

It was very interesting to reflect that such well-conceived scientific experiments were insufficient to lead directly to the successful development of a practical helicopter. Of course, the reason was that the necessary technology was just not available. The scientific approach is, of course, vitally important, but hand in hand with it must go the advance of technology.

When he first went to the Royal Aircraft Establishment in the middle 'twenties, he was astounded, intrigued, and slightly put off to see and hear about the helicopter which had been built in the R A E to the designs of Brennan. This helicopter, according to R A E records, made 200 flights under the pilotage of Bob Graham, who was the chief aerodynamicist, stressman, engineer and strong right arm of Mr Brennan. None of these flights soared higher than 10 ft and the average duration was three minutes, but in 1925 and 1926 200 helicopter flights was a great achievement.

It was also interesting that this helicopter was designed to lift five men and to carry enough fuel for an hour's flight. It had a rotor 62 ft in diameter and this rotor was driven by propellers mounted at the tips of the rotor. He thought that this was an anticipation of one of the features of the Rotodyne and other helicopters. This series of experiments was suddenly stopped by a crash. Fortunately Bob Graham was not injured. He was sure we were all delighted to see him here tonight.

Progress since then has, of course, been remarkable. We have seen tremendous ingenuity. Constant faith has been applied by those working in the field and there was no doubt that the helicopter has come to stay. Sir George felt sure that there was room for spectacular improvement, but this would only be achieved by great effort, and he hoped that some of this effort would be dedicated to the application of elegance and simplicity in design.

Sir George concluded by relating the tale of the potential customer who was invited to try out a modern electronic translating machine. He fed in the saying "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" and the translation came back in 1½ milliseconds, "The whisky's O K but the meat's gone bad." The meat was not bad tonight—it was jolly good—and on behalf of all the guests he wished to thank the Association for their wonderful hospitality and for the entertainment provided, coupled with the very good wishes of the guests for the Association's great success in the future.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors

Sirs,

I have just received my copy of the June Journal of the Helicopter Association which contains the report of Lt-Col P W Mead's lecture—"The Place of the Helicopter in a Modern Army."

I was surprised to read, on page 150, certain statements regarding No 22 Special Air Service Regiment which are contrary to my own recollection of events as a helicopter pilot in Malaya from 1950-53.

No 22 S A S Regiment was formed in, about, June, 1950, and was commanded by Lt-Col J M Calvert, D S O, R E, for some eighteen months and then by Lt-Col J B M Sloane, O B E. Under the "Briggs Plan" for operations in Malaya the primary role of this unit was deep-jungle penetration whilst other units were, in general, confined to operations on the jungle fringe.

In the early days it was difficult to assess the capabilities of the "Dragonfly" but it was clear that its effectiveness would depend largely upon the ability of the ground forces to provide adequate clearings. However, thanks to the able and inspired leadership of Lt-Col Calvert and the ready co-operation of No 656 Air O P Squadron (Major D P D Oldman, D F C, R A) who provided invaluable guidance from the air to patrols, it was soon proven that helicopters could be used successfully in Malaya. In fact, it could fairly be said of these officers that "they lit the lamp."

Naturally it was inherent that the type of operation in which No 22 S A S Regiment specialised—long range penetration—resulted in the need for more helicopter support than would be normal with other units but it should be remembered that all such requests were filtered through the Joint Operations Room before they were authorised. Later on it became necessary to deploy helicopters to specific

areas to meet the needs of particular operations—both by the S A S and other units—but the basic principles of usage still applied

I cannot judge whether many such requests were unnecessary or unwise but I would say that throughout my service in Malaya I cannot recall any time when a helicopter was in use by the S A S and could not be made available elsewhere. Indeed, I am unlikely to forget the occasion—Christmas Eve, 1950—when the Medical Officer of the S A S broke his leg in a jungle clearing but refused to request a helicopter lift on the basis that a greater need *might* arise elsewhere. (In the event he was picked up—against his wishes—but still insisted that a trooper, suffering from fever, be lifted out because the weather that day was deteriorating)

I am, etc ,

KENNETH FRY

G A P A N AWARD TO MR K M REED

Our congratulations go to Mr K M Reed, Chief Helicopter Test Pilot of Messrs Saunders-Roe Ltd, Southampton, who has been awarded the Master Air Pilot's Certificate by the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators

ADDITIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION'S LIBRARY

American Helicopter Society Publications

Journals Volume 4, No 3 July, 1959, containing the following papers

“VTOL—Past, Present and Future”

by Ralph P Alex

“A Power Plant Man's Look At The Ground Effect Machine”

by Robert W Pinnes

“Application of the Jet-Flap Principle to Helicopters”

by Rene Dorand and Gabriel D Boehler

“Sources of Helicopter Development and Manufacturing Costs”

by John B Nichols

“Simulation of a Helicopter Rotor”

by W G Heffron, T R Bristow,

W C Gass and J C Brown

Newsletter Volume 5, No 7 July, 1959

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