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SEPT 1980

TO

JUNE 1982



EXERCISE BRIGHT-EYE NORTH 2 SEPT 1980

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Evening Express

No. 31,953 (EST. 1879)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1980

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LATE EXTRA

ONE of the RAF Lossiemouth helicopter heroes spoke today of the Orkney rescue drama — the biggest rescue airlift ever carried out by one of the Moray air station's Sea King helicopters.

F/Lt Bill Campbell, who, along with winchman Sgt. Rick Bragg, was largely responsible for hoisting the 22 people to safety, said: "The heat was terrific."

"At times we could feel it penetrating into the helicopter as we hovered above the vessel."

"There were cannisters on the deck which kept flaring up. At times the flames were shooting 50ft. into the air."

F/Lt. Campbell, a radar operator, was in the second Lossiemouth Sea King which was called out to help the stricken vessel.

OFFICER

The helicopter was piloted by F/Lt Mike Lakey — who only yesterday was awarded the Queen's commendation for his part in the Ekofisk rescue — and F/Lt Dave Simpson. Also on board was S/Ldr Hamish Grant, senior medical

Hero tells of flames shooting from deck



Sergeant Rick Bragg, winchman on rescue copter.



THE 8000-ton Swedish ship Finneagle.

DARE-DEVILS SAVE 22 FROM FLOATING BOMB

Fathers of history

Sir Kenneth Fife and Chris of Dundee, sons of the famous Fife family, are the latest to be named as 'Fathers of history'.

The Fife family, who lived in the 18th century, were the first to introduce the Fife family to the world of the 19th century.

The Fife family, who lived in the 18th century, were the first to introduce the Fife family to the world of the 19th century.

'FINNEAGLE RESCUE' 1/2 OCTOBER 1980

Mike Lakey
Dave Simpson
Bill Campbell
Rick Bragg
S/L Hamish Grant

'It is very difficult when, on the one hand, you should be saying 'safety is paramount for my crew and aircraft, and I must go away,' while at the same time you see 22 people huddled on the deck of a blazing vessel. You can only put your trust in the Almighty and get on with the task you came to do.'

Flt-Lt. MIKE LAKEY,
pilot of the rescue
helicopter.



Group Captain Sandy Wilson (third left): CO at Lossiemouth with the rescue heroes. Left to right: Flight Lt. Mike Lakey, Flight Lt. Bill Campbell, Flight Lt. Dave Simpson, Sgt. Rick Bragg and Sq. Ldr. Hamish Grant.

Magnificent men in flying machine

Helicopter crew tell of epic rescue

By DAVID STEWART

The pilot of an RAF rescue helicopter told yesterday of how he "trusted in the Almighty" as he manoeuvred his machine in atrocious weather to rescue 22 people from a burning ship which it was feared might explode at any moment.

The rescue took place off Orkney early yesterday after a Mayday was sent out by the Finneagle, a Swedish ferry whose cargo included dangerous chemicals. Those saved included three women and two children.

Three helicopters were sent to the scene, two of them RAF Sea Kings, from Lossiemouth, and the third a British Airways machine from Shetland. They faced 70 m.p.h. winds and mountainous seas in their efforts to lower a winch harness on board.

One of the RAF machines and the British Airways crew eventually withdrew because their fuel was running low. The rescue was then taken over by the second Sea King, which was sent originally purely for back-up.

QUEEN'S COMMENDATION

The pilot, Flight Lieut. Mike Lakey (34), from Wiltshire, had only been back at Lossiemouth for half an hour after travelling from London where he had received a Queen's Commendation in connection with the rescue of men from the Alexander Kelland oil rig earlier this year.

With him last night were his co-pilot, Flt-Lt. Dave Simpson (25), from York; radar / winch operator, Flt. Lt. Bill Campbell (40), from Bo'ness; winchman Sergeant Rick Bragg (26), from Hylfax; and station medical officer, Squadron Leader Hamish Grant (33), from Inverness.

As they hovered round the stricken vessel with flames shooting into the air, it was obvious that the rescue was fraught with danger.

Flt. Lt. Campbell said there appeared to be four containers on the deck burning fiercely. "Occasionally a very strong gust of wind flared whatever was burning for a few seconds. You could feel the heat in the helicopter."

Flt-Lt. Lakey said it is very difficult when, on the one

hand, you should be saying 'safety is paramount for my crew and aircraft, and I must go away,' while at the same time you see 22 people, including women and children huddled on the deck of a blazing vessel. You can only put your trust in the Almighty and get on with the task you came to do."

He added: "I still can't believe that we got them off."

Their first attempt was to try to lower Sgt. Bragg on to the vessel but that had to be abandoned because of the conditions. The swell was so great that the helicopter was sometimes only 40 feet above the ship and then, seconds later, 150 feet above.

"I was spinning round like a top," said Sgt. Bragg. Flt-Lt. Laken said: "He was like a human pendulum. We had to take him back in or he would have been killed."

Then, flying blind, hovering in front of the ship, the crew managed to drop a long line to the vessel and send down the winch cable with double harness.

Flt-Lt. Lakey saw two women being put in the harness. "Suddenly the ship rolled very badly, to such an extent that I lost sight of it."

"It was apparent the ship was riding up a wave and the mast was going to collide with us, which would have put us in the water. Without thinking of any other consideration I applied full power. We went up like a Saturn Five rocket."

The two women were pulled very violently off the deck. When we winched them

up it became apparent each had a child in her arms. The children were inside the harness but not being held by it. They were being held by the women.

"With the shock with which we must have pulled them off the deck I am surprised they did not come away from the women's arms."

The rescue operation continued for the next one and three-quarter hours, with those on board being taken off two at a time. Throughout the operation the only light available was from the flames and from the helicopter. The last man off the vessel was the captain.

Throughout the operation he remained at the vessel's helm keeping her head into the wind. Flt. Lt. Simpson paid tribute to his actions.

"Without the skipper staying at the wheel it is very, very doubtful whether we would have been able to winch the people off in the way we did," he said.

He added that after everyone else had been taken off the skipper ran from the wheel and jumped into the winch harness, in a matter of seconds. Weather conditions were the worst he had ever seen.

Sqdn-Ldr. Grant said those

rescued were "remarkably unscathed" though one or two were shaking.

It is virtually certain that those who took part in the operation, several of whom had been on duty for long spells just before volunteering to go out, will be nominated for a bravery award.

The commanding officer at RAF Lossiemouth, Group Captain Sandy Wilson, said he understood the 22 rescued comprised the largest number ever taken off by a Sea King in Britain. The machine finished the operation with 27 people on board, nine more than is normal.

'PROFESSIONALISM'

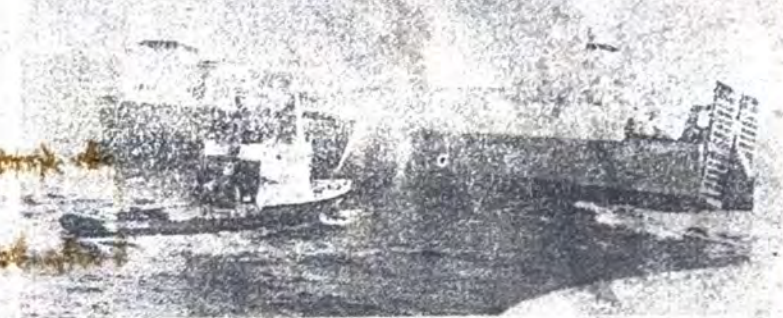
Group Capt. Wilson said: "Ten minutes of this sort of work is normally enough for a search and rescue pilot. One and three-quarter hours is truly remarkable."

It is one of the most remarkable rescues I have ever heard of. It epitomises the real professionalism which the search and rescue crews give us. We are most grateful to them all."

Throughout the rescue an RAF Nimrod from Kinloss, flew overhead at a height of about 1500 feet, co-ordinating operations.

Its pilot Flt-Lt. Terry Kirkhope (30) from Edinburgh, said: "It was a privilege to be involved in the operation. These helicopter blokes were absolutely magnificent."

The captain of the helicopter which brought them off flabbergasted us. He was in a very difficult hover position while an area of the ship he could not see was burning fiercely under him and there were explosions going off all the time."



The tug Caribic fights the fire aboard the Swedish freighter Finneagle.

Hazardous salvage task for tugboat

By OUR OWN REPORTER

After the daring rescue of 22 people from the blazing cargo ferry Finneagle off Orkney, a hazardous salvage operation was in progress last night.

A German tug, the Caribic, managed to put three men on board the 6500-ton Swedish vessel as the fire on board died down. They set up a tow.

The 75 m.p.h. winds and 30 foot waves, which had prevented two rescue attempts by helicopters from RAF Lossiemouth and British Airways at Summerville, Shetland, before the Sea King, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Mike Lakey was successful, moderated during the day.

But Force-9 gales were forecast as the tug made for Lerwick Roads in Shetland, operating all the time under the threat of a further explosion from the Finneagle's cargo which includes carbide—explosive on contact with water—and a tank of butane.

Last night there was still a small fire forward on the vessel and the cargo was smouldering aft. Two holes were visible forward of the bridge and aft of

the main deck after a series of explosions.

Kirkwall Coastguards, who described the salvage operation as "very hazardous," said there were about 60 tons of inflammable material aboard the ship which was carrying a mixture of cars, lorries and chemicals from New Orleans to Sweden when the first explosion occurred on Wednesday night setting it alight amid ships and aft. There were further explosions early yesterday.

Continued on Page 8, col. 4

Huge North Sea search

A full-scale search involving helicopters and 14 ships was underway in the North Sea last night after a collision between a Grimsby registered fishing boat and a German commercial vessel, about 45 miles east of the Ekofisk oilfield. The search was being controlled by the Danish search and rescue authorities. A Mayday signal was picked up yesterday afternoon but by last night nothing had been found.

703/5
MESSAGE FORM

Serial No.

F. Sgs. 266
(Revised 1AR 79)
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CHECK BOX

LINE 1

LINE 2

LINE 3

LINE 4

ROUTING
INDICATORS

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Precedence-Action ROUTINE.	Precedence-Info <i>Routine</i>	Date-Time Group, Month 061455 # APR 80
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FROM **202 SQN DET LOSSIEMOUTH**
TO **HQ NORMAR**

INFO

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FOR SINGLE TRANSMISSION
Transmitted to.....
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MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
(Messages referring to a
classified message must be
classified RESTRICTED or
above.)

UNCLAS

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REPORT OF CONDITION OF MV FINNEAGLE 01/02 OCT 80 @ R37
REPORTED ARRIVAL ~~AT~~ 2315 # AND DEPARTURE AT 2340 # @

DURING THIS TIME SMOKE WAS BILLOWING FROM VENTS ALONG SHIPS
SIDE FROM UNDER ACCOMMODATION TO AFT @ INTENSE FIRE
COULD BE SEEN WITHIN AFT SUPER STRUCTURE (GARAGE)

OCCASIONALLY FLAMES FLARED FROM GARAGE OUT OF STARBOARD
DOORWAY ON TO WEATHER DECK AND ROSE TO MAST HEIGHT @

R37 REPORTED ~~NO~~ CHANGE IN THIS SITUATION THROUGHTOUT

TIME PRESENT @ RESCUE 38 ARRIVED AT 020025 #
AND DEPARTED AT 020205 # @ SMOKE WAS STILL EVIDENT

AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BUT FIRE HAD GAINED A HOLD IN

CARGO ON WEATHER DECK OUTSIDE OF STBD GARAGE DOOR

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION

FILE NUMBER / OR
REFERENCE

DRAFTER'S NAME
IN BLOCK LETTERS

LAKEY

TELEPHONE
NUMBER

4441

BRANCH

202

RELEASING OFFICER'S
SIGNATURE

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NAME IN
BLOCK LETTERS

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Page 1
of 2
.....Pages

refers to a classified message ☐
This message (tick appropriate box)
does not refer to a classified message ☒

FOR
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FINAL CHECK
OPERATOR

LINE 1

LINE 2

LINE 3

LINE 4

ROUTING
INDICATORS

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Precedence--Action	Precedence--Info	Date-Time Group, Month
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FROM

TO

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F. Sigsbee
(Revised MAY)
(Pads of 1)

CHECK BOX

Routed by

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FOR SINGLE TRANSMISSION

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Time.....

Operator.....

MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
(Messages referring to a
classified message must be
classified RESTRICTED or
above.)

UNCLAS

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ICT

FIRE STILL INTENSE WITHIN GARAGE BUT FLARES OF FLAME
REPORTED AS MORE FREQUENT AND AT TIMES RISING TO
200 FEET @ R 37 AND R 38 CANNOT STATE THAT FLARES OF
FLAME WERE EXPLOSIONS AS SUCH AS DUE TO AIRCRAFT
NOISE THESE COULD NOT BE HEARD @ R 38 REPORTED FIRE
TO BE GRADUALLY INTENSIFYING THROUGHOUT HIS PRESENCE.

