

Naval Helicopter Squadron Honoured in Malaya

(The following article is reprinted by kind permission of "The Aeroplane," and describes the award of the BOYD TROPHY to No 848 Royal Naval Air Squadron)

The Boyd Trophy—a small silver model of a Swordfish aircraft and the Fleet Air Arm's highest flying honour—has been awarded to No 848 Helicopter Squadron for services in Malaya during 1953. The Trophy is presented annually for the most outstanding feat of aviation in the Royal Navy. Until recently, No 848 Squadron, equipped with Sikorsky HRS-2 helicopters, provided by the United States under the Mutual Defence Assistance Programme, was commanded by Lieutenant Commander Sydney H. Suthers, D.S.C., R.N. He has now been succeeded by Lieutenant Commander B. Paterson, R.N.

An official citation states that the Squadron was formed in the United Kingdom at the end of 1952 and sent to Malaya at very short notice. Officers and men had no opportunity of training and flying together before leaving and even their flying experience on the helicopters was severely restricted in the short time available.

Since the Squadron became operational on January 24th, 1953, more than 10,000 troops have been lifted and over 220 casualties evacuated. The Squadron has also developed a system for dropping paratroops from the helicopter, which has been adopted as standard practice. Conditions in Malaya were entirely new to them, the citation continues, and the remarkable results while operating in arduous circumstances and employing empirical methods can have been achieved only by outstanding effort by aircrew and ground crews.

The average serviceability of the helicopters for the first ten months of the year



Photograph on this page of No 848 Squadron in action was taken in August, 1953. It shows one of the Squadron's Sikorsky HRS-2s landing men of the Malay Regiment in the Meutake area, State of Pahang. The very small clearings in which the helicopters alight and the dense surrounding jungle are clearly shown.

(the latest figures available) was 79.6% and the Squadron has never had to cancel an operation for the lack of aircraft. Not one aircraft has been lost as a result of operations.

The Squadron, formed at the R.N. Air Station at Gosport (Hants.), sailed for the Far East in the ferry carrier "Perseus," within a few weeks. The Navy's first operational helicopter unit, it has also transported nearly 200,000 lb of freight over the Malayan jungles. In addition, helicopters have lowered tracker dogs used to round up terrorists, dropped leaflets and carried out valuable low reconnaissance work over clearings. They have spent more than 3,500 hours in the air.

CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAM

On January 13th, 1954, a telegram was sent to —

The Officer Commanding,
848 Royal Naval Air Squadron,
Royal Naval Air Station,
Sembawang,
Malaya

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN CONGRATULATIONS TO COMMANDING OFFICER AND ALL MEMBERS OF 848 SQUADRON ON THE CITATION AND AWARD OF BOYD TROPHY

AN APPRECIATION

The Executive Council, on behalf of Members, wish to record their appreciation for the support given to the Association over the past year by the following

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