours apart from Cpl. R. Dawson who arrived just as a search party was being mounted—teething troubles with the new Silva compass caused him unbargained-for mileage. No one got wet this time apart from Cpl. F. Skene who took a short cut across a river!

The 8th December found hovercraft XT.492 undergoing snow trials on Thorney Island. The day started badly with the O.C., Major S. B. Ball heading 180° in the wrong direction supported by the Master Navigator, W.O.I A. Hodson. Later in the morning the driver's nerve finally failed when the navigator tried to ram a 20,000 ton R.F.A. tanker—he decided to leave it one cable to . . . ? The craft was then hit by a blizzard with "A" Troop at the controls. On arrival at Thorney Island, radio contact was lost with base. W.O.II E. Nelson was despatched to make contact by telephone. Considerably later, he returned with some tale or other relating to the hospitality of an R.A.F. officer's wife . . . ? "A" Troop completed their day's work by returning without the propeller erosion strips. S.S.M. G. Bradman, who was with them put it down to the weather and other lamp swinging tales!

Night driving in the Solent has



Three R.C.T. Junior Tradesmen who are members of the Regimental Corps of Drums of the Junior Tradesmen's Regiment, Troon. From left to right: J/Dvrs. Pew, Herbert and Crampton

been undertaken with much trepidation. Not to worry, the training of the navigators and seamen gave eyes to the hovercraft and confidence to the driver. Even the local population surpassed expectation by not complaining of lack of sleep!

The Squadron mascot Dougal, of Magic Roundabout fame, has now arrived as a new recruit with the love of the B.B.C. We wish him a happy tour.

Recently the Squadron had a get together when all hands and wives, were given an initiation into the mysteries of the Far East by Major J. James, R.A.E.C. From that moment the language of Malay has plagued our existence, egged on by the drive of Capt. M. Branch.

The ever patient members of 'B' Troop have recently been inveigled into the arts of rock climbing by the connivances of Lieut. I. Hellberg. Most members seemed to enjoy it—or were they just being polite?

Lieut. I. Hellberg has just learnt that he was runner-up in the Clayton Essay competition. For his troubles he is now writing THE WAGGONER notes for the rest of his tour.

Junior Tradesmen's Regiment, Troon
It is believed that these are the first notes ever to be written about this unit; we felt that readers might like to know a little about the R.C.T. Junior Tradesmen.

At the present time we have over 60 R.C.T. junior soldiers under training here. They are learning to become Driver-Radio operators, Drivers or Clerks on courses which last for about one and a half years.

Troon itself is situated near Ayr, opposite the island of Arran, and just south of the Clyde estuary. For golfers and yachtsmen it is the ideal posting, coupled of course with the fact that in a boys' unit annual leave totals ten weeks! On the permanent staff the Corps is well represented with six officers and seven senior N.C.O.'s as well as other drivers and junior N.C.O.'s. Major H. L. A. Mitchell combines the duties of commanding the recruit intake company and that of senior R.C.T. officer, Capt. A. R. Skipper is Assistant Chief Instructor, and Lieuts. H. Bentley-Marchant, R. I. Walters, D. M. H. Baker and C. F. Hyland are all platoon commanders in the driver training company or the recruit company. R.Q.M.S. Guy and S/Sgt. Flint control the Regiment's clothing and equipment, W.O.I. Broome the Clerical Training Company. Sgt. Broe the Regiment's M.T., and Sgts. Davidson, Wilcock, Nicholls and S/Sgt. Richardson are all platoon Sergeants.

We would welcome a visit from any R.C.T. personnel who are interested in our training, especially squadron commanders who receive our final product.

OBITUARY

COLONEL HAROLD BINGLEY FINCH M.C., A.M.I.Mech.E.

COLONEL Harold B. Finch, whose death occurred following a stroke on 15th December, 1967, was educated at Wellington and commissioned into the Corps from Sandhurst in August, 1918. Less than a year later he was awarded the Military Cross in action when serving with the ill-fated North Russian Expedition against the Bolsheviks in support of the then White Russians. In the middle 20's he saw service on the N.W. Frontier of India in Waziristan in the campaign against the dissident Mahsud tribesmen.

On return to England in 1929 he was promoted Captain and attended the M.T. Works Course at Thorneycrofts at Basingstoke which earned him his A.M.I.Mech.E. After service at Edinburgh and Bulford he was promoted to Major in the "Hore-Belisha List" in August, 1938.

Harold Finch saw active service again in the Hitler War where he later attained the rank of Temporary Colonel in the Italian theatre. He was retired from the Army in April, 1948 in that honorary rank. He then developed and conducted a very successful business as an insurance broker at Aldershot which kept him busy for many years until ill-health compelled him to relinquish control.

Finch was a keen ornithologist and a one-time Fellow of the Zoological Society and was always deeply interested in animal and bird life in which he was an acknowledged authority. He leaves a widow and two sons, one of whom is a serving officer in the R.A.P.C. and the sincere sympathy of the Corps will be extended to them in their sad bereavement.

C.E.R.I.

DOUBLE SPACING, PLEASE

We again appeal to our contributors to use double spacing on typewritten contributions with an inch margin left and right.

No army abbreviations should be used and capitals should not be used for proper names.

for Falmouth to do escort to 22 S.A.S. exercising in the area.

R.C.T. V. Yarmouth Seaman has been spanning the south coast on weekly training voyages. She showed the flag at Norwich we believe, for the first time.

200 Hovercraft Squadron.—At last the Squadron is on the way to the Far East. Two SRN.6 hovercraft, X.V. 615 and X.V. 617, together with all the M.F.O. and G.1098 stores have already left Southampton aboard the freighter *S.S. Benloyal*. The last shipment, consisting of SRN.5 hovercraft X.T. 492 and SRN.6 hovercraft X.V. 616, left on 3rd March aboard *S.S. Ben Albanach*. Our soldiers and families followed soon after by air. Now only time can tell of what the future holds for us in Singapore.

During the last month and a half in England crew work up and familiarization training on the new SRN.6 hovercraft continued unceasingly both by day and by night. Long hours and working weekends helped to unite the Squadron still further.

One of the first members of the Squadron to fall victim to the idiosyncracies of the new SRN.6 was our O.C., Major Ball. Even his navigator, Sgt. P. C. Bandey, could not entirely account for the presence of the hovercraft rutted above the high-tide line in front of the battery.

The Squadron has been featured extensively both in the press and on television—mostly in relation to our move to Singapore. However Sgt. J. P. Poyntz and his crew achieved their own publicity by resorting to the services of a Royal Navy tug off Southsea on 4th February. Our operations officer Capt. J. Flood together with S.S.M. G. Bradman seem to have formed up into a crew of their own yet even this high powered team has its problems. Capt. Flood has a strange affinity for brown paper bags and the S.S.M. seems to have acquired an affinity to "pot-holes"!

The Squadron hovercraft-gunners have been hard at work pumping the targets full of holes, both by land and sea. Cpl. F. Skene seems to be developing a good "killer" instinct under the watchful eye of Capt. Branch.

Visitors have flourished again in the Squadron. Brigadier Hargroves, A.Q.M.G. and Brigadier Flint of the Australian Army have both been introduced to the versatility of hovercraft (backing both horses perhaps?).

Thursday, 29th February was a historic day for the Squadron. Dougal of Magic Roundabout fame was officially presented to the Squadron as "mascot". The presentation was made by Miss Ursula Essen of BBC Children's Television supported



The presentation of "Dougal" to Sgt. Poyntz by Miss Ursula Essen.

by Mr. Ray Williams, commercial manager television enterprises. Amid much laughter Sgt. J. Poyntz received the mascot on behalf of the unit and was subsequently appointed 'handler'! Shortly after the presentation the T.O.-in-C. paid a flying visit to the Squadron in the company of Brigadier Henson. He addressed the Squadron emphasizing the difficulties of our task in Singapore but also offering words of considerable encouragement.

Capt. J. Flood has taken his first steps to stardom by appearing on behalf of the Squadron in a Southern Television programme. He gave a very clear description of the role of the unit.

Capt. M. Branch has recently returned from a hygiene course and has acquired the somewhat dubious title of "Squadron Sanitation Officer".

Sport still flourishes particularly in football, badminton and squash. On 24th January the junior ranks challenged the senior ranks and officers to a football match. The latter received a nine goal start, the prize was a crate of beer. The result of this blood match was a 0-7 win to the senior members of the Squadron and a shatteringly concentrated training session for their goal-keeper, Sgt. P. Bandey.

We congratulate S/Sgt. Mercer and his wife on the birth of a son. We also congratulate Cpl. Mead and Cpl. Barker, R.E.M.E., on further reducing the bachelor status of the Squadron. We welcome Sgt. Wyman, R.E.M.E., from I.H.T.U. and wish W.O.II Drew a successful tour on his departure to the Depot R.E.M.E.

See you next in Singapore!

School of Transport

81 Maritime Training Squadron.—Consequent upon the re-organization of the Maritime Group this unit on March 1st became part of the Maritime Wing of the School of Transport.

Training continues apace with No. 22 L.C.T. Officers' Course (Capt. McCaffrey, Lieuts. Blyth, Robyns, Thornton, Binns, 2/Lieut. Crawley), busily making voyage plans for their first cruise across the channel under the ever watchful eye of W.O.I G. Elliott. No. 3 Specialist Maritime Course (Capt. Dunton, Lieuts. Cox, Bentley-Marchant, Colvin-Smith and Townsend) have joined us, and are currently grappling with Set and Drift, and Transferred Position Lines.

The new annex to the school has at last been completed and the Marine Engineering Division are in the throes of settling in.



"F" Troop, 2 Squadron, 32 Regiment. Winners of FARELF Safe and Skilled Driving Championship, 1968. Standing left to right: L/Cpl. Osman Awang, Dvr. Mat Akhir, Cpl. Said, L/Cpl. Osman Harun, Dvr. A. Bakar.

Sitting (from left to right): Lieut. Halim bin Yom, Major J. A. Macro, S.S.M. Mohammed.

Between one of his sea trips to Gong Kedah Major M. White has told the tale of his personal demonstration to an impatient senior officer that a calm sea at the L.S.L. anchorage does not necessarily mean calm at the beach. A quick trip by the officer White in a small craft to that beach resulted in the boat being overturned by the heavy swell. A bedraggled, very wet umpire had made his point!

A welcome break for normal garrison transport duties was afforded to 61 Squadron during April. They provided a troop detachment at Terendak giving transport support to 17 Division in the absence of 3 Squadron on exercises.

The first of April, we all know is All Fools' Day. To 46 Motor Coach Squadron it is also Formation Day, because on that date in 1899 46 H.T. Company was formed at Dover, reformed on 1st April, 1914 as 46 M.T. Company at Woolwich, and on 1st April, 1966, as 46 Motor Coach Squadron in Singapore. On 1st April, 1968 to celebrate the second anniver-

sary of this last formation day the Squadron was "At Home" to representatives from the rest of the Regiment for an hour at midday.

24 Squadron has progressed with its training at Kuantan. Since the end of March five sections each approximately 14 strong have been undergoing fitness and adventure training in that area. On most evenings relaxing from their own strenuous tasks they drew some comfort from observing the exertions of the turtles laying their eggs on the beach. As part of a general scheme to foster good relations between the British Forces in Singapore and local youth organizations, the Squadron took with them on three of their section exercises some school cadets from St. Joseph's Institute. These young boys were thrilled to share the hazards of "man-sized" training for a change and acquitted themselves well.

Two officers have escaped the chores for a while—Capt. W. Thomas and Lieut. G. Wharry are in Australia with the Singapore Combined Services Rugby XV.

33 Maritime Regiment

Regimental Headquarters.—In our previous notes reference was made to the expansion of the Regiment. We can now boast seven Squadrons with a total of some 875 all ranks. If we had not sold our railway last year we would have had all transport agencies (sea, road and air) in the Corps under command.

Major Robins has taken over (Tpt) as Second-in-Command and Capt. Kudri bin Haji Siraj, R.P.C. came as Assistant Adjutant. We hope he will enjoy his first tour in the R.C.T. on transfer.

A very successful Command Test Board was held recently with the Commanding Officer as President. *H.M.A.V. Arakan* was at the tender mercies of the three candidates, Capts. Coppen, Jones, and Lieut. Davies. However we are glad to add that all three gained their Command Certificate.

10 Port Squadron.—200 Hovercraft Squadron were our guests for a while but have now moved to their permanent home at the Naval Base. They left under their own steam with our new O.C., Major D. P. Monckton as a passenger in one. This craft experienced a "plough in" at speed and both he and Major S. Ball, O.C., 200 Squadron, found themselves in a heap on the floor (or deck). However, little damage was done.

We congratulate L/Cpl. Booth on the award of his Royal Life Saving Society Distinction Award.

37 Maritime Squadron.—On 29th March the Squadron held a farewell party for Major and Mrs. M. Lunn who are leaving us on posting to the



Chief Engineer FARELF, Brigadier Clutterbuck, talking to S.S.M. Johns.

ferry trip took 22 hours flying time and included night stops at Phuket (Thailand), Rangoon and Calcutta. The aircraft is based at the British Gurkha Line of Communication in south east Nepal and is employed on liaison flying between there, Katmandu, Biairawa and occasional flight to Pokhara.

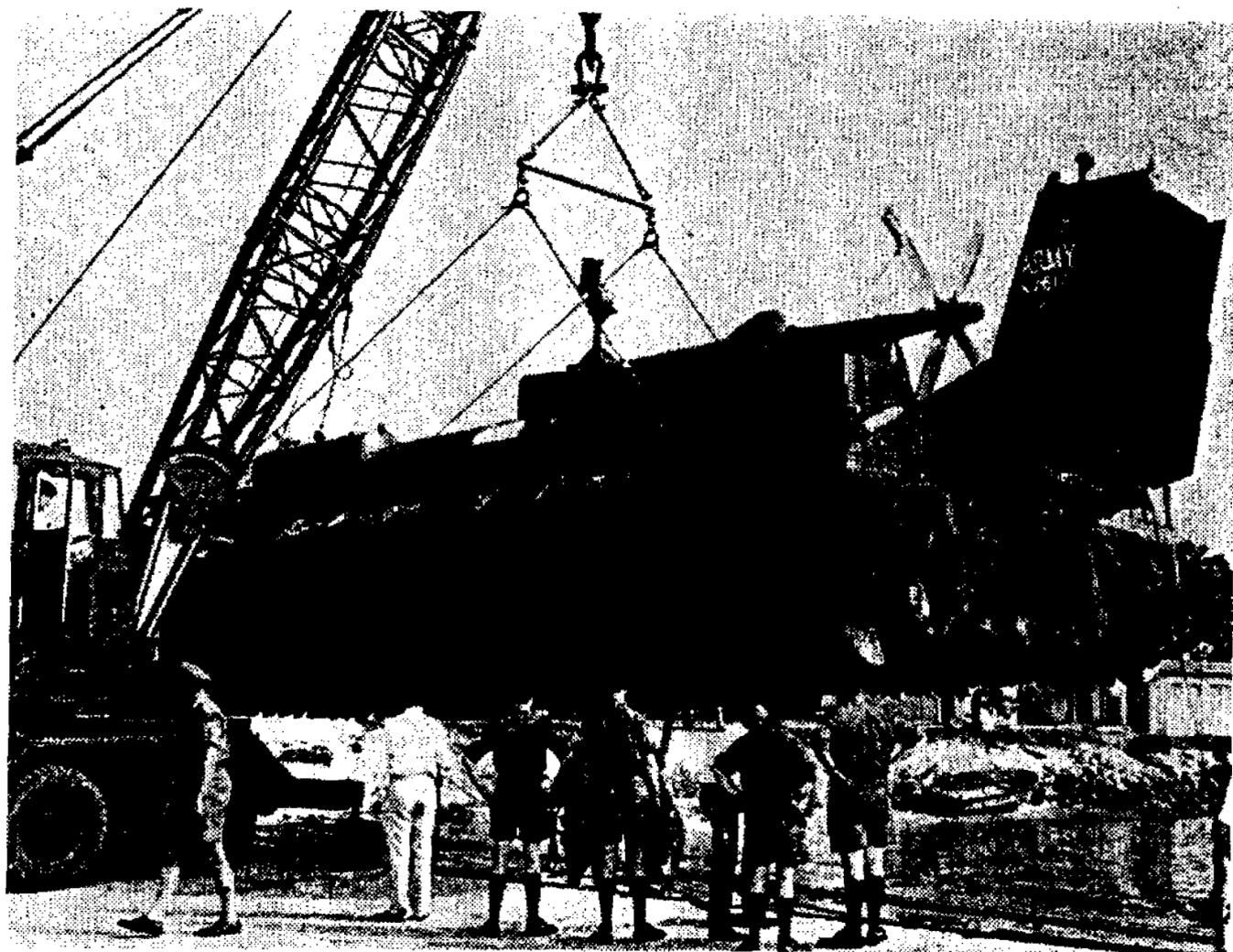
The water-ski boat returned to the water again after many long months in a corner of the hangar. The negotiations over the engine repairs were eventually concluded but on the short ferry trip down to the boat club mooring, an alarming number of leaks were disclosed.

200 Hovercraft Squadron — Singapore at last! The main party arrived in Singapore early on March 19th after a tiring but well controlled journey. The unit was received at the airport by the advance party headed by the O.C., Major Ball.

The hovercraft and unit stores arrived safely aboard the steamers *Benloyal* and *Benalmanach* on 23rd and 27th March respectively. Our two engineers aboard the vessels, Sgt. Weyman and Cpl. Guignard arrived looking brown and fit after a pleasant voyage.

While awaiting our new accommodation at H.M.S. *Terror*, the Squadron wasted no time in arranging courses and unit acclimatization. Capt. Branch set his heart on organizing jungle training. His most recent exercise was to take the unit up Gunong Pulai (2,147 feet) in the State of Johore. They arrived back considerably later than intended with conflicting reports as to the actual route taken to the top. The going had been very hot and many surplus pounds were removed. The S.S.M., W.O.II Bradnan arrived back with an enormous praying mantis to show (or frighten) his family.

The M.T. Section, led by Cpl. McLaren has now reassembled the unit transport and is once again ready for unit operations. The M.T. together with the Royal Signals detachment (under the leadership of Cpl. Boag) provide the backbone of the unit sports teams. Cpls. McLaren and Boag, L/Cpls. Squire and Adams, Dvr. Haynes and Sig. Rees and Grimshaw excel at football, while Dvr. Brown devotes his attention to "leg cutters". Three members of the Squadron, Lieut. I. J. Hellberg, Cpl. Nealer and Dvr. Haynes have already played for R.C.T. (FARELF) Corps cricket team. Three more members swell their ranks by playing for the Combined 32/33 Maritime Regiment Cricket team, they are S/Sgt. Webster, S/Sgt. Hickling, and Dvr. (Bomber) Brown.



Hovercraft X.V. 617 arrives safely at Tanjong Berlayer after her voyage aboard S.S. "Ben Loyal".

We congratulate Cpl. Nealer on being awarded his Corps cricket colours.

74/75 L.C.T. Squadrons, H.M.A.V. Antwerp (Capt. R. V. Stanley).—It has been all work and little time for play. On operation Bomb's Penang the rate of work has doubled and the bomb loads increased to such an extent that our escorts would not come anywhere near us until the dumping had been completed.

H.M.A.V. Arakan (Capt. K. Rollinson).—Having completed an excellent refit *Arakan* has already embarked on a very busy schedule. A quick visit to Bangkok in early April satisfied many of the crew's curiosities, but, glad to say all were brought back to Singapore.

H.M.A.V. Ardennes (Capt. P. E. Coppen).—The *Ardennes* is now in dockyard for a major refit and will emerge spanking new at the end of June. Of interest to engineers at home, we are being fitted with Foden generators.

Capt. Brack has departed for the *Arakan* and Capt. Coppen has assumed command.

H.M.A.V. Arromanches (Capt. J. O. Brack).—*Arromanches* having completed three months on Operation Bombs Penang was rewarded with a voyage to Thailand, visiting Sattahip and Bangkok before entering Royal Naval Dockyard to undergo intermediate docking.

The crew regrets that they were unable to be in Singapore to say

farewell to Capt. B. S. Birch who returned to U.K. at the end of March having been in command of *Arromanches* for two and a half years. Capt. J. O. Brack has replaced Capt. Birch.

3 Squadron.—The exercise season is upon us again. In the first four months of 1968 the Squadron has already been deployed on nine exercises. The locations ranged from the exercise areas in Malaya to Penang. Despite the heavy operational commitment, unit courses, adventure training and sport have also played a prominent part over this period.

Our soccer team started the season well with three good wins, unfortunately four weeks later than everybody else, whilst our cricket, badminton and shooting teams got under way with promising results. We have high hopes of our cricket team despite the early loss of one of our star players—Dvr. Thompson. Under the eagle eye of Capt. Fisher enthusiasm is running high. In individual sport Cpl. Waddington was beaten in the final of the FARELF Individual Boxing Championships. The Second-in-Command represented Malaya in the Inter-Area Squash Championships then went on to win the 28 Brigade and Terendak Garrison Championship.

The next production of the Bukiteers is to be Robin Hood. Cpl. Ball and his merry men are once more in business.

assist in the bomb dumping operations.

H.M.A.V. Arromanches (Capt. J. Brack)—recently made a very interesting voyage to Labuan.

HONG KONG

Headquarters R.C.T.—Soon we will be writing as Headquarters 31 Regiment R.C.T.; after a long hard-fought battle, which was started some time ago, the C.R.C.T., Lieut.-Colonel D. Neighbour has succeeded and 31 Regiment was formed on 15th July, 1968. This date, is, of course, the third anniversary of the Corps and so in future years Corps Week will have a double significance for us.

An abnormal amount of rain recently has resulted in some landslides but the situation has not been as serious as it was in 1966.

Visitors to Hong Kong during this period include Capt. Alcock on attachment from the Royal Australian Engineers, Capt. Stark from the School of Transport, Capt. Branch from 200 Hovercraft Squadron, Major Bell from H.Q. Gurkha Transport Regiment and Lieut. Peterson from 10 Port Squadron who delivered our first R.P.L.

Congratulations are due to Major R. J. Hutchings on his recent promotion.

29 Pack Transport Squadron.—The Squadron Open Day on May 18th was a great success; this year we combined the Annual Horse Show with a Fete and held both just outside the camp. This meant that the double attraction provided entertainment for both the younger and older elements who came to watch. The Horse Show consisted of the usual three events, the Novices, the Open and the "Hit and Hurry". Sgt. McGregor did exceptionally well by winning two of these events riding *Vanity*, with Sgt. Harrison doing well for the first time by winning the Open. There were many more lady competitors than in previous years which must prove that the Saddle Club is growing in popularity over junk outings and beach parties. The horses are taking a well earned rest during the hot season, but we hope to have a very busy winter ahead.

Polo finished for the summer on May 26th when 29 Squadron "A" team lost the last match of the season in a very hard fought battle with 18 R.A. polo club. Last season was more than successful for the Squadron as we started off with an almost complete string of newcomers, but by Christmas the young blood had shown its mettle in no uncertain manner,

and we were able to form two competent teams. The hardy perennial Major Tony Grimshaw was always at hand to beat us into shape. Perhaps the star personality was young Sgt. Addington whose handicap rose in leaps and bounds.

We have with regret relinquished our title to 29 Pack Transport Squadron R.C.T. after exactly three years bearing that name. To S/Sgt. Brumwell falls the honour of being the first and last R.C.T. Chief Clerk of 29 Pack Transport Squadron. On July 15th we become 414 Pack Troop, R.C.T., but as this means very little change to our establishment we shall continue to carry on as happily and as efficiently as before.

Congratulations to Mr. Kwok, our interpreter on receiving the Commander British Forces' Commendation and also on his subsequent promotion to Interpreter Class I. Congratulations also to S/Sgt. Tse Ting Yau who was awarded fifteen guineas for his invention which was mentioned in our previous notes.

S/Sgt. C. A. Byford, R.A.V.C., and family have left us for the R.A.V.C. Training Centre. We all wish 'Rocky' all good fortune in his new posting.

We welcome S/Sgt. A. R. Osborne, R.A.V.C., and family from the R.A.V.C. Training Centre and hope that they will enjoy their tour in Hong Kong.

56 Squadron.—Squadron Headquarters are having a reasonably pleasant time of late with only the formation of a Regiment to upset things. The occasional game of chess is played by participants of the Chess Championship. The O.C. must be congratulated on always winning the monthly R.C.T./R.E.M.E. golf championship; this is possibly due to no one else competing! However, it is rumoured that the M.S. has purchased a set of golf clubs in an endeavour to wrest away the championship.

The Squadron Swimming Gala was held recently, resulting in victory for "A" Troop, the inclusion of a local individual champion, no doubt, helped his team to win.

On June 7th the unit held its first barbecue of the year on Stonecutters Island at the Lido Pool.

Capt. Morley, "C" Troop Commander, was severely burnt in a bid to remove some inflammable material from a burning coach. Prompt action prevented excessive burns, although it is evident that he is very uncomfortable. His injuries look bad but we understand that they are not serious enough to impair his former beauty!

W.O.II B. Marshall has left us for 32 Regiment in Singapore. We see from earlier notes that we came

second to 32 Regiment in the FAR-ELF Driving Championships, so it looks like a case of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"

The long awaited R.P.L. arrived from Singapore has joined Maritime Troop. "Maritime News", our monthly newspaper, is still going strong and the July edition was possibly the best yet. Maritime Troop has finally gained its "independence", which was reported in the "News" in grand style; this is probably why there are so many detrimental remarks flying back and forth between Squadron and Maritime H.Q's.

407 Assault Ship (L.P.D.)

Operating Troop, H.M.S. Intrepid

WITH over 50,000 nautical miles logged since leaving U.K. in October 1967, and our impressive tally of foreign ports, we must by now be the most widely travelled Troop in the Corps.

Christmas and the New Year were spent in Singapore, where thanks to the hospitality of 33 Maritime Regiment, all members of the Troop spent a few days ashore after 12 weeks at sea.

Early January saw us in Hong Kong to give the ship a facelift. Great advantage was taken of this welcome break for sightseeing and sampling the delights of the Orient! A little business was combined with pleasure in the shape of a successful landing exercise with the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers in the New Territories.

Once again we have to thank the local R.C.T. units and in particular the C.R.C.T. for looking after us so well.

After leaving Hong Kong the first exercise took us to Penang with elements of 3 Commando Brigade and in due course the landing was made successfully and the unit ashore were maintained from the ship's considerable resources.

It was in the Persian Gulf that the next two exercises took place. The first involved a major landing at Sohar with ourselves and H.M.A.V. *Arezzo* as the Task Force, and the second, a Company Counter Insurgency exercise on remote and barren Yas Island. At Yas the O.C. managed to get ashore for the first time during an exercise, and accompanied by two Midshipmen provided a mobile if unusual band of dissidents, who succeeded in evading capture until the end of the exercise.

Whilst in the Gulf, there was little time for recreation although one short weekend was spent at Khor Quwai. It was probably the first time that, thanks to Sgt. Jessney, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding had ever been

their departure and would like to thank Lieut. D. Pepperell, S/Sgt. Nicholas and all ranks for their loyal support and cheerful co-operation.

Most of the D.U.K.W. detachment is being trained as driving instructors at Nee Soon.

Among those who have recently left us for U.K. is Sgt. Connery. He played rugby football for 45 years, finally hanging up his boots at the end of last season, aged 53. We shall very much miss him here, and hope that he and his family have a happy tour in Marchwood.

37 Maritime Squadron.—Brigadier G. E. Bavin visited Pulau Brani in July for "Concord" festivities which were well organized by Capt. Hussein bin Ahmad, R.C.T., and Mr. Ah Seng the Community Centre's Chairman.

One of our civilian Marine Engineers, Awang Chik bin Saban was recently honoured with an Army Commander's Testimonial.

From 4th to 11th August, Lieut. Nick Peterson and trainee seamen took the *G.S.L. Bob Sawyer* up the west coast of Malaya while about the same time *G.S.L. Uriah Heep* coxswained by S/Sgt. Harun carried the C-in-C. and his family up the east coast.

One night a Japanese cargo vessel pointed its stern at one of our harbour launches and put both engines full ahead. The result was a broken bow mooring line and a semi-sunk launch. The fact that the launch had only come off the slipway the day before really added insult to injury.

55 Air Despatch Squadron—Squadron Headquarters and 388 (Kemar) Troop have recently moved from R.A.F. Seletar to Telok Paku, R.A.F. Changi. The move to the fresh sea breezes and swaying palm trees far from aircraft noises has been long overdue. 390 Troop has remained in Seletar as the detached troop whereas 387 (Carfax) Troop, now commanded by Lieut. Irvine, once again comes under the close wing of S.H.Q. at Changi.

The cooks proved their worth in the Combat Cooking Competition. A team of three, two cooks and an assistant, from each of the five troops competed over a three-day period of preparation and competition. 387 (Carfax) Troop with L/Cpls. Gold and Anderson, assisted by Dvr. Baker, won the competition cup, closely followed by L/Cpls. Wilson, Maidstone and Dvr. Roberts of Kemar Troop. The food produced was of extremely high standard and everyone is once again assured of what the cooks can do with an oven made from an old oil drum when they are really put to it.

The sportsmen have been working hard as always. Dvr. Hoskins of 389 (Iskander) Troop now holds the F.E.A.F., Penang A.A.A. and R.A.A.F. Station Butterworth championship in the hammer event.

The Squadron soccer teams, managed by S/Sgt. Moffat in Changi and Cpl. Welch in Butterworth, played some excellent soccer this season. Their victories include the C.T.O.'s Cup (again) and the Singapore District Minor Units Cup. In addition the Singapore team won 42 games out of 46 in the Army League and Seletar League. Top scorers for the season were L/Cpl. Barks who scored 27 goals in the last six games, and Cpl. Streatfield with a total of 73 goals.

The Squadron 4ft. cabin cruiser *Belalang*, moored at Pulau Brani, has been working overtime under the skilled coxing of Sgt. Mason, Cpl. McGowan and L/Cpls. Patourel and McEneaney. The boat is used for family outings at weekends and Wednesday afternoons sports for us.

Lieut. Hibbs and Sgt. Gray have left for civilian life—Lieut. Hibbs to South Africa and Sgt. Gray possibly to Australia. Cpl. King, the main stay of the Orderly Room, has left us for the Trucial Oman Scouts.

130 Flight.—For the last three months we have been operating a trial detachment of one Beaver with a pilot and three ground crew in Nepal. The aircraft came back to Singapore on 1st June at the end of the trial.

Pilots and ground crew were rotated during the detachment and by this means we managed to give three pilots and seven ground crew experience of operating in the country. Pilots found the sudden change from high temperatures, high humidity and nil wind found in Malaya, to the exact opposite prevailing in Nepal during the dry season, a challenging and sometimes exciting transition. Although the Himalayans were more often than not shrouded in cloud all pilots encountered, sometime or other during their detachment, the situation where the complete range, from Annapurna in the west to Kaathenjunga in the east would stand glittering in the bright clear morning air.

The south west monsoon had established itself in the Bay of Bengal by the time the Beaver was due to return to Singapore, so the decision was taken to dismantle it and bring it back in a Hercules. The typhoon which caused more than 1,000 casualties at Akyab occurred on what would have been our return route, so the decision was happily the right one.

A farewell party was given to

W.O.I Tapping, A.A.C., who has been our Q.F.I. for the last two and a half years. It was the first time since January that all the pilots of the flight had been together in the same place at the same time.