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION

FILE
NUMBER /OR
REFERENCEDRAFTER'S NAME
IN BLOCK LETTERS

LAKEY

TELEPHONE
NUMBER

4441

BRANCH

202

RELEASING OFFICER'S
SIGNATURE

[Signature]

RANK

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NAME IN
BLOCK LETTERS

LAKEY

Page 2

of

..... 2 Pages

refers to a classified message

This message (tick appropriate box)

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☒FOR
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Stn Cdr

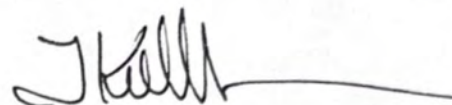
SEARCH AND RESCUE INCIDENT - M/V FINNEAGLE 1/2 OCT 80

1. A Search and Rescue operation was mounted during the hours of darkness of the night 1/2 Oct 80 in response to the distress call originated by the M/V Finneagle. I was captain of the Nimrod that was scrambled and ordered to the scene, NW of the Orkneys, to act as On Scene Commander. I wish to bring to your notice the exemplary conduct during the incident of the captain and crew of Rescue 38, a Sea King from RAF Lossiemouth.
2. The stricken vessel was on fire amidships, giving off clouds of smoke and fumes and intermittently suffering what appeared to be explosions of varying magnitude in the vicinity of the fire. The 22 people on board, including 3 women and 2 children, were eventually gathered on the forward superstructure. The vessel was heading into wind, unable to turn due to the severe weather and to the possibility of bringing the fire and fumes towards the crew and passengers.
3. The cloud base and visibility did not cause any problem but the surface wind was estimated to have a mean speed of 50 knots, giving moderate turbulence at 300 ft AMSL. There was a very high sea state and the Finneagle was heaving badly.
4. 3 Helicopters in succession were involved in attempts to rescue those on board Finneagle. The first on the scene was Rescue 37, another Sea King from RAF Lossiemouth, but he was eventually forced to land at Kirkwall, intending to try again at first light. Rescue 37 was followed by Rescue 17, a civilian S61 from Sumburgh. Rescue 17 was still attempting to get a hi-line on board the stricken vessel when Rescue 38 arrived at the scene. The West German fishery research vessel Walther Herwig was also there by then and she was illuminating the stricken vessel with searchlights.
5. Rescue 17 was unable to get his line on board and invited Rescue 38 to make an attempt while he, Rescue 17, landed at Kirkwall to refuel and modify his equipment. The crew of Finneagle was beginning to sound desperate by this stage. They were having difficulty in breathing. The master believed that his vessel was sinking and they were obviously extremely despondent, having seen the previous rescue attempts fail. The fire seemed worse and the explosions more frequent.
6. A message was received from Edinburgh RCC for relay to Rescue 38 informing him that the cargo was believed to contain carbide and Rescue 38 was to take the appropriate action. Further messages were received from Orkney Coastguard giving additional details of the hazardous nature of the cargo.
7. Rescue 38 was forced to winch from a position just off the port bow of the stricken vessel and very close to the forward superstructure. At the request of Rescue 38, the Walther Herwig was moved to a position some 400 metres off the Finneagle's starboard bow in order to provide a hover reference. This move meant that the Walther Herwig had to stop illuminating, leaving Rescue 38 to work with only his own lights and the glow from the fire. The Finneagle was unable to provide any illumination, having lost electrical power.
8. Rescue 38 managed to get his hi-line on board and with infrequent and extremely short breaks held his position while all 22 persons on board were winched up. This part of the operation lasted approximately 1½ hours. The survivors were all landed safely at Kirkwall.

9. The conduct of the helicopters, ships and shore stations involved was of a high standard. The co-operation and seamanship of the Walther Herwig, and the persistence of Rescue 17, despite his limited equipment, were particularly praiseworthy.

10. The conduct of Rescue 38 was, however, outstanding. He overcame the extremely difficult conditions caused by the weather, the darkness and the violent movement of the stricken vessel. He apparently discounted the fact that the ship was on fire, carrying hazardous cargo and appeared to be suffering intermittent explosions. He persisted with the rescue for 1½ hours, until all 22 people on board were lifted off, not once mentioning the possibility of leaving anyone on board the ship to await a later rescue attempt.

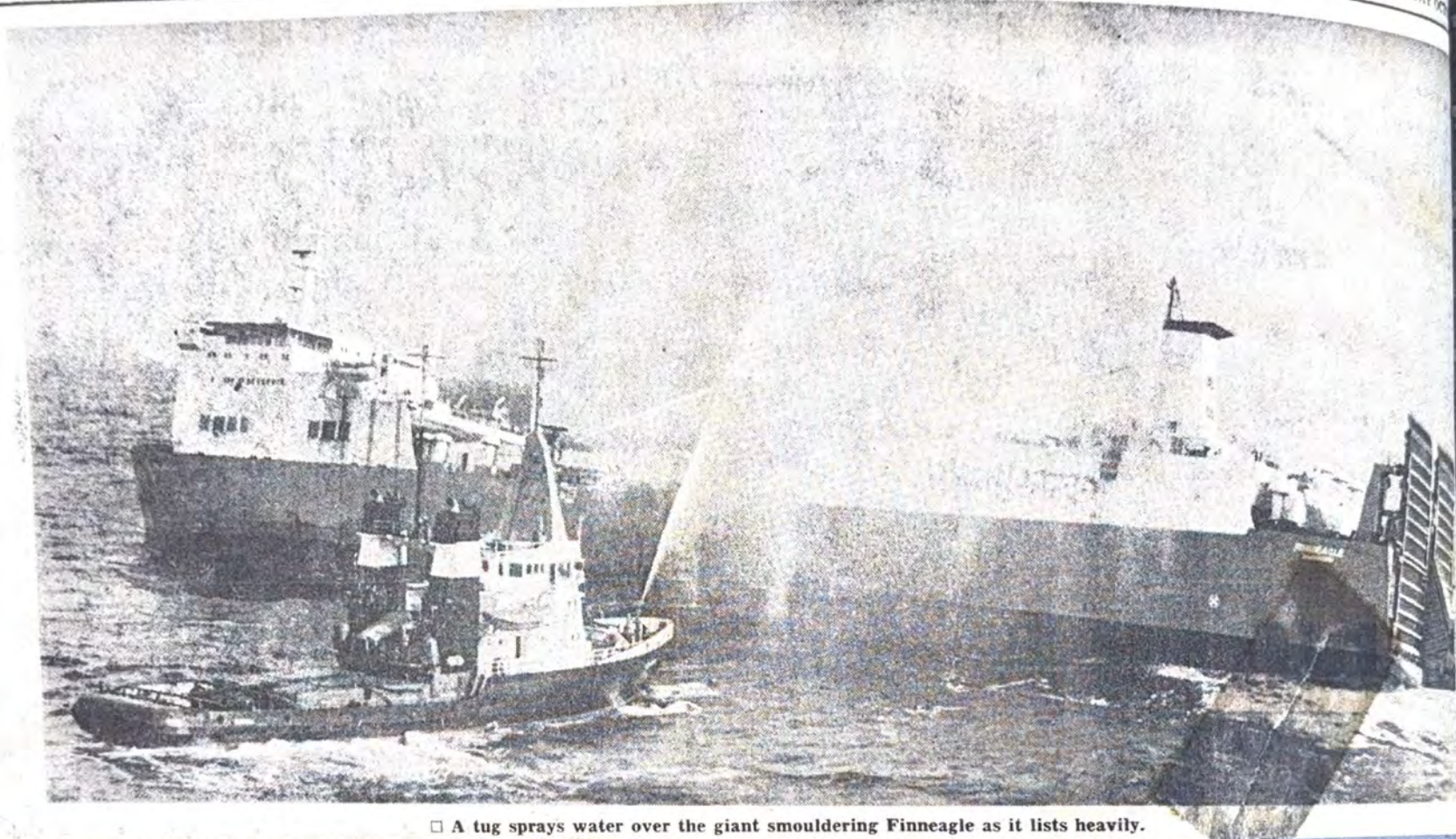
11. In my view, the courage, skill and determination shown by the captain and crew of Rescue 38 in the course of saving the 22 people on board the M/V Finneagle were of the highest order.



T KIRKHOPE
Flt Lt
120 Sqn
On Scene Cdr

6 OCT 80

**Tug
hoses
down a
crippled
giant
and
its
deadly
cargo**



□ A tug sprays water over the giant smouldering Finneagle as it lists heavily.

RAF helicopter snatches 22 from 'floating bomb'

THE most dramatic story of the night was snatched from the air by a blazing ship engulfed in flames.

Rescuers of an 18 in 18 in the night, the flames on the ship off Essex Finn Eagle, were snatched and snatched away, and to safety by

the crew of an RAF helicopter.

The drama, played out 30 miles off the Orkney Isles, was the biggest single helicopter rescue in the North Sea.

And last night the remains of the Finn Eagle

were still blazing, with three engineers on board trying to get the ship's fire fighting system in operation.

Meanwhile, crew and passengers were full of praise for the crew of the Sea King helicopter which hovered for more than an

hour above the ship until the last person had been taken off.

The rescue was all the more remarkable for the fact that the ship was a floating 'bomb'—laden with explosive chemicals which

could have gone off at any moment.

And it was carried out without a single injury. One seaman suffered a broken arm, but that happened before the winching operation began.

Heroic kings of the sea

By PETER DAVENPORT

It was, thought Mike Lahey, the end of a long, tiring day.

He had been to London and back for the announcement of an award for his bravery in the most modern disaster in the North Sea, the sinking of the oil rig Alexander Keilland with the loss of 122 lives.

He was now back at his RAF house in Elgin in Northern Scotland. His young son and daughter were asleep and he looked forward to falling into bed.

As he was about to turn on the light, he took a look at his watch. It was 11.15. He had barely begun when the drama began.

There was a flash on the horizon, would he be going out? Within five minutes Flight Lieutenant Lahey was in his car and driving the way to RAF Lossiemouth and about to lead the operation that would end another, happier chapter in the history of the North Sea.

Horrific

When the hastily assembled crew arrived at the scene in the hanger where the helicopters were based, the pilot of the Sea King, Dave Sheppard, who was on duty, was already there.

It was just over two hours after a weary day of work when the British Airways helicopter was sent to the scene of the disaster.

The Sea King helicopter had pulled away, leaving a short fuel tank and when Mike Lahey's helicopter arrived a British Airways helicopter was on its way to help. But that too had to give up and return to base.

The Sea King helicopter was the only one that could handle the job. The wind was blowing at 10 mph and the sea was very rough, the ship was listing and falling 50 ft at a time.

As the Sea King moved in to lower the basket, the crew of the Sea King helicopter were in a terrible position. The wind was blowing at 10 mph and the sea was very rough, the ship was listing and falling 50 ft at a time.

Another danger was, in heavy winds, that the basket could have been blown back and caught in the rotor or become entangled with the ship.

The men decided to tie a weighted nylon rope to the end of the winch cable and drift it down to the deck of the ship where the seamen could haul the basket down.

It worked, but a disaster was just around the corner. As the first of the people clambered into the basket, Mike Lahey, struggling to keep the chopper on even keel, suddenly lost sight of the ship below him.

Then it reeled back up. Its mast threatening to strike the Sea King. Suddenly, the voice of Bill Campbell, rang out above the hammer of the rotors: 'Up, up, up.'

Mike Lahey powered the

helicopter upwards away from the flailing ship, and then realised there were still people in the swaying basket hanging below.

'We hurriedly winched them into the helicopter and were amazed to find we had two women, each of them cradling a child in their arms,' he said.

'For the next 100 minutes we hovered alongside the ship, bringing people up two at a time. It was a hell of a long operation and terribly difficult.'

By the time they had finished, the Sea King, built to carry a crew of four and 18 passengers, was packed.

The courage of Flight Lieutenant Lahey and his crew was praised by passengers, flown

to Kirkwall for hospital treatment.

Jan-Erik Gustavson said: 'It was a remarkable piece of flying.'

Mike Lahey, who has been flying helicopters for 13 of his 15 years in the RAF, said: 'The man in the street might look at me as some kind of superhuman but, compared with the other men here, I am just another pilot.'

Last night, after a celebration drink with the Lossiemouth station commander, Mike headed home to say hello to one year old Robert and daughter Helen, five.

This morning he will be back on duty again, waiting for the next scramble call.



The Finn Eagle, still blazing last night, and (inset) helicopter pilot Mike Lahey



Jon-Erik Gustavson



Bengt Wennerlund

Drama that has become a way of life

THE hammering of the rotor blades of the big yellow 'birds' has become as familiar as the cry of seagulls above the treacherous waters around our shores.

To the despairing crews of floundering ships and ditched aircraft the angry clatter of the Sea King helicopters of the RAF's 202 Squadron means just one thing...

Hope and time again, when death has seemed an inevitability, it has been the quiet courage and

infinite skill of the chopper crews that has saved lives.

To an admiring public eager for heroes the men in the bulky flying suits seem to perform miracles winching seamen from storm-lashed ships or plucking injured climbers from mountains, the blades of their craft just inches from the rock face.

But the crews themselves finish from the death or glory image in the RAF tradition that goes all the way back to the quiet heroes of the Battle of Britain.

The motto of 202 Squadron, the

only team equipped with the long-range search-and-rescue Sea Kings, is Always Vigilant.

And the airmen live up to that creed ready to scramble at any time. They fly when the rest of us would hardly dare to venture outdoors to bring in the cat.

The squadron is split into four flights based at different stations around the country. It was D flight from RAF Lossiemouth near Inverness that pulled off yesterday's remarkable rescue.

The flight at Lossiemouth, which consists of two helicopters

and eight crew, flies an average of 150 mercy missions a year.

Crewmen can be selected or they can volunteer for search and rescue duty. It is demanding, tiring work, but it breeds a sense of camaraderie that, even in the traditionally close-knit RAF, is remarkable.

The crew of each helicopter lives cheek by jowl for their 24 hours on call. They sleep and eat in the crew quarters besides the ops room in the hanger—while their helicopter remains parked outside on the tarmac, ready to scramble.



-SNATCHED FROM FLOATING BOMB



PICTURE by KEN FERGUSON

SAFE and well . . . the family who were plucked to safety from a blazing ship off the coast of Scotland.

A ship that had turned into a floating bomb. For it was carrying the highly-explosive chemical Carbide—and at one stage flames leapt 50 feet into the air.

But the blast danger did not deter the crew of an RAF helicopter who flew to the ship to carry out the most difficult and dangerous helicopter rescue.

Last night Second Officer Jan-Erik Gustavon, his wife Monica and young sons Jonas and Johan were recovering in Kirkwall from their ordeal. Eighteen others were rescued from the ship during a night of drama.

**MISSION
IMPOSSIBLE**
—PAGE 5

RAF airlift Sutherland mum



GAMEKEEPER Mr Richard McNicol has reason to be grateful to the airmen from RAF Lossiemouth who hammered his rugby team by 26 points to last Saturday. For within 8 hours a helicopter crew from the same station airlifted his 26-year-old wife Nancy from her remote home to hospital at Thurso.

She was bleeding badly after giving birth to their first child some nine days earlier — and a ridge on the road from Badnach, Sutherland, where they live to Thurso had been dismantled for repairs.

Dr George Davidson, Helmsdale, alerted about the prob-

LOOKING happy and comfortable in hospital yesterday, Mrs Nancy McNicol and baby Lorne.

lem by telephone, arranged for a helicopter from Lossiemouth to pick up him and a nurse and fly the 20 miles up Kildonan Strath. Within an hour Mrs McNicol and her baby were safely in Dunbar Hospital, Thurso, where yesterday she was said to be "satisfactory".

