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NEWS RELEASE

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"PRE-WETTING" TRIALS IN H.M.S. CUMBERLAND

A method of protecting warships against radio active particles while operating in the "fall out" area, the outer fringe of the region affected by an underwater atomic bomb explosion, has been the subject of trials in H.M.S. CUMBERLAND (Captain T.V. Briggs, O.B.E., R.N.).

It is known as "pre-wetting" and involves the continual washing of all weather surfaces of the ship during and after exposure to contamination. Experiments have proved that fission matter is less likely to adhere to a surface while it is being subjected to a system of salt water washdown, and such as does adhere can more speedily be removed from the infected parts.

During the process all openings giving access to the interior of the ship are closed and would remain so and the washing down would continue until ratings with geiger-counters had ascertained that existing conditions on the upper deck allowed normal work to be resumed there.

The trials, which were commenced in home waters in May and concluded in the Mediterranean last month, were confined to the fore-part of the CUMBERLAND, where contaminated samples were placed in exposed positions for test purposes. Some fifty nozzles spraying some three hundred tons of water an hour over the decks and superstructure were used in the trials of the prototype system.

Describing the technical problems of "pre-wetting", an officer on board at the time said "Our aim was to produce a local rain storm exceeding the heaviest tropical downpour".

Admiralty, S.W.1.
26th September, 1954.