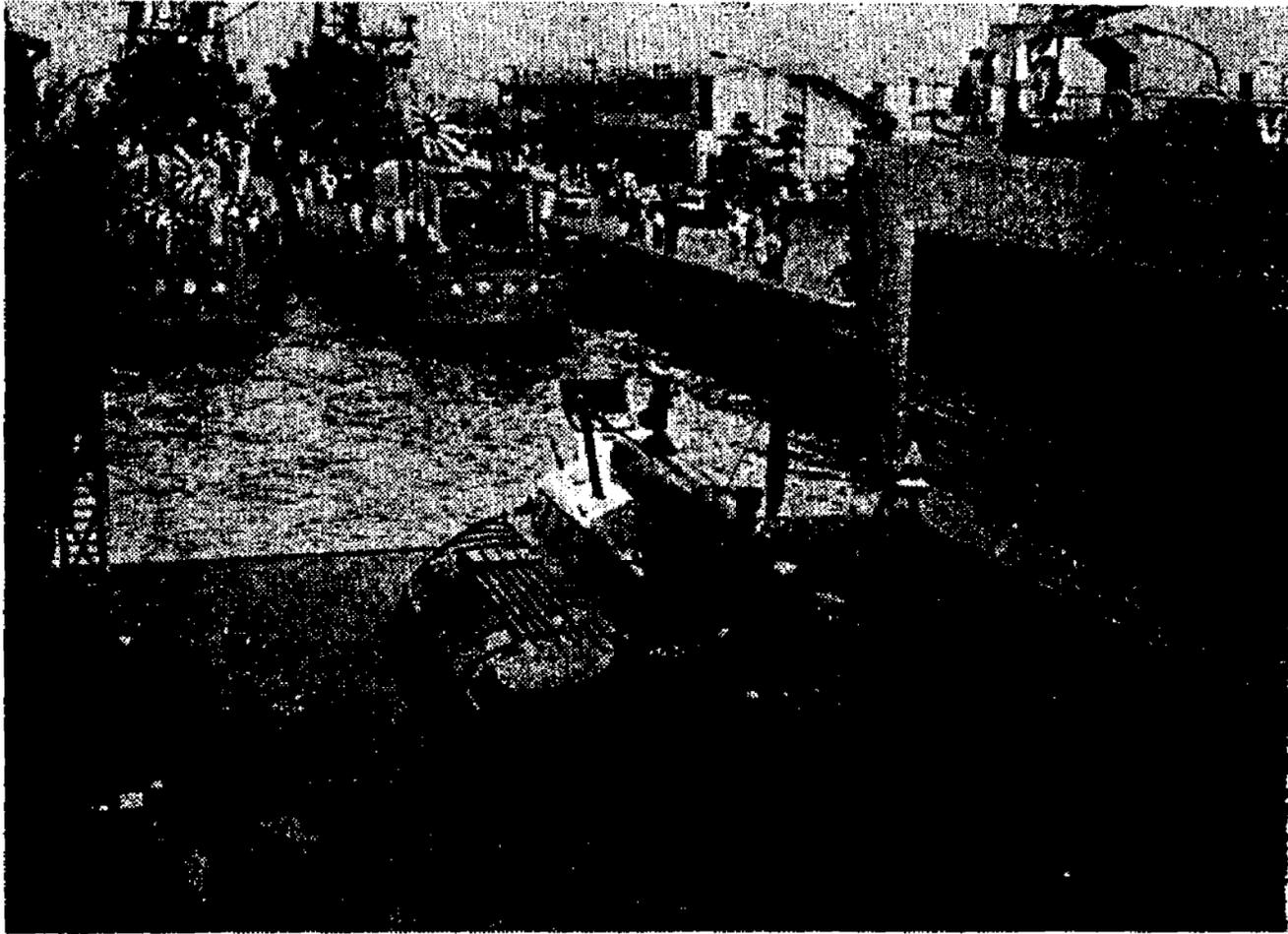
200 Hovercraft Squadron.—21st June brought the return of X.T.492, our much-travelled S.R.N.5 The recent trip having added Hong Kong and Japan to the impressive list of countries visited by this four year old craft. The crew on this occasion was W.O.II B. M. H. Webster, Sgt. P. Bandy and Cpl. B. Halliwell, moral and mechanical support being provided by Capt. M. W. H. Branch and two members of our Workshops, Sgt. Weyman and Cpl. Sturgin.

The craft was carried on the flight deck of L.P.D. *H.M.S. Intrepid* and gave demonstrations to military and civilian personnel in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Maizuru. The R.C.T. detachment on board was called upon for a great deal of assistance and we hope our welcome did not wear too thin. Capt. P. Brooke's comments, such as "I can think of a better way" as he hoisted the craft overboard for the 30th time, we can assure him, were taken in the nicest possible way.

On Thursday, 4th July, two SRN.6 Mk. II hovercraft returned from a very successful and conclusive participation in exercise near Marang. Both craft completed the long journey up and back with ease—overall distance 530 nautical miles. During the exercise, considerable experience was gained from operating with troops of 99 Gurkha Brigade—in a troop carrying capacity. The exercise finished on an especially successful note when the two hovercraft withdrew over 700 Gurkhas from the beach head to the waiting L.S.L.'s off shore—in a very short space of time. It was during this exercise that a certain Gunner subaltern declared: "I would love to serve with your Squadron—I like eccentric people."

In July the Squadron staged hovercraft demonstrations for the British Forces in Singapore, the Singapore Military and the Singapore Government respectively. The demonstrations proved highly successful, with W.O.II Bradnam and Sgt. Poyntz taking most of the limelight by driving the demonstration craft; not forgetting W.O.II Hickling and latterly W.O.II Webster with their crews who provided the static display. The Singapore Defence Minister, Mr. Lim Kim San, and Finance Minister, Dr. Goh Keng Swee honoured us with their presence. After the demonstrations, the Defence Minister stated that he would be carefully considering the possible use of hovercraft for the Singapore forces.

Almost a month later the Squadron



Hovercraft X.T. 492 in the dock of H.M.S. Intrepid at Tokyo.

moved up to Terendak near Malacca (West Malaysia) to stage a similar demonstration for 28 Infantry Brigade, the Malaysian Forces and Government. Almost exactly the same team of demonstrators was used apart from Lieut. Hellberg and W.O.II Hicling who retired sick. The former completely lost his voice which forced the task of commentator upon an ever adaptable O.C. The demonstrations again went well—again under the watchful eye of Capt. Branch. Tun Razak (Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia) was favourably impressed. He stated that “the Malaysian Army and police would like to use hovercraft—if they could find the money”.

We gravely miss our M.T. Chief, Cpl. A. T. McLaren after his admission to hospital as a result of a most unfortunate traffic accident. We wish him a speedy recovery.

74/75 L.C.T. Squadron—H.M.A.V. Arakan (Capt. O. M. Jones).—Once again *Arakan* has been away busy in Northern waters on “Bombs Penang”. A very happy occasion took place recently with the marriage of Dvr. Owens to Miss Janet Bellis—we wish them every happiness.

H.M.A.V. Antwerp (Lieut. J. S. Davies).—*Antwerp* returned to Singapore after a three-week tour in Penang at the end of June. On our way home we rendezvoused with L.S.L. *Sir Galahad* and in one lift ferried

nearly 400 troops ashore at Terendak. After our almost non-stop sailing since last December it is pleasant to see Singapore for more than intermittent two-day periods.

The ship's company embarked on a month of military training before the beginning of the refit and apart from renewing their acquaintance with boots and rifles, a number of soldiers found themselves airborne with 55 Air Despatch Squadron.

H.M.A.V. Arromanches (Capt. J. O. Brack).—In addition to exercises off the east coast of Malaysia *Arromanches* has also been fortunate enough to return to Borneo after a long absence visiting Brunei, Labuan and Kuching.

H.M.A.V. Ardennes (Capt. P. E. Coppen).—We have spent the last two weeks in Penang with the R.E. Bomb Disposal Team and have a fairly heavy programme ahead of us. Dvr. Khoo has got married since our last notes and we wish him and his wife all success for the future.

17 DIVISION

Headquarters R.C.T. — We said goodbye to our S.O.II Tpt., Major K. T. French, on posting to B.A.O.R. and Capt. S. Messenger on retirement.

In their place we welcomed Major A. T. M. Anderson from J.S.C.B.C., and Capt. (now Major) G. C. W. Edwards from 12 Squadron. Neither

are strangers to FARELF and we wish them and their families a happy return to the sunshine.

The Traffic Office now comprises a completely new team—with the exception of the W.O. i/c, W.O.II Griffin.

Much to the delight of the Traffic Office staff, we were allocated our first Boeing 707 flights. These were from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (Subang) and were for the unit moves of 6 Light Regiment R.A., U.K. bound, and 14 Light Regiment R.A., Malaysia bound. These moves provided us with a new experience, that of turning round over 1,000 pax in three days, and at an international airport, with none of the usual “movements facilities”! In such circumstances, talk of “24-hour delay”, when your passengers have driven over 100 miles in coaches to arrive at the airport, can cause grey hairs in minutes.

Those involved on exercise on the east coast of Malaysia have tales of millions of mosquitoes, sand sandwiches and scorpions as big as cats.

The unusual sight of the two ships marrying up at sea, via bow and stern doors, provided an interesting spectacle for both passengers and movements staff. The latter, incidentally, due to the failure of the assault boat motor, almost missed the event. Paddling like men possessed, Major Anderson, W.O.II Griffin and Cpl. Purdy, arrived at the bow doors in the nick of time. The W.O. i/c's comments on this event have been censored!

402 Troop.—402 Troop has been engaged in an unusual activity—helping the Road Safety Council of Penang to run a cycle rally for children of local secondary schools.

The event was run on the lines of a motor rally complete with scrutineering, driving tests and a fully marshalled “Tulip” road route. The rally attracted nearly 100 entries and seems likely to become established as an annual event.

S/Sgt. Othman had a busy time as Asst. Clerk of the Course, Mr. Loh our Chief Clerk was kept on the move supervising the driving tests, and Cpl. Ali with his scrutineers was so thorough that several teams were reduced to individual entries before they reached the start line.

The event succeeded in highlighting some of the prevalent driving offences and also drawing attention to common mechanical faults on children's bicycles.

L/Cpl. Rockingham is finding his way around the island and seems to have a “grip” on the job, but is still referred to by the “customers” as “the new Cpl. Brett”, whom he relieved.



The Army Commander saying farewell to R.S.M. (W.O.I) Sharp at Tanjong Berlayer.

Coppen). — During the past two months we have been engaged on bomb dumping in Penang and lifting the R.A.A. from Punggai to Prai.

H.M.A.V. Arakan (Capt. O. M. Jones)—has been spending most of the time steaming wildly up and down the west coast of Malaya, calling into Terendak and Prai, and dumping bombs off Penang.

200 Hovercraft Squadron.— Three of our hovercraft visited Australia to demonstrate their capabilities. The voyage was made in *H.M.S. Triumph*, accompanied by *H.M.S. Forth* and *H.M.S. Intrepid*.

They travelled far and wide from Queensland in the north east to Adelaide in the south, via Sydney. One S.R.N. went to Canberra for a demonstration.

Thanks are due to helpers from both 37 Maritime and 55 A.D. Squadron.

When he was serving with us, Capt. J. M. Flood, now at the Staff College, was constantly whistling "Fly me to the Moon" so we sincerely hope that his flight to U.K. was not diverted.

Congratulations go to Sgt. J. Whiteside and his football team on reaching the final of the Martlew Shield of the F.E.T.C. six-a-side competition, which they lost narrowly to 29 Commando R.A. We now have a star goal-keeper in Pte. A. Knights, A.C.C., who joined us recently from B.M.H. Singapore. Congratulations also to Cpl. A. Boag, R. Signals and Dvr. G. Brown on being selected for 32-33 Regiment rugby team.

130 Flight.—We have been busy of late preparing the detachments for Nepal and Laos. The former is a repeat of the trial detachment operated from February to June this year. After the results of the trial had been evaluated the decision was taken to detach one aircraft and ground crew permanently to Nepal and the aircraft was flown up during the first week in October.

The other detachment in Laos is

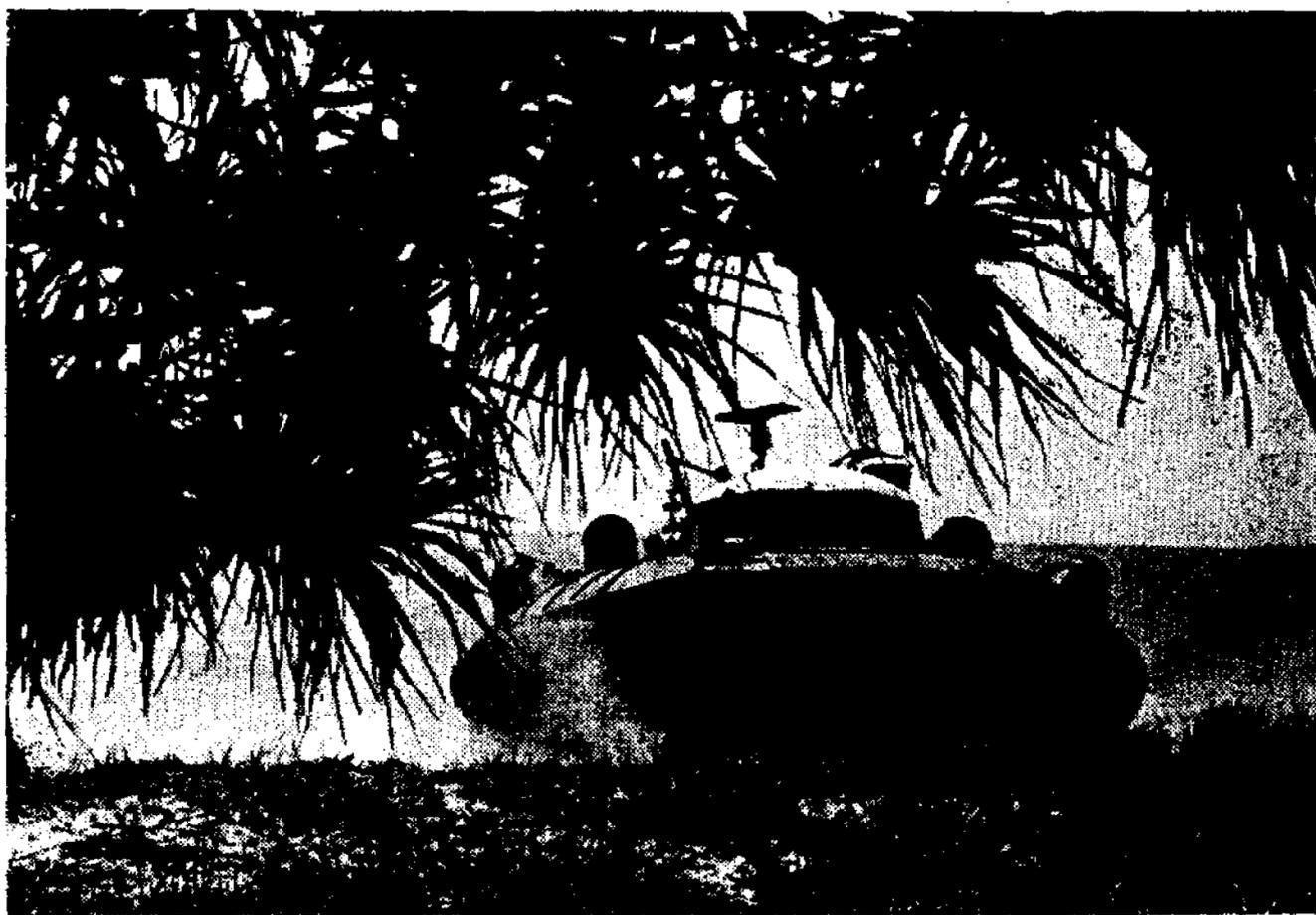
in direct support of the British Embassy. The aircraft is actually under charter to the Foreign Office. It is based at the Administrative Capital Vientiane and is engaged in communication sorties throughout the country — for the Ambassador, Defence Attache, Voluntary Service Organization, etc.

We had planned to send both aircraft together to Bangkok via a night stop at the island of Phuket (alleged correct pronunciation is Poo-Ket). From Bangkok, the Nepal aircraft would route via Rangoon, Akyab, Calcutta, Patna and Katmandu. The Laos aircraft would proceed direct to Vientiane.

In the event we had to delay the departure of the Nepal aircraft for seven days, due to difficulties over diplomatic clearance, from five different countries. However the Laos aircraft departed on schedule and duly arrived at Vientiane on 9th October.

Capt. D. G. Hazelton, R.C.T., is the first detachment commander and is settling down to the diplomatic whirl involved in being an accredited member of a British Embassy. The aircraft is serviced and repaired under contract by "Continental Air Inc.". This detachment promises to provide our pilots with a unique opportunity of studying at close quarters a campaign that is normally very inadequately reported.

The Nepal aircraft flown by Capt. M. H. Burton and Capt. D. A. Reid completed the long haul to Katmandu on schedule and is now busy with tasks up and down the length of the country in support of the British



The silhouette of the palms shows the hovercraft in a setting far removed from winter at home.



Even the cruise liners do not offer sunshine to compare with what this happy group of 200 Hovercraft Squadron are experiencing.

Gurkha lines of communication.

Capt. Burton is now back in Singapore but is due to take over in Laos in mid-December. The rotation of detachment crews will take place about every eight weeks. Already the Flight Office is beginning to take on the appearance of a travel bureau. Whether they will be able to repeat their coup during the first Nepal detachment, when one crew consisting of pilot, fitter and signaller found themselves the only passengers from Calcutta to Singapore on a charter Air India Boeing 707 complete with seven hostesses, remains to be seen.

17 Division

Headquarters R.C.T. — Volunteers for exercises are not normally easy to find, but when the magic word Australia was whispered a line soon formed. The lucky ones turned out to be Major Bennetts, Major Anderson and Cpl. Capper. We understand that no "boomerangs" are expected as a result of their efforts!

Detachments to Penang have been very much to the fore recently. Our entire movements staff, in two teams, was fully committed to cover the disembarkation of 1/10 G.R. from Hong Kong from four sailings by L.S.L's *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Geraint*. The most orderly manner in which the Gurkhas moved and their appearance after their sea journey, very much impressed all concerned.

Following the disembarkation of the Gurkhas at Penang Island, L.S.L. *Sir Galahad* sailed across the "straits" to the new deep water wharves at Butterworth. She had the distinction of being the first vessel to tie up at the new wharves.

Berthing at the wharves proved an experience in itself, but was soon overshadowed by the reason for her

doing so. Any movements agency receiving a bid to backload a Buccaneer aircraft might well look twice at it—we did! Fortunately, some very able bodied R.N. ratings arrived with the aircraft and thus perhaps prevented the S.O.II and W.O. i/c from making themselves famous. (What can you get for dropping a Buccaneer?)

We have said goodbye to our Chief Clerk, S/Sgt. Fogden, on posting to 60 Squadron. His place is taken by Cpl. Purdy, on his promotion to Sergeant.

We have also said our goodbyes to two of our long serving (suffering?) civilian staff, Mr. Kee Sang, 14 years, and Mr. Mohamed Yusof, 12 years. Both have rendered long and loyal service to the H.Q. and we will miss them.

402 Troop. — Dashera was celebrated by the resident Gurkha Battalion recently and members of the Troop were invited to attend.

We are sad to note that the last rickshaw has disappeared from the streets of Penang.

403 Troop. — The Troop once again provided transport for the Imperial Defence College Tour 1968 to Malaysia, last August. Together with the transport went our Second-in-Command, Capt. Lee, who acted as Transport Liaison Officer to the I.D.C.

Our vehicles travelled all over Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, to various Government Departments, tin mines, rubber estates, palm oil estates, and the Ministry of Defence (Malaysian). Our drivers once again received high praise from the leader and members of the I.D.C.

Our monthly jungle walk/compass reading exercise was carried out on the first Saturday of September in the

Kampong Sawah area. The course consisted of seven miles through thick swamp, jungle and rubber estates, and a climb to the top of a 3,200 foot high hill; direction finding was made by compass bearings only.

S/Sgt. Sood our Quartermaster led his section in a semi-circle and climbed two extra hills before he checked in at Check Point No. 1. He was questioned by the O.C., Capt. W. L. P. Greene as to why he came in the wrong way, his answer was, "there are many snakes so I took the long way round".

The O.C. has been fighting for the past two years to replace our aged 39-seater coaches, but now at last we have managed to smuggle one over the Johore Causeway into Malaysia and we have got a smiling Irish O.C. too. The O.C. thought he would never see a new coach before the end of his two and a half years tour in May, 1969.

The members of our M.O.R's Wives' Club are keen to learn to cook western dishes. Every fortnight, Sgt. Read, A.C.C., the N.C.O. i/c B.O.R. Cookhouse, 17 Div/Malaya District is giving the M.O.R's Wives European cookery and cake making lessons. In appreciation of Sgt. Read's good gesture Mrs. Greene, wife of the O.C., presented him with a set of pewterware drinking mugs.

404 Troop. — We open our notes with a word of welcome to S/Sgt. Pearson who is our new M.T. Sergeant. He is our last official change of staff before we ring down the curtain, and if he can put up with our idiosyncrasies the "cast" will remain static until we write our own epitaph.

We now have a football team that will take on all-comers. The team has no "Nobby Styles-ish" stars but virtually everyone wants to kick at the ball and the same team is never fielded twice. The O.C. puts his boot in (metaphorically speaking) on all possible occasions and when not playing cheers from the side-line. This is said to be as effective as the Hampden roar, and certainly strong men have been seen to quail. It's an old Army trick of course—if you can't beat 'em frighten 'em to death!. Still, we have actually won some games!

The school buses, once more in service after the long summer break, are withstanding the onslaught of Magnolia-fed youngsters extremely well, thanks no doubt to the vigilance of the maintenance boys! Where would we be without them?

3 Squadron. — Commonwealth Week was with us again in mid-September, and once more the Squadron teams were called out to compete in 28 Brigade's "Commonwealth Games". Teams were produced for 15 different

POSTINGS

Extracted from Unit Notes

No guarantee of accuracy can be given. These lists are compiled from information supplied by units. Would contributors please submit lists made out in the manner shown below. Where gaps appear in the locations it is because the information has not been given to the Editor.

OFFICERS

	FROM	TO
G. H. Atkinson	Capt. (QrMr)	103 T.C. Office
J. R. Arymar	Lieut.	20 L.C.T. Sp. Regt.
M. L. Baugniet	Capt.	Oxford Univ. O.T.C.
K. J. Beaven]	Major	8 Regiment
A. L. Bridger	Major	30 Squadron
C. Broussen	Capt.	H.M.S. Intrepid
J. Burt-Reid	2/Lieut.	90 Squadron
J. Clementson	Capt.	School of Transport
F. Crabtree	Capt.	H.Q. S. Command
C. L. Crew	Major	H.Q. FARELF
D. S. Crossley	Capt.	C.V. H.Q.
J. Daniel	2/Lieut.	26 Regiment
W. J. Diment	Lieut.	48 A.Y.T.
J. T. Doran	Capt.	J.T.R. Troon
W. G. Dover	Lieut.	7 Squadron
J. D. English	Major	30 Squadron, G.T.R.
L. M. Evanson Goddard	Lieut.	30 Sqn. G.T.R.
P. C. Field	Major	H.Q. Scotland
J. N. Fitzgerald	Capt.	4 Div. Regt.
J. M. Flood	Capt.	200 Hovercraft Sqn.
P. R. French	Capt.	Hong Kong
R. Hoare	Major (QrMr)	26 Squadron
C. D. Hurrell	Major	157 Regiment (V)
C. F. Hyland	Lieut.	J.T.R. Troon
A. G. B. King	Major	8 Regiment
J. May	Lieut.	9 Squadron
R. McMillan	Capt.	2 Tpt. Gp.
R. R. Millam	Capt.	J.S.P.U. (F.E.)
R. Morgan	Capt.	18 A.Y.T.
R. F. Mutch	Lieut.	26 Regiment
T. G. R. J. Old	Capt.	H.Q. FARELF
J. G. Owens	Lieut.-Col.	J.S.C.B.C.
G. W. Parker	Major	School of Transport
R. C. F. Payne	Lieut.-Col.	Malta
M. G. Powell	2/Lieut.	Reading University
J. R. Radford	Lieut.-Col.	FARELF
M. Randell-Smith	Major	11 Trg. Regt.
A. J. Samson	Capt.	8 Regiment
S. C. Searle	2/Lieut.	4 Div. Regt.
A. O. Sheppard	2/Lieut.	20 L.C.T. Sp. Regt.
G. Snelgar	Capt.	27 Squadron
K. F. Spall	Capt.	Singapore
G. S. Spence	Capt.	9 Squadron
I. H. Steward	Lieut.	9 Squadron
R. H. Taylor	Capt.	Terendak
F. Webb	Capt.	30 Sqn. G.T.R.
P. Whyte	Capt.	12 Trg. Regt.
		42 Squadron
		33 Regiment
		8 Regiment
		H.Q. N. Ireland
		28 Squadron
		14 Squadron
		26 Squadron
		Staff College
		H.Q. B.A.O.R.
		H.Q. B.A.O.R.
		11 Trg. Regt. (H.S.)
		8 Squadron
		28 Squadron G.T.R.
		157 Regiment (V)
		27 Squadron
		Br. Tpt. Staff College
		Trg. Depot, The Bde. of Gurkhas
		12 Trg. Regt.
		30 Regiment
		Staff College Camberley
		14 Squadron
		103 T.C. Office
		6 Training Regiment
		31 Squadron, G.T.R.
		M.E.X.E.
		H.Q. 5 Inf. Bde. & Sig. Sqn.
		200 Hovercraft Sqn.
		H.Q. S. Command
		3 Squadron
		11 Trg. Regt. (H.S.)
		65 Squadron
		School of Transport
		8 Regiment
		C.V. H.Q.
		4 Div. Regt.
		J.S.C.B.C.
		33 Regiment
		R.M.C.S.
		School of Transport
		74 L.C.T. Sqn.
		9 Squadron
		9 Squadron
		27 Squadron
		A.A.C.
		9 Squadron
		J.L. Regiment
		4 Div. Regiment

WARRANT OFFICERS AND SERGEANTS

	FROM	TO
J. Ainslie	Sgt.	8 Regiment
J. M. Baillie	Sgt.	42 Squadron
T. Bain	Sgt.	14 (A.D.) Regiment
J. A. Branch	S/Sgt.	33 Mar. Regt.
V. Bunclark	S/Sgt.	62 Squadron
S. E. Cahill	W.O.II	32 Regiment
N. M. Campbell	W.O.II	31 Regiment
Cooper	S/Sgt.	9 Squadron
		A.Y.T. Coventry
		103 T.C. Office
		31 Regiment
		62 Squadron
		12 Trg. Regt.
		12 Trg. Regt.
		H.Q. N. Ireland
		School of Tpt.

a billabong. The northern corner of the billabong is town (three houses and a shed) that is your target." "Tally-ho Blue".

The detachments in Nepal and Laos continue to operate fairly smoothly with Capt. D. Reid holding the fort on the top of the world. Capt. M. Burton is "our man in Vientiane" at the present.

R.A.F. Seletar, with whom the Flight lives and works, is to close in March and so 130 is again on the move, this time to R.A.F. Changi, which is to be the new location.

200 Hovercraft Squadron.—Having re-assembled his Squadron after adventures "down under", our Officer Commanding, Major S. B. Ball, disappeared again to prepare further adventures in Hong Kong—leaving the Squadron the task of annual classification and P.E. tests. After this the Squadron started to familiarise units with hovercraft in earnest, carrying out trials with strange and varied military objects. A visit to remember was 99 Brigade H.Q. and Signal Squadron (Gurkhas no less) who, after carrying out load trials, went to sea in hovercraft XV.615 (W.O.II Nelson & Co.)

Our visitors were many and as always they are welcome. Of special interest was the visit of some senior Thai Army officers who are consider-

ing following suit with a hovercraft Squadron of their own.

Our trials have taken us up to Terendak to work with 105mm. guns and 14 Light Regiment, R.A. Capt. R. Macmillan was in the van as a (mere?) craft commander—spreading his wings for dizzier heights under the watchful eye of Lieut. I. Hellberg with the shadow of XV.616 and W.O.II L. Hickling breathing down his neck. Also on parade for his first time was our new crew "chief", S/Sgt. D. Dobson, R.E.M.E. The exercise was thoroughly successful from a hovercraft point of view . . .

The O.C. in his wisdom decided that a small orienteering competition should be held just before going on Christmas leave. The competition which was won by S/Sgt. T. Johns, R.E.M.E., once again stressed the flexibility of the unit to adapt itself to ever changing environments—from mud, swamp, jungle to just plain road.

55 Air Despatch Squadron—387 (Carfax) Troop.—We are now well into the swing of working at Telok Paku and recently had an air despatch "first" by dropping 16 by 1-ton containers, split stick auto, from a Hercules. The crew had to get it right as it consisted of our A.D.E.T. (L.E.), W.O.II (M.A.D.) Ops and S/Sgt. Q.A.D.I.

At sea level we have been playing Robinson Crusoe with a vengeance with numerous dinghy drills and another "wetback" series where our crews get "ditched" off a nearby island and do a small overnight escape and evasion exercise.

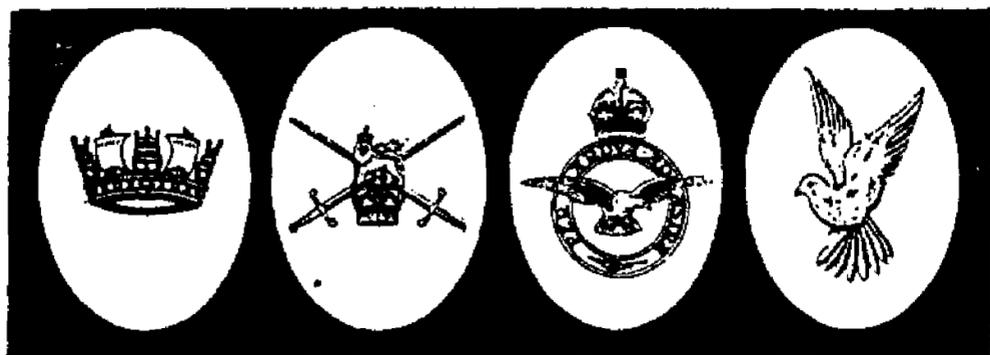
Our adventure trainers are involved planning another Kinabalu trip projected for early January. Another group is muttering about the air-conditioned streets of the Cameron Highlands.

S/Sgt. Minto's keen band of rally enthusiasts keep attempting to find their way around local rally courses with unit Land-Rovers, thereby incurring the displeasure of the O.C., who dreads the availability returns after such events.

But it is with some pride that we report that S/Sgt. Minto has been elected Forces Driving Club Rally Champion for 1968—the fact that he is Club Captain and responsible for running the championship tables has no bearing on the matter.

388 (Kemar) Troop.—Lieut. Hardaker took a party of men to the Cameron Highlands for Exercise "Fresh Air" (strawberries and cream for all). Later Lieut. Hardaker went on to Butterworth to take over as Troop Commander of 389 Troop for a month while their Troop Commander was away on a course.