Richard, who is head gamekeeper on Lord Leverhulme's estate at Badanloch and is a mainstay of Sutherland Rugby Club, said yesterday: "I cannot express my thanks to these RAF lads in proper measure. One day I was cursing at them on the rugby pitch at Dornoch as we toiled in the scrums — then it seemed within hours I could not praise them highly enough.

"They arrived in their helicopter in no time, and so cheery with my wife and so careful of the baby."

The bridge at Harvieton, near Kinbrace, is being reconstructed because of its dangerous state and the road is out of action for about a week.

Keepers' wives and families have arranged a boat to take them across the river, but this was impossible for Mrs McNicol in her condition.



Mrs McNicol and baby Lorne.

RAF come to rescue

GAMEKEEPER Mr Richard McNicol has good reason to be grateful to the airmen from RAF Lossiemouth, who his rugby team beat by 26 points to seven on Saturday.

For within 48 hours a helicopter crew from the station air-lifted Mr McNicol's 26-year-old wife, Nancy, from their remote home to hospital in Thurso.

She was bleeding badly after giving birth to their first child, Lorne, nine days earlier — and a bridge on the road from Badaniach in Sutherland, where they live, to Thurso had been dismantled for repairs.

Dr George Davidson, of Helmsdale, arranged for a helicopter from Lossiemouth to pick him and a nurse up and fly the 20 miles up Kildonan Strath. Within an hour Mrs McNicol and her baby were safely in Dunbar Hospital, Thurso, where yesterday she was said to be "satisfactory."

Mr McNicol, who is head gamekeeper on Lord Leverhulme's estate at Badaniach and is a mainstay of Sutherland Rugby Club, said yesterday: "I cannot express my thanks to these RAF lads in proper measure."

Safe... thanks to RAF heroes

RUGBY player Richard McNicol cursed a team of airmen as they battled in the scrums.

But two days later Richard was full of praise for the lads — after they air-lifted his wife to hospital.

Nancy McNicol, 26, took ill after giving birth to their first child, Lorne.

And a bridge on the road to Thurso from Badaniach in Sutherland, where they live, had been dismantled for repairs.

The RAF Lossiemouth men answered the SOS and within an hour Mrs McNicol and her baby were safely in hospital in Thurso.

She was recovering yesterday.

Richard, head gamekeeper on Lord Leverhulme's estate at Badaniach and a mainstay of Sutherland Rugby Club, said:

"I cannot express my thanks properly to these RAF lads. They were so cheery to my wife and so careful with



Injured deerstalker rescued by helicopter



Commander Boyle being carried from the helicopter at Raigmore Hospital

AN INJURED deerstalker was flown to hospital by helicopter early yesterday after a doctor had crossed a storm-tossed loch in West Inverness-shire to give him medical aid.

The injured man, Commander John Boyle, of Craigantaggart, Dunkeld, was assisting the estate stocker, Mr Andy Rogerson of Barrisdale Lodge, Glenelg, when it is believed he fell, sustaining a fractured skull and spinal injuries.

Mr Rogerson managed to get him back to the hunting lodge.

Dr Gordon Carnachan

was called from the opposite side of Loch Houran.

As there are no roads in the area a search and rescue helicopter was summoned from RAF Lossiemouth. It reached Barrisdale at first light and flew Commander Boyle to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, where his condition was later said to be "satisfactory."

In another incident, helicopters were called out twice within eight hours to the Peterhead fishing boat Rosebloom in the North Sea.

Crewman Richard Crockett, 48, of Green Western Road, Buckie, suffered back and head injuries when he fell into a hold, and a Bristow's helicopter from Aberdeen flew him the 120 miles to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, where his condition yesterday was "quite satisfactory."

Then a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth had to airlift a pump to the boat when it sprang a leak about 90 miles off Peterhead. It was later escorted back to Peterhead by another fishing boat and an oil-tender.

20 OCTOBER 1980

Dave Simpson
Ian MacFarlane
Ron Abbott
Mike Barnes

HUNTER SAVED

An RAF helicopter was called yesterday to rescue a retired naval commander seriously injured after a fall while deer shooting on a remote West Highland estate. Commander John Boyle, from Dunkeld, Perthshire, was helped off the mountainside by his stalker.

8 OCTOBER 1980

Derek Whatling
Dave Cosby
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg

RAF airlift

AN RAF Lossiemouth helicopter yesterday airlifted a young Sutherland mother to hospital after she had become ill at her home at Badanloch Estate, near Kinbrace.

Mrs Nancy McNicol (26), wife of the estate's head keeper, developed complications after giving birth to her first child just over a week ago. Yesterday she underwent an operation at Dunbar Hospital, Thurso, and was later said to be quite comfortable. Her son, Lorne, is being looked after by her mother.

20 OCTOBER 1980

Dave Simpson
Ian MacFarlane
Ron Webb
Mike Cornes

2 The Sunday Post, November 2, 1980.

WIND WHIPS

Gale Ship Navigation Is All Greek...

EMERGENCY services swung into action to help a listing Greek cargo ship as gale-force winds battered the north of Scotland yesterday.

The master of the 300-ton Rio Grande sent out a May Day message that his vessel was listing badly 30 miles off Peterhead.

Rough seas and winds of around 70 miles an hour had shifted deck cargoes on the ship which has a crew of 21.

Peterhead lifeboat was launched. A Sea King helicopter from R.A.F. Lossiemouth was scrambled as vessels sped to her aid.

A Bristow helicopter was also put on stand-by at Aberdeen.

But the May Day was cancelled when the Rio Grande's master reported his crew had managed to secure the cargo.

Later, coastguards in Aberdeen discovered the drama had not happened off Peterhead as the ship's master had stated.

The Sea King 'copter had reached the area but found no trace of the vessel.

It was eventually established the Rio Grande was ten miles east of Orkney—180 miles north of where her master had reported her.

A coastguard spokesman said: "Greek navigation is mystifying."

The Rio Grande is heading for Iceland.

1 NOVEMBER 1980

Jim Gatherer
Dave Cosby
Mick Headleand
Roger Whitehead

Faroese fishermen praise their rescuers

FOUR Faroese fishermen whose boat, the *Borgin*, ran aground on rocks on the west coast of Lewis on Monday night, yesterday praised their rescuers.

They were plucked to safety by an RAF helicopter after developing engine trouble. The rescue took place early yesterday morning as winds gusted to a full gale and heavy seas pounded the stricken boat.

Stormway lifeboat was launched, and three coastal rescue equipment companies from Stormway, Breasclate, and Portnaguran were called out.

Late on Monday afternoon the *Borgin* reported that she had engine trouble while heading for Breasclate to land fish. The *Delta Dawn*, a boat from Bernera, went to her aid but had to return because of the weather.

The Faroese skipper then set sail to try to stand off shore to make the Butt of Lewis, and for a while it appeared he was making progress. By evening, however, the wind had increased to a gale, and the vessel was forced into the shore at Balantrushal, on Lewis.

The shore rescue companies managed to get three lines on board about 100 yards offshore, but the lines were swept away before the crew could get a breeches buoy on board.

The four crew members — skipper Andrias Marknagil, 62, Hans Jacob Jonnsen, 56, Hans Hansen, 30, and Alf Henriksen, 49, huddled in the wheelhouse while the shore rescue company kept the vessel illuminated with searchlights and flares.

Then the RAF Sea King

helicopter from Lossiemouth arrived and airlifted the men on board in 20 minutes.

The helicopter pilot, Flight-Lieutenant Dave Simpson, said their biggest problem was the two masts and the two sails which had been put up. This caused the boat to rock.

Skipper Marknagil said: "The helicopter crew did a wonderful job. I could not have done it without them."

Meanwhile, boat coxswain has been RNLI silver for a daring force 10 steers crew tookside seaman ptem from a waves. Irvine Hae crew ber detes. Five m received.



Praise for the RAF helicopter crew which plucked them to safety, and for the shore rescue companies, was given yesterday by the four Faroese fishermen whose vessel ran aground on the west coast of Lewis on Monday night.

The airlift was carried out early yesterday as winds gusted to force 8 and heavy seas pounded and swamped the stricken Faroese fishing boat *Borgin* (seen on the rocks above).

Stormway lifeboat was also launched and three coastal rescue equipment companies from Stormway, Breasclate and Portnaguran were called out.

The *Borgin* reported late on Monday that she had broken down while heading for Breasclate to land fish. The *Delta Dawn*, a fishing boat from Bernera, put to sea to go to her aid but had to return because of bad weather.

The Faroese skipper then put up sail to try and stand off shore to make the Butt of Lewis but by evening, the wind had increased

Praise for crews in gale rescue

to gale force and the vessel was forced into the shore at Balantrushal.

The rescue companies managed to get three lines on board *Borgin* which was being swamped by heavy seas about 100 yards off shore, but the seas swept the lines away before the crew could secure them.

The four crew members (pictured below) — skipper Andrias

Marknagil (62), Hans Jacob Jonnsen (56), Hans Hansen (30), and Alf Henriksen (49), huddled in the wheelhouse while the shore rescue company kept the vessel illuminated with searchlights.

Then the RAF helicopter from Lossiemouth arrived and hoisted the men to safety in only 20 minutes.

The helicopter pilot, Flt-Lt. Dave Simpson said that their

biggest problem was the two masts and the two sails which had been put up. This caused the boat to rock back and forth.

Skipper Marknagil said: "The helicopter crew and the shore rescue company did a wonderful job. We are very grateful to them."

Yesterday the vessel was aground and there is no possibility of her being salvaged.



On-the-rocks fishermen praise airlift squad



THE RAF helicopter crew which plucked them to safety — and the shore rescue companies — were praised yesterday by the four Faroese fishermen whose vessel ran aground on the West coast of Lewis on Monday night after developing engine trouble in the Atlantic.

The dramatic airlift came early yesterday as winds gusted to gale force 8 and heavy seas pounded and swamped the stricken Faroese fishing boat Borgin.

Stornoway lifeboat was also launched and three coastal rescue equipment companies from Stornoway, Breaslete and Portnaguran were called out.

The drama started late on Monday afternoon when the Borgin reported that she had broken down with engine trouble while heading for Breaslete to land fish at the factory there. The Delta Dawn, a fishing boat from Bernera, put to sea to go to her aid but had to return to port because of the weather conditions.

The Faroese skipper then put up sail to try to stand offshore to make the Butt of Lewis and for a while it appeared he was making progress. By evening, however, the wind had increased to gale force and the vessel was forced into the shore at Balanthurshal on the West coast of Lewis.

The shore rescue companies

managed to get three lines on board the vessel, which was being swamped and rocked by heavy seas about 100 yards offshore, but the seas swept the lines away before the crew could secure them to get a breeches buoy on board.

The four crew members — skipper Andrias Marknagjil (62), Hans Jacob Jannsen (56), Hans Hansen (30), and Alf

Henriksen (49) — huddled in the wheelhouse while the shore rescue companies kept the vessel illuminated with searchlights and flares.

Then the helicopter from Lossiemouth arrived and lifted the men off in only 20 minutes despite the severe weather conditions.

Helicopter pilot Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson said their big-

gest problem was the two masts and the two sails which had been put up. This caused the boat to rock back and forth. Because the wind was on their side it was difficult to hover in a position where he could keep his eye on the boat. "We had hoped to bring them up two at a time, but I think they preferred to come singly," he said.

Also aboard the helicopter were co-pilot Flt. Lt. Dave Cosby, winch operator Flt. Sgt. Ron Webb, and winchman Master Air Loadmaster George Muir who was making his last trip with the crew before being posted to Cyprus.

Skipper Marknagjil said: "The helicopter crew and the shore rescue companies did a wonderful job. We are very grateful to them. They got three lines on board us but they were swept away before we could do anything to secure them. By the time the helicopter arrived the vessel was swamped."

"It is very sad for me to lose my boat. I have been at sea since 1933. She was a strong boat and I knew that if we were not lifted off we could wait until daylight and then probably get ashore more easily."

Yesterday, the vessel was hard aground and there is no likelihood of her being salvaged. The heavy seas also swept away her catch of 85 tons of tusk.



● FAR LEFT: The Faroese vessel Borgin hard aground on the rocks on the West coast of Lewis.

● LEFT: The crew of the Faroese boat safe after their ordeal (left to right): Hans Jannsen, Hans Hansen, Alf Henriksen and skipper Andrias Marknagjil.

1 DECEMBER 1980

Dave Simpson
Dave Cosby
Ron Webb
George Muir

NEW DRAMA FOR HEROES

Lossie crew pluck holidaymaker from moor



Flt. Lt. MIKE LAHEY
... In action again

THIRTY-SIX hours after leading the dramatic air-sea rescue operation off Orkney, helicopter captain Mr Mike Lahey was last night at the centre of another major air search.

And once again he and his three-man crew were the heroes as they located Plymouth pensioner Mr Frank Scott, who had been missing for eight hours on a desolate moor near Cape Wrath, North Sutherland.

Mr Scott was picked up as darkness was falling thanks to a last hunch by local policeman Constable Michael Macdonald.

Constable Macdonald directed the Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth to a lonely bothy and there was Mr Scott and his

By JOHN DUCKERS
and IAIN LUNDY

black retriever, Zillah. Mr Scott was waving frantically.

Mr Scott, a retired farmer, and his wife, who had been staying at Kinlochbervie as part of a tour of the North, had set out in the morning for Sandwood Bay, a spot well known for its spectacular cliffs.

But they took the wrong path. Mrs Scott said: "Frank and Zillah just disappeared into thin air."

In heavy rain and poor visibility, a frantic Mrs Scott began searching for her husband, but to no avail. Finally she reached the home of Mr and Mrs Raymond Marshall, 288 Sheigra. Mr Marshall and Mrs Scott

went out to continue the hunt while Mrs Marshall raised the alarm.

The helicopter was called out and Assynt Mountain Rescue Team alerted. But it was only around 7 p.m., with darkness falling, that Mr Scott was discovered.

