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SURVIVAL AT SEA TRIALS

1. BACKGROUND

As a result of trials started in 1946 to determine the practicability of their use for lifesaving in the Royal Navy, inflatable liferafts were introduced for general service in 1955.

The present trials, which are being carried out under the auspices of the Admiralty and the Medical Research Council, are part of a series which will culminate in a realistic five-day free drift trial in the North Atlantic in February, 1961.

2. OBJECTS

The object of the free-drift trial at sea is to determine whether Naval life-saving equipment is still adequate and the best for the purpose for which it was designed.

The present trials at Portland are aimed at:-

- (a) Providing information relating to the sea-going trial.
- (b) Testing experimental equipment for recording temperature readings and physiological data.
- (c) Evaluation of recently developed commercial life-saving equipment

About 150 volunteers from Ships of the Fleet and from Naval Establishments in the South of England are being used in tests consisting of jumping from a height of some 16 feet into the water, swimming about 60 feet to a liferaft, boarding it, and living in it for periods of either 4 or 48 hours. Full medical supervision is provided for these volunteers, who include officers of the rank of Captain, Royal Navy and Junior Ratings with only a few weeks in the Service.

3. TRIALS RECORDS

The information gained consists of quantitative data relating to the time taken to get into the raft, the thermal conditions inside the raft, and some indication of the men's physiological reactions. Qualitative information is being obtained by asking the volunteers to complete a questionnaire designed to provide views on their subjective feelings.

4. PROGRAMME FOR PRESS REPRESENTATIVES

Opportunities will be provided to witness a typical jumping and boarding trial, in which the men stay in a raft for 4 hours, and to interview volunteers both before and after a trial.

A raft will be seen in which volunteers are living for 48 hours, and it may be possible to arrange short visits to them.

It is hoped that Press Representatives will not hesitate to talk about the trials with the volunteers taking part, and that the broader aspects of this work will be discussed with those running the trials.



ADMIRALTY

NOTE TO EDITORS

NO. 173/60

R.N. SURVIVAL AT SEA TRIALS

Nearly 150 officers and ratings of the Royal Navy are taking part in survival at sea trials in Portland Harbour, Dorset, in which a variety of survival rafts are being tested as a preliminary to Mid-Ocean trials to be held by the Navy next year.

Press representatives are invited to cover part of the trials at Portland on Wednesday 23rd November, when opportunities will be given to photograph and interview volunteers as they jump into the sea from H.M.S. PLOVER before beginning their spell in the survival rafts.

A Press boat will leave Camber Jetty, Portland, at 11.45 a.m. on Wednesday, and applications for passes for the limited number of places available should be made to the Department of the Chief of Naval Information, Admiralty, Whitehall, S.W.1. (Telephone: WHITEhall 9000, Extension 1125.)

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18th November, 1960