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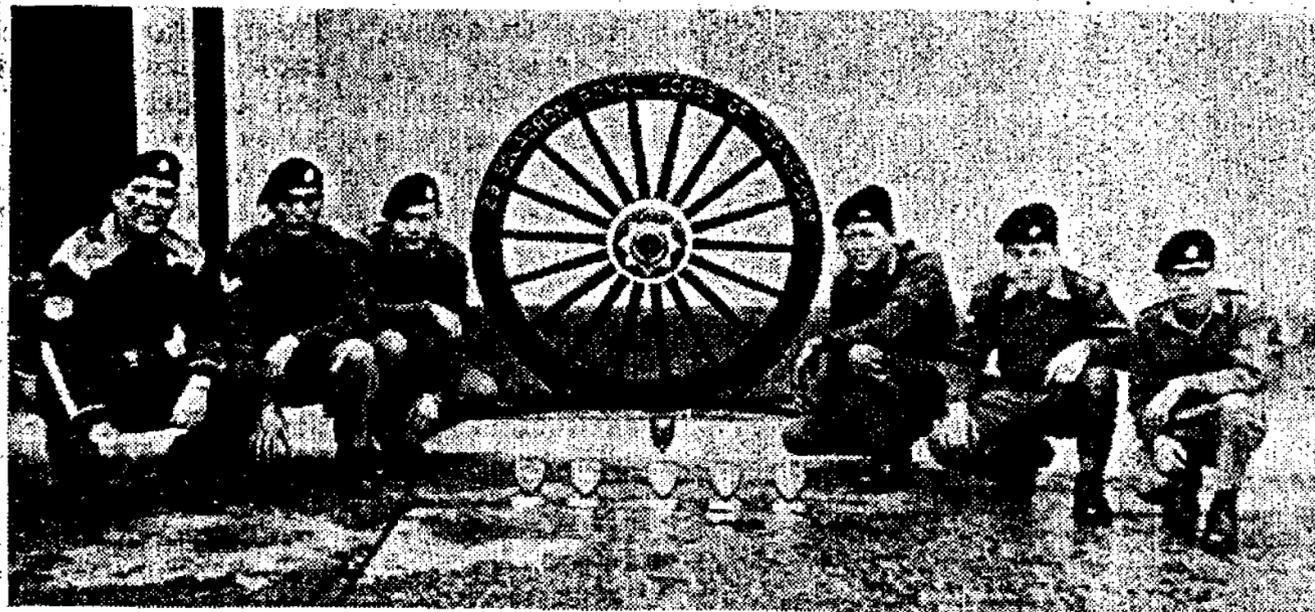
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Skilled Driving Competition: winners—B Troop. S/Sgt. Hickman, Cpl. Sin Chuen Yee, Dvr. Ng Bing Kwan, L/Cpl. Wong Yiu Tong, Dvr. Lai Hing Chung.

HONG KONG

31 Regiment

ST. Valentine's Day this year was celebrated with a very successful Ladies' Dinner Night in Victoria Officers' Mess.

Lieut.-Colonel Treasure the S.O.I (Tech.) from FARELF visited us and spent a hectic weekend travelling the colony, meeting as many people as possible. He was the only Army spectator privileged to attend the Hong Kong Road Safety Conference to hear the C.R.C.T., Lieut.-Colonel Neighbour as Chairman of the Army Committee deliver a paper to delegates from as far away as Australia and Japan.

The R.C.T. Hong Kong squash finals have been played: the singles final was an all 29 Squadron affair whilst in the doubles the C.O. and Adjutant "appropriately" defeated Majors B. C. P. G. Mahony and R. Hoare.

The R.C.T. Hong Kong Year Book for 1968 is now in circulation.

29 Squadron.—The Annual P.E. Tests have been successfully completed by everyone. Of particular note was that the O.C. carried S/Sgt. Hickman (who by no stretch of the imagination could be considered svelte) the requisite 100 yards.

Under the direction of 2/Lieut. D. M. Clare the Skilled Driving Competition, held in February, was won by B Troop with A Troop very close behind.

The Squadron is the backbone of the Regimental soccer team at the moment with no less than seven players.

L/Cpl. Brown and his bride have left us for B.A.O.R. and we wish them luck. Bon voyage also to Lieut. M. W. Gillespie who has left us for 3 Squadron. Our official goodbye was made in the Sergeants' Mess with the

presentation by the O.C. of a tankard from the officers and senior ranks. Lieut. Gillespie then presented the R.C.T. Squash (H.K.) Individual Champion's tankard to the O.C. who reciprocated by presenting him with the runners-up tankard. Not to be outdone Lieut. Gillespie then presented the O.C. with the squash doubles runners-up medal!

56 Squadron.—The sports meeting has been held and won very convincingly by B Troop, who took the cup from 415 Maritime Troop, last year's winners. The meeting was a success and most of the officers who participated did well, and it was very encouraging to see the Chinese soldiers having a go at all events with tremendous enthusiasm. The O.C. must be getting old as he was beaten into second place in the 100 metres.

The Chinese soldiers were given a pay rise in early February and this helped to make particularly lively and enjoyable Chinese New Year parties, which this year were held on a Troop basis.

The 56 Squadron Sergeant's Mess has now closed and the senior N.C.O.'s of the unit have become members of the new Shamshuipo Camp Sergeants' Mess.

415 Maritime Troop.—The assault element of the Troop has been in support of 48 Gurkha, and 51 Brigade Battalions almost continuously since January; they are at present preparing for Exercise "Trident Star", a Joint Service Amphibious exercise which also involves H.M.S. *Intrepid* and 200 Hovercraft Squadron. In spite of the miserable weather and unpredictable seas, the exercise season is thoroughly enjoyed by all not only for its training value but also as it means getting away from the "concrete jungle".

414 Pack Transport Troop.—In the New Year we turned our attention back to exercises and the accent was very much on the mules again.

With the reduction in strength goes the greater part of our British N.C.O.'s, a loss sadly felt on the polo field. However, the Troop put on another tent-pegging display for the Annual C.B.F. versus Chief Justice Polo Match. This time we made it a competition amongst ourselves by arming three riders with swords and three with lances. A high standard of skill-at-arms was attained and we now feel justified in challenging our rivals at H Squadron in U.K. to a duel.



The 414 Pack Transport Troop team.
Capt. A. B. Drewe (O.C.), W.O.II C. Swift (T.S.M.), T.O.M.S. Watson, Sgt. Harrison, S/Sgt. Osborne, Sgt. Kelly.

reverse route. These trips are a good test of endurance and navigation in the airways of S.E. Asia with the minimum of navigational aids.

The detachment in Laos is being suspended until the autumn.

One of the aircraft flown by Lieut. N. Ironside recently "dropped" a display team from the Joint Services Sport Parachute Club at the Selangor Grand Prix meeting at the Batu Tiga circuit, Kuala Lumpur. The "home" straight provided a novel strip for the pick up of the team prior to the drop. The Beaver taxied into the pits, took off and was reputed to have completed the fastest circuit of the meeting.

On the subject of motor sport Cpl. Davis, R.E.M.E. of the Flight Workshops, recently drove his Austin Healey in the first Asian Highway Rally, a gruelling 1,800 miles from Vientiane to Singapore; he completed the course but did not qualify for a place.

200 Hovercraft Squadron. — Our last notes left our readers on the beaches of Bali with the inevitable bevy of dusky maidens decorating the demonstration hovercraft. Duty called, however, and having dragged our reluctant crew off the beach we set sail on H.M.S. *Triumph* once again via Ambon to Hong Kong. As always, Capt. Macmillan had smoothed the path ahead and we were ashore and working before most members had time to put on winter clothing.

We soon commenced an intensive series of demonstrations for commercial firms and government agencies in Hong Kong. This was then followed by familiarisation lectures and sorties for most of the interested military units in the area. Having spread the gospel at an early stage we became increasingly involved in routine work which would normally have been done by helicopters or displacement vessels. These included remote area patrols, search and rescue, as well as troop lifts, and the movement of all sorts of stores and equipment to outlying islands.

Both the craft crews and the local water traffic viewed each other with considerable mistrust at first but eventually arrived at a happy mutual understanding and night passages through the harbour in excess of 30 knots became "Just routine, sir".

Later two craft returned to Singapore in H.M.S. *Intrepid* leaving the remaining two to carry out intensive trials with the Marine Police. The unit thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Hong Kong returning happy, wiser, and very much poorer. Our thanks to all the units we met for their help and hospitality in particular to 31



29 Squadron.
2/Lieut. E. Cross-Gurnell, S/Sgt. Hickman and three soldiers from B Troop, 29 Squadron who formed the commemorative Guard at the graveside of Dvr. Joseph Hughes, G.C., on March 23rd.

Regiment, the Ordnance Depot Hong Kong where we lived, and R.A.F. Kai Tak where we worked.

Having been a unit for two and a half years the time has come for a great turnover of personnel: W.O.II L. J. Hickling, 65 Squadron beware, he even "bulls" his boots to drive a hovercraft; W.O.II T. E. Nelson with stopwatch at the ready; W.O.I A. H. Hodson who aims to get 40 knots out of an L.C.T.; and Sgt. A. J. Whiteside who goes from hovering paperwork to moving paperwork. To all others leaving us who are too numerous to mention, our thanks and best wishes.

HONG KONG

31 Regiment

Headquarters. — Major - General P. G. Turpin paid us a fleeting visit accompanied by Brigadier G. E. Bavin.

I.S. Exercise "Pink Ticket" kept the Headquarters Staff extremely busy at all hours and was useful in "running in" new members of the Ops and Transport Control Staff.

The 1969 rally season got off to a full swing and for several weeks Headquarters resembled a competition department rather than a Transport organization. In a rally promoted by the Motor Sports Club of Hong Kong, the Regiment took second, third and fourth places in the

B.A.M.A. Class. A special prize for the best performance over the special sections was won by R.S.M. P. Beaumont and Sgt. T. Bain, who props up B.A.M.A. clerically, filled the third position.

Capt. J. C. Hale who recently joined 29 Squadron from the "Air" world in U.K., admitted under pressure that he had had some rally experience. He volunteered his services as Assistant Clerk of the Course for future events.

From four to two wheels: Major Mason (2 i/c) has, with help from the R.S.M. and the Motor Sports Club managed to get the Army Motor Cycling Association Hong Kong "off the ground"; trials are now well established.

Joint Services Movements Unit. — The "note of uncertainty" which prevailed at the turn of the year, still exists. We are beginning to suspect that this is a plot to ensure our military alertness, initiative and preparedness.

Capt. E. Burroughs and L/Cpl. Curtis and their families whom we welcome from Singapore, say that Hong Kong is too cold—this view was even shared by L/Cpl. Owen from U.K.! They are all having second thoughts now!

Flt. Lieut. Almond has now joined us full time as our second in command. It has been alleged that he and Capt. Simon will now only work alternate weeks.

We congratulate Cpl. Youngman and Cpl. Welch on their recent marriages and wish them all the best for the future.

75 L.C.T. Squadron.—We have been required to provide an L.C.T. Commander in the Gulf and this time it was Capt. R. V. Stanley (*H.M.A.V. Arakan*).

H.M.A.V. Arromanches (Capt. J. R. Arymar) emerged from the Dockyard on 20th May and after an initial hesitant scurry up to Penang, has now found her sea legs!

June was spent wandering around the eastern coast of Malaya, Pulau Tioman, Pulau Babi Besar and Marang on exercise.

The maintenance of an exercise on Pulau Babi Besar proved the versatility of L.C.T's. After towing a Mexeflote up, *Arromanches* discharged 13 vehicles on to the Mexeflote, flooded down and disgorged two harbour launches, refloated, anchored a cable length off, pumped 50 tons of water ashore, reloaded off the Mexeflote, hitched the tow and was off, all in ten hours. The Malays have learnt a new catch phrase: "Concurrent Activity".

The vessel is now preparing for three weeks in Brunei.

H.M.A.V. Ardennes (Capt. P. E. Coppen) during the last two months has been visited by the Army Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Peter Hunt, and the C.-in-C., Admiral Sir Peter Hill-Norton. At the same time we have been bearing the brunt of operational runs together with *H.M.A.V. Arakan*.

We have had an inspection from the Inspector of Shipping, Lieut.-Colonel A. J. Spicer. Congratulations to L/Cpls. Md Noor and Arham on passing their Seaman B.I tests.

W.O.I J. D. Bain is still dividing his time between us and the various gold courses, and has added to his collection the R.A.F. Tengah Open Handicap Championship.

We welcome Lieut. E. F. Palmer on board as 1st Lieut. and hope that he and his wife will have a pleasant tour in the Far East after their time with L.C.T's in U.K.

130 Flight.—May saw the Flight once again engaged in an F.A.C. role with only one of its three F.A.C. pilots participating, the other two were on detachments in Nepal and Laos. The latter detachment was closed down successfully, the ferry trip via Bangkok offering its usual good value!

200 Hovercraft Squadron.—After the intense work load in Hong Kong (where the Operations Officer, Capt. R. Macmillan, was able to find time to become a familiar sight driving hydrofoils between Hong Kong and

Portuguese Macao) the Squadron has found the pace in Singapore rather sedentary. "Gremlins", obviously irritated by our leaving Singapore, were waiting on the slipway on our return, and attacked in earnest, resulting in a lot of very sick hovercraft, which, at the time of writing, are only just starting to recover. However the Squadron is starting to regain some of its former glory, being committed to a joint Army/Singapore Government Survey of the islands surrounding Singapore (a total of 61), and support of a six weeks exercise being held on the east coast of Malaya. Planning is starting for a two weeks exercise in Sabah, a joint force exercise in Malaya and a demonstration in Brunei; bids, threats, bribes, etc., are much in evidence whilst the personnel are selected to take a craft to Japan in September for the British Trade Fair.

After a year in the Far East, with a considerable portion of the time spent in bashas, squadron personnel still voluntarily sentence themselves to unnatural hardships. A party, led by Capt. Branch and Capt. Hellberg spent five days exploring 40 miles of scorching coastline. The result of this venture was a few shells and fishing floats, and a large number of sandfly bites. The S.S.M., W.O.II Bradnam, has, at the time of writing, departed with a group of "away from it all" people to make a raft trip 200 miles down the Pahang River.

101 Transport Control Office.—It is with sadness that we report the sudden death of W.O.I W. Bainbridge in the B.M.H. Singapore after a short illness. He will be greatly missed by all military and civilian staff and by his friends of H.Q. FARELF.

The funeral took place at Ulu Pandan Military Cemetery with full military honours on 13th June.

W.O.I Bainbridge served in the Royal Engineers from 1947 until 1965, when he transferred to the Corps as a Movements Clerk. He served as a Movements Instructor in Longmoor and in Movements at Chester, Hong Kong and M.F.O. Ratingen.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow and five children.

HONG KONG

31 Regiment

HEADQUARTERS once more took the brunt of the load for the "March Hare" Rally. Major Mason completed his Hong Kong tour with an excellent performance as starter and the event was covered by Hong Kong TV; which shows how popular this sport has become in the Colony.

A hearty welcome to Major W. Haynes (2 i/c designate), who will require all his Scottish B.A.M.A. experience, with the number of events now held. According to Sgt. Bain, the roads in Scotland and Hong Kong are about the same anyway.

We bid farewell to our Chief Clerk, W.O.II Ames, and welcome W.O.I Herbert, who has only to cross the harbour from Kai Tak.

The R.C.T./G.T.R. Swimming Gala was a well supported event and was won by 29 Squadron, who broke a few Corps (Colony) records in doing so.

Our "ten pin" team is still striving for success and, with the steady improvement of Capt. McGuirk (Adjutant) and W.O.I Beaumont (R.S.M.), promotion should not be far off.

29 Squadron.—Any unit Notes are made easier when activities vary from crewing a Dragon boat to thundering round Tate's Cairn on the B.A.M.A. Rally, hoping that at least two tyres will be on terra firma. It would be difficult to envisage boredom in Hong Kong and May and June certainly left no room for any.

Our 2 i/c arrived from U.K. right at the end of April. His only complaint about the flight (Air Despatchers please note) was that an 18-hour sortie with no drop was just wasted effort.

At the Brigade athletics meeting two of our N.C.O's achieved noteworthy results. L/Cpl. Lee Chung Hing was second in the 100 metres and L/Cpl. Ko Dor Mut third in the 200 metres.

In May we entered for the Spring Rally, a co-sponsored M.S.C./B.A.M.A. Rally. Mr. Cross-Gurnell and S/Sgt. Hickman finishing eleventh overall and fourth in the B.A.M.A. entries.

During early May, A Troop went to annual camp. Troop Commanders should note that, for peace and quiet, they should first choose an island that is guaranteed impossible to telephone and, second, when tasking a helicopter for the O.C., give, as the grid reference, a point in some 20 fathoms of "oggin". Despite the best laid plans, the camp was visited by Brigadier Illing, our Brigade Commander, and also by the O.C. and S.S.M. Roberts, who, playing safe, travelled by ferry.

Also, during this week, we were visited by the Army Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Peter Hunt, who met the officers and senior N.C.O's and then watched a wheel changing display. B Troop and D.T.W. provided the teams and had an excellent dress rehearsal in preparation for two mini Tattoos.

For the military element of the Squadron, in addition to taking leave, school holidays offer a chance to catch up on such purely military activities as range classification, P.E. tests, etc. We even manage sometimes to get away up country by ourselves to practise basic skills. Our mixed complement of 71 civilian drivers takes staggered block leave, when they return to their taxi driving and satay stalls.

We still have not mentioned the ease with which Britons, Chinese, Malays and Indians work in complete harmony, an object lesson in ethnic unity.

This month, we welcome W.O.II Wiles from B.A.O.R. He will take over our Nee Soon detachment. From Far East Training Centre we also welcome Capt. A. Abdeen, who comes as second-in-command. At the Squadron Joget on 5th October, we bade a final farewell to Capt. Abdul Manaf bin Yaacob, and wished him every success in his new appointment in Kuala Lumpur.

33 Maritime Regiment

Regimental Headquarters. — The last couple of months have been extremely hectic planning the run-down of the Regiment. We are very sorry to be witnessing the departure of 200 Hovercraft Squadron to the United Kingdom. During their 18 months in FARELF they have worked extremely hard and have done much to enhance the Corps' reputation in both civil and military circles.

Further reductions in 55 Air Despatch Squadron include the reduction of the Squadron Headquarters and disbandment of 388 (Kemar) Troop.

Recent visitors to the Regiment have been the O i/c R.C.T. and A.C.C. Records, Colonel P. Pearman, and the A.A.G., A.G.8, Colonel B. A. Edridge.

10 Port Squadron.—Cameron Highlands training is now over for the year. The final party of 30, who were there from 11th to 18th September with a similar number from 55 Squadron, had some useful training and the cool climate was beneficial both physically and mentally. It is now too late to send any more parties there, due to the monsoon, but we hope to do so.

Shooting, wireless training, courses and P.E. tests are intermingled with exercises, bomb dumping and work for the R.A.F. A project in hand for a local Community Centre is the construction of a roof for a boxing ring. An unusual task for one of the Michigan operators was the collection of the boxed E.A.S.C. cap badge mosaic from Marina Officers' Mess. We have also been working for 200



55 Air Despatch Squadron, R.C.T., shooting team.
Rear : W.O. II L. Nicholson, Dvr. H. J. Dougan, Dvr. D. R. Robertson, L/Cpl. D. G. Craig, Cpl. E. Hounslow.
Front : S/Sgt. J. P. Monto, Dvr. J. M. Lyle, Dvr. W. D. Appleby, Dvr. D. J. Webb.

Hovercraft Squadron and have enjoyed free trips round the harbour at high speed as a result.

At present we are involved in preparations for the Army Commander's Study Period and moving 1,500 measured tons of furniture from Terendak to an L.S.L. for shipment to Hong Kong. Moving furniture is not a new occupation, because two L.C.T. loads per month come into Tanjong Berlayer.

The unit divers have not recently been required to do beach reces far afield so have made themselves useful finding out what is wrong with the hard (there is plenty!) and assisting in laying the moorings for the yacht of the Air Adviser to the Singapore Government, whose house overlooks the Port.

"Keep Singapore Mosquito Free" is the cry. Formerly content to beat at them with rolled-up newspapers, our approach to this problem has now become more scientific. With the aid of Lieut. F. Marriot, R.A.M.C., two members of the Squadron have been trained to deal with the problem. One of these is Cpl. Bennett from the S.Q.M.S. store. The cynics say that when he smokes his pipe there is no mosquito problem anyway!

We congratulate W.O.II Fox on his appointment as R.Q.M.S. and Cpl. Blay, A.C.C., on promotion to Sgt.; and give Sgt. Corlett our good wishes on his departure to U.K.

37 Maritime Squadron.—There has been a very welcome series of promotions within the Squadron and

W.O.I Poi Ah Bee, W.O.II Harun bin Tawi, and S/Sgt. Nordin are accorded the heartiest congratulations.

Cpl. Abu Samah returned from the United Kingdom very happy with his course grading and is now putting his A.1 knowledge to good use on one of the five R.P.L's that are at present gracing Keppel Harbour.

Squadron badminton players fill most of the places in the Regimental team, which was very successful in the Singapore District Minor Unit Championships, reaching the finals for a thrilling play-off against the R.E.M.E. The success of the team is largely due to Sgt. Aziz, who is both team captain and trainer.

A crowd of about 5,000 packed the Pulau Brani sports ground to watch a professional wrestling match in mid-October. The match was organised with the help of 3 Commando Bde. Signals Squadron. Our soldiers, under the supervision of the newly arrived S.S.M. W.O.II Badar, worked very hard to make the evening a success. Many requests for a repeat performance have been received.

55 Air Despatch Squadron.—Recent Andover drops to the S.A.S. in the jungle will be of interest to "old and bold" despatchers who still "swing the lamp" with hairy tales of Valettas. The Andover drops were a real taste of the old tree hopping and even our Squadron Commander was "converted" to Andovers.

Master Air Despatcher Nicholson was attached to the 10th Gurkha Rifles for nine days to instruct their

negotiating a very foggy Kiel Canal before arriving tired and happy in Portsmouth.

200 Hovercraft Squadron.—We are now fully established in our former location on Browdown beach at Gosport. Our move was unusual in that the stores and equipment were fully containerised. The Chacons were supplied by the Royal Navy and proved most effective. We are claiming this as another 200 Squadron "first" but counter-claims may be considered.

On arrival our much-travelled craft were taken into the Royal Naval Aircraft Yard, Fleetlands, for extensive overhaul and modification and are now emerging to be plunged straight into a very intensive training programme. Former customers will be delighted to hear that, thanks to the improvements made, they will no longer be required to sit on the floor of the craft or help pump during refuelling.

Before the next trials phase commences, the unit will have completed its 99% change-over of personnel. The 1% remaining of the original founder members is the S.S.M., W.O.II Bradman, who appears to have taken root.

27 Regiment

Headquarters.—Despite the attempt of 65 Squadron to pollute the Headquarters by pointing the exhausts of vehicles in light preservation directly at H.Q. Block, the well oiled machinery of the Headquarters element continued to function with its usual efficiency.

The Major Operations, Adjutant and R.Q.M.S. are in Norway on Exercise "Hardfall IV", we wish them well and an ample supply of coffee.

We welcome our new Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel D. H. Turner, who joins us from the British Army Staff, Washington, U.S.A. Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Thomas, O.B.E., left us for Singapore after a lively send off. We wish him every success and congratulate him on his present decoration, awarded in the New Year's Honours List.

8 Squadron.—Once again the Squadron is away, half in Norway and half on block leave. The middle of January will see the big change over when the half now on leave in such cold places as Glasgow and all points north go to Norway for their survival training.

The last of our bachelor officers, Lieut. J. Daniels, has taken the plunge into marital bliss. We extend our congratulations to both him and his wife.

19 Tank Transporter Squadron.—Congratulations are due to Lieut. Tait who, having been recalled from detail

disappeared on a University Course at Exeter and announced his engagement on the same day.

Regarding the more serious aspects of tank transporting, our details have recently been enlivened by the carriage of one or two difficult loads. A pair of 10,000 gallon water tanks, and a large six berth yacht gave cause for rumours that we were going into the haulage business.

With tank transporting continuing up to two days before Christmas and a record number of lifts in 1969, our soldiers have had their share of entertainment. It was good to see Cpl. Taylor of C Troop, whilst riding a B.S.A. motor cycle in a police escorted detail, take time off to give first aid to a seagull which flew straight into him. Cpl. Taylor upheld the highest principles of animal lovers by stopping a four-troop convoy on a narrow road and depositing the injured bird with a startled police car driver, giving instructions to take it to an animal sanctuary as soon as possible. The policeman complied.

Later Cpl. Taylor jumped off an Antar tractor, broke his ankle and is now on crutches. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Recently L/Cpl. Barrett, R.A.O.C. and Dvr. Morris completed a 36-mile walk sponsored by the Squadron. They raised over £60 which they presented to the Old People's Home in Salisbury. Well done both.

42 Squadron.—Since our last notes life has been quiet and most of the Squadron has returned home from various parts of the world. We are "fostering" a group of Jamaican soldiers for three weeks. They arrived on about the coldest day of the year.

50 Movement Control Squadron

FOR once most of the squadron has been at home carrying out annual training. W.O.II Turton chased everyone through their P.E. tests and a high standard of fitness should pay dividends during Exercises "Hardfall IV" and "Arctic Express" in Norway for the next three months.

On 2nd December we had our Fitness for Role Inspection by Brigadier J. G. Bagnell, O.B.E., M.C., who was very interested in the work of the squadron. He presented S/Sgt. Arthur Butler with the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Our .22 shooting club was host to the local Army Cadet Force, who are trained by Sgt. Taylor, their C.S.M.I. They showed a high standard of marksmanship and polished off trays of sandwiches in record time.

With the start of the swinging 70's and the raising of the £50 travel restriction we have personnel in

Antigua, Kenya, British Honduras, Libya, Ethiopia and Norway.

The "workers" in the Air Mounting Wing continue to disperse units to the far corners of the world. During the New Year we hope to improve the image of the passenger terminal, which is now at the mercy of the decorators. Ground hostesses from the W.R.A.C. would raise the morale of all transitees but perhaps this is too much to hope for.

NORTHERN COMMAND



17 Squadron.

The New Year finds us back at Ripon after block leave, eagerly awaiting our bumper bundle of inspections and visits. Our footballers are once again preparing

to sort out all comers. Their only recent defeat was by the Yorkshire Services league leaders, R.A.F. Leconfield, a match played immediately after disembarking from the L.S.T., and at the end of last year's B.A.O.R. training. Undaunted they have continued to the final in both this league and the Northern Command Minor Services League. The recent Officers v. Sergeants football match was in a different class altogether; the Officers won in a remarkable game, during which the O.C. scored twice (for his own team on both occasions, fortunately).

NORTHERN IRELAND

26 Squadron



ALL is quiet at present and the 26th of wheel returns to something approaching normality.

Our football team has maintained its reputation by winning the Garrison

League by a clear margin. We have also beaten several local civilian teams.

An innovation is our own Squadron Club, as yet unnamed but nevertheless welcomed by all Squadron members.

Warrant Officers and Sergeants	Rank	From	To
J. T. Archibald	Sgt.	130 Flight	12 Training Regiment
E. A. Argust	W.O.II	3 Squadron	7 Squadron
J. R. Armstrong	S/Sgt.	33 Maritime Regiment	H.Q. 153 (H) Regiment (V)
S. R. Bailey	S/Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	4 Div. Regiment
B. Barfoot	Sgt.	68 Squadron	20 Squadron
D. Benn	W.O.I	Depot Regt.	2 Div. Regiment
R. Bennett	Sgt.	2 Div. Regt.	12 Training Regiment
J. Bentley, B.E.M.	W.O.I	Junior Leaders Regiment	32 Regiment
A. Biggs	Sgt.	1 Div. Regt.	10 Regiment
J. S. Blackie	Sgt.	131 Flight	8 Regiment
M. R. Blackman	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	S.A.B.C. (Singapore)
G. Blythe	W.O.I	32 Regiment	Army School of Transport
C. J. Bracey	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	14 (A.D.) Regiment
A. E. Bradley	S/Sgt.	47 (A.D.) Sqn.	H.Q. Northern Command
O. Bradley	Sgt.	1 Div. Regt.	Army School of Transport
Brown	Sgt.	Depot Regiment	33 Squadron
R. R. Brumwell	W.O.II	56 Sqn.	H.Q. R.C.T. London District
G. A. Burrows	S/Sgt.	33 Maritime Regiment	17 Port Regiment
W. H. Carder	Sgt.	A.C.I.O. Norwich	8 Regiment
Churchill	Sgt.	Junior Leaders Regiment	20 L.C.T. Support Regiment
R. Coley	W.O.II	50 M.C. Sqn.	H.Q. Northumbrian District
B. Collins	Sgt.	4 Div. Regt.	Army School of Transport
J. V. Cooke	Sgt.	15 Squadron	12 Training Regiment
D. E. Crabtree	Sgt.	50 M.C. Sqn.	H.Q. R.C.T. South-East District
I. P. Cunningham	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	19 Tk. Tp. Squadron
J. C. Davies	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	14 (A.D.) Regiment
W. Dixon	Sgt.	6 Squadron	Army School of Transport
R. Eaton	W.O.II	55 (A.D.) Sqn.	3 Squadron
A. F. Ellis	W.O.II	33 Maritime Regiment	487 Mov. & Tpt. Con. Tp.
H. J. Forder	Sgt.	68 Squadron	AFNORTH
A. J. J. Fowles	Sgt.	47 (A.D.) Sqn.	27 Regiment
M. A. Fricker	S/Sgt.	Army School of Transport	33 Maritime Regiment
S. Goold	W.O.I	R.A.M.C. Trg. Centre	4 Div. Regiment
W. Gough	S/Sgt.	7 Squadron	26 Regiment
R. B. Greeves	S/Sgt.	Junior Leaders Regiment	26 Regiment
A. T. Hall	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Squadron	3 Squadron
Harte	Sgt.	Junior Leaders Regiment	R.M.A. Sandhurst
A. Henderson	S/Sgt.	1 Div. Regiment	Army School of Transport
T. W. Honeysett	W.O.II	76 A.Y.T.	2 Div. Regiment
Hyland	Sgt.	2 Squadron	2 Cas. Clearing Station
J. R. Kelly	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Squadron	1 Div. Regiment
J. L. Kennedy	Sgt.	68 Squadron	Brunei
J. King	Sgt.	30 Regiment	12 Training Regiment
Lawrence	S/Sgt.	H.Q. NORTHAG Tpt. Coy	Depot Regiment
Lemmon	W.O.II	Junior Leaders Regt.	4 Div. Regiment
Lloyd	S/Sgt.	C.V.H.Q. Bedford	Junior Leaders Regt.
G. Lunn	S/Sgt.	8 Regiment	12 Inf. Bde. & Sigs. Sqn.
Marshall	W.O.II	Junior Leaders Regt.	H.Q. Regt. 1 (BR) Corps
B. Marshall	W.O.II	Junior Leaders Regt.	14 Squadron
T. P. L. McDade	Sgt.	8 Regiment	A.C.I.O. Bolton
T. McGowan	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Squadron	26 Regiment
McGregor	Sgt.	A.C.I.O. Aberdeen	Depot Regiment
C. McInnes	Sgt.	2 Div. Regiment	Tpt. & Mov. H.Q. B.A.O.R.
G. McKenzie	W.O.I	2 Div. Regiment	Dhekelia, Cyprus
J. P. Minto	Sgt.	55 (A.D.) Squadron	14 (A.D.) Regiment
R. O. Morris	S/Sgt.	1 Div. Regiment	617 Tk. Tp. Unit
A. D. Moss	S/Sgt.	2 Div. Regiment	21 Squadron
Murphy	Sgt.	J.T.R.	2 Squadron
Myatt	W.O.I	62 Squadron	8 Regiment
T. H. B. Proctor	Sgt.	20 L.C.T. Supp. Regt.	33 Maritime Regiment
J. N. W. Ramsey	Sgt.	4 Div. H.Q. & Sig. Regt.	4 Div. Regiment
Reece	S/Sgt.	28 Regiment	FARELF
D. P. Reid	Sgt.	26 Regiment	17 Port Regiment
L. E. Riley	S/Sgt.	26 Regiment	240 Tk. Tp. Squadron (V)
D. Robertson	S/Sgt.	200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron	10 Port Squadron
J. E. Ryan	W.O.II	33 Maritime Regiment	20 L.C.T. Supp. Regt.
J. J. Shone	Sgt.	60 Squadron	26 Regiment
T. Smith	S/Sgt.	12 Training Regiment	215 Squadron (V)
J. E. Smith	S/Sgt.	4 Div. Regiment	60 Squadron
A. Smithies	W.O.II	55 (A.D.) Squadron	14 (A.D.) Regiment
R. Stephenson	S/Sgt.	1 Div. Regiment	4 Gds. Bde. H.Q. & Sig. Sqn.