He had found his way to one of two bothies in the area. Constable Macdonald decided that the two should be checked and on the final helicopter sweep, with the constable on board guiding the airmen, Mr Scott was spotted.

Constable Macdonald said: "There was no possibility of a further sweep and I very much doubt if he could have survived a night out in that rain. He was soaked to the skin. But he showed a great deal of sense by staying at Strathan Bothy. He was too tired to go further."

After a tearful reunion with his wife, Mr Scott told of his ordeal. "I went over a hill and my wife just seemed to have disappeared."

He said he searched various cliffs and bays for his wife until the rain blotted out all landmarks. Finally he stumbled on the bothy.

"I must have walked 10 miles," said Mr Scott. "The bothy was cold but dry. However, I had no matches and nothing to warm me up. Then I heard the helicopter and ran out waving my arms."

Zillah had apparently spent the time chasing rabbits.

The Scotts were last night staying at the home of Mr and Mrs Alistair Macleod, Sheigra House.

The Search and Rescue Dog Association were also put on the alert at the height of the hunt.

Flt-Sgt. Webb said last night that Mr Scott was very lucky to be picked up before nightfall.

They searched for the missing man for about 90min. and the main problem was having to cover a great amount of ground very quickly.

All members of the four-man helicopter crew were involved in the massive air-sea rescue off Orkney. Along with Flt-Lt. Lahey were Flt-Lt. Jim Gatherer, Flt-Sgt. Ron Webb, and Flt-Sgt. John Morrice.

3 OCTOBER 1980

Mike Lahey
Jim Gatherer
Ron Webb
John Morrice



22 HOISTED TO SAFETY IN FORCE NINE GALE



SERGEANT RICK BRAGG, FLT LT MIKE LAKEY, FLT LT BILL CAMPBELL, FLT LT DAVE SIMPSON AND SQN LDR HAMISH GRANT ... rescue from a burning ship

KINGS OF THE SEA

A LOSSIEMOUTH Sea King rescued 22 people from a burning and exploding Swedish chemical cargo ship off the Orkneys in a Force Nine gale, hours after the pilot won a bravery award for an earlier rescue.

At one stage four people were winched up at the same time — two mothers in the double strop and the children they clung to. Two helicopters tried and failed to rescue the crew in the bow section of the ship. Conditions were too bad with the 8000-ton Finneagle heaving badly and explosions breaking out in the cargo area.

But the third helicopter on the scene rescued all 22 people. At the controls was Flt Lt Mike Lahey, who, as a Boulmer co-pilot, took part in the Alexander Kieland oil platform disaster rescue.

One hour before he scrambled on this mission he had returned from London after being named

for the Guild of Air Pilots' and Air Navigators' Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award for his part in the earlier rescue.

On arrival over the Finneagle Mike, and co-pilot Dave Simpson, winch operator Flt Lt Bill Campbell, and winchman Sgt Rick Bragg, plus doctor Sqn Ldr Hamish Grant, realised conditions were too bad for a normal winching.

Instead they opted for a "hi-line" rescue where 150 feet of nylon rope and a weight are attached to the strops and dropped onto the ship. The helicopter can then hover to one side away from heaving masts and aerials while the survivors pull in the strops. Once two people are secured in the strops the helicopter returns over the ship, lifts the pair and then moves to one side to complete the winching.

The first lift from the Finneagle turned into the biggest worry. Two women were in the strops with the lift beginning, the ship heaved up, Mike Lahey was forced to apply full power and the helicopter found itself with four people on the end of the winch

wire with just sea underneath. Both women had grabbed their children and just hung on to them.

"It was a worrying moment," admitted Dave Simpson afterwards, but the quartet were safely recovered.

The drama began when the Finneagle, a roll on/roll off cargo ship fully laden with chemicals, including 12 tons of carbide, and en route from New Orleans to Sweden, reported a fire on board when 36 miles north west of Stromness.

A Lossiemouth Sea King and a British Airways Sikorsky S61 from Sumburgh scrambled but after many abortive rescue attempts both had to return for fuel.

Mike Lahey's Sea King was the third on the scene at about 2 a.m. on Thursday, October 2, three hours after the drama began. By this time the survivors, in radio contact with a Kinloss Nimrod flying topcover, reported that fumes were making it difficult to breathe. The decision to use the "hi-line" rescue method was made.

Listeners at the Northern Res-

cue Co-ordination Centre at MHO Pitreavie first heard that two children, three women and two men had been lifted. Then there was silence as the helicopter crew checked conditions on the ship, the worsening weather and the fuel state.

A cheer went up when, after an agonising delay, word came through that 27 people were on board the Sea King and it was making for Kirkwall.

All 22 survivors had to be treated for shock and the effects of fumes, and one man was treated for a broken arm sustained earlier.

Four aircrew who took part in the Alexander Kieland oil platform disaster rescue earlier this year are to receive the Guild of Air Pilots' and Air Navigators' Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award.

They are Flt Lt Bob Neville, Flt Lt Mike Lahey, Flt Sgt John Moody and Flt Sgt Mike Yarwood who crewed a Boulmer Sea King during the rescue.

The award takes the form of certificates signed by the Duke of Edinburgh. Their names will also be entered into a special bound book. It is only the second time the award has been made. Last year it was won by a British Airways helicopter crew for rescuing the crew of a grounded trawler.

PILOT of the Lossiemouth Sea King helicopter Flt.-Lt. Mike Lakey (34) arrived back at the Moray Air Station at lunchtime and said: "I still can't believe it — I still can't believe that we got them all off safely."

"We were hovering over a burning ship which we had been told had a nasty cargo on board."

"We were just forward of the vessel and fortunately the wind was blowing the flames away. Once or twice the flames were higher than the helicopter, but fortunately we were in front of the ship."

All the survivors were on the forward part of the boat — which at times was going up and down 30 or 40 feet."

His co-pilot, Flt.-Lt. Dave Simpson said that the main hazard was that the ship was on fire.

"We were not quite sure what was going to happen," he said. "The ship was rolling from side to side and it was extremely difficult for us to hold the helicopter in hover."

WINCHMAN

Winch operator Flt.-Lt. Bill Campbell said that it had been extremely difficult to get the 150ft. long highline on board.

"Some of the people were quite panic-stricken when we got them on board — but others reacted very well in the circumstances. Only one person fainted," said Flt.-Lt. Campbell.

Sgt. Bragg — who had made an unsuccessful bid to get down to the vessel — said: "It was impossible. As soon as I went out of the

'I can't believe we got them off'

BY ALASTAIR BISSET

helicopter I started spinning like a top. I had no control."

The senior medical officer from RAF Lossiemouth, Sqdn. Ldr. Hamish Grant, who was also on the helicopter, said: "All the survivors were remarkably well. There were a few cases of shock, and one person had a broken arm."

"I was surprised at the lack of injuries. They were all remarkably well and were very relieved to get on board the helicopter."

The first person to meet the helicopter crew on their arrival back at Lossiemouth was Lossiemouth station commander Group Captain Sandy Wilson.

It is believed to be the biggest rescue ever undertaken by a Sea King helicopter — and certainly the biggest from Lossiemouth.

Survivor praises rescuers — and calm mother

□ A SURVIVOR of the Finneagle today praised the helicopter crew who, he said, saved his life.

And they undoubtedly saved the lives of three women and two little boys, aged three and five on board the stricken vessel.

Crewman Bego Samuelson said: "I feel lucky to be alive."

"I have no doubt the helicopter crew saved our

lives. They were marvellous."

But he also praised the calm of the women — especially the mother of the two little boys.

He said: "Two of the women were crew, but the mother of the children was marvellous. The children were crying and upset at first, but she calmed them down."

Mr Samuelson said that the crew tried to contain the blaze themselves.

ONE of the RAF Lossiemouth helicopter heroes spoke today of the Orkney rescue drama — the biggest rescue airlift ever carried out by one of the Moray air station's Sea King helicopters.

F/Lt. Bill Campbell, who, along with winchman Sgt. Rick Bragg, was largely responsible for hoisting the 22 people to safety, said: "The heat was terrific."

"At times we could feel it penetrating into the helicopter as we hovered above the vessel."

"There were cannisters on the deck which kept flaring up. At times the flames were shooting 50ft. into the air."

F/Lt. Campbell, a radar operator, was in the second Lossiemouth Sea King which was called out to help the stricken vessel.

The helicopter was piloted by F/Lt. Mike Lakey — who only yesterday was awarded the Queen's commendation for his part in the Ekofisk rescue — and F/Lt. Dave Simpson. Also on board was S/Ldr. Hamish Grant, senior medical officer at RAF Lossiemouth.

Said F/Lt. Campbell: "When we arrived on the scene a British Airways helicopter was trying to get to the ship, but after a few

minutes it moved aside and let us take over."

"The ship was on fire and there was smoke billowing out from the forward superstructure — directly underneath where the people were waiting to be winched from."

"Four large containers in front of the superstructure were blazing. These flared up every so often throwing flames high into the air."

"The first to come on board the helicopter were two wives of the crew and two children aged about four and seven."

The Sea King rescue — hampered by gales and by the intense smoke and heat — took just over 100 minutes to complete.

The rescued passengers and crew were given emergency treatment by S/Ldr. Grant as the helicopter flew them to Kirkwall.

■ A Coastguard spokesman at Kirkwall said the Finneagle can only be described as a floating bomb.

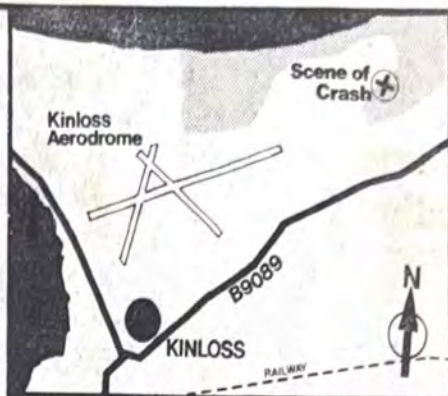
"Because she is carrying a toxic and explosive cargo it is too dangerous to go in and deal with the fire."

A salvage tug was standing by more than a mile from the Finneagle to tow her into port if the blaze burned itself out.

Gulls likely cause of Nimrod crash

SURVIVAL SACRIFICE

Two pilots die, but 18 crewmen escape



THE still-smouldering tail section of the Nimrod, bearing the aircraft's identification number on its smoke-blackened fin, was all that remained after fire reduced the wreckage to a molten mass.

By ALASTAIR
BISSET

captain of the aircraft, Flt Lt Noel Anthony 30, of the Royal Australian Air Force, and his co-pilot, Flying Officer Steve Belcher (24).

Flt Lt Anthony has been at Kinloss since March last year on an exchange tour. Married with no family he lived in quarters at Kinloss. FO Belcher, a single man was from Blackfield, Hants.

The RAF are not releasing the names of any of the crash survivors.

One senior NCO was taken to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, where he is said to be "satisfactory" with leg injuries and another NCO who was taken to Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin, also with leg injuries, was released after treatment.

All the other survivors were treated for shock and minor injuries at the Kinloss station sick bay.

Yesterday's crash involved a Mark 2 Nimrod from the station's No. 206 Squadron. Normally it carries a crew of 13 — but for yesterday's flight an additional seven squadron crew were on board, all of them taking part in a training and instruction sortie involving the submarine detection equipment, and familiarising themselves with the Mark 2 aircraft.

Both the pilots and the flying engineer were fully qualified and were not undergoing training, said the RAF.

The survivors would have had less than 60 seconds warning of the crash landing in the pine forest — and how they all managed to escape from the aircraft virtually unscathed is little short of miraculous.

One factor which would have been in their favour in this respect is that the cabin crew would have been in normal "crash position" for take-off.

The pilot's job in this sort of circumstance is to land the aircraft and that is exactly what they did, said Group Capt Harris. "It was a controlled crash landing, extremely well executed in very bad weather conditions.

"We don't know how they all managed to get out, but it would appear that they got out either before or simultaneously with the crash services arriving.

A FLOCK of seagulls blanketing the early-morning take-off flight path has emerged as the most likely cause of yesterday's crash involving a Nimrod aircraft from RAF Kinloss.

The aircraft's two pilots were killed instantly as the four-engine jet plunged into a pine forest at Roseisle and burst into flames — only half a mile from the airfield's perimeter.

Miraculously — an opinion shared by all who later visited the crash scene — the 18 other crew members escaped serious injury, many of them being able to walk from the burning wreckage.

And last night the commanding officer of RAF Kinloss, Group Captain Win Harris, praised the action of the two dead pilots who carried out a controlled crash landing in difficult conditions — hampered by lashing rain, low cloud and darkness.

"Their skill in handling the aircraft reduced the casualties to a minimum," said Group Capt Harris. "As far as I am aware the crew did not have the time to make any emergency radio transmission."

"Having looked at the crash site — having seen what happened to the aircraft — and having talked to some of the survivors it is quite clear to me that the pilots did a tremendous job."

"It is a miracle that anyone got out alive — an absolute miracle."

"There is no doubt in my mind that these two men who have lost their lives did a fabulous job."

The two who died were the

Tragedy highlights birds menace

THE menace to aircraft posed by the hundreds of thousands of gulls, geese and wading birds that find sanctuary in Findhorn and Burghhead bays was dramatically — and tragically — highlighted by yesterday's crash.

A special three-man unit were set up in 1976 to try to control the problem. They have to track the daily movement of flocks of birds and try to and scare them off when aircraft need to use the runways.

Bird damage to RAF planes in Britain costs more than £1,000,000 each year.

Several of the survivors were walking about dazed when the rescuers arrived at the scene.

A board of inquiry has already started in a bid to find the cause of the crash — the first involving a Nimrod since the highly sophisticated and computerised submarine hunter came into service with the RAF in 1970.

The aircraft's flight data recorder — the black box — has been recovered from the wreckage.

But one theory already being given serious consideration by high-ranking RAF officers is that the Nimrod was involved in a "bird strike".

Group Capt Harris told a Press conference at Kinloss: "Without prejudicing the findings of the inquiry it can be said that the aircraft appeared to strike a number of birds as it became airborne."

"The indications are that the aircraft developed engine failure as a result of bird ingestion. Some of these birds appear to have been seagulls."

He added that he did not know what height the Nimrod would have been at when the "bird strike" occurred, but said the aircraft would have been travelling at the normal take-off speed of 160 mph.

If the "bird strike" had been the cause of the engine failure the crew would have had about 60 seconds' notice of the impending crash landing.

Bird strikes are a natural hazard on any airfield close to the sea and we have our own bird control unit who had been down the runway just prior to take-off", added Group Capt Harris.

17 NOVEMBER 1980

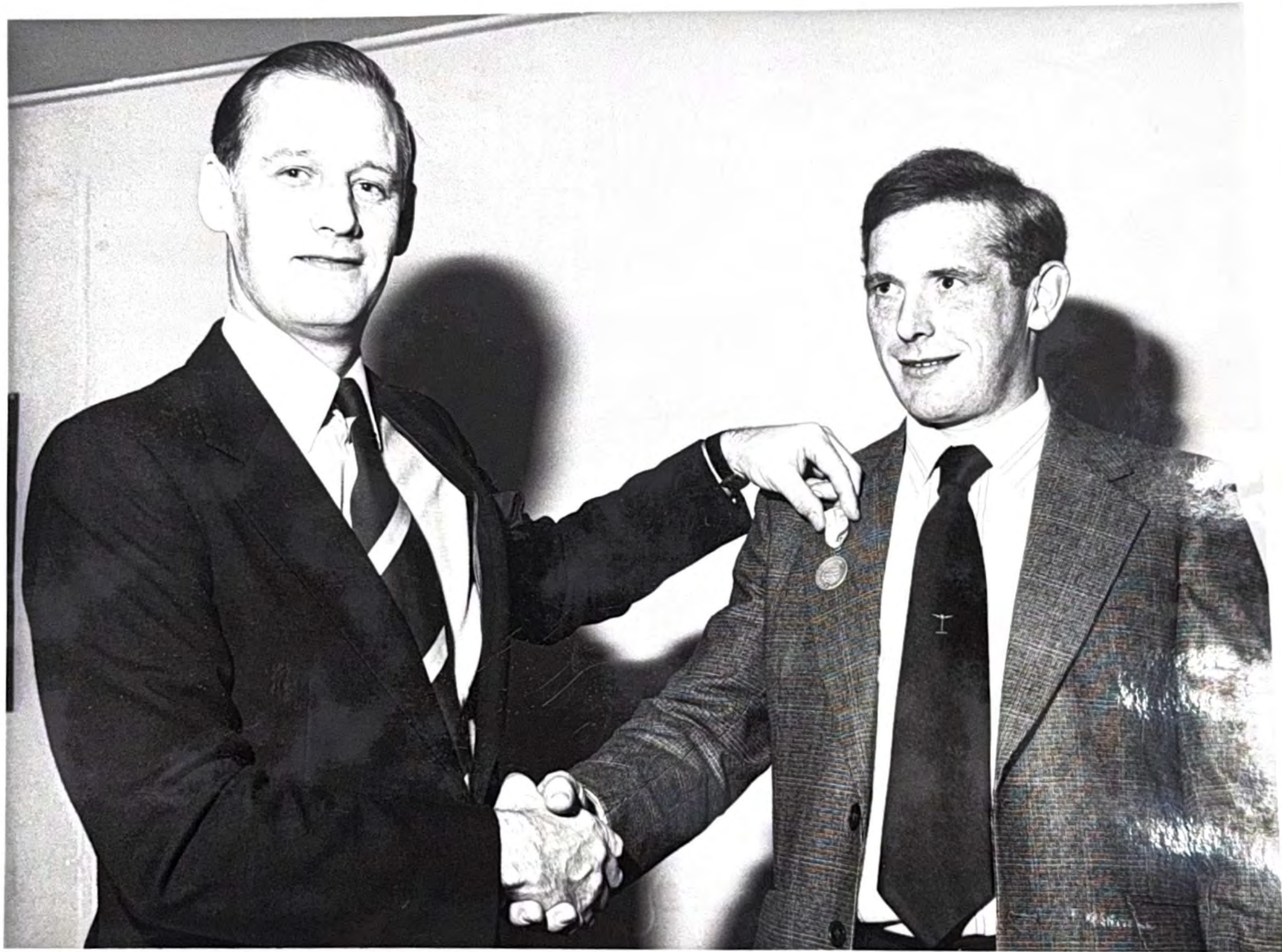
Dave Simpson
Jim Gatherer
Mick Headleand
Norman Pringle



PRESENTATION OF AWARDS ON BEHALF OF THE 'SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR RESCUE OF MARINERS & SAILORS'

BY GP CAPT WILSON

DECEMBER 1980

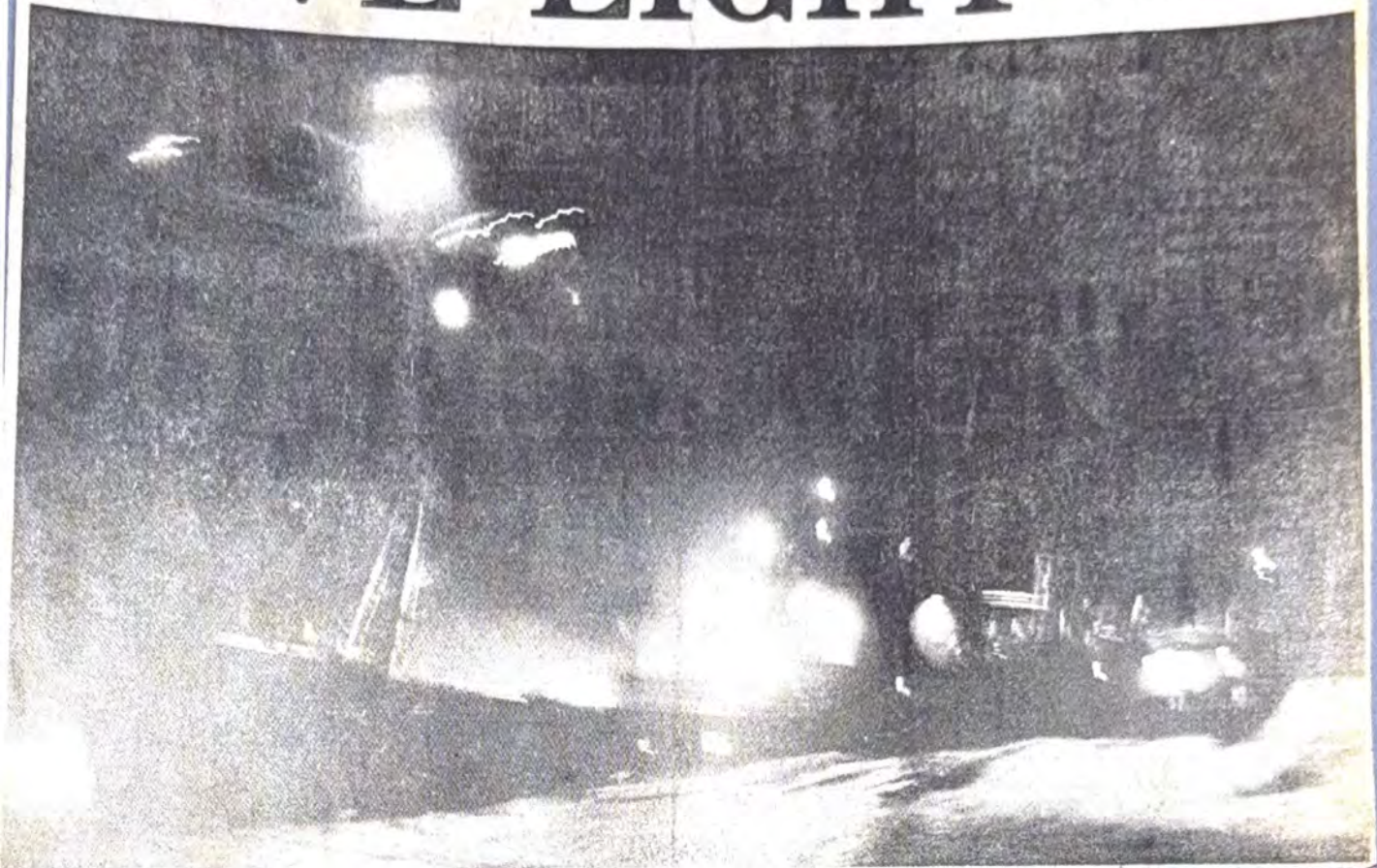


Drama as oil boat runs aground

COPTER MEN

SAVE EIGHT

REPORTERS IAIN LUNDY,
MITCHELL REID, ALAN DRON
PHOTOGRAPHER
KATHLEEN SUTHERLAND



THE eight-man crew of a Grimsby-registered oil-rig standby vessel were last night plucked to safety by a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth.

The men were winched aboard the helicopter shortly after midnight after their boat, the Ross Khartoum, had run aground on Balmedie Beach.

For almost six hours the crew were stranded on the stricken vessel as both air and rescue teams attempted to get them to safety.

With Force Eight blowing the boat was pounded by heavy waves which tilted her about two lies up the coast from her original grounding point.

The Ross Khartoum's owners, British United Travers, are to conduct an inquiry into the incident.

The Sea King was launched from RAF Lossiemouth at about 10.15 p.m. when it was discovered that none of the rescue vessels would be able to reach the boat.

Skipper Jack Stephen radio-

THE CREW members of the Ross Khartoum were all from Aberdeen with the exception of one deckhand from Hull. They were: Skipper Jack Stephen, 173 School Drive; mate James Smith, Aberdeen (address not known); chief engineer James Gibb, 90 Skene Square; second engineer Sean O'Callaghan, 91B Walker Road; cook Frank Taylor, 152 Crown Street; deckhands Stanley Hutcheon, 47 Davidson Place; John Donald, 9F Summerfield Place, and James Bingham, 132 Telford Street, Holderness Road, Hull.

too far into the shallows to allow them to get in.

The Ross Khartoum was on its way from Aberdeen Harbour to the Brent oil field in the North Sea when it developed engine failure and turned back.

An Aberdeen harbour tug, the Sea Griffin, got a line on board the Ross Khartoum but it parted three times and the boat began to drift in towards the sandy beach.

Skipper Stephen tried to use the engine to get the boat back

out to sea but a sand bank lying outside got her into difficulties.

The only alternatives then were to rescue the crew with the help of breeches buoy or by helicopter and the final decision to use the helicopter was made at around 10.30 p.m.

The helicopter arrived on the scene at 11.45 p.m. and began searching for a suitable spot on the deck to winch the men from.

The Ross Khartoum was lying broadside on to the shore

but as the chopper hovered over her stern the wind and waves increased. It swept her round at a 45-degree angle to the beach, with her bow pointing towards the shore.

The crew appeared on the stern, holding on to the rails as the vessel bucked wildly, with spray from the waves and the helicopter's downdraft whipping over her.

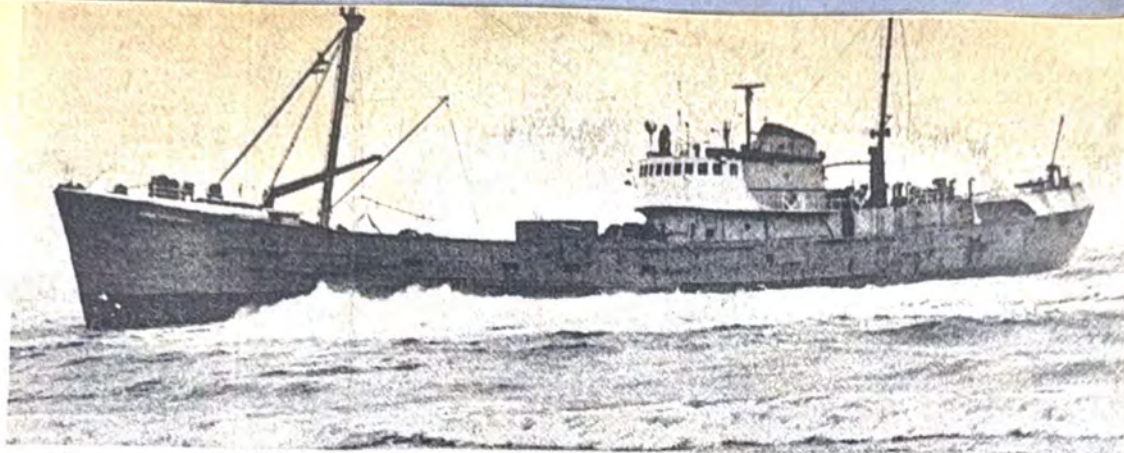
The winchman was lowered to the deck and began winching up the men in twos. Half an hour later, with all men safe on board, it was all over and the helicopter turned and headed for Aberdeen Airport.

A BUT spokesman said last night: "There will be an inquiry to find out the circumstances which resulted in the boat landing on the beach."

Steps have already been taken along with our insurers to arrange for the vessel to be pulled off. The police have been contacted regarding a round-the-clock watch on her."



'No panic'
during
rescue
operation



Today's picture of the stranded Ross Khartoum at Balmedie Beach.

SKIPPER TELLS OF GROUNDING ORDEAL

By **BILL MACKINTOSH**
and **ALISTAIR FARMER**

THE CREW of a stricken oil rig standby boat calmly watched television and ate sandwiches while a rescue operation was mounted.

They tuned in to the news to see if they were featured as force eight gales lashed their boat, beached at Balmedie.

The Ross Khartoum skipper Jack Stephen said: "There was no panic."

"While we were afloat, it was okay, but when we went aground it was fierce. The waves were breaking right over the ship."

The skipper was speaking the morning after his crew's six-hour ordeal on board the standby vessel which was heading for the Brent oil field.

She developed engine trouble, coastguards said, and was turning back to Aberdeen harbour when she was beached.

The tug Sea Griffin failed three times to secure a line and eventually a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth winched the men to safety.

Today as the Ross Khartoum lay beached at Balmedie it was announced that a Department of Trade inquiry will be carried out.

PRAISE

Skipper Stephen praised the crew of the Sea Griffin.

"They did a great job in those conditions trying to get a line on board," he said. "The crew were being washed about the decks as they tried to help us."