Dattler

writing.....

Presentation of medals



THE medals of the late Lieut.-Colonel P. A. Prescott-Roberts, O.B.E., were presented to the Corps Central Medal Collection by his son, Mr. Alan Prescott-Roberts, at a small ceremony in Buller Officers' Mess on Thursday, 9th April, 1970.

The photo shows Brigadier B. J. Eastwood, O.B.E., Commandant R.C.T. Training Centre, receiving them on behalf of the Corps.

These medals are now on display in the Medal Room in Buller Officers' Mess.

Cycle Racing by Hovercraft

A REQUEST was received by 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron to assist the Andover Round Table in a race which involved transporting a team of racing cyclists across the Solent.

This was accepted by the Squadron as the proceeds were to go to charity, but on the day of the race, Sunday, 7th June, all the Squadron craft were storm bound in the West Country. However, disappointment was averted by asking the Interservice Hovercraft Unit to help. This unit has a sizeable R.C.T. element, and an S.R.N. 5, piloted by Major G. G. Blakey, R.C.T., took on the task at short notice crossing the Solent in just over three minutes. The Andover Round Table paid a cheque to the Save the Children fund as a result of this activity.

LONGMOOR RUNS OUT OF STEAM!

Army hands over Steam Locomotive



THE superheated tender engine No. 600 *Gordon* and the three blue saloons passed from the care of the Army to the British Transport Trust at a small ceremony held on Longmoor Downs platform on 28th May, 1970.

Major-General P. F. Claxton, O.B.E., T.O.-in-C. (A) made a token presentation to Mr. R. E. Wilsdon, Chairman of the Trust, to mark the event.

In a short speech the T.O.-in-C. explained that due to a changed military requirement there was no longer a need for military railwaymen to be trained to drive steam locomotives and that this locomotive had reached the end of its useful life.

Mr. Wilsdon in accepting the locomotive and the coaches on behalf of the Transport Trust, who are to be responsible for their preservation and safe keeping, said that it was the intention to preserve these items at Liss on the section of the Longmoor Military Railway between Liss Forest Road and Liss which has been acquired by the newly formed Longmoor Trust to establish the Longmoor Steam Railway.

The "token" presentation was a large electric staff token once used on the Longmoor Military Railway.

held in April and May.

18 Squadron.—Although only part of the Squadron was involved in Exercise "Soleil" with 29 Bde. it proved to be a valuable exercise to all concerned. The Amphibian control system was practised to the full, and the DUKW drivers were able to carry out ship to shore passenger and cargo movement with 'live' cargo for a change. Overall exercise safety was one of the Squadron responsibilities, and this resulted in some hair raising manoeuvres in the surf in support of the vehicles landing from the L.C.M. 9s of the Royal Marines. Fine weather helped to make the whole operation a success, although a patch of sea fog on the morning of the first landing caused some navigational problems for section commanders. The L.S.L. was anchored two and a half miles off shore and visibility at times was down to a few hundred yards!

On 11th July we said goodbye to Major J. C. R. Hyde, who after two years with the Squadron, has moved on to a staff appointment at H.Q. 3 Division. In his place we welcome Major R. L. Martin.

On 16th July the Squadron was visited by the G.O.C. Southern Command, General Sir Michael Carver, who met members from all units at Instow/Fremington and flew over the Braunton Burrows training area. Another visitor was Capt. C. Forache from the French Transportation Corps. It is heartening to hear that the French Army also still employs DUKWs with their amphibious forces, although, unlike us, they have a number of interesting new amphibians on the stocks as possible replacements.

Our first Squadron "broad brush" watersports weekend at Bovisand proved to be a resounding success, with members trying their hands at sailing, canoeing, water skiing, skin diving and fishing in Plymouth Sound. We must congratulate L/Cpl. Ivey of the Squadron Workshops, our canoe instructor, who has been picked for the Army canoe team. Once again Sgt. Hoyland has been picked to play cricket for the Army and the Corps, and we have a number of people playing for the local North Devon team. Our football season came to an official close with our winning the local six-a-side competition, but actually terminated with a match between the Wives Club and the Junior Ranks Club, which because of the indifferent referee, was won by the former.

51 Port Squadron.—Just a few days after handing over the port to 52 Port

Squadron we were ensconced at Stadden Heights, near Plymouth, for three weeks, the scene of a successful Summer Camp. This year we enjoyed good weather and a programme designed to entertain and train. A visit to H.M.S. *Intrepid* was relished not only for its interest but for the scope of the refreshments.

Another highlight was a three day exercise aptly named "Robins Pidgeon"; a 2/Lieut. Wilkinson production, designed to teach I.S. procedures, it revealed a hitherto unknown aptitude of Sgt. Jessney in the activities of the enemy.

The Squadron also contributed to "New Envoy". Our team under W.O.II Palmer demonstrated some of the skills of our seaman and freight handlers to an obviously intrigued public.

52 Port Squadron (as at 30th June 1970).—On our return from Tobruk the Squadron faced a quick change in key appointments with the immediate departures of Capt. H. Bentley-Marchant for Northern latitudes, and Capt. E. J. Arnold for civil life. We wish them the best of good fortune.

On 1st May we picked up the threads of Duty Squadron for the summer months. Shortly afterwards we provided detachments for the L.S.L. supported exercises "Sugar Tongs" with 1st Royal Hampshires and the larger 24 Bde. amphibious "Soleil". Since then we have continued to provide detachments for other L.S.L. operations including, inevitably, Northern Ireland. Nearer to home we provided a detachment at Pembroke Dock to receive the German Armour arriving for training, in what has now become a very routine annual procedure. Some variety from normal was provided by a very small Danish Coaster, which brought 300 tons of ammunition back from the Gulf after a two month voyage home. This tiny vessel had a crew of only six, which gave those used to domestic manning scales considerable food for thought.

In search of improved inter crew communications system for Mexeflote we have conducted trials on four commercial miniature radio transceivers. One of these showed most promising results. We are currently carrying out trials on the Rotork Seatruck which, with its 25 knot speed, provides an exhilarating way of passing a summer afternoon.

The first all grey painted L.S.L. is *Sir Tristram*, back from her annual refit. She looks very sinister and purposeful in contrast with the traditional troopship livery, but we shall no doubt soon get used to it.

We hear good reports from R.P.L.

05 *Eden* under S/Sgt. Kendall in the Menai Straights. An R.E. Squadron is carrying out emergency repairs to Brunel's famous Britannia Bridge, recently damaged by fire. The R.P.L. is hard at work conveying bridging materials to the very piers of the bridge in fast running tidal conditions. We wish them luck.

20 L.C.T. Support Regiment

H.M.A.V. Agheila.—In our last notes we commented on being at sea for Easter. As luck would have it we were also at sea for the Spring Bank Holiday. Indeed it is often said that this vessel is always at sea whether in port or not! However, it will give our newly promoted Chief Engineer, W.O.I Webster, a chance to pump out. Not that he needs much practice at this as at the last count only the fuel tanks were not flooded. The vessel has accordingly returned to Portsmouth for dry-docking and repairs.

We have been principally employed on the Benbecula and St. Kilda run, but the navigators were given a chance to prove that we don't run on rails between there and Helensburgh when a voyage was made to Stornaway to deliver some M.P.B.W. equipment. We also acted as a ferry between Oban and Tobermory to carry the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders T. & A.V.R. unit to receive the Freedom of the last Burgh in Argyllshire whose Freedom they hadn't already got. The pipe band played us in and out of port from the flagdeck to the consternation of the helmsman who had difficulty in separating the helm orders from the skirls.

We congratulate Dvr. Buchan on his marriage and wish them both the best of happiness in the future.

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—The Squadron has recently completed a most successful and enjoyable attachment to R.A.F. Chivenor while engaged on Exercise "Soleil". Our R.A.F. hosts made us very welcome despite our inability to get more than four inches off the ground.

Half of the Squadron are now on board the R.F.A. *Sir Tristram* and from time to time, have been operating off such places as Denmark and Holland.

27 Regiment

Headquarters.—Lieut.-Colonel D. G. Turner, our Second-in-Command and also Commander, Logistic Support Battalion A.M.F.(L), is busy planning for the next exercise, which takes place in Turkey in October. This involved a trip to Istanbul, returning via Cyprus, where he visited 65 Squadron. We understand that with

bound for a six week working tour of the eastern Mediterranean.

We welcomed on 1 November a party from our sister T. & A.V.R. units, 270/271 Port Squadrons. During their stay they operated the port and took part in an LSL exercise arranged especially for them.

The Squadron manned a recruiting stand at this year's Southampton Boat Show, which went off well with approximately 1,500 people having trips in Regimental DUKW's, attached to us for the period from 18 Amphibian Squadron.

During the stay of the T. & A.V.R. the whole of 51 Squadron visited Strong's brewery, for a tour and refreshments. This was the brewery's way of expressing its appreciation for action taken at the Southampton Boat Show by L/Cpl. Brassington and Dvrs. Adams and Blackman in catching a thief who whipped their bar takings and, after a half mile chase, was brought to justice by their prompt action.

52 Port Squadron.—For the Southampton Boat Show we constructed and positioned a 454ft. "T" shaped Mexeflote jetty. This important M.A.C.C. project has now become an annual fixture. Sgt. Craig paid careful attention to the positioning of the eight anchors; a wise precaution as a force 8 gale blew for 36 hours from the most exposed direction.

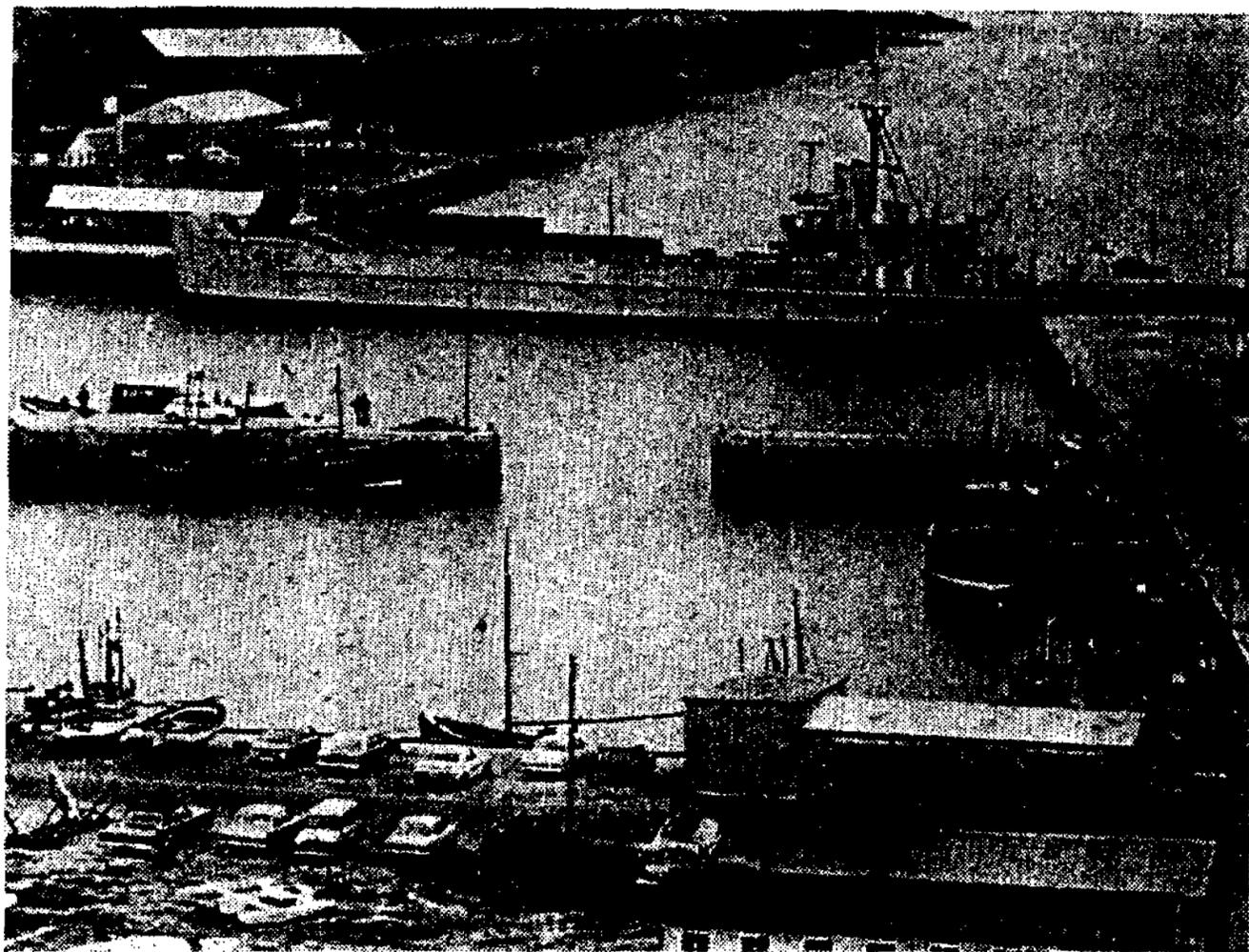
The Squadron has been assisting Board of Trade and Ministry of Technology personnel in operating oil dispersal equipment from the decks of large commercial tugs and was involved in disposal of the oil leaking from the tanker *Pacific Glory*.

20 Maritime Regiment

R.H.Q.—On 11 September Lieut.-Colonel D. E. T. Charles-Jones handed over the Regiment, then consisting of 200 Hovercraft Squadron and six L.C.T's, to Lieut.-Colonel P. K. A. Todd. On the same day we took over the R.C.T. Fleet, some 20 small vessels, from the Maritime Training Wing and redesignated it the Fleet Squadron R.C.T.

Fleet Squadron.—We are now in business under command of Major G. C. W. Edwards and continue the traditional role (since 1818) of maritime support for the Regular Army, with diverse tasks from supplying the garrison on St. Kilda in the Atlantic during the winter months to escorting adventurous canoeists across the English Channel.

The Fleet as it is generally known, is justly proud that five of its members were awarded the Imperial Service Medal this year. This requires a minimum of 25 years qualifying service and the oldest recipient, after



H.M.A.V. Aachen, 20 L.C.T. Support Regiment, Scrabster Harbour, Caithness.

logging up 43 years' service with the Fleet, is still serving.

H.M.A.V. Akyab (L.4037).— In August the vessel sailed north to Helensburgh to commence a season in Scottish waters. The first detail was north to Balta Sound on the Isle of Uist in the Shetlands where we delivered caravans to the R.A.F. A supposed quick trip to St. Kilda was extended by severe weather, with the ship stormbound in Loch Carnan, until the R.A. Range personnel on Hirta were down to their last combox. Our arrival was therefore very welcome.

H.M.A.V. Aachen (L.4062)—Before sailing for Scotland, the ship took part in Exercise Soleil, and was able to test the potential of the old broken down wartime loading hard in Plymouth and the versatility of an L.C.T. by beaching on rubble without damage.

At the Bideford/Instow end, vehicle waterproofing was very realistically tested. There was little doubt in the minds of the observers from the ship that a course of seamanship is necessary for all vehicle drivers working from L.C.T's on a fast rising tide. Especially in learning the art of counteracting current when driving a submerged Land-Rover.

From Plymouth we sailed for the Isle of Man over a pellucid blue sea and a hot sun, giving the lie to the usual Atlantic weather. Here some enthusiasts rose at 0400 hours to watch practising for the T.T. motor cycling races.

However, the holiday soon was

over and, having loaded up 243 Force Provost Coy R.M.P., we sailed with a capacity cargo for Rhu. A quick day in port and we left for North Bay, Barra, intrigued by the prospect of beaching on the island's airfield and wondering how the R.A.F. would cope with, say, an L.C.T. straddled across the airfield at Lyneham. The airfield turned out to be a very large flat beach and aircraft landed and took off under the eyes of our dried out L.C.T.

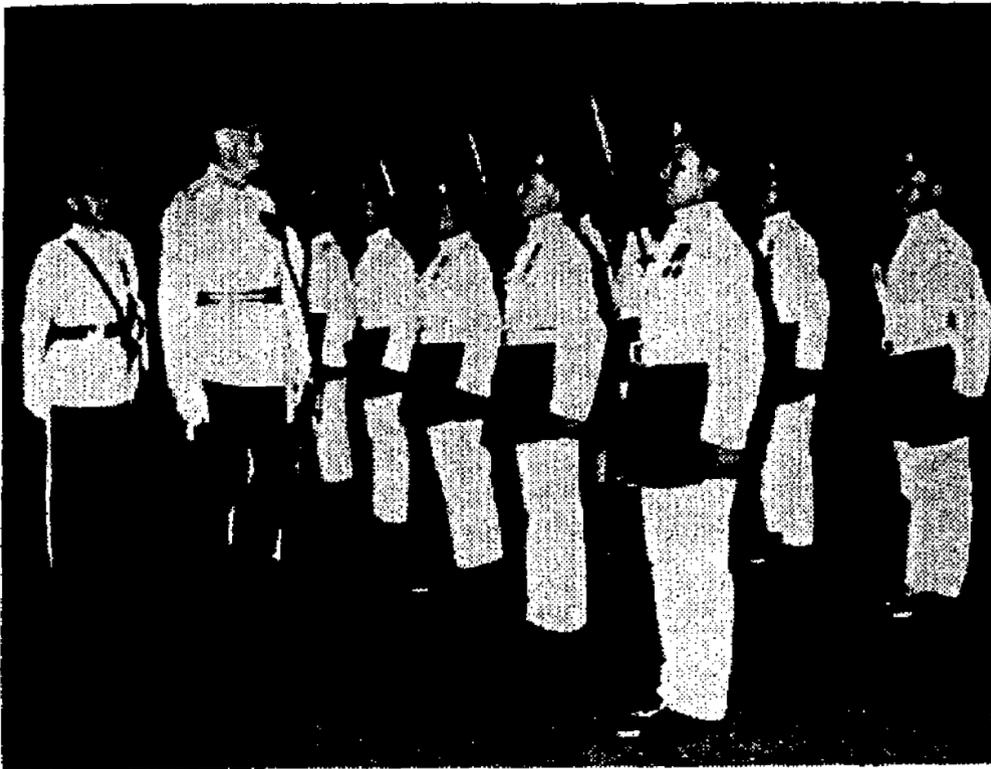
The cargo, a 30-ton crane, was landed successfully. Alas, the side roads of an Outer Hebrides island are not built for loads of this nature and the crane was last seen up to its chassis, in a mixture of peat and tarmac.

H.M.A.V. Audemer (L.4061).— During our "short" eight months commission we have had two periods of detachment in Scotland working with the R.A. Range Benbecula and their St. Kilda outpost.

At other times we have carried the R.A. Kape team from and to B.A.O.R. and the Royal Hampshire Regiment on Exercise Soleil.

Last but not least in the vessel's sailing programme was the regimental exercise, which took us to Jersey, followed by an amphibious assault on the south coast of England. During our stay in Jersey we had a visit from the Governor of the States of Jersey, followed by a local millionaire wanting to buy the ship!

We are sorry to say farewell to Capt. B. S. Birch who joins *H.M.S. Intrepid*, not in command as rumour



Inspection of the Quarter Guard by the Commander FARELF, accompanied by C.O. 33 Maritime Regiment, Lieut.-Colonel J. M. Kelsall.

with characteristic cheerfulness and discipline to the end.

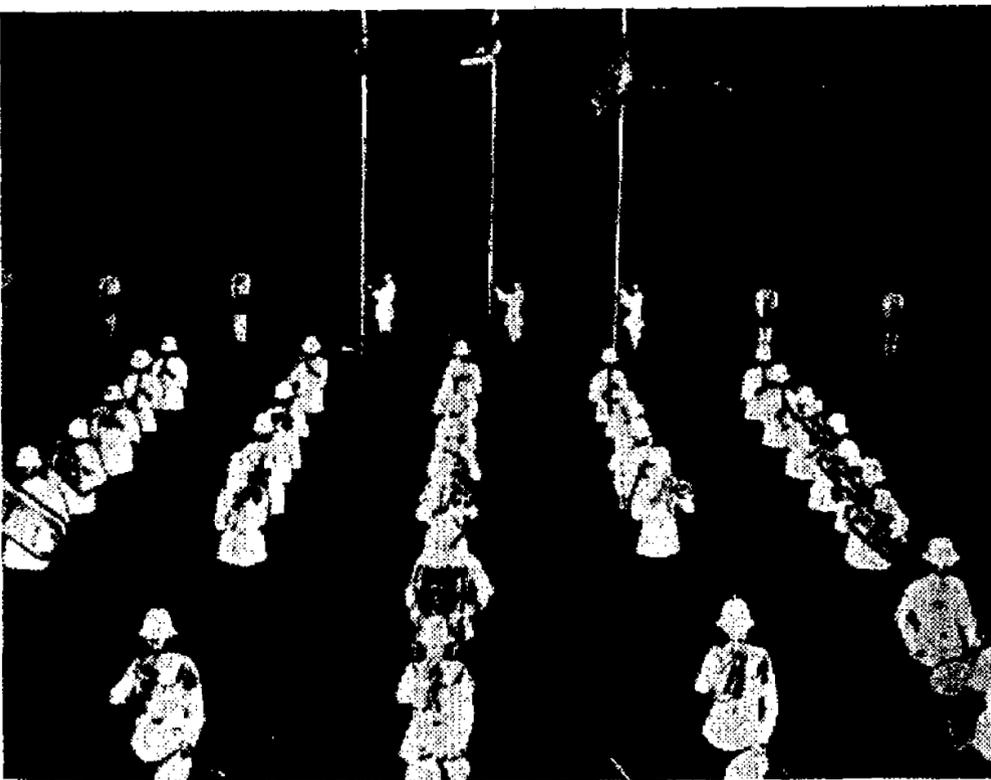
On 2 March 1971, the day on which our locally enlisted soldiers went on terminal leave, the Commanding Officer was proud to receive the following signal from the Transport Officer in Chief (Army) :

"For C.O. from T.O. in C. (A). As you are about to reduce to Maritime Troop strength I would like you to pass on to all ranks my sincere thanks for all the good work that the Regiment has done in its many and varied tasks in FARELF.

I send you all my best wishes for the future particularly to the Locally Enlisted Soldiers who are returning to civilian life. We in the Corps will always remember our association with them.

Good luck to you all."

Our final formal ceremony took place on Pulau Brani on the evening of 18 January 1971 with the simultaneous lowering of the Corps, Maritime and FARELF flags. The salute was taken by Major-General W. B. Thomas, D.S.O., M.C., Commander Far East Land Forces.



The final lowering of the flags on Pulau Brani, with the Band of 3 Commando Brigade R.M. in the foreground.

There has been a military presence on Pulau Brani since 1893. In particular, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers have had close connections with the island which was part of the chain of fixed defences for Singapore. After World War II, R.A.S.C. Water Transport Companies Nos. 626 and 884 were formed on the island. Their successor, No. 986 Water Transport Company, was renumbered and renamed 37 Maritime Squadron when the R.C.T. was formed in 1965 and together with 10 Port Squadron and 74 and 75 L.C.T. Squadrons became part of 33 Maritime Regiment. In addition this Regiment had under its command during the years 1968 to 1970, 55 Air Despatch Squadron and 130 Flight. From March 1968 to September 1969 200 Hovercraft Squadron was also under command.

The Regiment provided Maritime, L.C.T., port operating, lighterage, air despatch and light aircraft support in FARELF.

On 5 February 1971 the island was formally handed over to the Singapore Armed Forces. With the departure of 33 Maritime Regiment the British Army's connections cease but all who have served in Pulau Brani will continue to value the close association and friendship of the people on the island, especially those who served the British Army so loyally.

The War Memorial Village

THE War Memorial Village, Westfield, Lancaster, North Lancashire, was founded in 1918 as a "Permanent Memorial" to the fallen of the 1914-18 War, and for securing a decent home for some of the comrades of the men who have passed beyond.

Westfield, built on a private estate, and controlled by the Council, the War Memorial Village, comprises 70 houses, eight bungalows (for severely disabled) and six flats.

The general standard of accommodation are houses with two to three bedrooms, at rentals decided by the Council, which are less than would be paid for a comparable corporation house.

It has been decided that: "The War Memorial Village will become available for ex-members of H.M. Forces (The Royal Navy, The Army and the Royal Air Force) who are disabled through war service, or otherwise than from active service duties, or who find themselves in necessitous circumstances".

An Applicants Registration List is maintained by the Secretary, for the consideration of available tenancies as and when these occur; the final selection for each vacancy being decided by a personal interview of the applicant and his wife before a selection committee of the Council.

Any ex-serviceman (married), qualifying under the foregoing conditions, and desirous of consideration for inclusion on the waiting list, should, in the initial instance, write to :

The Secretary, The War Memorial Village, Westfield House, West Road, Lancaster, Lancs.

giving brief particulars of qualifications, etc. If considered as a suitable applicant, the secretary will then forward the official registration form for completion and return, but further correspondence will not be entered into.

No personal visits or telephone calls should be made, neither should anyone re-apply who has made a previous application.

routine aspects of port operating and at the end of that month the T. & A.V.R. assisted us with the handling of large ammunition shipments.

Congratulations to Cpl. Westwood and L/Cpl. Tapley on their recent marriages. We also welcome a new recruit to the Squadron, Dvr. Milton's son, David John, who was born on 27 May.

52 Port Squadron.—We recently received another R.P.L., the *Avon* (01) from Singapore. R.F.A. *Baachus* has also brought our Mexeflote raft back from the Gulf.

After handing over the Port to 51 Squadron, a detachment of 20 from the Squadron, under Lieut. Marno, set off for Anguilla to recover engineer plant, taking 15 mobile homes for Gibraltar with them.

Another detachment is at Pembroke Dock discharging German tanks for their annual training at Castlemartin. According to reports received the work progresses well despite near-tropical rainfall and an ammunition ship which is equipped with winches that date from the time when Noah built the Ark.

Three of our athletes gained places in the Regimental team which won the R.C.T. athletics at Taunton. Between them they achieved two firsts, one second and a fourth.

20 Maritime Regiment

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—The Squadron is once again firmly established at its home base at Browndown after Exercise Van Dyke in Norway and is fully occupied with V.I.P. demonstrations, presentations and preparations for future exercises.

We were fortunate in being able to stage two Squadron exercises, one in Alderney, the other in the Thames estuary area, which included a run as far as Tower Bridge.

At present the Squadron "operational" team is carrying out a summer cruise up the Rhine in an R.C.T. fast launch—ostensibly on a reconnaissance!

Future operations envisage further trials work purely of a technical nature and a detachment to the Persian Gulf in the late autumn.

27 Regiment

Regimental Headquarters.—On 3 June the Corps Band Beat Retreat. This was followed by cocktail parties in the Officers' and the Sergeants' Messes.

The regimental cricket team has had a good season so far, containing no less than nine Corps players and one Army player; the season opened with a good win over a strong Royal School of Artillery side by 64 runs.

In the first round of the Army Cup we played 29 Cdo. Lt. Regt. R.A., we batted first and scored 212 and then dismissed them for 25.

We lost the second round by two wickets in a very exciting match, 144 against 145 for 8, against a very strong School of Signals side, who must be favourites to win the Army Cup.

Dvr. Sanderson's 141 not out for the United Services Salisbury Plain Area team has been the outstanding individual performance.

8 Squadron.—The second week of our Regimental training period in May was spent at Pennally Camp in Wales where the great event, and the wettest, was a 24-hour DP exercise with Junior N.C.O.'s in command. The Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel D. G. Turner, visited us in the field by helicopter.

The major part of the Squadron is now on leave prior to going to Cyprus to form the UNFICYP Transport Squadron. A most successful Farewell Dance was held, together with a number of other farewell occasions too numerous to mention.

Cricket is the main sport at the moment. Congratulations to L/Cpl. Hydes and Dvr. Armeni on being selected for the R.C.T. Corps side making a total of seven Corps

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Lex Service Group

The party was met at the Royal Pier Landing and embarked on a Command and Control Craft of Fleet Squadron. The launch took station with an escort of four DUKW's of 18 Amphibian Squadron and sailed for Marchwood, where the visitors were landed on the roll-on roll-off facility to be met by the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel P. B. House. The Mayor inspected the Regimental Quarter Guard before moving to the Officers' Mess for refreshments and briefing.

During the morning the male element of the party toured McMullen Barracks, saw a P.T. display in the gymnasium and tried their shooting ability in the miniature range at various targets including luminous snap targets engaged in darkness. The ladies visited the children's playgroup and were shown over married quarters.

After an aperitif at the Sergeants' Mess the party met the remainder of the officers for lunch.

After lunch the whole party toured the port area, saw the loading of 450 tons of ammunition on to R.F.A. *Empire Gull*, a static display of plant and a CRN5 hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Squadron. After a short sea-apptitude test of one quick circuit in the R.E.M.E. Workshops wobbly landship, SS *Nightingale*, they all

embarked on a mexeflote. After the mexeflote had shown off its manoeuvrability it hoveed to as a passing workboat stopped, ran up flag code "D", and started to drift towards the shallows. This was the cue for a SRN5 of the I.H.T.U., commanded by Capt. D. K. Patterson, to come slithering across the mudflats and the harbour to the aid of the workboat. A line was quickly passed and, enveloped in sheets of spray from SRN5's slipstream, the vessel was towed away from the hazard and manoeuvred around the area to demonstrate the capability of the hovercraft as a lifeboat cum salvage tug.

The party then transferred to DUKW's for the return to shore, where the R.E. Diving School gave a half hour demonstration of diving and underwater metal work with sea-fire cutting equipment. Their demonstration of the purpose and use of the Re-Compression Chamber was so realistic that one lady visitor had to be reassured that it was only an exercise! Her nerves and those of the remainder of the party were soon soothed by tea in the Officers' Mess before the party embarked for the return to Royal Pier with the DUKW escort after what, we have since been assured, was a most enjoyable, interesting and exciting day.