The crew members of the Ross Khartoum are Skipper Jack Stephen, 173 School Drive; mate James Smith, c/o 19b Seaton Drive; chief engineer James Gibb, 90 Skene Square; second engineer Sean O'Callaghan, 91b Walker Road; cook Peter Taylor, 152 Crown Street; deckhands Stanley Hutcheon, 47 Davidson Place, John Donald, 9f Summerfield Place, all Aberdeen, and James Bingham, from Hull.

The crew told rescuers they were prepared to stay on board until daylight as they were in no danger. But the boat's owners, British United Trawlers, ordered them to abandon ship.

British United Trawlers' managing director Mr Andrew Lewis said the men wanted to stay on board but coastguards said there was no point.

He added the ship appeared to be undamaged and arrangements were being made to have it refloated. However, that may be difficult as vessels can't get within 1000 yards of her.

It was after midnight before the Sea King helicopter got a line on board the rolling ship.

The crew appeared on the stern holding on to the rails as the vessel bucked wildly with spray from the waves and the helicopter down draft whipping over her.

The men were taken up in twos and flown to Aberdeen Airport. None required medical treatment.

20 DEC 1980

IAN MACFARLANE
JIM GATHERER
BILL CAMPBELL
ROBBIE SUTTON

THE SCOTSMAN, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1980

RAF pilot named 'Scot of the Year'

Flight-Lieutenant Mike Lahey, hero of two air-sea rescue missions this year, was yesterday named 'Scot of the Year' by the BBC's Good Morning Scotland radio programme.

Listeners to the programme placed Flt-Lt. Lahey top of their poll, the Queen Mother second, Jim Watt third, and Hercules the bear numbered into fourth place.

Flt-Lt. Lahey flew into RAF Turnhouse from Lossiemouth yesterday in a Sea King helicopter with the crew who in October took part in the rescue of 22 people from the burning Swedish freighter Finneagle, which was carrying dangerous chemicals when she went aground in 70 m.p.h. winds in Orkney.

COMMENDATION

He had set out on the mission only half an hour after returning from London where he had received the Queen's Commendation for his part in the rescue mission in the Alexander Keilland disaster off Norway last March.

He accepted the award — an engraved goblet and a large bottle of champagne — from the programme's two presenters, Mr Malcolm Wilson and Mr Neville Garden, at a ceremony at the RAF station.

Flt-Lt. Lahey said that he accepted the award on behalf of all people involved in rescue work in Scotland — not only at his station at Lossiemouth, but also in the Royal Navy, the Coastguard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and mountain rescue teams.

"I was only one part of the team. I'm accepting this as one part of a very large organisation in Scotland," he said. "I am proud to be



Flight-Lieutenant Lahey, pictured with the engraved goblet and bottle of champagne awarded to him yesterday as 'Scot of the Year.' Members of 202 Squadron RAF Lossiemouth who comprised Flt-Lt. Lahey's rescue team stand in the background.

with them and among them. They are all fantastic," he added.

Flt-Lt. Lahey and his team were unable to open the bottle of champagne at the ceremony because they were on duty as the back-up team for yesterday from RAF Lossiemouth.

But along with Flt-Lt. David Simpson, Flt-Lt. Bill Campbell and Sgt Rick Bragg, who took part in the rescue mission on the Finneagle, he promised a good celebration at Lossiemouth last night.

The nominations for "Scot of the Year" were open to anyone living

in Scotland, or to any Scots living elsewhere in the world.

Flt-Lt. Lahey, who comes from Wiltshire, falls into the former category, but has an added qualification — he was made an honorary Jock when he was air liaison officer with the Royal Highland Fusiliers three years ago.

If 1980 was a good year for Flt-Lt. Lahey, then 1981 could be even better — for he expects to become a father for the third time in May, and the RAF are making him station commander at Lossiemouth.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 31 1980

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MIKE LAHEY -- 'JOCK OF THE YEAR'

Great Scot..it's Mike!

LET'S raise a glass to ENGLISH helicopter pilot Mike Lahey who has been voted SCOT of the Year by listeners to BBC's Good Morning Scotland radio show.

Mike, who led the rescue of 22 people from a burning ship

in October, flew in to Turnhouse Airport, Edinburgh yesterday with his RAF Lossiemouth crew, Rick Bragg, Bill Campbell and Dave Simpson, to collect the award.



FLT. LT. Mike Lahey and members of his crew are pictured at RAF Lossiemouth.

Royal Air Force



NEWS

No. 513

JANUARY 14-27, 1981

SEA KING MAN IS TOP SCOT

Helicopter ace Flt Lt Mike Lakey, based at Lossiemouth with the Sea King search-and-rescue flight, has been voted 'Scot of the Year' by listeners to the BBC programme 'Good Morning Scotland' which goes out every day from 6.30 am to 8.45 pm.

Mike was presented with an engraved glass bowl in a formal ceremony at Turnhouse, the award commemorating his piloting skill when he and his crew (Flt Lt Dave Simpson, Flt Lt Bill Campbell, Sgt Rick Bragg and medical officer Sqn Ldr Hamish Grant) were called out last October to the Swedish chemical cargo ship *Finneagle*, which was on fire off the Orkneys in a Force Nine gale.

'HI-LINE'

Two helicopters had already tried and failed to winch the crew off the disabled vessel, but despite the massive sea that was running and explosions occurring in the ship's cargo holds, Mike Lakey and his men managed to lift off all 22 aboard, including some women and children, by using the 'hi-line' technique.

Only hours before taking off on this sortie, Mike Lakey had been one of the four Sea King crewmen who received the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators' Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award in London for his part in rescue operations after the Alexander Kieland oil platform capsized.

Ship's bell gift to RAF ^{ASAP} rescuers

By DAVID STEWART

The crew of the RAF helicopter which rescued all 22 people from the Swedish ferry *Finneagle* off Orkney last month were presented with a replica of the ship's bell at a ceremony in Aberdeen yesterday.

The men, based at RAF Lossiemouth, braved atrocious weather and rough seas last month to save the 17 men, three women and two children on board the burning ferry which it was feared might explode at any moment.

The presentation was made by Mr Goran Littke, a director of the Johansson group of companies, who own the ferry. The bell bears an inscription stating that 'the bravery and endurance of the air crew was beyond all praise'.

VERY PROUD

It was accepted on behalf of the crew by Flt-Lt Mike Lakey, the pilot, who said later that everyone was very proud of the bell, which would probably be kept at the officers' mess.



Mr Goran Littke presents the replica bell to (left to right) Flt-Lt Mike Lakey, Flt-Lt Dave Simpson, Flt-Lt Bill Campbell and Sgt Rick Bragg.

Blaze ship owners thank 'copter heroes

AN RAF helicopter crew whose bravery was "beyond praise" were on their way back to their Lossiemouth base last night after a special ceremony in Aberdeen.

The owners of the *Finneagle*, the Swedish Johansson Group, made the 202 Squadron aircrew guests of honour at celebrations in the city to mark the start of their new shipping service linking Aberdeen with several ports in Scandinavia.

The four-man crew making up D Flight at RAF Lossiemouth were scrambled early on October 2 to go to the aid of 17 crewmen, three women and two children on board the *Finneagle* which was on fire 30 miles off Orkney.

Because "hazardous cargo" was in flames a quick evacuation was vital and, according to the ship's owners, this was achieved in "appalling conditions" by the Lossiemouth Sea King with Flt. Lt. Mike Lakey at the controls.

Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson was co-pilot with Flt. Lt. Bill

Campbell as winch operator and Flt. Sgt. Rick Bragg winchman.

The aircrew worked in the dark and in a force 10 gale — too close for comfort to a burning ship which might have exploded, according to her owners yesterday.

Finally, their efforts resulted in all 22 being lifted safely into the helicopter.

Yesterday the aircrew went on board the Thomas Wehr — operated on the new service by the Johansson Group's company Roto Line — and were presented with a replica of the *Finneagle*'s ship's bell.

Director Mr Goran Littke, of the Johansson Group, in handing over the bell replica to Flt. Lt. Mike Lakey (second left) and (left to right) Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson, Flt. Lt. Bill Campbell and Flt. Sgt. Rick Bragg, said: "The bravery and endurance of the crew was beyond all praise."

A blacksmith made a special frame for the bell in one of the Johansson Group's shipyards which occupies a site once used by Vikings for building longships.



PRESENTATION OF THE SHIP'S BELL TO THE 'FINNEAGLE' CREW



PRESENTATION OF THE STOCKHOLM GOLDEN LIONS CLUB AWARD
TO F/L MIKE LAHEY BY AIR MARSHAL CURTIS



VISIT OF COMNORMAR AVM BAIRSTOW TO 'D' FLIGHT

SWEDES HONOUR RESCUE MEN

The helicopter crew from D Flight of 202 Squadron which rescued 22 people from the Swedish vessel *Finneagle* in the North Sea last October has received the Golden Lion Trophy of the Stockholm Golden Lions Club.

This much-prized award is presented annually by the Stockholm Golden Lions Club for outstanding achievement. It was accepted from Mr Lennart Forssén, the board president, by Cpl Capt Bob Barclay, the Defence and Air Attaché at the British Embassy in Stockholm, at a dinner last November, and was in turn presented to Flt Lt Mike Lakey (representing his crew) by Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss at a small ceremony at Kinloss. The other aircrew aboard the Sea King during the operation were Flt Lt Dave Simpson, Flt Lt Bill Campbell, Sgt Rick Bragg, and the Lossiemouth SMO, Sqd Ldr Hamish Grant.

A cheque which accompanied the award will be donated to the Mike Yarwood Fund, a subsidiary of the RAF Benevolent Fund set up to assist families and dependants of search and rescue personnel.

Helicopter wins battle to get baby to hospital

A HELICOPTER crew battled against gales early today to save a desperately ill baby.

The drama mounted when six-week-old Jordan Campbell, of Lower Dunbar Street, Wick, became critical in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

Earlier in the day, the infant — a blue baby — had been flown by air ambulance from Wick.

At Inverness he was rushed aboard an RAF Los-

sie Sea King helicopter in an incubator.

The crew took off for Glasgow's Yorkhill Hospital in atrocious weather.

Crew captain Flight Lieutenant Jim Gatherer decided on a "softly, softly" flight path because of the condition of the youngster.

Before they left Lossiemouth weather reports warned they would encounter freezing temperatures, high winds and sleet and snow showers if they attempted the direct route.

They had to make a lengthy detour by the coast and a trip which would normally last one hour took three times as long.

Doctors and staff stood by at Glasgow and a doctor with the baby and his mother to monitor his condition.

Staff at Yorkhill said the toddler was very ill and remaining under observation.

17 DEC 1980

Jim Gatherer
John Prince
Bill Campbell
Robbie Sutton



Flight-Lieutenant Mike Lakey receives the Swedish Lion Dragon Trophy from Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss.

Honour for RAF helicopter crew

By IAIN GRAY

AN RAF helicopter crew were yesterday honoured for rescuing 22 people, including two children, from a blazing Swedish ship.

The four-man crew, from RAF Lossiemouth, had volunteered for the rescue operation when fire broke out on the *Finneagle*, 50 miles north-west of Orkney, in October last year.

At a ceremony at RAF Kinloss, Flight Lieutenant Mike Lakey, the pilot, was presented with a trophy and a cheque from the Stockholm Golden Lions Club. The trophy is awarded annually by the

club for outstanding achievement.

Squadron Leader Hamish Grant, RAF Lossiemouth's senior medical officer, who had volunteered to fly with the crew, was included in the honour.

Another sea King helicopter crew and a civilian helicopter were forced to abandon their attempts because of high winds and heavy seas.

Other members of the crew were Flight-Lieutenant Dave Simpson, the co-pilot, Flight-Lieutenant Bill Campbell, the radar operator, and Sergeant Rick Bragg, the winchman.

CLIMBER CHEATS DEATH IN PEAK FALL

CLIMBER John Hayes defied death for 48 hours on a snow-covered mountain.

John, 30, tumbled down a gully on a Highland peak and then crawled back up the mountain on his hands and knees in 50 miles an hour gales.

He reached a shelter 500ft up and there met Domini Derda, an exchange student teaching in Ayrshire who had also taken refuge. She fed

him, treated his wounds and then set off for help.

John spent the night on the mountain—3,200ft. Strathna-shellach, near Ullapool—and conditions improved enough yesterday for the RAF to airlift him off.

Last night, John, of Castle Boulevard, Nottingham, was recovering.

CLIMBER TELLS OF HIS AGONY CRAWL



Injured climber Mr John Hayes in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, this morning.

INJURED climber John Hayes sat up in his hospital bed in Inverness today and told how he had crawled and hobbled three miles to safety after plunging between 100 and 200 feet down a West Coast mountain.

It took him 18 agonising hours to reach the safety of a hut where a French climber tended the worst of his wounds and then trapped off to summon help.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth picked up 30-year-old Mr Hayes of 52 Castle Boulevard, Nottingham, and lifted him to Inverness.

Nursing badly bruised ankles and a gash on his head which needed 15 stitches Mr Hayes said he was "very lucky" and added: "I thought I had bought it."

Mr Hayes — "I am not a rock climber" — was alone on 3500 feet An Teallach near Dundonnell on Saturday when he slipped down a snow and ice-filled gully.

Today he answered criticism by Dundonnell rescue team leader Mr Bill Neat, who said he had to be "somewhat critical" of Mr Hayes for being out alone in view of the weather.

Mr Hayes said: "There was no question of my climbing. I was out to take photographs."

Mr Hayes said that the fall happened just as he had decided not to go any further because of the conditions.

He managed to stop his fall with his ice axe.

When he gathered his senses he tried to staunch the blood flowing from his head wound and then started to make for the Sheneval Bothy.

At the bothy he met Frenchman Domini Derda. Mr Hayes said that after he fell and before setting off for the bothy, he had taken a picture of the spot.