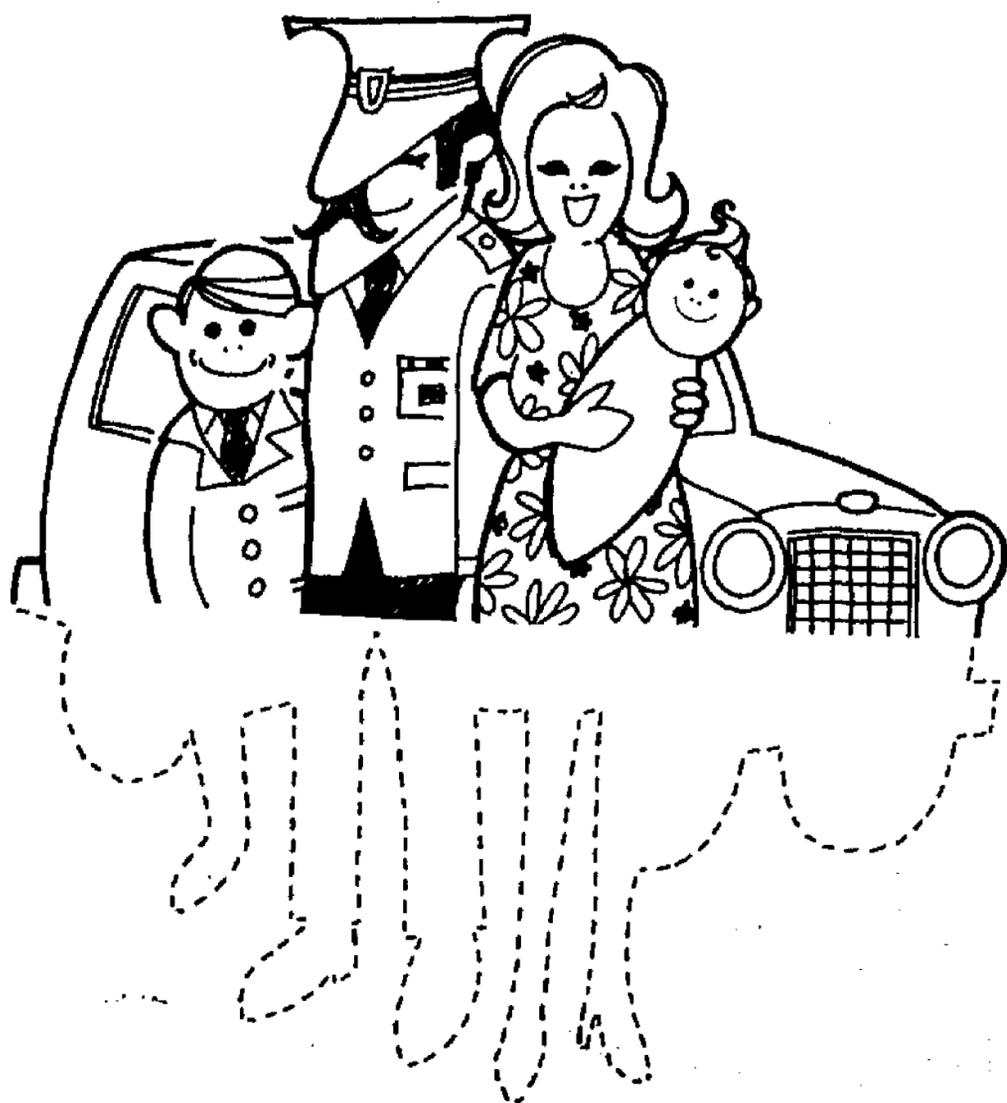
18 Amphibian Squadron.—Squadron personnel have been very busy, having been involved in the Corps Church Parade, Exercise New Envoy, Exercise Busy Truce, and the seasonal visits by T. & A.V.R., C.C.F. and A.C.F. units, with some 19 individuals entering their last month of their six month emergency tour in Northern Ireland.

As the detachment which went to Denmark proceeded on block leave immediately upon its return to Fremington there was no opportunity to compare its findings with Lord Longford's investigations. The detachment found itself transporting Danish and other senior N.A.T.O. officers in almost incessant rain. A coach trip to a brewery with free drinking for an hour was well received. A Force 6 sea sorted out many a stomach on the return journey aboard *Abbeville*.

S/Sgt. H. Kubinski left the Squadron in September, being relieved by S/Sgt. Greeves. With only one break of four years S/Sgt. Kubinski has been with the Squadron since 1957: "almost a fixture one might say? Every effort will be made to avoid the Squadron from disintegrating.

51 Port Squadron.—Major K. G. Hicks has left us for a staff job in H.Q. UNFICYP. We extend to him and his family our best wishes for the future in that sunny Mediterran-

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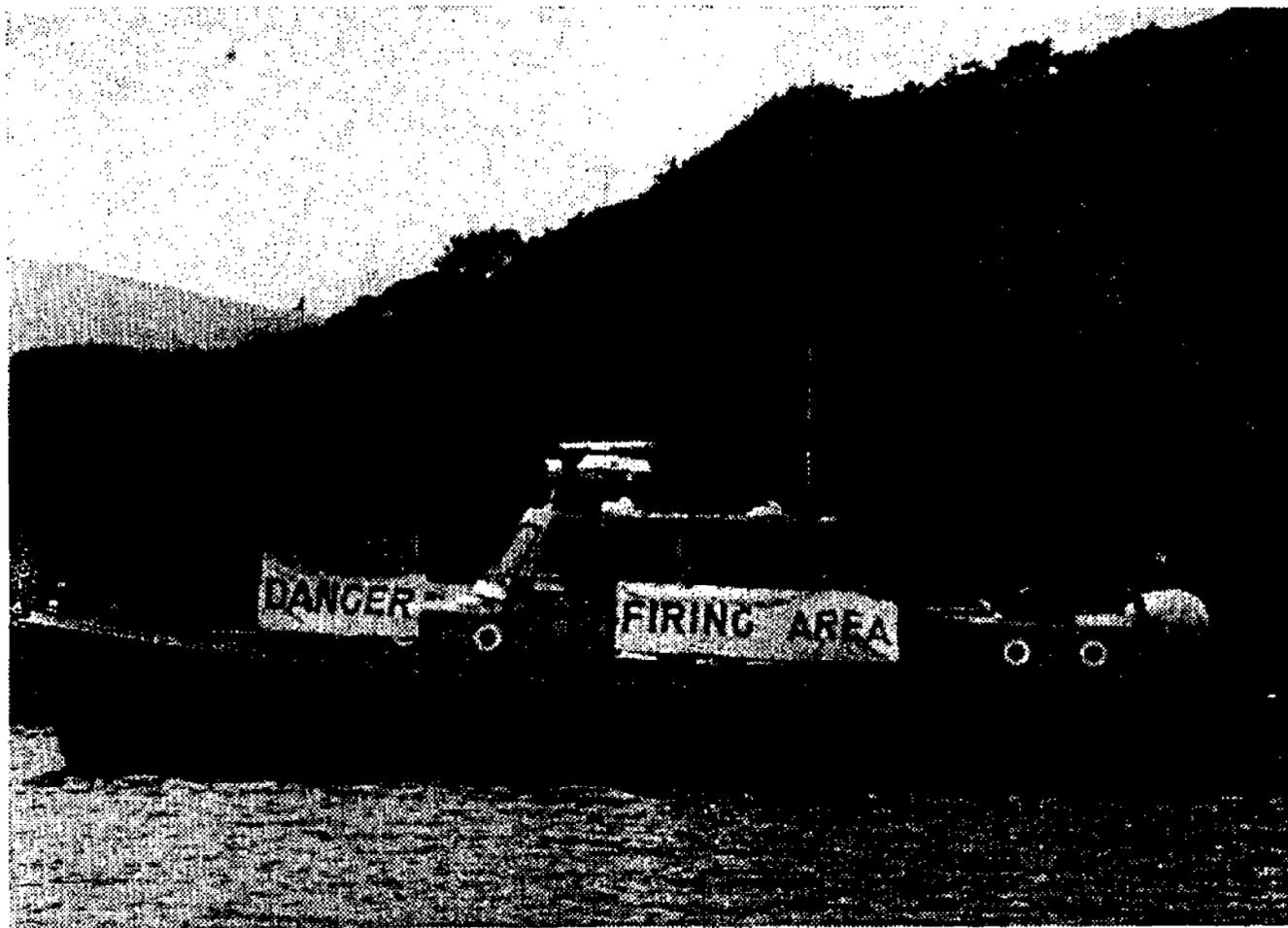
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* These prices come into effect from January 1st 1972 and are slightly higher July 15–September 1.



Command and Control Launch "Skua" on range safety duties off Lulworth Cove, Dorset.

several ships to load and discharge and in spite of four and a half months as Standby Squadron find that none of the old skills have even got rusty.

18 Amphibian Squadron.—Three DUKW's took part in Exercise "Golden Cross" at London. One joined H.M.A.V. *Abbeville* to provide a static display aboard the LCT at Tower Bridge. The other two drove to London to join the mobile recruiting display.

2/Lieut. J. A. Dawson and A Troop are aboard H.M.A.V. *Abbeville* taking part in a amphibious exercise centred on the Channel Islands. This will probably be the last time we provide DUKW's for exercises, as the sword of Damocles is upon us and we are due to re-role next year.

20 Maritime Regiment

THE Regimental Exercise Crocodile Tears took place from 13 October to 20 October. The following ships took part: HMAVs *Audemere*, *Agheila* and *Abbeville*, RPLs *Avon* and *Eden* of 17 Port Regiment, ten DUKWs from 18 Amphibian Squadron and three hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.

The exercise, which was a limited amphibious one, took place in the English Channel, and the isle of Jersey. It was extended to include the newly formed 7 Queens Regiment (V), which was engaged on its own exercise, Red Hare. Although the hovercraft were prevented by storm force winds from taking part in the Jersey phase of the exercise, the LCTs

succeeded in carrying out their major role which included transporting 7 Queens and their transport from Marchwood to St. Aubin Bay, Jersey and back.

There is no doubt that the soldiers of 7 Queens will certainly remember their first T.A.V.R. camp and many a story will be told, embellished and retold of the storm force winds experienced aboard tank landing craft in the English Channel.

A reconnaissance was carried out in the Channel Islands by two SRN6s from 200 Hovercraft Squadron for Exercise Chanex II on 20-24 September and three SRN6s made passage up the River Severn on 7 October for Exercise Westward Ho.

Loading trials with SRN6s and LCTs and the refuelling of hovercraft from a bowser in an RPL were recently carried out.

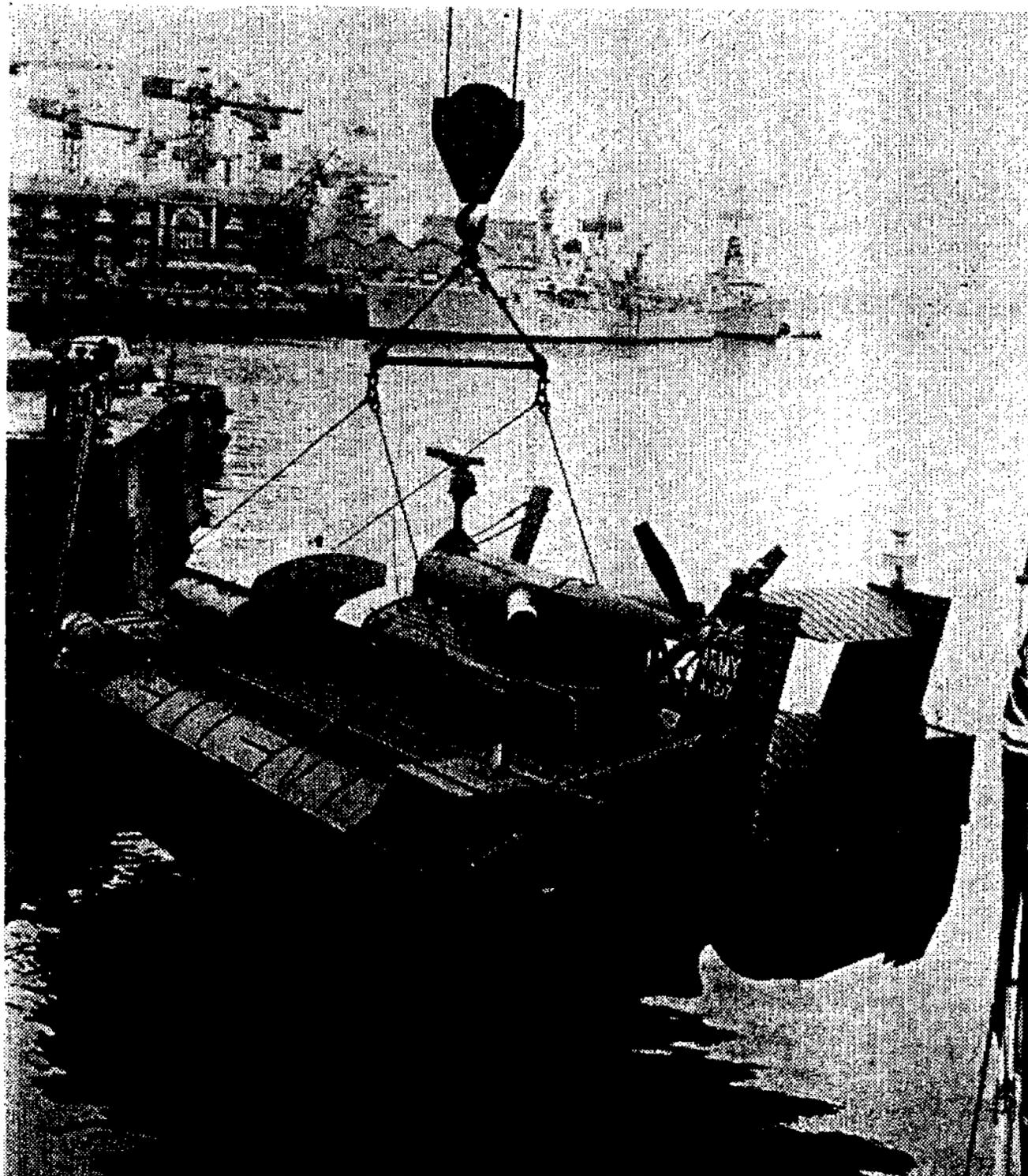
A presentation was given to General Butler of Army Strategic Command on 1 and 2 September and to the Army Staff Course on 4 October at Browdown.

Capt. Nicholas returned to the Squadron in late November, after standing in for a R.N. officer in the Falkland Islands for seven months.

In the Fleet Squadron R.C.T. V *Mull* completed her refit and alteration to passenger accommodation in September and sailed to take station in Scottish waters. Unfortunately on passage the feed pump, which supplies water to the boiler, collapsed and she had to return to Portsmouth. Four of the new Command and Control Launches are now employed on range clearance and safety in Weymouth, Pembroke and Hebrides. These have proved very successful in this role. Two Mates have retired, Mr. Davey, B.E.M., served with the Fleet for 30 years and we wish him a long and happy retirement. We regret to announce the death of Mr. Johnston of Menai Bridge detachment, he had served with the Fleet for five years.



Dvr. Pete Ibbotson, 42 Squadron, helping serve fruit to German Paratroopers on Exercise Hellenic Express in Greece.



A SRN.6 hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron being off-loaded from a LCT in Portsmouth Dockyard.

the majority of his 13 years in the army at Fremington.

On 2 February the Squadron was visited by the Deputy Transport Officer in Chief, who was shown all the various activities being undertaken by the Squadron at present.

Later the Brigadier presented L.S. & G.C. Medals to S/Sgt. Ruff R.E.M.E., and Cpl. Border. He went on to address the men, and allay any doubts or fears they may have had over their change of location.

On the sporting side, the Squadron Basketball team again excelled itself. Aply organised and captained by Cpl. Hopson, they are at the top of the North Devon Basketball league and are proceeding very favourably in the South West District Championships.

20 Maritime Regiment

TWO officers and 19 soldiers from 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron took part in Exercise 'Hardfall 1972' in Norway, in January. The rest of the

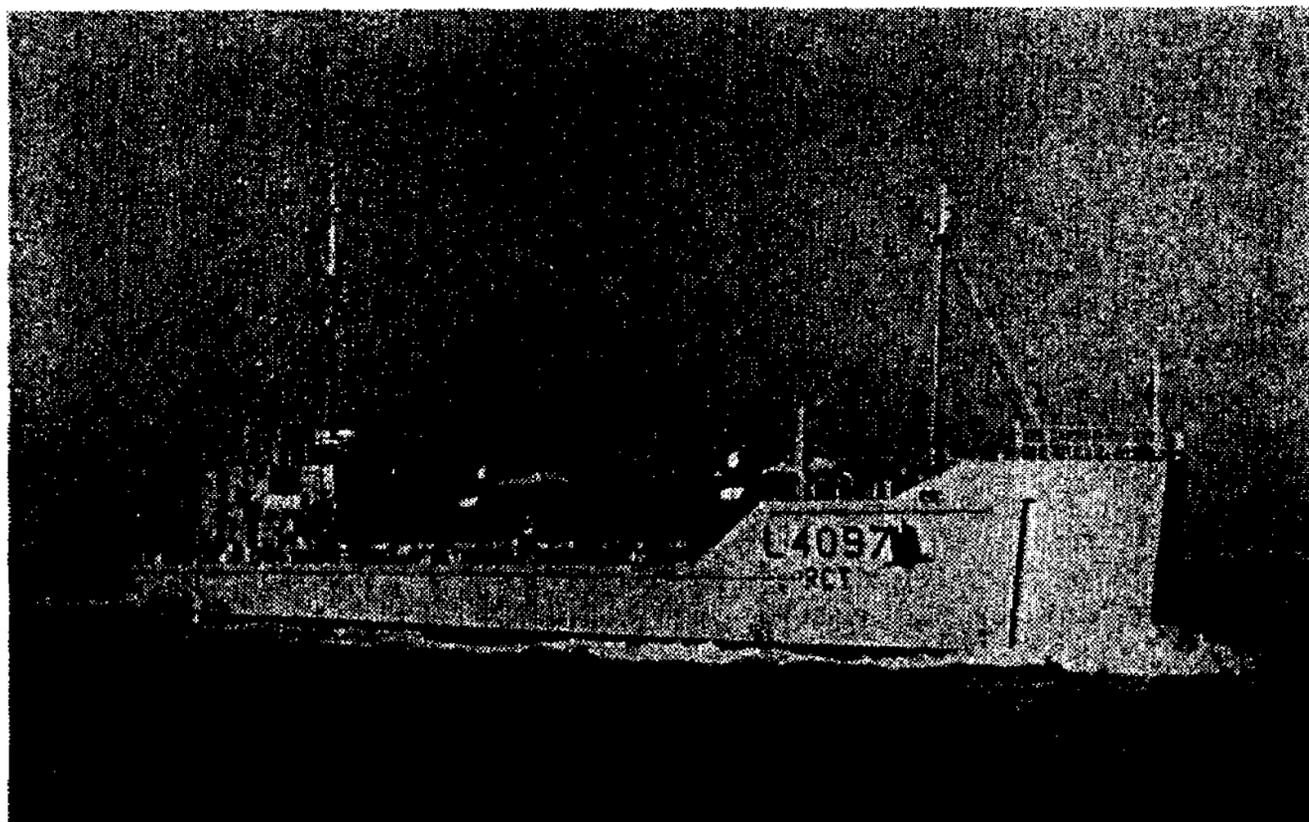
Squadron with three SRN 6 Hovercraft joined the Royal Navy in Exercise 'Crusty Roll' in February, being deployed from Rhu/Garelochhead in Scotland. Trials were undertaken, prior to this exercise, which involved an L.C.T. acting as mother ship to the hovercraft; during these two SRN 6 Hovercraft were carried successfully on beams above the Tank deck of H.M.A.V. *Andalsnes* from Portsmouth to Alderney and back.

On 27 January the Squadron was visited by Lieut.-Colonel R. G. Harmer C.R.C.T., and a presentation is to be given at Ministry of Defence (Army) to the Vice-Chief of the General Staff, Lieut.-General Sir Cecil Blacker, K.C.B., O.B.E., M.C. on 2 March.

The Fleet Squadron reports that R.C.T.V. *Mull* returned to station in Scotland after the Christmas break on 6 January. From that date until 9 February she did not sail in under a Force 8 gale. Twice she was caught in Force 12 plus storms, with wind speed ashore of over 100 miles an hour being recorded. These storms caused a bow plate to spring, resulting in her returning to the Clyde for emergency repairs.

Two Command and Control Craft take up their range clearance duties off Weymouth on 1 March. A third departs for Scotland in mid-March for range clearance duties at the R.A. Range Benbecula. For the first time a G.S.L. (*Raddle*) will also be employed in the Hebrides, being based on Loch Boisdale. She will be detached from Whitehaven for these duties.

A sad farewell was said to Staff Sergeant 'Munch' Mason who retired



H.M.A.V. *Andalsnes* of 20 Maritime Regiment carrying two SRN6 hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron, on deck beams in the Solent.

EDITORIAL

AFTER perusing an article by Capt B E Colston in the May edition of our sister journal, the RCT Review, it would appear that some young officers still have outdated notions of our editorial staff, believing no doubt that we all look something like this.



Time to contemplate the wonders of nature.

Whereas the picture of our typist and latest recruit, Miss Sandra Clark would, we feel, grace any journal.



Note the pile of "copy" awaiting attention.

The contents of Capt Colston's letter will of course only reach that small percentage of THE WAGGONER clientele who receive the RCT Review. It includes much that is corny and well known, particularly as regards unit notes and the naming of VIP's in every other sentence, but he has tried to be constructive and there is much merit in what he says. Quoting out of context is always dangerous, but as the article is too long to reproduce for our other readers, brief extracts must suffice.

The author states :

"Destructive criticism is valueless, so I propose a new product must appear on the Corps front. Since "The Waggoner" is the less useful and, I venture to suggest, the less popular of the two publications, and is in any event tardy, dull and damaging to our Corps image, then any new venture should be based on the Review."

"I suggest an RCT publication incorporating the best from both "The Waggoner" and "Review" but published quarterly. My thoughts on a new publication are outlined below.

The aim should be to produce a review with articles of interest, not only to the Corps but to British industry, the institutes and the Army generally.

In addition to this there must be the continued publication of the domestic Corps news, ie the only parts of the current "Waggoner" worth retaining. Regiments and units should write only when they have something worth saying and this can be in the form of Regimental Letters to the Editor."

To my mind he has made several major errors : firstly the RCT Review has a limited circulation to all serving officers, Regular and T & AVR, and secondly THE WAGGONER has to cater for the up and coming, the old and bold, senior ranks, junior ranks both Regular and T & AVR, Association members ; we even hope the wives glance at it from time to time. Thirdly, at present THE WAGGONER can only be sold to persons with some relationship to the Corps.

The result of this is that an acceptable amalgam of high level intellectual articles, lighted hearted ditto, unit notes plus domestic detail is almost impossible to achieve.

The Museums, Memorials and Publications Committee of the RCT Officers' Club keeps the format of all RCT publications under review and THE WAGGONER is under active consideration at the present time. However, constructive criticism is always welcome and may well be helpful to the Executive Working Party of the above committee. So readers please add your comments to Capt Colston's hearty outburst.

Anyone who watched the television presentation of life in Fleet Street, entitled "Paper Tigers" may have heard one eminent newspaper editor remark that only ten per cent of the copy that comes in gets published and even this gets hacked about. This comment was balm to the sore ears of this editor.

FORCES COMMEMORATIVE COVERS

THE fifth anniversary formation of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron RCT has been commemorated by a special cover depicting the first flight of SRN5 XT 492.

On 26 April 1972 an official commemorative cover was flown on the above hovercraft on a re-enactment anniversary flight. The cachet is printed in full colour illustrating the hovercraft, the Corps and Squadron badges and appropriate wording. Stamped with the 2p Tutan-khamun stamp issued that day, and handstamped with a special BFPO one day handstamp, no. 1270. There is also special flight franking and backstamping with the official illustrated franking of the British Hovercraft Corporation and also the official franking of the Squadron. The craft used was the one piloted by Lieut-Colonel S B Ball RCT, the original pilot. Limited numbers are available price 30p each, inclusive of postage under separate cover, or 40p, autographed by the Squadron Commander, and obtainable from *Philatelic Co-ordinator, 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron RCT, 14a Russell Road, Leeson-Solent, Hants.*

team in these matches must surely be unique.

17 Port Regiment

RHQ Troop. — The Regimental football team was narrowly beaten for the second year running in the final of the Travers Cup, but it has just been confirmed that it is league champion of the Southampton Wednesday league. This is a real reward for the efforts of all concerned throughout the season.

We congratulate L/Cpl Harulow on his splendid effort in a sponsored swim in which 900 children and adults took part. It raised £970 for the British Heart Foundation.

51 Port Squadron.—During the last few months cargoes moved have ranged from tanks to small bore ammunition, and from cray-fish to cans of Tiger Beer. Places visited have also helped to broaden a number of minds and imaginations, with teams working from the sunny Caribbean to much colder Norway.

The Squadron provided work boats and RPL's for various escape and evasion exercises, liaised in an amphibious exercise with the Royal Marines, and set (simulated) fire to one of the Mexeflotes. The last effort being for the benefit of the Fire Brigade, who arrive by "chopper" to extinguish the growing flames.

52 Port Squadron.—During Febru-

and March a detachment of 28 took part in the 24 Airportable Brigade exercise Sun Pirate by providing AOO teams for each of the LSL's, *Sir Bedivere*, *Sir Geraint* and *Sir Tristram*. Other ships in company were *HMS Fearless*, *HMS Phoebe* *RFA Tidesurge*. This was a major amphibious exercise. A rough and eventful Atlantic crossing took the embarked force to the mounting base in Puerto Rico. The amphibious landing took place on the island of Vieques—the discharge being completed inside 24 hours by intensive working. Mexeflote, commanded by Cpl Leith, was used extensively for landing tanks, an assortment of B vehicles, combat supplies and general stores. *Workboat 07*, coxswain Cpl Harris, provided valuable service as communications launch in difficult surf conditions. *Sir Bedivere* sailed to the British Virgin Islands, where a quick change of role saw Capt de Marco and his team operating the flight deck to land troops on four of the islands by Wessex helicopter. The force was finally re-embarked and *HMS Fearless* and *Sir Bedivere* paid a visit to Barbados for a well earned break before starting the return Atlantic crossing.

Another detachment of 33, under Lieut Searle, then started "winging" its way in the opposite direction, to

the Gulf. They arrived at RAF Masirah on 7 March to discharge *RFA Hebe*, and then flew on to RAF Salalah to discharge a further cargo. The offloading was completed by 1 April.

With the build up of RAF Masirah as a staging post, the detachment will now be a regular feature.

20 Maritime Regiment

RHQ has inaugurated a Station Families News Letter named *The Gosmouth Siren*. It is mainly for issue to married quarters in Portsmouth and Gosport.

Contents include comments from the Housing Commandant East Hampshire, the Paymaster and the Officiating Chaplain, marriages and births, station news, Wives Club, etc.

200 Hovercraft Squadron has been working up new crews. Exercise *Beggars Muddle*, from 27-30 March, involved intensive night operations and an interception exercise with two fast launches of the Fleet Squadron RCT. All crews have recently carried out training in survival, involving simulated hovercraft accident and subsequent life raft techniques.

On 8-9 March ATV's "Magpie" camera team arrived to make a short film on hovercraft operations. The results have not yet been released.

RCT V Mull returned to Ports-

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LARC V's of the Federal German Forces at Marchwood during Exercise Symphonie '72.

two weeks. There is no truth in the rumour that it was a glorified pub crawl or that Capt Britton-Johnson spent all the time in the support Land Rover, after falling over a wall getting his wallet out.

The Squadron team came third overall in the RAF Thorney Island Athletic Meeting. We won the Relay and Tug of War and four members of the Squadron are in the Station Team for the RAF Air Support Command Championships. Dvr Lawrence was the outstanding performer.

The SSM and some of our soldiers took part in an escape and evasion exercise held at RAF Mountbatten, acting as enemy against RAF Aircrews who were trying to escape. A good time was had by everyone and all 23 RAF Aircrews were captured—a very satisfactory result.

17 Port Regiment

Regimental Headquarters.—June started off with Exercise Symphonie 72 held at Marchwood in conjunction with some 160 officers and men of the Federal German Armed Forces. Visitors to this exercise included Lieut-General Sir Frank King, Lieut-General Sir Allan Taylor and a number of high ranking officers from the German Ministry of Defence at Bonn and the Federal German Navy.

The Regimental shoot, organised most ably by the RSM, WO1 Galpin, took place at Chilcomb Ranges on the only two fine days we have had

this summer. The SMG classification was fired in respirators and teams reached a high standard of shooting. 52 Port Squadron won this competition.

The Regimental football team won both the local Wednesday soccer league and the Marchwood International match of the year; when they beat the Federal German visitors by five goals to two. An excellent show.

We also congratulate 17 Port Regiment Workshop REME, who have now achieved independence as 17 Field Workshop (Maritime) REME.

Finally, a sad farewell to Capt D P Hutton Dunton, our Adjutant, who has left us after four and a half years in the Regiment.

RHQ Troop.—During "Symphonie 72" the Amphibian Troop moved ammunition from Highland Roberts Camp to LSLs *Sir Lancelot* and *Sir Galahad* anchored off Netley. Approximately 1,000 tons of ammunition were carried by our nine DUKWs and 23 LARCs of the German Navy; the latter, with their greater load capacity, bore the brunt of this operation.

On 20 May our OC, Capt R. A. Smith, left after 37 years service. All ranks join in wishing both Capt and Mrs Smith a long and happy retirement.

51 Port Squadron.—We have finished our stint as duty Squadron, and all our various parties have

returned from odd corners of the world to be counted, upgraded, and sent on leave or courses.

At soccer, 425 Troop six-a-side team lost the final against Workshops in the Regimental competition but in the Regimental shoot we won the SLR competition by a convincing score. Dvr Lewis 736 (we have four in the unit) won the young soldiers award.

52 Port Squadron.—At the moment everyone is trying to decide which is their best profile, as the film "RCT at Sea" is being shot here. The number of budding Dustin Hoffmans around is amazing, though they are beginning to realise that a film star's life is not all beer and skittles.

We are still collecting silver, having added the Regimental Athletics and Shooting Cup to our hoard. L/Cpl Thorpe and Cpl Nicholls did well in the Hammer and Javelin events respectively, whilst S/Sgt Blackwood and Lieut S J Searle were outstanding in the shooting team.

Our Tug-of-War team, under the coaching of SSM Kirkbride, has already taken part in a number of outside events with some success. In the sailing world we congratulate Dvr Banham, crewed by Dvrs Baker and Shenton, who came third in the Corps Families Regatta, and our OC, crewed by WOII Molden and L/Cpl Fletcher, who finished second in the Regimental Regatta.

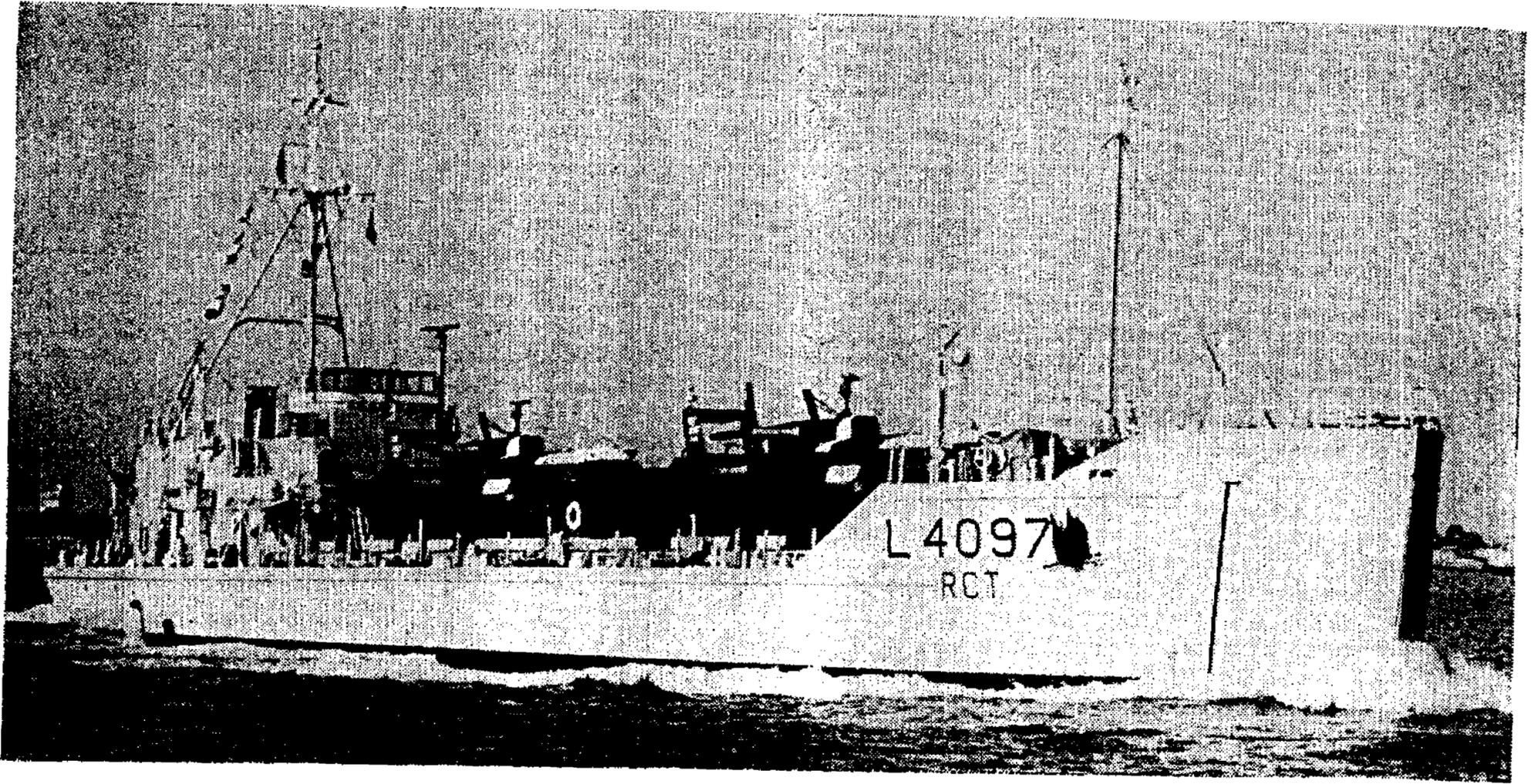
20 Maritime Regiment

THE Fifth Anniversary of the formation of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron RCT was celebrated on 26 April 1972 by the flight of an SRN 5 Hovercraft from HMS *Daedalus* slipway at Lee-on-Solent to the Isle of Wight, piloted by the first Squadron Commander, Lieut-Colonel S B Ball, now Commanding Officer 17 Port Regiment, over the original route taken in 1967. A Commemorative First Day Cover was issued to portray this event.

At present emphasis is being placed on night operation training for our employment in Norway later this year. Two types of new craft, the CC 7 and the SRN 6 Mark 5, have arrived and are being worked up.

In April the Squadron undertook a short navigational exercise to the Channel Islands. Unfortunately bad weather shortened the exercise from five to three days. However, operating from Herm, visits were made to Alderney, Sark, Jersey and Guernsey. In exercise "Angle Iron" the Squadron moved a company of the Queens from Bexhill to Lydd in the Tactical Assault role. This took place during darkness and from the craft point of view was a great success.

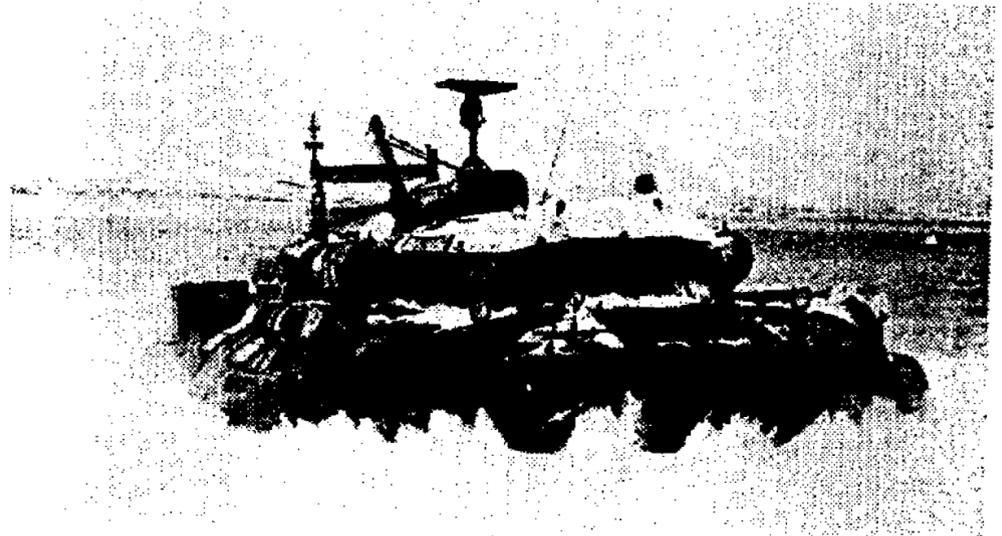
Lieuts Everingham and Riley (27



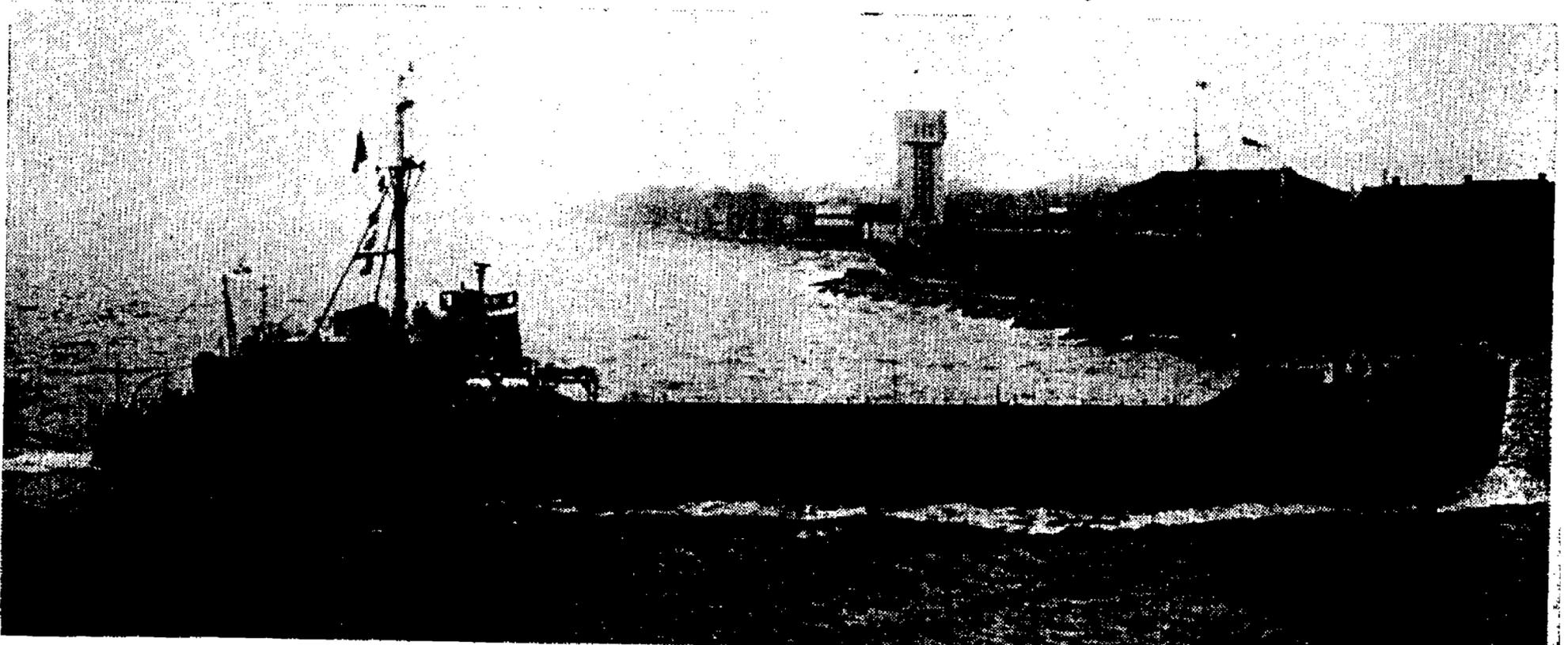
HMAV Andalsnes carrying two SRN.6 hovercraft of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron in the Solent.



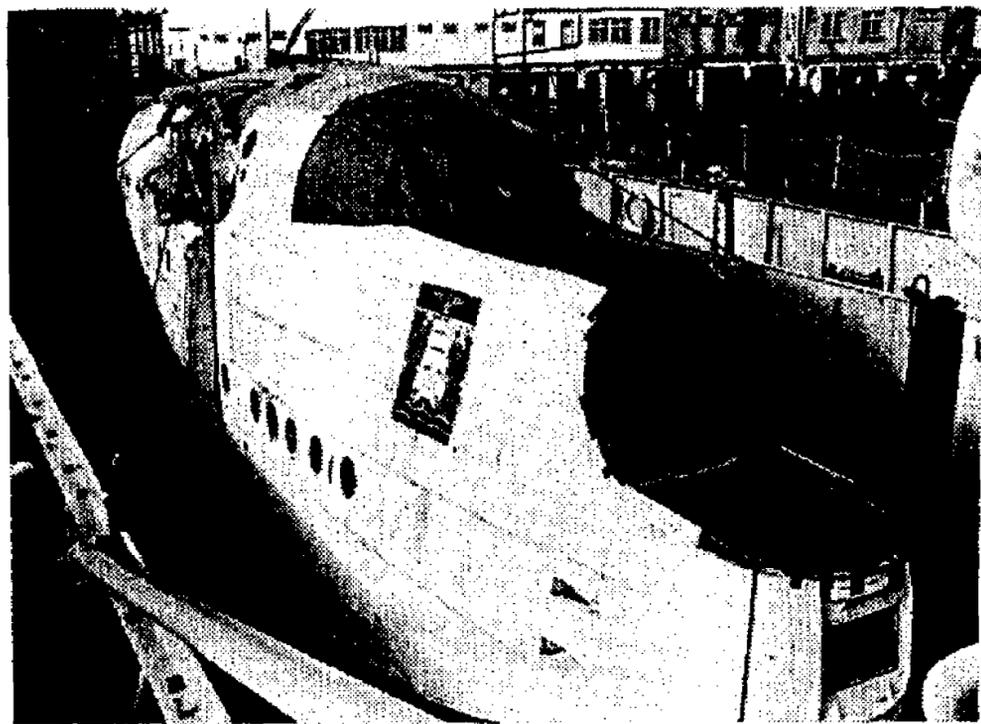
Fleet Squadron RCT Command and Control Craft.



SRN.6 Mk II.
Landing during Exercise Cold Winter, Norway, 1971.



HMAV Abbeville entering Portsmouth Harbour.



HMAV Aachen
The Army's aircraft carrier.



Survival exercise in the Solent.

Don't imagine that the crew of the ship in refit is idle either. Normal military training takes place during these times—range classification, NBC training, PE tests; all have to be completed. Also it is normal practice to de-kit the ship and the quantity of stores, large and small, that have to be moved, laid out, checked, serviced, replaced and put back on board at the end has to be seen to be believed. A covered area about half the size of a football pitch is needed for each ship's inventory.

Miles steamed and tonnages carried have increased and appear to be increasing yearly. In 1971, for example, the five ships steamed 59,581 miles, carried 28,690 tons of cargo and 4,450 passengers.

The provision of a replacement for the LCT Mark VIII has now been approved. Arrangements are well in hand for the commencement of building the first ship (LCL), and an option has been taken on a second.

200 HOVERCRAFT TRIALS SQUADRON

This unit is commanded at the time of writing by Major G G Blakey and is about to be taken over by Major S la R Salter.

It was formed in 1966 with the charter of establishing the place of hovercraft in the Army. It is located at Browndown Camp, Gosport, about three miles from St George Barracks, but has during its six year life so far operated in almost every condition of climate and environment carrying out a wide variety of logistic and tactical tasks. Trials are directed by HQ UKLF. Exercises have been recently carried out on the NATO flanks in Turkey and Norway, where the Squadron completed a winter survival course, apart from supporting the exercising forces. Certain incidents still cause a chuckle; like the sight of Dvr Brown attempting to comb his hair in a temperature well below zero degrees Centigrade, and failing miserably—his hair being frozen into a solid block!; or the expression of shocked disbelief on the face of a hovercraft crew who, when attempting maximum speed trials on ice, saw a man on the ice, miles from anywhere and so engrossed in his task of fishing that he paid no attention to the hovercraft—even when it passed within 20 feet of him at 70 miles an hour. Then there was the occasion when, 500 miles inside the Arctic Circle, a frightened housewife sent a message to the Norwegian police reporting that a monster had come out of the sea in a snow-storm and crawled up the beach, and would they get the Army or someone to shoot it!

Although part of 20 Maritime Regiment, the Squadron, together with its REME Workshop, can and does operate

independently for long periods because of its trials commitments.

This year the Squadron has been equipped with two each of two new hovercraft SRN.6 Mark V and CC7 Cushioncraft. The former is slightly larger than the SRN.6 Mark II. It has an open well deck with the crew housed in two cabs, one on each side of the craft. A possible load would be a BV 202 Volvo and trailer or $\frac{1}{2}$ ton Land-Rover and trailer. The CC7 is far smaller than any of the other craft and has a total passenger carrying capability of five. It might well prove to be invaluable in the reconnaissance role. It is propelled by a ducted fan system, rather than the single propeller of the larger SRN.6 class and this makes for much quieter operations than its bigger brothers.

The Squadron recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. The occasion was marked by a re-enactment of the Squadron's first sortie, in an SRN.5, to the Headquarters of the British Hovercraft Corporation at Cowes. The original craft completed the sortie piloted by Lieut-Colonel S B Ball, Commanding Officer 17 Port Regiment, who was the pilot of the first sortie and the first Squadron Commander. On arrival at Cowes, Major Blakey was presented with a model of the craft.

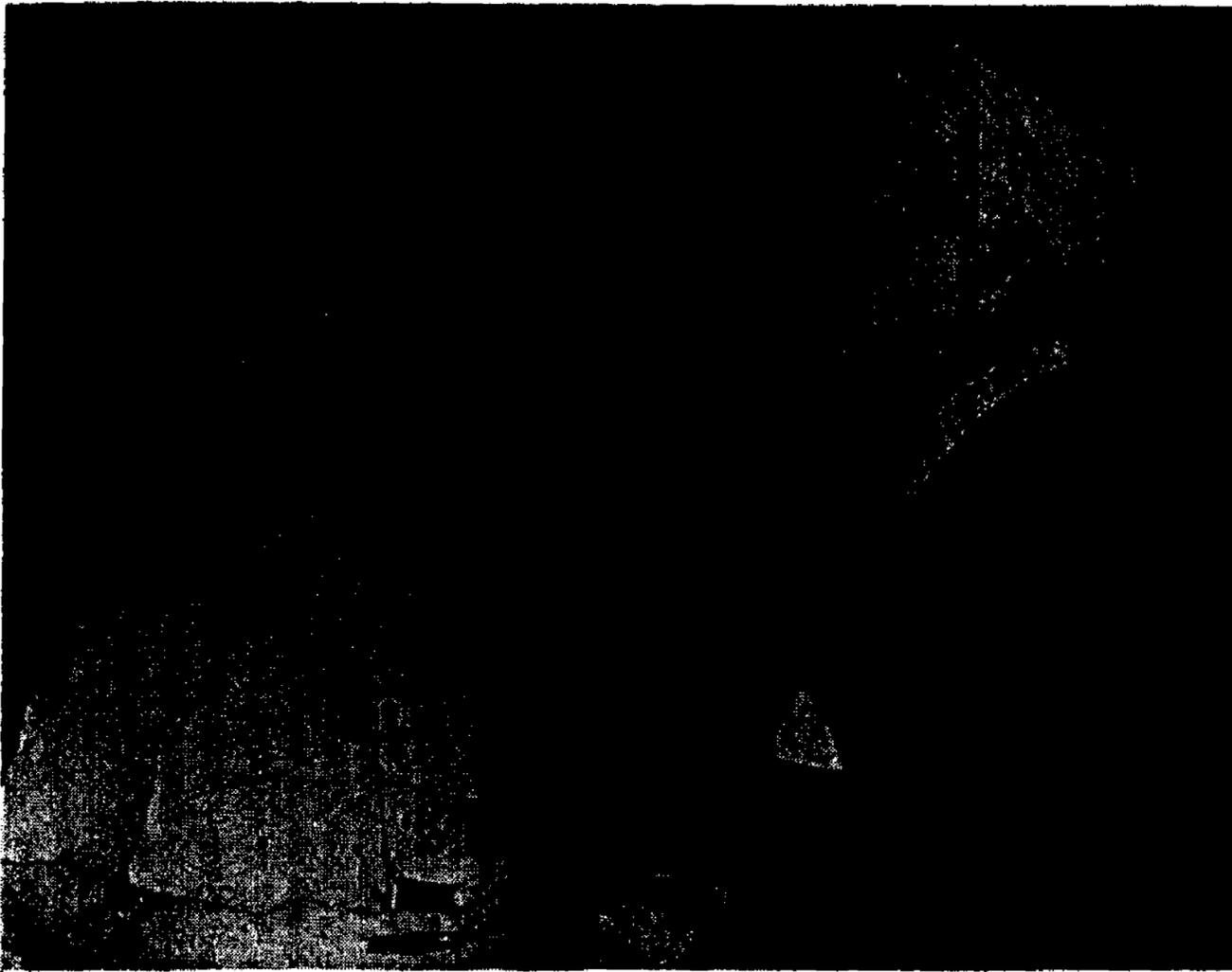
As 200 Squadron is the first Army unit of its kind it is continually visited by VIPs and senior officers when presentations and trials at sea are the order of the day.

FLEET SQUADRON

This is a civilian manned unit and is the successor to the old WD/RASC Fleet. It is commanded by Major G C W Edwards and is divided into two Flotillas, A and B.

A Flotilla is based in Portsmouth and is employed in giving support to the Maritime Training Wing of the Army School of Transport, the maintenance of craft in reserve and on details received from the continent, Channel Isles and Isle of Wight. During the first six months of 1972, A Flotilla has steamed over 9,000 miles, carried over 1,000 passengers and nearly 1,000 tons of general cargo—in addition to carrying out its primary task of providing training craft for the school.

B Flotilla is employed on range clearance and range support around the coast of the United Kingdom. The ranges which the Flotilla supports include Lulworth Castlemartin (Pembrokeshire), Eskmeals (Cumberland) and the RA Range in the Hebrides. This is an all year round task and the Flotilla is kept more than busy in all kinds of weather.



Cpl Sanzen-Baker, 20 Maritime Regiment, Master of the fast launch "Coronach" talks to the Prime Minister at the Kiel Military Yacht Club where he was assisting the British team at the Olympic games.

way ready for Exercise Strong Express.

The Squadron was in support of AMF (L) and a number of interesting recce and surveillance tasks were undertaken, culminating in a clandestine landing in enemy territory by CC7. An exciting night was spent intercepting and attacking the enemy invasion fleet, during which all the craft got the chance to have a "crack at the enemy" Fast Patrol Boats. On 18 September the Squadron moved location, and operated for the remainder of the exercise in support of the Amphibious Task Force. During this phase the new Mark V and CC7 craft took part in the UK force landings on Red Beach, while the Mark II craft looked after the air/sea rescue commitments of both the UK and American beaches. As a result of the enemy's Fast Patrol Boat activity during phase one of the exercise, a constant hovercraft patrol of the area was maintained to warn the fleet of any attempts to infiltrate Fast Patrol Boats through the fjords.

During the exercise the Squadron was visited by the Rt Hon Geoffrey Johnson Smith, the US of S (Army).

It was nice to have back WO2 Dowson as a hovercraft pilot for the exercise.

Fleet Squadron.—*RCT V Mull* is on station in the Hebrides and has completed her first passage to St Kilda in southerly Indian Summer conditions as opposed to the normal wind, rain and sleet.

The Command and Control Launch *Fulmar* has returned to Portsmouth from her successful Hebridean detachment.

We take over the manning and operations of the *RAF V 5012* (Inshore Minesweeper) on 30 October and will say more about this later.

The *Coronach* (48 foot Fast Launch) has also returned to Portsmouth after her very successful detachment to Kiel for the Olympic Games.

From *HMAV Aachen*, refitting at Portsmouth—a motor whaler was based on the Norfolk Broads and

crews of three soldiers at a time each spent one week exploring these extensive waterways.

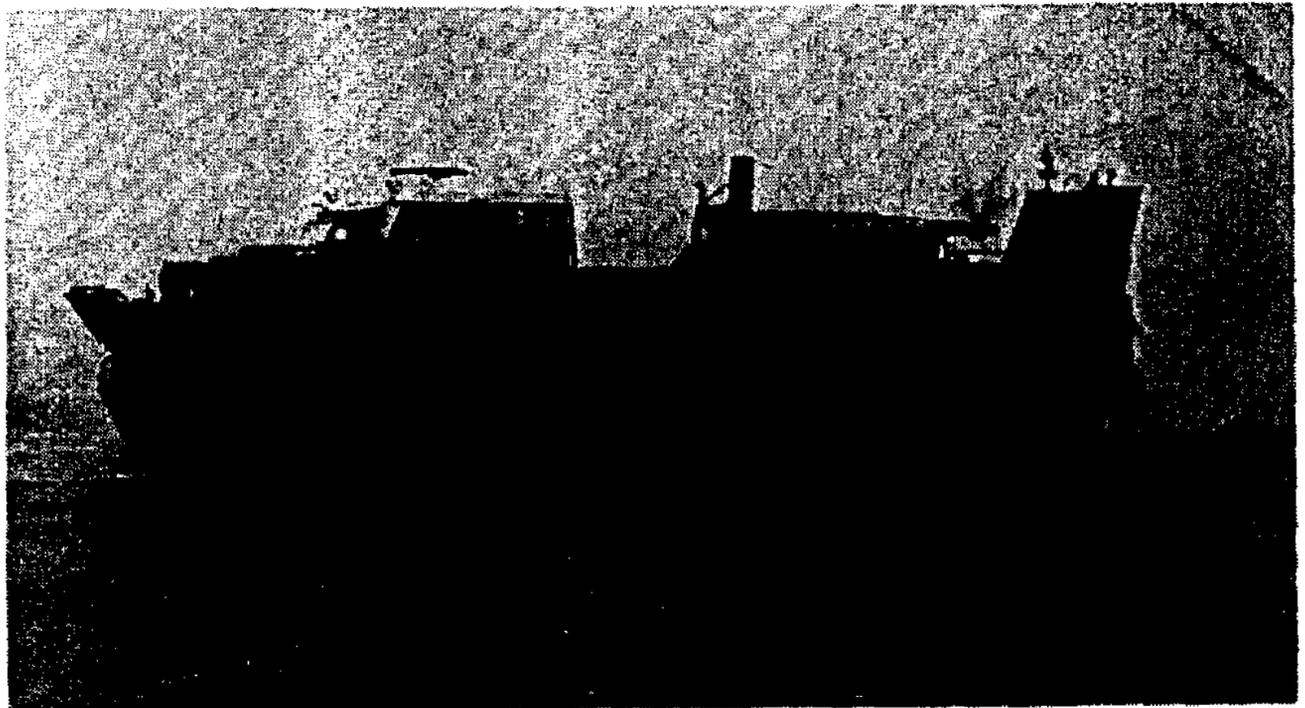
Nearer home a Harbour Launch was borrowed from Fleet Squadron, and successive crews visited almost all the navigable waters between Chichester and Lympington.

We welcome WO1 Homes and say farewell to WO2 Wood, on his secondment to Brunei.

From *HMAV Andalsnes*—we returned to Norway for the second time this year, this time in her new role as hovercraft mother ship. While awaiting the hovercraft to complete Exercise Strong Express the crew arranged an exercise in Harstad with the Norwegian Coastal Artillery and mounted a night attack on their communications centre. Considerable ingenuity was shown and a fair degree of success was achieved in a task different from normal duties. We would like to thank Harstad Garrison, who, at very short notice, arranged considerable facilities for the ship, and their hospitality was much appreciated.

From *HMAV Agheila* the ship supplied the islands of Tiree, Coll, Barra and Lewis during the dockers strike; which included going to Arinagour, on Coll, and being the first Landing Craft Tank to use the new pier there. During one trip to Tiree, while beached to discharge a Royal Navy fuel bowser, they held a brief ceremony in the stern of the ship for new members, after which they were thrown over the side. Reports indicate that the temperature of the water would not have appealed to brass monkeys.

With deep regret they announce the death of Gilbert the guillemot, who, having covered himself in oil leaking on the dory deck, died of Swarfega



Exercise Strong Express, SRN6 Mk V of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron heads in towards Red Beach carrying a Land-Rover and trailer.
(photograph by courtesy of Soldier magazine)

the re-organisation was the establishment of a new civilian clerical post in the RHQ surface movement department, into which Sgt Sheldrake moved, having retired and assumed his new style of address—Mr!

The last round of the Transport and Movements Cup—a sporting tournament between the military staffs of 24, 25, 28 Regiments and HQ BAOR (Tpt & Mov)—was held on 29 October at Dusseldorf. 25 Regiment won the 1972 competition overall and our strong band of supporters was delighted to witness the presentation of the cup to Cpl Briley by Mrs Sutton.

1972 has also seen the formation of a club for Regimental wives and lady employees, the meetings of which are well supported and much enjoyed. The acquisition of the small bungalow adjacent to the Regimental car park provides a pleasant venue for these and other social events and a great amount of refurbishing and re-decoration is in hand. Squash, badminton, .22 shooting and chess are all on the programme of winter activities, so we shall greet the spring fit in body and mind!

Capt and Mrs George leave us in January for Northern Ireland, after nearly four years with the Regiment. He has done a great deal for us during his stay and we shall miss his expert touch and cheerful efficiency.

Lieut-Colonel Matthews left us after a very happy tour, bound for the austerities of UK. We hope that he and Mrs Matthews enjoy Bedford and in his place we extend a warm welcome to Lieut-Colonel and Mrs O'Connor.

28 Regiment

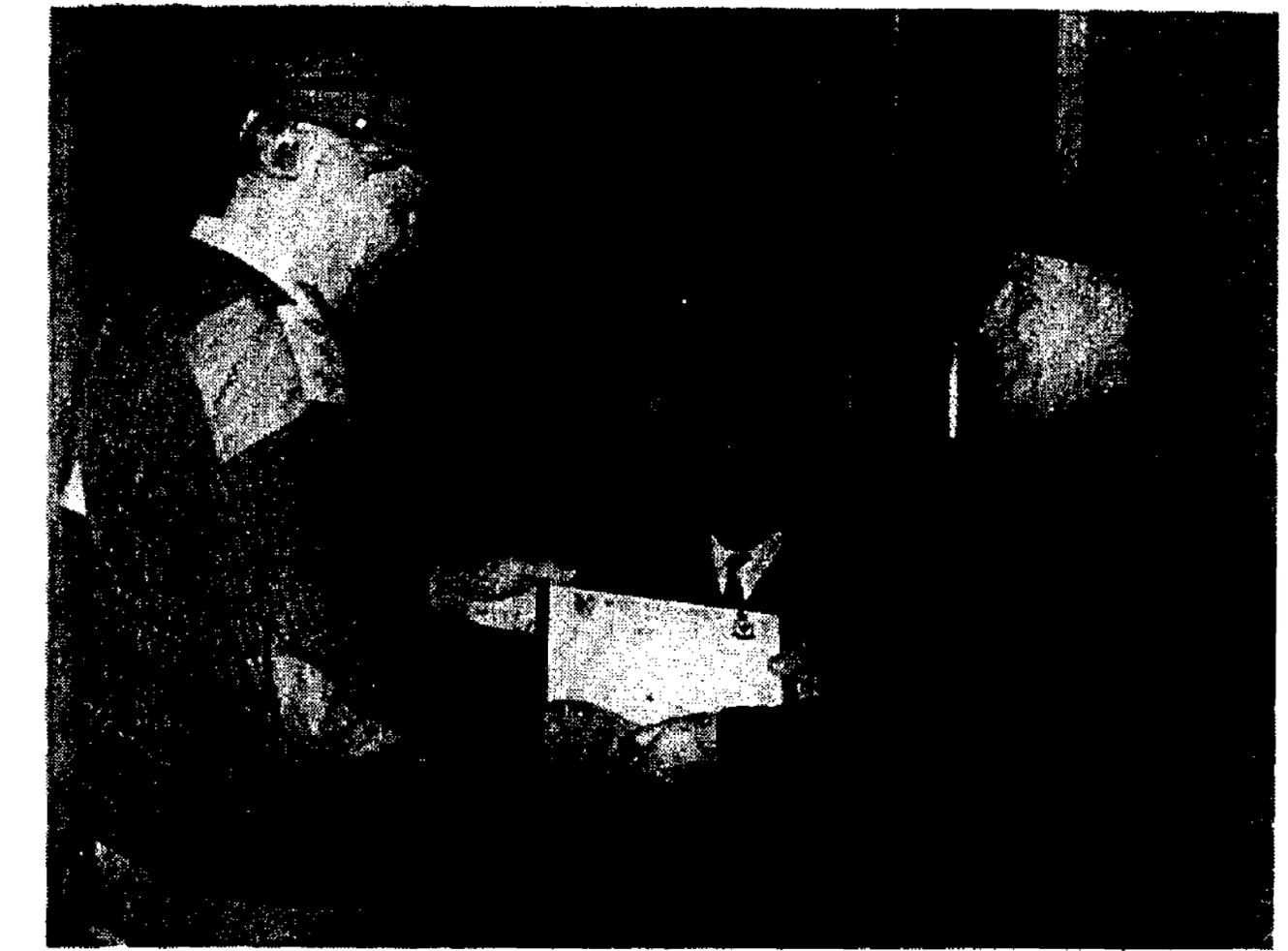
Regimental Headquarters.—The past few weeks have been rather hectic at the RHQ. Not content with our "lion's share" of unit moves, we were blessed by a spate of visitors. The most important of whom were the Representative Colonel Commandant and Mrs Eggar.

Whilst at the RHQ they both met most of the military and civilian staff over a cup of coffee in the Match Club. All who spoke to the Brigadier were immensely impressed, not only by his wit but also for his memory for faces.

He presented the British Forces Germany Certificate of Service, for 25 years' service, together with a cheque for DM 300.00 to Dvr Czajka of 624 Transport Unit MSO.

We were also hosts to WO2 Roy Steger RCT, at present a recruiter in Hull who was on a "What's it all about" tour.

We have bade farewell and good luck to RSM and Mrs Robinson, S/Sgt and Mrs Coles, S/Sgt Waldren



Brigadier R A J Eggar presenting to Dvr Czajka of 624 Transport Unit MSO, a British Forces Germany Certificate of Service and a cheque for DM 300.00. Also in the picture are Capt R Christie, Lieut-Colonel S T M Pledger and Asst Supt Peter Lypa who interpreted for the occasion.

and Sgt Phillips (both WRAC), Sgt White and Cpl Martin, and have welcomed RSM and Mrs Levett, S/Sgt Hills and Cpl Kenrick (WRAC).

RSM Robinson was the "founder RSM" of 28 Regiment and has served us long and well. We congratulate him on achieving his QM commission and wish him all success in 200 Hovercraft Squadron.

38 Squadron.—The peace and quiet of the summer Olympic recess has finally been shattered. Those few not involved in Exercises Eternal Triangle, Boxtail and All Change, have been busy working out the possibilities of going to Cyprus.

The Squadron has been nominated to relieve 36 Squadron as the UNFI-CYP Transport Squadron. The prospect of wearing a blue beret has given us great heart. We all await with bated breath the news that the OC and TCO will bring back from their recce—are all those stories we hear from the old sweats really true?

So far our football team remains unbeaten in both the Wednesday and Saturday leagues and we have got through the first round of the BAOR major units competition by beating 36 Heavy Regiment RA in a ding-dong battle. We now play 28 Signal Regiment in the next round. The rugby team is making great strides and has won a few matches, gaining considerable experience. Unfortunately we lost the first round of the Army minor units rugby to 154 FAD

Wulfen by 18-6 in a very good match. The shooting team gained fifth place in the Rhine Area inter unit competition.

14 Squadron

Headquarters Regiment 1 (BR) Corps

In the sporting field our squash team is preparing for the RCT inter-unit championships by arranging a few friendlies. To date we have played six and lost one. The Squadron orienteering team also did well by reaching the BAOR finals and only just failed to gain a ticket to UK for their championships. Our footballers are showing great improvement and are now beating teams that earlier in the season were beating us. Sgt Ryan, L/Cpl Hare and Capt Greene are playing rugby regularly for the Bielefeld Javelins and HQ Regiment teams, with Ryan and Hare being selected for the Corps team to visit UK.

At Arnhem our marching team carried on its yearly feud with the Americans. Unfortunately we came off second best this year, but by hook or by crook the cup will be ours again in 1973. In the Teutoburger Volkslauf, a yearly walking and cross country competition run by the Bielefeld Stadt, B and D troop teams put up a fine performance.