20 DECEMBER 1980

John Prince
Ian MacFarlane
Mick Headleand
Vic Oliver

D'FLT 202 SQN SCRAMBLES											
1	JAN 4	3 MISSING CLIMBERS CLIMBERMAN	3 RESCUED	31	19	NO MANUS FOUND SURVIVED LEFT ALIVE	NAR	61	28	MISSING AND 12 JAN 1980, 8:45 1 INDIAN 1-8	95
2	17	2 FALLON CLIMBERS CLIMBER ADAMS	3 TRUCK 45 IN WINDING	32	21	THAT WOMAN WHO WENT DOWN WITH HER MARRIAGE	1 THINER TO RECOVERED	62	29	FINISHED CLIMB - TRUCK 45 RECOVERED	96
3	17	1 FALLON CLIMBER LIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	33	21	MARRIAGE CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO RECOVERED	63	30	22 RESCUED	97
4	26	FALLON CLIMBER AN TENDON	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	34	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	64	3	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	98
5	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	35	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	65	8	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	99
6	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	36	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	66	8	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	100
7	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	37	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	67	11	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	101
8	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	38	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	68	20	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	102
9	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	39	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	69	1	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	103
10	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	40	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	70	3	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	104
11	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	41	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	71	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	105
12	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	42	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	72	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	106
13	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	43	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	73	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	107
14	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	44	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	74	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	108
15	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	45	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	75	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	109
16	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	46	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	76	17	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	110
17	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	47	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	77	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	111
18	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	48	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	78	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	112
19	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	49	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	79	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	113
20	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	50	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	80	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	114
21	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	51	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	81	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	115
22	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	52	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	82	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	116
23	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	53	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	83	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	117
24	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	54	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	84	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	118
25	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	55	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	85	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	119
26	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	56	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	86	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	120
27	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	57	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	87	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	121
28	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	58	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	88	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	122
29	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	59	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	89	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	123
30	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	60	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	90	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	124
31	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	61	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	91	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	125
32	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	62	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	92	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	126
33	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	63	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	93	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	127
34	27	1 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	1 TRUCK TO CLIMBER	64	27	100 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	NAR	94	28	10 FALLON CLIMBER CLIMBERMAN	128

D FLT SCRAMBLES 1980

MONTH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
SCRAMBLES	5	6	4	1	8	6	9	10	6	5	3	4
MEDIVACS	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	2
TOTAL	5	7	5	3	8	6	10	12	6	6	3	6
NO. RESCUED	7	3	1	1	3	3	4	6	2	25	0	13

Whirlwind Total
Feb 1973-21 Sep 1978

SCRAMBLES	621
MEDIVACS	103
TOTAL	724
NO. RESCUED	345

Sea King Total

	21 Sep 78 31 Dec 78	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
23	85	67					
3	20	10					
26	111	77					
28	71	68					

'Classic case of underestimation' MAN DIES IN CAIRNGORMS

By JIM LOVE

Climber's body brought down

TWO young English climbers spoke yesterday of their ordeal in the Cairngorms which led to the death of their companion.

The three former students of Oxford Polytechnic intended to be back for Hogmanay, but as the Aviemore New Year parties got into full swing, 3000ft. below them, two of the climbers were huddled together in a snow hole. Outside, the third member of the party lay dead.

Last night, the joint co-ordinator of the search and rescue operation, Mr Fred Harper, of the Outdoor Training Centre at Glenmore Lodge, said the three had not hopelessly put of their depth.

The holiday-climbing expedition had started well enough. Weather conditions were mild as Anthony Isaac (22), Alistair Miller (28) and Neil Baillie (22), set out from the Cairngorm car park on Tuesday.

They camped for the night near the Boulder Stone on the Cairngorm plateau. The weather was very mild and we were very comfortable," said Tony, a British Leyland engineer, 55C Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol.

The following day, Wednesday, was a complete white-out and near freezing. We didn't have much food so we tried to make it for the car park, but in the middle of the plateau we were hit by a blizzard.

"We continued walking by compass bearing but we got lost and found the way down was far steeper than it should have been.

"As we were crossing the March burn, an ice bridge broke and Neil fell in up to his waist. He was soaked through but he didn't complain.

Alistair, a laboratory technician of Whiregates, Main Road, Betley, near Crewe, took up the story. "It was then we all fell down an ice-covered scree slope. We lost our tent poles, torches, Neil's sleeping bag and his spectacles.

"Neil's progress was becoming slower and slower and we had to help him. We tried to support him with our shoulders but that was no good. We kept falling all over the place. In the end we practically had to carry him."

Tony sheltered him with his body as Alistair dug a snow hole and erected a make-shift shelter with the remains of the tent, but Neil stopped breathing.

"I tried to revive him with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I knew he had a heart pacemaker," Tony said. "It was no use. He was dead. We crawled into the snow hole and spent the night there."

In New Year's morning, cut, bruised and frost-bitten, the pair set out to raise the alarm, leaving their dead companion, a biologist, who lived with his mother at 307 Fleetwood Road, Blackpool.

At 8 a.m. personnel from Cairngorm and RAF Kinloss mountain-rescue teams set out with Constable James Simpson, Kingussie, and his dog, Czar. A member of the Cairngorm rescue teams also took his dog.

Within two hours, they had found the climbers' abandoned gear and located Neil's body under 18 in. of snow. They stretched it down below cloud cover, where an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter was waiting to fly it to Glenmore Lodge.

Mr Harper said last night. "This is a fairly classic case of English climbers underestimating conditions on Scottish mountains."

These three climbers had very little experience of dealing with the conditions they encountered in the Cairngorms.

"In winter, climbers come to Scotland having hill-walked and rock-climbed in England, where conditions are quite different, and they encounter situations they have not learned to handle. These three were not able to deal with the conditions, technically or personally."

There were very high winds, very low visibility, a lot of blowing snow and very low temperatures — normal conditions in the Cairngorms — and it is very difficult to make the right decisions, to navigate accurately and to deal with technical mountaineering problems.

Mr Harper paid tribute to the volunteers of Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team who turned out on New Year's Day as soon as the alarm was raised. "This kind of work requires self-sacrifice on the part of all volunteer teams," he said. "The only thing they get out of it is the satisfaction of helping people in trouble."

The Christmas and New Year periods are times when there is a lot of activity in Scottish mountains, and although we have had only one incident in the Cairngorms this year, the Cairngorm team have been ready for any emergency."

Asked if Neil should have been climbing with a heart condition, his companions said: "It was his personal choice. There was nothing different about him apart from the fact that he moved more slowly."

DEATH TRAGEDY IN LOST VALLEY



Victim Neil Baillie

TWO young walkers yesterday described their ordeal as they vainly tried to save a friend's life during a mountain blizzard.

Biologist Neil Baillie (22), who was fitted with a heart pacemaker, died after a fall.

Neil, of Fleetwood Road, Blackpool, was with Tony

Express Staff Reporter

Isaac, 22, of Clifton, Bristol and Alistair Miller, 26, of Betley, Oxfordshire, on a walking trip in the Cairngorms.

The tragedy happened in the Lost Valley, near Ben Macdui, when the three were caught in a blizzard.

First Neil fell into a freezing stream, then all three plunged down a scree slope, losing vital equipment.

Said Tony: "We knew we had to get shelter for Neil

as he was becoming slower and slower. He was delirious and soon collapsed.

"I tried sheltering him with my body and Alistair tried to put up a shelter, but we had lost the tent poles in our fall."

"Then Neil stopped breathing. I tried to revive him with the kiss of life, but it was no use. Conditions were so bad by then we had difficulty moving."

The two crawled into a makeshift shelter where they spent Wednesday night before going for help.

The dead man's body was brought down by the local mountain rescue team and RAF helicopter.

Atrocious

Mr Fred Harper, head of the Glenmore outdoor training centre, who co-ordinated the search said: "From the time the man fell into the stream the chips were down."

While the three were well equipped for hill walking, they were not equipped to deal with the atrocious weather found on the Scottish mountains.

Neil's brother Mark, 25, said at the family home in Blackpool, yesterday: "Climbing was Neil's greatest hobby."

"The pacemaker imposed its limitations, but Neil knew what he could do."

2 JAN 1981

Jim Gatherer
Geoff Clements
Bill Campbell
Rick Bragg

Snow-baby Jill gives voice to a rousing greeting



TO THE delight of her mother, Mrs Linda McKenzie, Fraserburgh, and Staff Nurse Margaret Macintyre, North-east "snow baby" Jill gives a rousing hello to the world yesterday.

Just a few hours earlier, when blizzards blocked many roads in the area, an emergency airlift was organised to take the expectant mother to Aberdeen.

Mrs McKenzie (22), 89 Saltoun Place, was admitted to Fraserburgh Hospital on Monday night but, because of complications, it was decided to transfer her to Aberdeen Maternity Hospital. A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was called to take Mrs McKenzie to Aberdeen.

Police used their car head-

lights to help the helicopter land on Fraserburgh Links.

A hospital spokesman said that Mrs McKenzie arrived at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital around 3 a.m., and gave birth at 8.05 a.m. He said Jill, who weighs nearly 7lbs., and her mother were both well.

This is the first child for Mrs McKenzie and her husband Brian (23), who is an electrician at St Fergus gas terminal. They have been married for almost two-and-a-half years.

Yesterday, Mrs McKenzie said she could remember little of the flight except that it was noisy. She said her husband had travelled by road in the morning to see their daughter and was to visit again later.

Blizzard baby

RAF takes a mother to hospital

SMILING young mother Linda McKenzie hugs her snow baby Jill who beat the blizzards to come into the world.

Linda, 22, was admitted to hospital in her home town of Fraserburgh on Monday.

But there were complications and it was decided to transfer her to hospital in Aberdeen.

Because of the bad road conditions, a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth came to the rescue and a few hours after arriving at Aberdeen, Jill was born.

As she hugged her blizzard babe, yesterday, Linda, of Saltoun Place, Fraserburgh, said: "I can't thank the doctors, nurses and the helicopter crew enough. They have all been wonderful."

Meanwhile the north and north-east of Scotland faced more snow chaos yesterday.

At one time drifting snow and heavy showers cut off Aberdeen and few roads in the area were passable.



Linda and baby Jill . . . flown to hospital

13 JAN 1981

John Prince
Geoff Clements
Ron Webb
Robbie Sutton

WHEN THE BULL SEES RED



Flt.-Lt. Dave Simpson, Flt.-Sgt. Ron Webb, Master Air Electronics Operator Roger Whitehead, Flt.-Lt. Mike Lakey.

THE Quizman dropped in on the R.A.F. base at Lossiemouth last week.

He was tackled by four members of 202 Helicopter Squadron.

Included in the team is Flight-Lieutenant Mike Lakey, who was recently named "Scot Of The Year" in recognition of his part in the heroic rescue of 22 people trapped on board the burning Swedish ship, Finneagle, off Orkney last October.

QUIZ CORNER

1—Why does a bull paw the ground before charging? (1).

2—Which fresh vegetable is bought most in his country? (1).

3—Can you really hear better in the dark? (0).

4—Standing on a ship, facing the bow, which side is port and which starboard? (1).

5—Which can you go longer without — food or water? (1).

6—What causes the dark blue colour in a bruise? (1).

(Total, 5 points).

7—Do plants sleep at night? (1).

8—What causes the statch you get in the side after running? (1).

9—Why do some smells, e.g. fish, fried onions, stay in the air longer than others? (1).

10—Why do we say someone is caught "red-handed"? (1).

11—If the weatherman forecasts an anticyclone, what does this mean? (1).

12—Why is a top pupil called the dux? (1).

(Total, 6 points).

13—What's the opposite of claustrophobia? (1).

14—Give three articles of clothing with the names of places in them. (1).

15—What's the difference between a cook and chef? (1).

16—Do more road accidents occur in summer or winter? (0).

17—Why do people yawn when they're tired? (1).

18—Why do we say we're on tenterhooks? (0).

(Total, 4 points).

19—Why does a gentleman lift his hat to a lady? (1).

20—Why do we get wrinkles in our skin as we get older? (1).

21—What title is given to (a) the daughter (b) the son of a Duke? (1).

22—What makes the wind howl? (1).

23—Have there been more Presidents of the USA or PMs of Great Britain since the last war? (1).

24—Why do we "see stars" after a knock on the head? (0).

(Total, 5 points).

Answers

GROUP 1.

1—It's a sign of irritation, just as we drum our fingers when annoyed.

2—Potato.

3—No. It's just that there's usually less noise at night.

4—Port is left, starboard right.

5—Food. As little as four days without water can lead to death.

6—The automatic release of pigments following destruction of the blood vessels.

GROUP 2.

7—In a sense, yes. Their growth can halt through lack of daylight.

8—When we use muscles that are normally inactive, they tighten, squeezing our nerves and causing pain.

9—Because they are more pungent in the first place and released in vapour through cooking.

10—It refers, literally, to being caught with the blood of murder on your hands.

11—Settled weather's on its way. In summer it'll be warm, in winter cold.

12—It comes from the Latin word meaning leader.

GROUP 3.

13—Agoraphobia.

14—Wellington boot, Panama hat, Oxford bags.

15—A chef is more highly skilled, with qualifications, and has more responsibility in the running of a kitchen.

16—Summer.

17—It's the body trying to take in more oxygen.

18—Cloth, after being woven, is stretched or 'tentered' on hooks. So when our nerves are stretched we say we're on tenterhooks.

19—It comes from the days of chivalry when knights took off their helmets to show trust.

20—Skin loses its elasticity.

21—(a) Lady, (b) The eldest son has courtesy title of Marquis, other sons are Lords.

22—As wind goes through enclosed spaces, it causes objects to vibrate, producing sound.

23—More PMs — 9, as opposed to 8 Presidents, including Ronald Reagan.

24—The eye nerve is affected, giving a sensation of light.

TEAM TOTAL, 83.33 per cent.

The Sunday Post, January 25, 1981.

An uplifting sensation as rescue team go through their paces

Copter's saving grace

TRAVELLING over the snow-cruised roof of Ben Nevis, 4406ft. up in a twin-engine RAF Sea King helicopter, is an uplifting sensation.

Winching down 50ft. on what looks like a gular-string to a tufted-grass carpet fitted wall-to-wall on Britain's most spectacular cliffs is something else.

I was really in very safe hands, though, the guest of 202 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, who stand by to scramble 24 hours a day in any weather, on high-speed rescues at sea or on the sheerest Highland crag.

In the past few years, the RAF crews in Scotland have become highly respected as a fast, skilled and courageous task force, flying missions, often in darkness and deplorable weather.