Our social life has been quite hectic, particularly when SSM Levett departed on promotion to RSM of 28 Regiment. Among his farewell gifts was a golf trolley.

14 AD Regiment

47 AD Squadron.—With one troop employed with 8 Squadron on MT duties in Northern Ireland and a 40 man detachment in Cyprus on exercise, we are thinner on the ground than usual.

As the Cyprus party returned another group, under Capt Steele, left for Nicosia to provide air despatch support for RAF exercise Jet Stream, which is the first of a series to be staged in Cyprus as part of the Tactical Support training programme.

The Administrative Officer, Capt (QM) Carter, became one of the few QM officers to complete 40 training sorties and earn the air despatch brevet; as a reward he went on a "mail run" to drop to ships at sea. His five day trip eventually ran to 14 days when the Hercules went un-serviceable in Nairobi.

Our soccer boys are progressing in the Salisbury Plain League, beating the School of Infantry 3-2. We also did well in the Station Commander's Sports Cup, which covers virtually every game going, being pipped by one of the Servicing Squadrons.

17 Port Regiment

51 Port Squadron.—Sterling work was performed by the LSLs and our AOO teams on the Liverpool/Belfast run during a hectic November; a

definite "scouse" element is creeping in, led by 2/Lieut Taylor, Dvrs Wilkinson, Bamber and Hoole, to name but a few, who have qualified for Liverpoolian citizenship.

Plant troop's newest temporary acquisition, a rough terrain crane, tasted its first salt water this month and seemed to dislike it. The 6ft 6in wading depth became 8ft 6in as the tide came in, valiant efforts by heavy recovery vehicles and a Michigan succeeded in hauling the errant machine on to dry land where it decided to engage its own gears and made sedately off closely followed at the gallop by L/Cpl Hardy. We also have a new line in amphibious Hysters, Cpl Vandembrouck is experienced in the use of them.

Congratulations are due on promotion to Capt Evetts, and to Sgts Birk, Ellis and Miles, and Cpls Brett, Smith G T, Brassington, Adams, Sneddon, Richardson, Smith M and Laing.

20 Maritime Regiment

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—The Squadron completed a presentation for the long transport course at Marchwood in late October, and followed that up by a presentation to the Royal Marines at the Amphibious Training Unit Royal Marines establishment at Poole. All crews have been down to Mountbatten and

completed a short sea survival course to prepare them for the cold of the Arctic waste in early 1973.

The naming ceremony of RCT vessel *Richard George Masters* on 19 December is reported elsewhere in this issue. It also coincided with the farewell visit of the Commander 2 Transport Group, Brigadier P H Benson MBE, who presented the Imperial Service Medal to AB I Lewis and the the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to Sgt O H S Carter at St George Barracks, Gosport.

HMAV Audemer tells us that 4 November saw the welcome end of a very hectic period of work, culminating in a delivery of naval hutting to Tiree, Inner Hebrides. The ingenuity of the ship's company was employed to a great degree in order to unload two 38 foot huts in very windy conditions. Unfortunately one of the huts having been discharged successfully on to the beach, fell off its cradle and smashed into many pieces.

The final detail for December was to take a full cargo of tanks for the 13/18 Hussars from Southampton to Pembroke dock. In convoy with *HMAV Abbeville* they left Southampton, only to get as far as Torquay due to storm force seas. The wind not abating they returned, tails between legs, to Portsmouth.

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ment in France, the Channel Isles, and sailed across to the Isle of Wight. A basic amphibian course was run at Fremington and as a result L/Cpl Swan is now amphibian trained and has left his office forever. The DUKW still amazes the unenlightened and last year we covered over 20,000 miles with our small contingent. S/Sgt Boyd spent his 39th birthday in hospital having a cartilage operation but is now back in training.

51 Port Squadron.—We say goodbye to Capt Coote who is forsaking the Corps in order to join the RAOC. We offer our thanks for services rendered and our best wishes for the future.

The phrase "rats and sinking ships" hardly applies here, but Capt Lake is also leaving this month—his saluting has been an inspiration to us all, the same sentiments are echoed to him.

On 31 January we handed over duty squadron to 52 Squadron and most of the workers donned their winter gear for AOO duties on the annual migration to Norway in support of Exercises Hardfall and Clockwork. Cpl Adams and Dvr Bragg have qualified and joined the port divers and are believed to be enjoying themselves removing ropes from Royal Marine LCMs and repairing the bow door seals of LSLs.

52 Port Squadron.—During January the Squadron once more was scattered to various corners of Norway carrying Troops to and from Exercise Clockwork and Hardfall, we then moved straight into the throes of "Duty Squadron" and also the FFR.

On the sporting front, the Squadron's seven-a-side team for the Eassie Shield is being put through its paces by 2/Lieut Dawson the intrepid leader of the "heavy gang". We congratulate Dvr G King on being awarded his Army canoeing colours, and L/Cpls Raistrick and MacDonald for their spirited participation in the Corps cross country championships.

It is with deep regret that we report the tragic death of Mrs Holme, wife of Dvr D G Holme. Our sympathies are extended to Dvr Holme and the families concerned.

20 Maritime Regiment

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron.—On 5 January the Squadron deployment to Norway for Exercise Van Dyke II, the three month series of trials and exercises with hovercraft in various parts of Norway from Bergen in the south to Hardstadt in the north. By 13 January we were settled at our first location—Vaernes airfield, close to Trondheim. We remained here until 8 February and then deployed by LSL to the Royal Norwegian naval base at Bergen.



SRN.6 Mark 5.

Our objectives for the initial three weeks in Norway were to practise all ranks in the techniques of arctic warfare and survival, and to evaluate on three types of hovercraft in conditions of snow, ice and sub-zero temperatures. Unfortunately an almost complete lack of snow and mild weather caused us to modify the programme. However we gave a number of demonstrations to Norwegian Naval, Army and Air Force personnel, as well as an enthusiastic local press.

On 29 January the Commander in Chief United Kingdom Land Forces arrived in Trondheim and next day visited the Squadron. He sampled superb hovercrafting in the calm minor fjords, saw our REME Workshop facilities at the airbase and ended his visit with lunch at Lanke Camp. On 6 February we said farewell to all our Norwegian friends in the Vaernes area at two memorable parties at Lanke Camp.

Staff Corporal Hague, our attached RAC representative, left the Squadron on 31 January at the end of his eight month tour with hovercraft.

Landing Craft Tank HMAV Aachen informs us that the ship, having finally left the clutches of Portsmouth Dockyard on 1 January has been very busy.

She has been on ammunition dumping voyages from Marchwood, Portsmouth and Zeebrugge; visited Alderney; carried out a week of dracone trials in the Solent and English Channel; and has also been involved in exporting Chieftains from Marchwood.

Whilst towing a dracone (flexible

oil barge) through the Needles Channel, the barge broke free and was carried away on a four knot current. Much amusement would have been caused to anyone watching as one LCT and its motor boat tried to round up a lively dracone galloping through the Needles Channel with mischievous intent. Dracone eventually recovered, much to the relief of Capt B S Birch, the project officer, who had, of course, signed for it.

HMAV Audemer was high and dry in Vosper Thornycroft's shipyard until mid January. After essential repairs had been effected, her first voyage involved taking two Inter-Service Hovercraft Unit hovercraft to Faslane. Once back to Portsmouth a further hovercraft was loaded along with a RAF Gnat simulator. The voyage proved to be one of the smoothest encountered going up to Scotland. At Faslane the hovercraft was craned off, as was the simulator at Holyhead. Unfortunately on the return journey gale force winds hurried the ship to the shelter of Milford Haven, South Wales. Tempers became frayed at the end of a week of storms, but eventually, in a blinding shower of snow, she made her escape and returned to base.

27 Regiment

RHQ.—The Adjutant and RP staff have gone into the antique military print business to brighten the walls of the "corridors of power". A production line was set up and frames and mounting produced by the score. Only one snag has occurred—no prints. Our man in Munich is finding out why—we hope!



The Waggoner

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Notice to Correspondents

All correspondence is to be addressed to :
The Editor, THE WAGGONER, RHQ RCT Buller Barracks, Aldershot, Hants.

Contributions for publication are to be despatched so as to reach the Editor six weeks in advance of the first day of the month of publication. It is regretted that only in exceptional circumstances can copy be accepted after that date.

* Copy is to be typewritten with double spacing. Capital letters should not be used except as in normal literary usage. Army abbreviations should be avoided wherever possible.

Photographs should be black and white prints—not colours, not transparencies and not negatives—packed for post in protective cardboard or similar.

Captions to be typed and stuck on back. Requests for return of photos to be included with typed caption.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Lieut B R G Ash at the wheel of "British Soldier" during the Whitbread Trophy Round-the-World Sailing Race. For articles see pages 104 to 107.

EDITORIAL

IT may be that breakfast this morning was not so palatable to those who had tussled with the new wrapper on THE WAGGONER.

This innovation is caused by the present difficulty in obtaining envelopes and the need to reduce weight to try and reduce postage, which is due to go up yet again in the near future.

On a more pleasant note, we are pleased to publish two accounts by members of crews of yachts taking part in the Whitbread Trophy Round the World sailing race. Maybe we are over-exposing this event with two articles, but the authors were in different crews and on different legs of the course. This race has been a tremendous test of skill, courage and stamina and we are proud that there should have been three RCT members taking part. We only regret the very sad loss of life which has occurred during the course of the race.

This edition includes the last report from 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron RCT, which ceased to operate on 31 March. It is sad to see this unit disband but, during its existence, it had a varied and interesting career and carried out hovercraft trials and promotion in many areas of the world. Even in March, its last operation was to have a craft on a sales tour in the Middle East.

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patchers moved the SEAC packs to the edge of the ramp and knelt beside them. The Corporal and third soldier stood on the port and starboard side. All had a full gale roaring round them from the slipstream. The plane, flying at about 150 mph, dropped to 100 feet, the green light showed and the despatchers heaved the packs overboard which vanished onto the airfield below. All great fun if you have abiding faith in your safety harness. The ramp was raised, the doors shut and we returned to Lyneham for tea and the final "wash-up"—the end of a most interesting day. We all felt that air despatch crews earn their keep.

14 Air Despatch Regiment

BOTH Squadrons gave a good account of themselves when they were turned out recently to show that they could move to battle stations with a minimum of warning. Whether or not the Commander 2 Transport Group was aware of these domestic activities is still uncertain. Nevertheless he created a diversion in calling for our Spearhead element, which was being processed at the time by the South Cerney Air Mounting Centre, to report for duty. Unfortunately the "fog of war" took a hand in events and whilst the detachment presented itself in immaculate order, it would have been better equipped if it had stopped off en route to collect its vehicles. We are pleased to say that a repetition of this exercise held a few days later demonstrated a significant improvement in communications followed by a faultless turnout.

The rigours and delights of Aviemore have been tested by Lieut Gerry Betts and 30 Air Despatchers, although both ski slopes and party members encountered some casualties. Sporting activities of a different kind were held at Thorney Island when schoolboy potential officers were let loose on Eager Beavers in the car park.

On the more conventional sporting scene, 14 Regiment soccer team had the pleasure of beating 27 Regiment by 4 goals to 3 in the final of the 2 Transport Group Benson Cup. The same team is also through to the finals of the South West District Major Units competition and is scheduled to play 22 Engineer Regiment at Tidworth towards the end of March.

The last Regimental Parade at which the current Commanding Officer, Second in Command, Major Operations and Regimental Quartermaster will be attending is to be held in the presence of the Transport Officer in Chief at RAF Lyneham on 10 April. In addition to the award of a number of General Service Medals, the TO in C will present Cpl Brian Mackey with the British Empire Medal, earned in recognition of services to air despatch in Nepal at about this time last year.

On 22 February 1974, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Air, The Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, visited RAF Station Lyneham to familiarise himself with station problems. 47 Air Despatch Squadron was asked to furnish a Quarter Guard with which to greet him on arrival at the Squadron location.

17 Port Regiment

Headquarters Squadron.—Whilst the lighterage side has been concentrating on refitting and preparing vessels for the summer season, the terminal operating troops have been fully committed, both within Marchwood and abroad in such exotic places as Oman, Hong Kong, Brunei and even Liverpool. Full support has been given to both Royal Marines and AMFL on their exercises in Norway and not even the exceptional January storms managed to dampen the enthusiasm of our soldier-sailors. A freak wave during a force 10 gale in the North Sea smashed in the bow doors of *RFA Sir Geraint* causing our gallant team to dream of Newcastle Brown instead of snow-cooled lager.

The Amphibious Troop has had a frustrating winter. Having stood by with their DUKWS for flood relief duties in Wales on several occasions, the rescue call failed to materialise, in spite of the monsoon-like rains of early February.

The Central Servicing Station has been in operation for four years and is an undoubted success. Last September it was expanded to include all vehicles and equipment within the Marchwood Station. It also has a first line repair facility provided by a four-man detachment from 17 Field Workshop.

During a two monthly period over 200 vehicles and equipments are inspected, and an average of 35 plus are serviced. In addition approximately 70% of all that arrives for first line repairs are rendered serviceable within 24 hours.

52 Port Squadron.—Marchwood Squadron is behind us once more and, as usual, our manpower deployment takes us to many

parts of the world, even our two newly qualified Port Operating Officers were sent away within days of finishing their course.

The six a side league is dominated by our A team, with the B team showing well. The first Regimental golf competition found six players from the Squadron out of the 24 from the Regiment.

We say farewell to WO2 Hilton who has left the Army after 26 years service. We thank him for all he has done and wish him well in his new life.

20 Maritime Regiment

SADLY, this will be the last mention of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron RCT. The Army Board has decided to discontinue Army hovercraft trials, and the unit ceased to operate with effect from 31 March.

Since its formation in 1966, the Squadron has had a very varied existence, visiting such countries as Australia, Singapore, Borneo, Japan, Turkey, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France and Belgium as well as the Channel Islands and Scotland, including the Hebrides.

In the Fleet Squadron the majority of vessels have been refitting during the last two months in preparation for the year ahead.

GSL Newman Noggs has been trying to get back to Portsmouth from Whitehaven since 18 December 1973 in the worst weather conditions for 30 years and so far has managed to reach Padstow. The Mate IC, Mr Dennis Harris, is set to break the existing record for a coasting passage down the Irish Sea.

We report with pride that for the first time the Regiment has won the United Services League Portsmouth junior challenge football cup. The final was played at Victory Stadium, Portsmouth, against *HMS Dolphin* in front of a large crowd on 22 February and we won 3-1.

Attacking at a fast pace, 20 Maritime scored three times in the first half. Rodgers put Glendinning away on the left and as he cut in towards the goal he was chopped down from behind; the referee did not hesitate in pointing to the spot. With everyone not wanting to take the kick, Glendinning stepped up and tucked it away 1-0 (18 minutes). After some clever mid-field work, Cpl Bramhall's final pass split the defence for Sgt Streatfield to run on and hammer home, 2-0 (23 minutes). With Cpl Lumb beating the full back with his speed, it was not long before it was 3-0, when one of his perfect centres found Cpl Bramhall's head (37 minutes). *HMS Dolphin* came back into the game and one stinging drive was well saved by L/Cpl Smith in goal.

Within three minutes of the restart *HMS Dolphin* pulled one back when a slip-up in defence let in the centre forward, who squeezed it in between goalie and post. For the next 20 minutes the Regimental defence took a hammering, but they held firm, with a good general in "Legs" Parkins, and finished the game on the attack.

Transport and Movements Branch HQ Scotland

SLOWLY spring starts to show itself through the Scottish weather and with it a group of new arrivals and departures. The DTMO, Colonel J W Gray, left us to attend the Senior Officers' Course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, after which he assumes the appointment of Colonel Q, HQ UKLF. We wish both Colonel and Mrs Gray the very best of fortune in their new appointment. Colonel and Mrs K Andrew have arrived from the AFO to take their place, we bid them welcome, although being a Scot he is back on home ground.

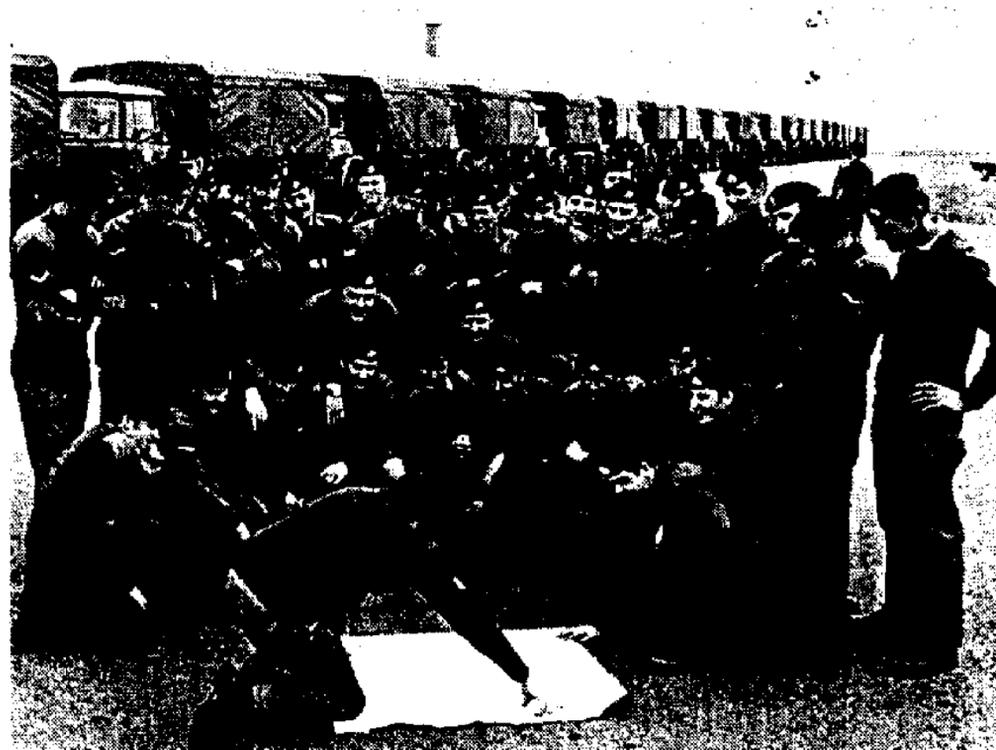
S/Sgt O'Regan leaves the MC detachment RCT Hebrides at Benbecula for 8 Regiment, being replaced by Sgt McKee from the British Army training team, Suffield, Canada. Finally congratulations to Capt Van-Weegen on his promotion, achieved in March.

A recent highlight has been the marriage of our 'confirmed bachelor', Sgt Tom Matakitoga, to Miss Margaret Macrae, daughter of Mr Macrae, our Camp RQMS. The reception was held in the Sergeants' Mess, HQ Scotland on 29 December, getting Hogmanay off to an early start! We wish them both a great deal of happiness and good luck for the future.

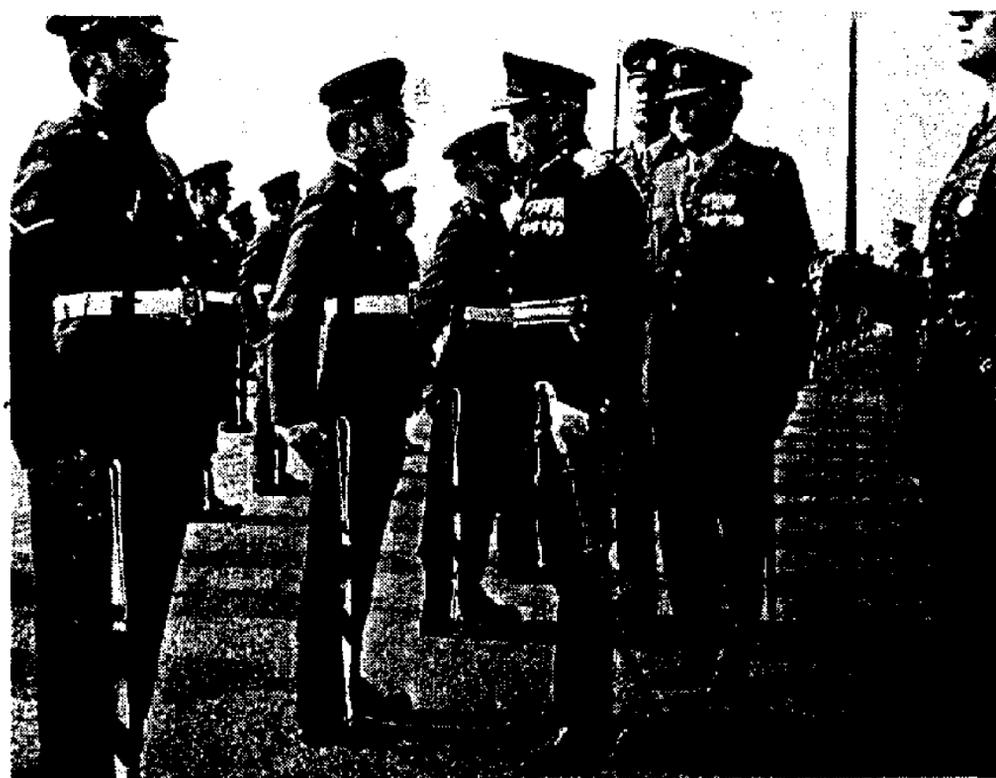
The LCT's of 20 Maritime Regiment will soon be joining us for the summer maintenance season to the Hebrides. *HMAV Audemer* arrives in April followed by *HMAV Andalsnes* later the same month. They are so very much part of our life up here that one truly feels summer is upon us once they appear in the Clyde. The Junior Tradesmen's Regiment Troon has now closed down leaving a gap in RCT ranks north of the border.



The Right Honourable William Rogers, Minister of State for Defence (Army) inspects the quarterguard prior to departure of the convoy from Lynham, watched by Major W P B Moss, OC 47 Squadron.



The drivers and crew of the convoy being reminded at the final briefing of some of the hazards to be encountered en route.



TO in C (Army) talking to Dvr C Gillyon, 47 Air Despatch Squadron.

en route by a BBC television crew tasked with making two 30-minute documentary films, was seen off by a VIP element with a host of names which would have done justice to a Cecil B de Mille extravaganza. They represented the services and the charities responsible for financing the project.

Nearer home, the TO in C (A) did us the honour of attending a Regimental parade to award a number of medals for service in Northern Ireland.

Finally we record the award of two trophies. The first is for the South West District soccer championship, which the Regimental team, playing for the first time as a major unit in this championship, won at Tidworth against 22 Engr Regt with a score of 2 goals to 1, after extra time. The second and most rewarding news, particularly for a Commanding Officer achieving it for the second time in his career (the earlier occasion being in command of 3 Sqn RCT), is the honour bestowed by the TO in C (A) upon the Regiment with the award of the RASC/RCT Association Efficiency Trophy for 1973.

In conclusion, the Regimental bids farewell (again) to Major Stanley Cole, MBE, who, after many years in various capacities, leaves Air Despatch for the last time to take up an appointment as PSO in his home town of Aberdeen. He will be remembered not only for the Coles Trophy but also for his crossword-like salutations to the Cleric of Chelsea. We welcome Lieut-Colonel (QM) J C Balloch as replacement golf rep, pipe player and sometime RQM.

20 Maritime Regiment

200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron, which ceased operations on 31 March, marked the occasion by a families day on 30 March in glorious spring weather. Most of the Squadron's families were joined by many ex-members for a final farewell gathering. This was followed in the evening by an excellent social.

Hovercraft expertise is being spread world wide and we will have ex-members in Hong Kong, Singapore, Cyprus, Malta, Berlin, BAOR and Northern Ireland by the end of August.

HMAV Audemer has changed commanders. Major M Randall-Smith has handed over to Major B S Birch. We wish the former success in his new appointment as Inspector of Vessels RCT, and welcome the latter. After the handover we sailed on the export tank detail, slightly changed from its usual form by dense fog! This culminated in us setting off for Portsmouth with a workboat in side-tow as these boats have no radar or radio. After a shortened maintenance period we sailed with a cargo for Ballykinlar and landed on the beach to be met by the CRCT Lieut-Colonel J S Riggall, MBE, and three exLCT Commanders, Captains Arymar, Paterson and Winand, all now employed ashore in Northern Ireland in a vastly different role.

We spent a short time (for Mariners anyway) lamp swinging, as only one managed to attend our Maritime Reunion. We continued from there to Couport to crane-discharge a Command and Control Launch carried in the vehicle deck, and thence to Rhu and Loch Carnan to flood down to discharge a harbour launch—an interesting exercise which we hope with the aid of photographs to explain in detail in a future edition. We are now in Scotland for three months supporting the RA Range on South Uist.

HMAV Agheila (Capt R A Potts) emerged from refit in late January after being given the kiss of life yet again. Amongst other details she collected from Grimsby a hovercraft belonging to the Interservice Hovercraft Unit. There were some "hairy" moments during the craning of the hovercraft into the tank deck. On several occasions, due to the distance the load was jibbed out and to the weight of the craft, the mobile crane's jacks left the ground causing much concern.

Fleet Squadron.—One Command and Control craft is now on station in the Outer Hebrides and the second craft will leave Portsmouth on 28 April 1974. RCT Vessel *Newman Noggs* is the range safety boat for the Cinque Port Range at Lydd and Hythe; this is a new commitment and increases the distance of the Squadron's dispersal around the coast from Folkestone to Benbecula.

The Squadron provided several craft to welcome the British Army "round the world" yachts on their return to Portsmouth. They carried the families of the crews and, in the case of the Parachute Brigade yacht, the Regimental Band.

HMAV Andalsnes (Capt J Fidler) is at present taking trainee officers on a Watchkeeping Board and will then set off on a Maplin Sands clearance detail. *HMAV Abbeville* (Captain W K Jewell) is in refit in Liverpool.

51 Port Squadron.—Somewhere at the southern end of the Persian Gulf lies, squats might be a better word, an island of immense scenic beauty, if you have a particular fetish for sand and rocks. The island of Masirah is situated off a stretch of coastline, which, if not entirely forsaken by God, at least ranked

A JUBILEE REVIEW 1952-77

IN recording this review of Corps activities it is inevitable that the selection of events will not satisfy everyone. This review is intended to be representative of the life of the Corps as presented in the pages of THE WAGGONER over the past twenty-five years.

1952

3 October —The Duchess of Kent, accompanied by The Duke of Kent, visited RASC units in Singapore.

1953

1 January —Library of the Institution of the RASC opened in Aldershot.

1 March —Title of THE WAGGONER added to the official title of 'The Journal of the Royal Army Service Corps'.

March —The Duke of Edinburgh visited BAOR. 36 Company provided staff cars.

18 April —22 (Western) Corps Troops Column RASC (TA) granted Freedom of Entry into Southport.

June —The Colonel-in-Chief, The Duke of Gloucester, kindly consented to become patron of the Institution.

2 June —The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. RASC represented by 14 officers and 121 rank and file in the procession, and 6 officers and 160 rank and file in the street lining.

RASC administered to an extra 35,000 troops in London District.

5 July —Royal review of ex-servicemen in Hyde Park. RASC Association allotted 310 positions.

25 November —The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visited Jamaica. RASC provided transport.

December —The Queen approved the alliance between the Federation of Malay Volunteer Army Service Corps and the RASC.

1954

February —The Queen approved the alliance between the Royal Pakistan Army Service Corps and the RASC.

April —SGT J E White, RASC (TA), won the Queen's Medal Clasp 1953 for Champion Shots, having previously won the King's Medal in 1937 for the Regular Army and for the Territorial Army in 1939.

1 May —The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visited Tobruk to board HM Yacht 'Britannia' in the harbour. RASC was heavily committed.

12 July —Princess Margaret visited BAOR. 36 Company provided transport.

30 October —Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, attended the fourth rally of the RASC Association.

December —100,000th National Serviceman passed through 5 Training Battalion.

1955

January —Princess Alice visited Port Royal. RASC vessel Flying Fox used.

24 January —Centenary of the Land Transport Corps.

20 February —Princess Margaret visited Port Royal. RASC vessel 'Flying Fox' was used.

22 March —Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, visited units of the RASC in BAOR.

April —The Duke of Edinburgh inspected RASC AATDC detachment on the occasion of his visit to Aldershot.

17 October —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, visited Buller Barracks.

1956

February —The Queen visited Nigeria. Royal Baggage vehicles provided by 88 Company WAASC.

May —The Queen presented the Queen's Challenge Cup for Services team jumping to the RASC team at the Windsor Horse Show.

15 May —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC visited HQ BAOR and inspected the guard of honour formed by 5 Company RASC.

3 November —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, attended the fifth rally of the RASC Association. Mr R G Masters, VC, was presented.

1957

28 February —15 Training Battalion RASC won the Army inter-unit boxing championships.

8 May —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, visited 1 Training Battalion.

10 May —Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother visited Northern Ireland and reviewed the Territorial Army celebrating their Golden Jubilee. 601 and 931 Company's RASC (TA) were on parade.

June —New cover design for THE WAGGONER.

24 October —The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester visited Ulster. RASC officers' mess honoured by receiving the Colonel-in-Chief and the Duchess of Gloucester.

1958

January —New cover design for THE WAGGONER.

May —15 Training Battalion won Army boxing championship for second year running.

June —The Gurkha Army Service Corps was formed.

1 November —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, attended the sixth rally of the RASC Association and presented the RASC efficiency cup to 9 Company RASC, the first winner of the competition.

24 November —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, visited RASC units in Aden.

1959

23 February —The Duke of Edinburgh visited Singapore and the RASC were hosts at a luncheon at their officers' mess, Marina Hill.

5 March —15 Training Battalion won the Army inter-unit boxing championship for the third year running.

22 March —The Duke of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief RASC, visited Army Group Transport Column BAOR.

May —New cover design for THE WAGGONER.

June —50th anniversary of the formation of the Corps Cricket Club.

9 July —5 Training Battalion won the Army 88-stone tug-of-war championship.

December —The Queen approved the affiliation of the Gurkha Army Service Corps to the RASC.

1960

March —6 Training Battalion won the Army inter-unit boxing championship.

May —RASC won the Queen's Challenge Cup for Services team jumping at the Windsor Horse Show.

September —The first post-war all-Regular company formed with 9 Company RASC at Aldershot.

11 October —The Queen approved that an appointment of Colonel The Gurkha Army Service Corps be instituted.

October —Passing-out parade at 2 Training Battalion carried the No 4 rifle for the last time.

December —The end of the National Service call-up. Final passing-out parade of intake 309 from 5 Training Battalion was held on 8 December.

1961

January —The Queen approved the alliance between the RASC and the Supplies and Transport Column, The King's African Rifles.

16 March —The Duke of Gloucester visited the RASC at Regent's Park Barracks.

26 April —2 Training Battalion beat 6 Training Battalion to win the 'All Corps' Army football cup final.

13 May —The RASC team won the Services team jumping for the Queen's Challenge Cup for the second year in succession.

May —The Royal Canadian Army Service Corps celebrated its Diamond Jubilee.

1 June —Headquarters of the RASC Association moved to the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, London.

30 June —The last RASC cadets were commissioned from 1 Training Battalion. Over 4,000 officer cadets were trained between 1939 and 1961.

4 August —The RASC won the Army regimental doubles tennis championship.

August —Depot Battalion won the Army 100-stone tug-of-war team championship.

November —RASC Training Centre took over responsibility for the Aldershot Horse Show.

November —Princess Alexandra of Kent visited Hong Kong, where 56 and 79 Companies supplied transport on land and sea.

1962

15 February —The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester arrived in Kenya and visited 60 Company.

26 February —Water Transport Training Company leaves the Isle of Wight.

March —Gurkha Army Service Corps received their own cap badge, which had been designed and approved two years previously.

2 April —Depot Battalion took over the role of recruit intake unit.

12 May —The RASC team won the Services team jumping for the Queen's Challenge Cup for the third successive year.

September —Depot Battalion won the 100-stone tug-of-war championship for the second year running.

1963

The 21st anniversary of the appointment of The Duke of Gloucester as Colonel-in-Chief RASC.

1964

February —THE WAGGONER printed by Geerings of Ashford for the first time.

25 April —911 Company RASC (Mot Amb) TA given the Freedom of Entry to the Borough of Eccles, Lancashire.

June —The 50th anniversary of the formation of the New Zealand Army Service Corps.

July —The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester visited the RASC Training Centre.

1965

26 March —Royal Warrant setting out changes in Corps of Royal Engineers, Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Corps of Royal and Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, signed by Secretary of State for Defence.

17 April —63 Company won the Devizes to Westminster canoe race.

1 May —102 (Cheshire) Transport Column RASC (TA) given the Freedom of Entry into the Borough of Birkenhead.

26 May —The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visited Rhine Army.

31 May —63 Company won the Army sprint and long distance canoe championship.

15 July —Royal Army Service Corps re-designated Royal Corps of Transport.

7 August —New cover for THE WAGGONER.

16 October —The Gurkha Army Service Corps re-designated The Gurkha Transport Regiment.

1966

11 January —The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester toured military units in Malaysia. The Colonel-in-Chief RCT visited RCT units and inspected a guard of honour provided by 15 Air Despatch Regiment.

30 March —63 Para Squadron won the UK Army rugby cup final.

30 April —53 (Welsh) Divisional Regiment RCT (TA) given Freedom of Entry to the Borough of Port Talbot.

June —200 Squadron formed as the first operational unit of hovercraft.

4 July —The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visit Northern Ireland and review ex-servicemen at the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme commemoration service.

7 July —The last Dinner Night was held in the old Buller Officers' Mess.

July —Capt R A Hill, BEM, won the Sword, Lance and Revolver championship at the Royal Tournament. Previous winners were Maj G G R Boon in 1953 and Maj T J Brown in 1963.

7 August —Band of the Junior Leaders Regiment toured Rhine Army.

September —Move of RCT from Buller Barracks to Queen Elizabeth Barracks completed and the rebuilding programme commenced.

11 November —The Queen reviewed the London Fire Brigade in their centenary year. H Squadron provided horses for the horse-drawn appliances, which were driven by Col J R Burgess and members of the squadron.

TOO MUCH, TOO SOON?

The Army's Hovercraft Experiment

by Major General F J Plaskett MBE

THE Armed Services' interest in hovercraft dates from 1961 when the Inter Services Hovercraft Unit was formed at Lee-on-Solent just three years after Christopher Cockerill first demonstrated a working model of this new and still unique means of transport. Five years and several trials later the Army decided to branch out independently with a separate, wholly military unit and 200 Hovercraft Squadron was born. The Squadron was formed at Portsmouth in November 1966 as a unit of a new Corps — the Royal Corps of Transport, itself at the time only one year old.

Like most new projects, the Squadron sprang from small beginnings, its only assets at first being one SRN 5 hovercraft borrowed from the Inter Services Hovercraft Unit (ISHU) and the enthusiasm of the officers and soldiers selected for hovercraft training.

A number of those who volunteered had already qualified as light aircraft pilots, gravitating naturally to this new medium. Consequently there was — and still is — some difference of opinion on the status of the man at the controls; those without wings were apt to describe him as a pilot and those with wings called themselves drivers. Civilian operators evade this problem neatly, they call him the 'craft commander'.

Plans were in hand to build new squadron offices at Browdown near Lee-on-Solent, well known to generations of World War Two naval ratings as the location of the draughtiest rifle ranges in the United Kingdom.

Early in 1967 the Squadron moved into its new, purpose built accommodation at Browdown and was immediately in business, demonstrating its new craft at a number of major and minor exercises.

The Charter of 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron was quite simply to evaluate the military uses of hovercraft in all types of climates and terrain. This was a tall order but a very necessary one. Air cushion technology was still in its infancy and performance under stress in extremes of heat, cold, dust and dampness had yet to be properly assessed. Hovercraft work on the principle that a cushion of air may be generated under the craft's hull by a lift fan, the air being contained by a skirt fitted around the vehicle in much the same way as a parachute contains air as it is descending. Forward motion of the craft is achieved by propellers. Later marks of craft use centrifugal fans for forward motion and later still the air cushion principle was applied to a normal seagoing hull thus reducing surface friction but still retaining an immersed propeller for motive power.

But to begin with 200 Squadron was to be equipped with conventional hovercraft. The craft to be evaluated were SRN 5, 40 feet long, 23 feet wide and capable of carrying 15 fully equipped troops at 80 miles per hour in calm water, and the SRN 6 Mark 2, which was bigger at 60 feet long, and slower at 56 miles per hour, but was able to carry 30 fully equipped troops or a dismantled field gun, its ammunition and crew in the cabin. Both these craft were powered by a Bristol Siddeley Marine Gnome gas turbine engine with a continuous rating of 900 shaft horse power. The crew of each craft consisted of a driver, a navigator/radar operator and a crewman/gunner manning the roof mounted General Purpose Machine Gun.

In 1966 the hovercraft's value for military purposes appeared to be indisputable. SRN 5s had already operated successfully in a logistic role in Borneo a year earlier as part of an ad hoc unit called HUFU (Hovercraft Unit Far East). The United States Navy had also used SRN 5s as fast, offensive patrol craft in the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam, using the well deck of a dock ship as a base.

But it is fair to say that although extremely useful, the experience provided by these events had emerged fortuitously as the result of an operational requirement; the craft involved danced in each case to the tune of a war — a cool, scientific appraisal of their performance had not been possible.

200 Squadron's task was to build on this experience so that it could recommend in due course the size and shape of the hovercraft unit or units to be included in the Army's regular order of battle. No-one doubted in 1966 that a regular hovercraft unit would be justified. Consider the apparent advantages over more conventional forms of transport — high speed over any reasonably flat surface even in darkness and bad weather, a heavy load carrying capacity (the air cushion principle has no theoretical limit) and complete role flexibility from reconnaissance through all forms of offensive operation to logistic tasks. In coastal and riverine operations the hovercraft emerges well ahead of most craft and in matters of maintenance it has one big advantage — it can be brought on shore under its own motive power.

1967 saw the Squadron formed and working up to a planned departure for the Far East towards the end of the year. It was organised as a squadron headquarters, two hovercraft troops, each of two craft, and a workshop provided by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The first squadron commander, Major Stanley Ball, was a graduate of the Royal

Military College of Science and had been a hovercraft pilot in the Inter Services Hovercraft Unit. He insisted that his troop officers and the squadron sergeant major should qualify as craft drivers, thus effectively doubling the squadron's official driver strength to four — one for each craft.

Having established that hovercraft could perform such basically nautical manoeuvres as taking up and leaving a mooring at all states of wind and tide, the craft went on to prove its versatility in beach operations and as a true amphibian scornful of the obstacles to normal craft or vehicle progress presented by mangrove swamps and impenetrable sub-surface weed. It also performed effectively as an assault craft, emerging smoothly from the bowels of a dock ship or landing ship and making at high speed for the shore.

The Japanese had expressed interest in this strange new vehicle and a demonstration was arranged on the island of Honshu during British Week. Their interest was presumably based on quick transportation between the Japanese islands and across the Inland Sea but they didn't buy a British craft — the first oriental hovercraft, the M (for Mitsubishi) 5 was built in Japan under licence from BHC soon afterwards.

Trials in Hong Kong demonstrated the hovercraft's ability to move troops quickly by sea from place to place. The Hong Kong trials report gives it the edge over helicopters because it could operate at night and in marshy country. But the hovercraft/helicopter comparison doesn't really hold water — hovercraft can't climb hills.

During the Hong Kong trial, real trouble erupted on an outlying island. A hovercraft speeding to the scene with a small force of soldiers, ensured that the incident did not get out of hand.

Exercise Coral Sands in Australia provided the highlight of the Squadron's Far East tour. This was a major amphibious exercise which included 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines, HMS Albion and Australian units. All craft performed well under considerable pressure, operating continually at high speeds and with heavy loads and this mainly at night using navigational radar.

Ship to shore journeys which would have taken four or five hours using conventional craft were made in one and a half hours using hovercraft, and even in rough seas the official trial report says that 'marines arrived on the beaches showing no evidence of fatigue or discomfort'.

It would seem pretty obvious that a disadvantage which a hovercraft shares with a tank is the noise it makes. Oddly enough, this is largely discounted in trial reports. 'Enemy' troops reported that they have no idea of the precise location of the craft because the noise was all around them.

After further small trials in Malaya, Thailand, and, of all places, Bali, the Squadron returned to Browdown by Christmas 1969 to start the NATO phase of its existence. The balance sheet for the Far East tour showed a healthy credit not only in terms of operational success but also of goodwill. The craft had broken new ground and several countries had taken a keen interest in its military — and commercial — possibilities.

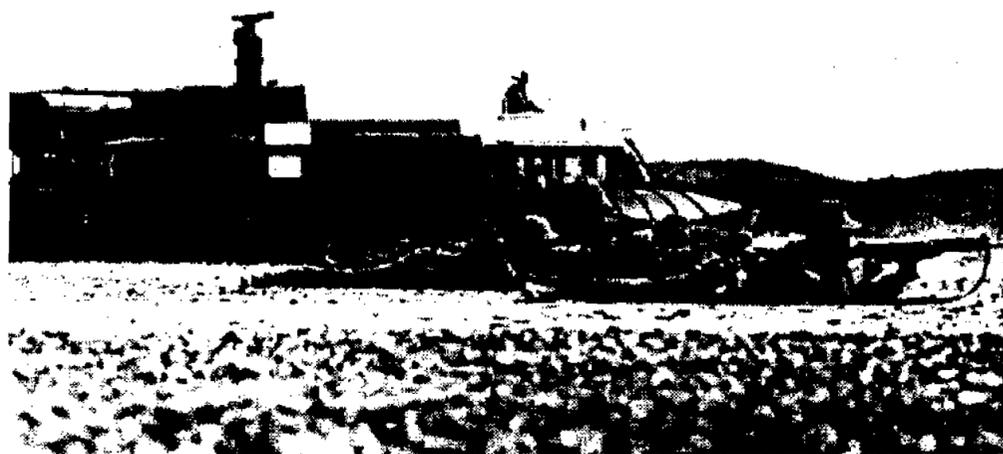
Although the Far East trials had been both interesting and successful, the outcome of the NATO trials would be crucial to the Squadron's future. Successive defence reviews had underlined the increasing importance of our NATO contribution, and the hovercraft would have to prove its worth in the vastly differing types of terrain on NATO's flanks to have a chance of survival in the Army's future order of battle. NATO territory stretches from Norway's border with Russia to Eastern Turkey. The central region was quickly eliminated as an area for operating hovercraft; conventional vehicles are cheaper and more effective for the support of ground forces. The extremities, however, offered exciting possibilities and NATO's flank protection force was keen to try out the Squadron. Exercise Deep Express, which took place in Greek and Turkish Thrace in 1971, found the hovercraft highly effective during operations in marshy coastline and delta areas for up to sixty miles inland. But it had to be admitted that the hovercraft could only claim its speed as an advantage over cheaper, conventional craft performing similar tasks in this region.

The Northern Flank, however, was a vastly different story. The sheer beauty of Northern Norway's mountains and fjords in winter masks one of the most forbidding climates in the world. Daylight lasts for two or three hours only and temperatures of up to 30° of frost are commonplace.

In these conditions a man can become badly frostbitten before realising it, and contact of exposed skin with metal results in loss of the outer layer of skin. Helicopters are grounded for fifty per cent of the time during the winter months and water freezes inland in most of the fjords and along parts of the coast for some way out to sea. Much of the possible operational area is impassable even on foot.

Trials during 1971 and 1972 showed that in Northern Norway the

military hovercraft, hitherto assessed as extremely useful, had finally come into its own. Unalloyed enthusiasm is not usually a description to be applied to a report on a piece of military equipment, but comment on the hovercraft's arctic weather performance comes as near to being lyrical as a reasoned military assessment will allow. Consider the problems faced by a Force Commander in this region. The threat is from the North. But the East West mountain ranges which span the territory are barriers to North-South movement. The fjords cut deep into the mainland, but they can't be used by conventional craft in the depths of winter because they are wholly or partly frozen over. The opposing Commander of course has the same problems. But he has a preponderance of men trained to live and handle their equipment all the year round in arctic conditions. He also has the great advantage of being able to choose his time and place of strike. In these conditions a NATO commander needs two things — early information of his enemy's main point of strike and tactical mobility with which to counter it. A small opposing force landed fit and fresh and at the right time and



SRN 6 Hovercraft supporting troops after an assault landing during a demonstration overseas.

place could produce results out of all proportion to its size. An ideal task for hovercraft, as 200 Squadron proved. To quote from one exercise report:

'109 soldiers (of the Norwegian Army) and their support weapons, bergen rucksacks, reindeer skins (bedding), skis and pulks (sledges) were embarked in four SRN 6 Mk 2 hovercraft and driven to an assault beach 15 miles down the coast. It was assumed that the beach was lightly defended. The assault was made just before last light. The four craft hit the beach simultaneously, running about 100 metres inland. All infantry and equipment were disembarked within 28 seconds and the craft had withdrawn clear of the beach in less than two minutes from coming ashore. It would have been impossible to land infantry at the point selected by normal landing craft due to off lying rocks and shallow water. This exercise successfully demonstrated the hovercraft's unique capability of crossing shallow water, coming well inland and landing men dryshod in extreme conditions.'

Other lessons were being learned. The SRN 6 Mk 2 with its enclosed cabin was ideal as a troop carrier, but assault troops operating out of range of heavy artillery need light vehicles and close support weapons — and they need these things quickly, particularly if the weather denies them the assistance of close support aircraft. There was an urgent need for a hovercraft with an open deck capable of carrying a tracked oversnow vehicle of the type used for arctic operations or a light sled-mounted field artillery piece with its crew and limber.

Major Mike McIndoe, the squadron commander during the early Norway trials, later to be tragically killed in a light aircraft accident in Germany, pressed for a modification to be put in hand. Eventually, two of the old SRN 5 craft were given a major face lift and emerged from BHC's workshop with a central open well deck flanked on either side by a small cabin for the pilot and crew. These craft were called SRN 6 Mk 5.

Into the open deck a gun with crew and limber or an oversnow vehicle with crew and trailer fitted snugly. Alternatively fifty troops could be carried, but they would lack the warmth and comfort provided by the enclosed cabin of the Mark 2.

Operations in Norway are extremely vulnerable to outflanking attacks by sea, and while the noise made by the big SRN 6 craft was no disadvantage when operating inland because the acoustic effects of the surrounding mountains made it extremely difficult to detect their location, it was considered to be a serious disadvantage when operating to seaward in the surveillance role for which hovercraft were in all other respects well suited. If the noise problem could be overcome, the craft could speed to an outlying island and then, camouflaged, closed down and floating silently with only the radar and radio switched on, they could use their excellent

surveillance radar and good craft-to-shore communications to monitor all movement for miles to seaward. The Force Commander would receive early warning of an amphibious or seaborne assault.

To counter the noise problem, the Squadron was issued in 1972 with two Cushioncraft 007s. This was a small, highly manoeuvrable vehicle with two semi-enclosed centrifugal fans mounted on the stern of the craft one each side of the passenger cabin. The craft was powered by the ST6 simple cycle free turbine engine rated at 620 horsepower with a continuous rating of 500 h.p. The air jet produced by the fans provided both lift and forward propulsion. This resulted in a considerably quieter performance than the much bigger SRN 6, and this together with its low silhouette and payload of five fully equipped troops appeared to make it ideal for such tasks as surveillance, coastal reconnaissance, beach survey and landing clandestine raiding parties in hostile territory.

007 and the new SRN6 Mk 5 were tested exhaustively on Exercise Van Dyke II in Norway in 1973. Apart from proving the robustness and military value of both the new craft this trial was interesting in that it also considered the three craft in service with the Squadron as possible offensive weapon carriers. Clearly the craft would continue to have to depend largely on its speed for its own protection so the addition of heavy armour was out of the question.

The addition of a small medium range missile to the normal protective armament of light automatic weapons and a general purpose machine gun appeared to offer possibilities. The degree of sophistication required by the target acquisition and fire control system presented problems which were still unresolved at the end of the trial — nor had any specific weapon been decided upon — but the germ of an idea for the future had been sown.

Van Dyke II marked the end of the trials programme for 200 Squadron. Since its formation in 1966 the Squadron's craft had travelled nearly a million miles and visited nineteen countries. It had taken part in innumerable exercises, trials and demonstrations. The time had now arrived for the reckoning. There was no doubt in the minds of the Army's hovercraft enthusiasts, a number of them senior officers in influential positions, that 'Hovercraft can make a decisive contribution to tactical mobility (within NATO)'.

A blueprint for an operational squadron was prepared. This was to consist of nine craft in two troops of four and one reserve and was to be an expanded version of the existing trials squadron. Hopes ran high at Browndown. But early in 1974 the axe fell. The Ministry of Defence announced that the military hovercraft project had to be abandoned for reasons of economy. The trials unit was to be disbanded, leaving the Services' interest in hovercraft in the hands of the Royal Navy, which continues to retain a small trials organisation. There is no doubt that the conclusions of the Army Hovercraft Committee's final report which recommended the formation of an operational squadron had been sympathetically considered and there is little doubt that had the money been available they would have been acted upon. But Defence spending these days is largely a matter of taking agonising decisions on priorities, and, like other revolutionary advances in recent years, the Army's project died of financial starvation.

The decision to disband the Squadron is all the more poignant when viewed from the perspective provided by four intervening years. Hovercraft, for so long something less than big business, seem poised in 1978 for big advances on the commercial front. Improvements in technology have considerably reduced operating costs (1) and there can be no doubt that the construction of larger numbers of craft will cause capital costs to tumble.

The problem of tactical mobility on NATO's Northern Flank have not gone away, and only time and the direction from which the next threat to our existence materialises can tell us whether the decision to abandon the project was a wise one. Perhaps the British Army went too far too quickly?

Whatever the ultimate verdict, however, 200 Hovercraft Trials Squadron Royal Corps of Transport made military history in its seven years lifespan. It proved the military advantages of a revolutionary and unique form of transport; it helped, by passing trials information back to industry, to keep Britain in the forefront of air cushion technology and in the design, development and production of hovercraft. It certainly enjoyed its hovercraft soldiering and having fulfilled the terms of its charter to the letter, it has retired from the stage with honour.

(1) *Janes' Surface Skimmers* — 1978.

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COME BLOW THE CORPS HORN

BY

Major C. F. Wilson RCT

This is an advertisement. How about :

Five weeks tactical update on Costa Del Sol (isbury).

Key participation in one of UK's largest FTX.

A golden opportunity to bang the Corps drum, blow the Corps trumpet or both.

Work hard and yet have a lot of fun making useful contacts and revising old friendships.

If you are a senior captain or a young major you cannot afford to miss a Combat Team Commanders' Course (CTCC).

CTCC is held four times per year at Warminster. The aim of the course is :

"To revise and practise officers of the combat arms in the command, training and logistic support of combat teams formed from battle groups of armoured divisions and field forces in all phases of war."

As a Corps we have one vacancy per course. It was a long hard battle to secure the vacancy. We cannot afford to let it lie dormant. You the readers have got to fill the slots or they will be quickly lost. The course is not a daunting experience. It is well within the capability of the Corps officer. A logistically trained officer has a considerable contribution to make towards dispelling the massive logistic ignorance through which his teeth arm contemporaries wade. No great brains are required — viz the writer went. Formal staff training at one of the forcing houses is again not a prerequisite, indeed the armies and divisions of Camberley can be left far behind. The basis of the course is practical and aimed at the craft of commanding a combat team.

The course is organised into three phases. A classroom/background information phase which is designed to get students to a useful start point. Secondly a TEWT and syndicate discussion section, covering all phases of war. Lastly a practical exercise in three parts: dismounted infantry (Ex Quick Flash), mounted with drivers and operators only (Ex Iron Maiden) and a full mounted exercise with a battle group of three combat teams (Ex Phantom Bugle). Students fill the various command appointments in rotation. It is not possible for all to command a combat team and these appointments go mainly to students who are in or are pending posting to teeth arm unit sub command. The course is evolutionary in content (*vide Army Training News No 2 April 1979 for more background*). By the time the first Corps officers attended (the writer and Maj Chris Rawlinson — CTCC No 6, January-February 1979) most of the birth pangs were over.

The main value of the course lies in Corps officers revising teeth arm operations, being seen capable of operating professionally in a teeth arm environment and making a common sense logistic contribution to discussions and appreciations. Rightly, considerable emphasis is placed on the course being an exchange of ideas amongst peers rather than a course which is "taught at". In this situation the logistics officer can make a significant contribution because of his detailed knowledge of the supply system, its capacity and capability.

Ignorance in these areas is rife. The more alarming misconceptions concern ammunition supply. For example it is the logistician who can bring home most forcibly the folly of poor time appreciations. Ten minutes added to H hour may not sound too much. If the preliminary bombardment has begun the extra ammunition necessary to continue is much more graphically expressed in vehicle loads than in the more abstract rounds per minute. In a course which claims a practical emphasis the logistics officer is able to point out real problems and to cultivate sensibly an awareness of the support difficulties in contemporary warfare. So much then for what you the Corps officer can put into CTCC. There is also direct benefit to be gained in the updating and revision of :

Verbal orders,
Battle procedure/SOPs,
The phases of war,
Nuclear and chemical operations,
Counter revolutionary operations,
Reserve demolitions,
Air defence,
Fighter ground attack
War gaming and battle simulation techniques.

All these subjects are of professional relevance to any officer, CTCC provides an ideal opportunity to practise the skills and techniques in a critical environment amongst officers of equal age and seniority.

CTCC is of direct benefit to squadron commanders in divisional regiments. Night replenishment is practised during the exercise using echelon transport for IRGs. Many lessons are brought hard home. The officers attending CTCC No 6 were able to make recommendations for the radical alteration of battle group SOPs to ensure a higher quality of service. At the time of the course both officers were serving in 7 Tank Transporter Regiment RCT as squadron commanders and were brought fully up to date with the aggressive delay battle, a subject of critical importance to them.

Here then is an opportunity to make the Corps mark. We too often sit back and let the teeth arms dictate the form. Whilst fully accepting that "G" lays down priorities, it is the logistician who has a complete picture as to what the system is able to provide. The supplies will not be there if they are expended indiscriminately. Financial constraints have honed down our capabilities in all arms and the consequent logistic lessons must be drummed home to teeth arm colleagues. As a Corps we are in a strong position to be heard and to give advice to the infantry and armoured corps officer. He does see us in battle and can relate his survival capability to our jobs. We are not in some remote rear area but right there next to our user. He is looking for support and service. Our advice however is only sound if you as an individual understand the problems of the men in direct contact with the enemy. CTCC provides a sound opportunity to revise those problems before going out to make your contribution. The course is professionally valuable, relevant, controversial and very social, what more could you ask ?

"Is there anything I can do to prepare?"

"Yes, revise the inevitable organisations at regimental level and make sure that your voice procedure is OK, and if I were you I'd ring or write to someone who has already done it. They'll help."

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Let's have some volunteers for this worthwhile qualification. We can compete for pool vacancies as well as our allocation of one per course. CTCC is highly regarded amongst teeth arms. It's up to you to make it highly regarded in the Corps and the Corps respected as a valuable contributor to the course.

HOVERING IN NEPAL — 1979

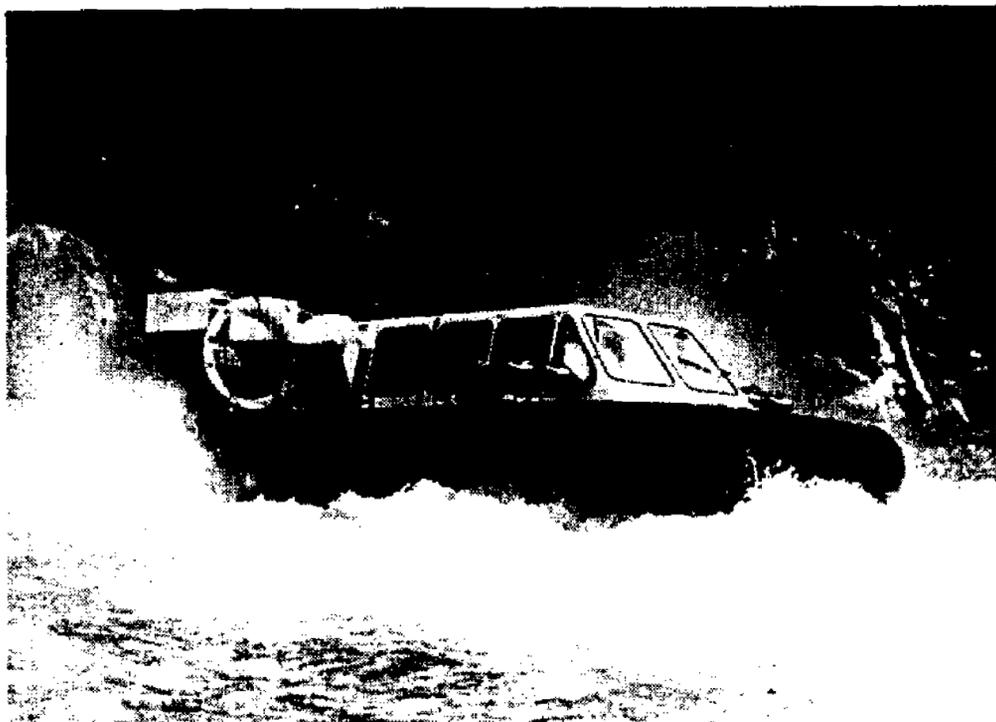
by

Captain (QM) G. F. Bradnam, RCT

THE Kali Gandaki is a vicious swirling river which roars its way through the Himalayan mountains of West Nepal. This river, named Goddess of Death by the Nepalese, is a natural but formidable highway. As it makes its way South from Mustang then East between steep sided gorges, seeking a route through the Mahaberet Range, the river's course is strewn with turbulent rapids.

For the villagers who live in this area of Nepal sickness produces a desperate situation because medical clinics are few and involve days of walking over the mountains. To get to the only hospital at Tansen involves a journey of up to fourteen days, usually with the sick person being carried on the back of a friend or relation. The choice facing the head of the family is simple, he either leaves the planting of his crops to take the sick member of his family to hospital, or he stays with his crops and the sick person is left to suffer. The decision is usually to stay with his crops as only one person may die, whereas if he neglected the crops his whole family may die.

It was this tragic situation which led to the mounting of the 9th Sponsored Joint Service Expedition. The expedition was to take a small six seater hovercraft to the river Kali Gandaki and open up a route along which the hovercraft could travel. By carrying doctors to the villages, and by providing a fast means of transport to move the sick from their villages to Tansen Hospital, the use of the hovercraft would cut the fourteen day walk



The author battling up another rapid.

to a journey of just a few hours, hence bringing relief to the suffering population.

The 20 expedition members were selected from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, the Army and the Royal Air Force. The hovercraft selected was the River Rover, a small craft designed by Mr Tim Longley of Gosport and built with the help of expedition members in a small workshop. The craft, based on motor car technology was of simple bolt together construction, with an aluminium frame and marine ply panels. It incorporated a revolutionary control system which minimised the sideways skidding and allowed a positive control on steering. It was powered by a Renault 20 car engine which drove both propulsion units and the lift fan.

The expedition flew to Nepal by RAF Hercules, landing at Kathmandu Airport where the craft and stores were loaded onto their vehicles. A 25 seater bus was hired and this was used to transport personnel and their kit.

The journey from Kathmandu to base camp at Ramdi Ghat took two days over narrow mountain roads. In places the width of some roads was reduced by landslides leaving barely room to get the vehicle through. The edges of these roads dropped away in places to deep ravines, hundreds of feet deep, and it was on this journey that we came across a terrible scene.

A bus carrying forty-one passengers had gone over the edge and dropped two hundred feet into a ravine. Miraculously only three people had been killed outright and the remainder lay scattered where they had fallen. The injuries were terrible and rather frightening to see. However, whilst some members of the team offloaded and unpacked our medical boxes the two doctors, assisted by the remainder of the expedition, carried out first aid. Some three hours later, during which time the doctors had carried out unbelievable feats of surgery in almost impossible conditions, the casualties were loaded into the back of a sand lorry and sent off on a seventy mile journey to the nearest hospital. Probably the most vivid memory I have of the event was of a young mother who lay breast feeding her week old baby, not showing the least concern for her leg which had been almost severed in the accident.

The base camp which had been set up by a small advance party was located at Ramdi Ghat, a small village at the point where the road crossed the river Kali Gandaki. The people were very friendly and viewed with



Underwater rocks produce the troughs seen across the river at the head of the rapid.

awe the hovercraft and equipment we offloaded. The poverty and lack of medical facilities were very evident. Every morning during our stay the two doctors treated patients, some of whom had travelled days to see them. The treatment which ranged from tooth extraction to teaching a mother how to wash her new born baby was received with immense gratitude and no doubt accounted for the hospitality and assistance we received at base camp.

Based on my experience with 200 Hovercraft Squadron RCT I had been selected as the hovercraft pilot. From the beginning I could see that the river would cause problems, especially on the tremendous rapids. To launch the craft it was necessary to move the rocks along the rivers edge to provide a fairly level slope and during the process we uncovered several bodies which had been buried along the river. It was usual for bodies to be burnt on wooden pyres but at times they were buried under a few rocks. We covered the bodies with rocks again and finally completed the launch site.

The first few days on the river were spent in familiarization with the craft and assessing its performance, especially on the rapids, where it soon became obvious that special driving techniques were required. Going up was fairly easy since it was easy to reduce power, turn, and go back if any major danger threatened, however, once a decision was made to go down a rapid it was impossible to turn back. Most rapids were on a bend, and the danger of being forced down the rapid and straight across the bend into the rocks on the far side was a real problem.

The first phase of the expedition was to explore up river as far as possible before the walls of the ravine closed in and stopped any further progress. Initially daily runs were made through the gorge navigating over spectacular rapids. At times it was impossible to drive up through the tons of cascading water and it became necessary to by-pass the main river. This was achieved by moving rocks in small side streams and hauling the craft around the main obstacle. Unfortunately, the water level in the river was falling rapidly and the further we progressed up river the more dangerous the journey became. Eventually the possibility of the craft being smashed and lives lost outweighed the desire to go on, reluctantly we returned to the base camp to review the situation and it was at this time that mechanical problems developed with the craft's transmission system. The drive belts were slipping on the toothed pulleys causing extensive wear to the teeth.



A Nepalese baby receiving (not very happily) its first ever bath.

This developed into a serious setback to the whole expedition and the engineers spend many sleepless nights stripping the system and carrying out unbelievable engineering feats.

The two engineers concerned, CPO College RN and Chief Tech Vincent RAF, using primitive equipment and working in impossible conditions worked miracles to remedy the fault. (It was these two members who I eventually selected to travel with me on the final and successful journey down river to the Indian border.)

By this time the BBC had arrived to start the filming sequences for their programme "World About Us". They obviously wanted exciting and spectacular shots which required many trips back up river through the bad rapids we thought were behind us.

Finally, planning for the long journey down river was started and during this time I made several probing journeys to get an idea of what to expect. The river slowly widened and the mountains flattened out, to reveal beautiful scenery and lots of wildlife. The longest of these journeys was about 45 miles and it was during this trip that the remoteness and the knife edge between survival or death was brought home.

On the return journey, when still about 40 miles from base, the lift fan was severely damaged resulting in five of the ten blades being smashed. On board at the time was the film producer and although we carried emergency rations these would only have lasted two days. The 40 mile journey by hovercraft would have taken about two hours but represented an eight day march over the mountains. We tried to repair the damage but soon it