Winter brings the fiercest rescue conditions and the two four-man crews at

ALAN THOMSON writes about his day as guest of 202 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, on one of their training flights, and the part played by helicopters — in conjunction with the ground troops of the RAF Mountain Rescue teams — in the saving of lives on the Scottish hills.

Lossiemouth, with a duplicate force at RAF Leuchars in Fife, flying the smaller Wessex helicopter, are in peak training, so to speak, for the grim months ahead. Up to 28 people lose their lives in a year on the Scottish hills and about 200 are injured or become lost. Accidents range from big climbing falls to weary stumbles on rock, scree and ice.

Winter also brings a regular crop of injuries and a few fatalities from hypothermia, avalanches, and even lightning.

In close radio link with civilian rescue teams, police and the ubiquitous ground troops of RAF Mountain Rescue from

Kinloss and Leuchars, the Sea King Mark III can fly some 20 men to an accident scene, or handle the rescue entirely alone.

Mist and new snow churned up by the rotors are visibility hazards which, like icing on the power blades, will ground a helicopter. But conditions were near-ideal for our training flight into the great rock cauldron of Ben Nevis.

The squat, yellow machine with its mallard duck crest has exhilarating "lift" and cruises at around 120 knots. Soon, 25-year-old Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson eases her back on the updraught from the ragged Carn Mor Dearg. Dave, who hails from York and

lives at Stobhill Road, Lossiemouth, then drops his aircraft on an ominous, higher engine pitch into Coire Leis from which these 1000ft. cliffs, just sweeping past the rotors, erupt.

The Kinloss ground team are landed rapidly by winch and I follow in a tight sling and the gentle bear hug of winchman George Muir (40), 42 Linkwood Road, Elgin. Radar operator Mick Headleand (29), from Pine Grove, New Elgin, keeps watch for snags.

A stretcher lift is set up and the Sea King, a gaudy splash against the delicate pink of Carn Dearg, the main rock-climbing face, thunders in to collect the "casualty".

The chattering duck later makes a one-point landing on irregular slabs nearby and six of us struggle back aboard against a hurricane blowing from the blades. Flt. Lt. Simpson holds a difficult hover against the "instinct" of the plane's auto-flight control system.

Co-pilot FO Ian Macfarlane (24), with the appetising address, Half-a-loaf Cottage, Muirton, Lossiemouth, comes crackling on intercom. "I didn't realise just how severe the cliffs are here." He is making his first Ben Nevis call.

Shortly, after dropping us back in Glen Nevis greenery, the Sea King is off on an all-night vigil over a trawler taking water badly but finally limping into Lerwick — a typical long and testing shift for the crew.

In fact, Dave Simpson was commended recently as co-pilot in the rescue of 22 people, including children, from an exploding Swedish chemical ship on fire off Orkney in a Force-9 gale — after two other flying teams had failed.

Less glamorous but equally important are the climbing RAF rescue teams at Kinloss and Leuchars. I spent much of the training day with the hardy Kinloss squad on the short but steep walls at Pollidubh in Glen Nevis.

Team leader Flt. Sgt. Ray Sefton (41), from Aviemore, was awarded the BEM in 1977 for long and dedicated service to mountain rescue.

"Sunshine", as the aero-electronics engineer is widely known in rescue, recalls sheepishly that as a fresh-faced Londoner heading north to his first RAF posting, he and his equally-raw mates quit the train at Kinross instead of Kinloss, an 'ell of a difference.

After 25 years in the RAF and nearly as long in rescue — 10 of his total 24 years as an RAF team leader — Ray is now highly



"BARROW boy" Jun. Tech. Bill Batson (24) descends a rock face with "casualty" SAC Bruce West (23).

adept at finding his way around Scotland.

In that quarter-century, Flt. Sgt. Sefton has spent most weekends away from home on Highland hills and highways, training for call-outs or actually recovering mountain casualties. His wife, Myrtle, an Aviemore lass, clearly deserves a half-share in that BEM.

The couple have an 18-year-old son Ivan, reading history at Oxford, and a daughter Caroline, aged 16, at Kingussie High School.

Ray was rescue leader at Leuchars for a couple of spells before taking charge at Kinloss nearly four years ago. He heads a full-time corps of five, including his deputy, Cpl. Terry Moore (27), a wireless operator and two drivers. And there are about 22 RAF part-timers who train evenings and weekends.

They play a roving role in rescue, taking part in between 15 and 20 searches and evacuations a year, apart from their major

security and rescue function in the event of aircraft crashes.

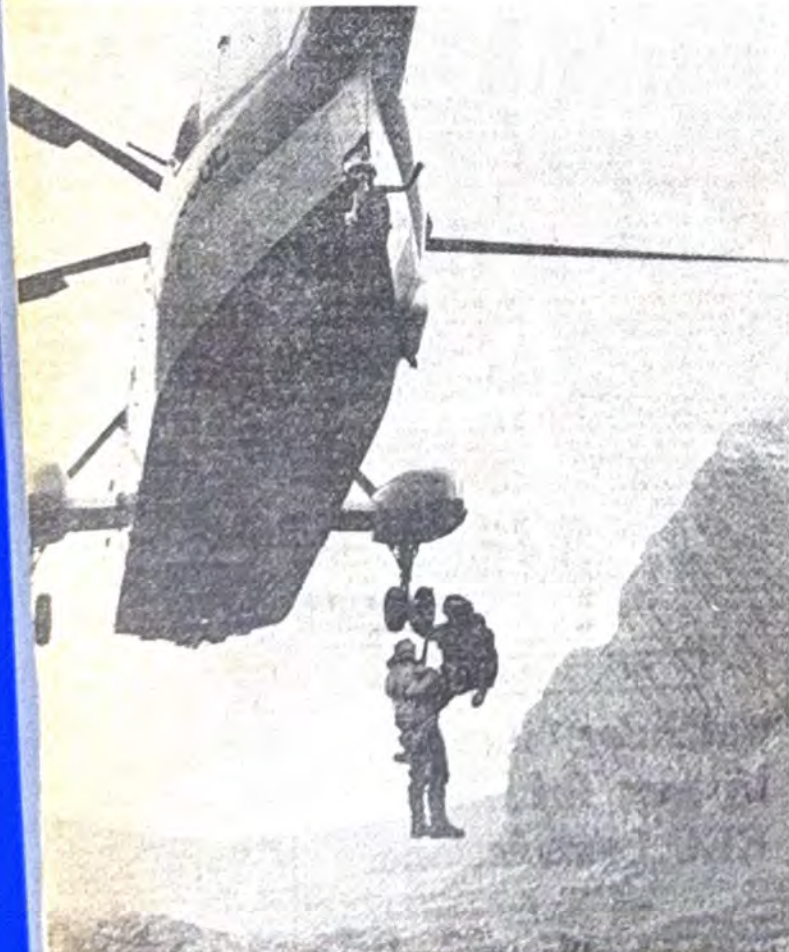
"Attrition among rescue recruits at the station is as high as 80%," says Ray. "Often one weekend on rescue training is enough. After five or six outings, our man usually slots in."

RAF rescue, as a fully-organised service, evolved just after World War II in Scotland to rescue pilots and secure classified documentation and equipment after plane crashes, often in mountain terrain. Kinloss were on call-out to

Lumsden, Ben Lui and Skye last year.

Kinloss cover the Grampians and northern Highlands, including Skye, but often range more widely. "We have the mobility and logistics to operate nearly anywhere quickly," says Ray.

The team have their own Land-Rovers and equipment trucks garaged at Kinloss and a hut with offices, stores, maps and lecture room. Evening briefings are popular. "Maybe because we have the best little bar at the station," Ray smiles.



GEORGE MUIR winches down from a Sea King with Ray Sefton in Coire Leis on Ben Nevis.

DUTCH AIRMEN SNATCHED FROM SEA



A Nimrod from St Mawgan co-ordinated the dramatic rescue last month of nine Dutch airmen from freezing 30 foot seas after their Breguet Atlantique crashed while shadowing the Soviet aircraft carrier Kiev off the coast of Scotland.

The Nimrod, captained by Flt Lt Charles Montgomery, acted as the on-scene commander whilst RAF and Navy helicopters winched up survivors from two liferafts. Three other men died in the freezing Atlantic while trying to reach the liferafts.

SURVIVORS

The nine survivors were later landed at a hospital in Londonderry where they were treated for exposure and petrol burns.

Flt Lt Charles Montgomery gave his account of the rescue — "The sea was very rough and conditions were dreadful. A 40 knot wind was blowing with heavy squalls of sleet and snow. We reached the scene of the crash just before the wreckage of the aircraft sank. The radio beacons from the liferafts were giving out signals."

"Then I saw two open dinghies, one man was waving on his own from one. In the second dinghy eight men were huddled together and crying."

"The pilot of the Atlantique did a tremendous job in ditching the aircraft so successfully in such bad weather conditions."

NINE RESCUED IN SEA DRAMA



An aircraft similar to the one which crashed

By JAMES TAYLOR

NINE Dutch navymen were plucked to safety in an Atlantic blizzard yesterday.

But three others died after a Nato patrol plane ditched while keeping watch on Soviet sea movements.

The men spent two and a half hours of misery huddled beneath the canvas tarpaulins of their liferaft waiting for help.

The dramatic rescue began after the Dutch Atlantique twin turbo-prop plane sent out a "may-day" call.

Seconds later it ploughed into stormy seas 113 miles west of Colonsay and about 100 miles north west of Mullin Head in Northern Ireland.

Two Sea King helicopters

from Prestwick, one from Londonderry, and an RAF Nimrod from St Mawgan, Cornwall, were sent out.

The Nimrod spotted flares, then two liferafts. The helicopters, battered by 40-mile-an-hour winds and blizzard conditions, winched the men to safety one by one.

They were given immediate medical attention and questioned in the hope of finding the three missing men. The bodies were recovered shortly after.

After landing the survivors at Londonderry, the helicopter crews returned to Prestwick with the bodies.

Last night the 36-year-old captain of the ill-fated plane, Lt. Theo Postma, said he had to ditch because "technical problems" had developed.

Nine Dutchmen rescued But three die after ditching in Atlantic

RESCUE helicopters snatched nine Dutch airmen from two liferafts in the gale-lashed Atlantic yesterday after their maritime patrol plane crashed while shadowing a Soviet aircraft carrier off West Scotland.

Three men died in 30ft. seas while trying to reach the liferafts. The nine survivors who were landed at Londonderry's Altnagevin Hospital for treatment for exposure, were last night described as comfortable.

They were not badly hurt, although one was burnt by petrol.

One Navy Sea King helicopter from Prestwick picked up eight survivors, another winched up one survivor and one body and an RAF helicopter from Londonderry brought up two bodies.

Lt John Rich, pilot of the first helicopter, said last night: "I believe the three who died abandoned the aircraft wearing lifejackets and swam around trying to make it to the liferafts."

He said they almost certainly died from cold rather than from drowning.

Lt Rich (25), from Cowes, Isle of Wight, received the first call about the crash at Prestwick just after 10 a.m. and his helicopter raced to the scene, 100 miles off Scotland's West Coast.

"We saw two liferafts, about half-a-mile apart, one with eight men in it and the other with one man."

"Our normal hover height is 40ft. but because of the sea condition it dropped to 20ft," he said.

They did not put a winch man down, but lifted the survivors directly from the liferaft.

The operation would normally have taken only 10 minutes in calm conditions but because of the rough seas it took half an hour.

"The third man up was suffering from hypothermia and because of that we decided to make for hospital in Londonderry," said Lt Rich.

"The men were smelling strongly of fuel from the air-

craft. We did not see any wreckage."

The French-built twin turbo-prop Atlantique aircraft, with 12 crewmen aboard, had been shadowing the Soviet aircraft carrier Kiev and her escort of two Kresta cruisers 300 miles further out in the Atlantic.

A big rescue operation was mounted immediately after the plane was reported missing.

The Royal Navy frigate HMS Brighton was diverted to the scene from her role as Kiev's shadow.

The RAF Lossiemouth helicopter which picked up the two bodies arrived on the scene after the navy helicopters.

Which operator, Flt-Sgt Robbie Sutton (33), Duffus, said: "When we got there, there were four men unaccounted for."

"We began a search, along with the Navy and we found one man floating in the water. "We pulled him in, but unfortunately he was dead. We then icked up a second chap in the water. Again we pulled him in, but he too was dead."

"The sea was very strong. One minute I was in the water and the next minute I was 30ft. to 40ft. above it."

The captain of the RAF Nimrod, Flt-Lt. Charles Montgomery, said: "We scrambled at 10 a.m. and on reaching the scene we saw the wreckage of the ditched aircraft in the water just about to sink."

"The sea conditions were terrible, but the pilot of the Atlantique must have done a tremendous job to have ditched the aircraft intact," said Flt-Lt. Montgomery.



AN ATLANTIQUE aircraft similar to the one which crashed into the sea west of Stornoway yesterday.



15 JAN 1981

John Prince
Geoff Clements
Mick Headleand
Robbie Sutton

R.A.F. 'Copter Contacts Missing Walkers

FOUR hill-walkers, missing overnight in this winter's fiercest storm in the North, were found yesterday afternoon by an R.A.F. helicopter in remote Corriemulzie, Central Sutherland.

The men, led by forestry student David Kirkwood, who is based at Shin Forest, Lairg, had set out on Friday with the intention of seeing some of the countryside in Assynt.

When they had not shown up yesterday morning, forestry worker Tony Coull of Achany alerted the police at Dornoch.

After a search, their small blue car was seen several miles from the Oykel Bridge Hotel on the track to remote Corriemulzie Lodge. But there was no sign of the walkers.

An R.A.F. crew, scrambled from Lossiemouth, made contact with the men as they walked back to their car in the glen.

It is thought they had sheltered for the night in a shepherd's bothy six miles up the glen.

17 JAN 1981

Jim Gatherer
Graham Cannell
Bill Campbell
Rick Bragg

Two climbers saved after 400ft. fall on north face of Nevis

TWO climbers who fell 400ft. were rescued yesterday from the blizzard-swept north face of Ben Nevis.

One was taken off by an RAF Lossiemouth Sea King helicopter and the other was taken to hospital by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

The two, who were on a climb known as the Bob Run in Coire Leis, are David Dawson (40), of 10 Fort Matilda Place, Greenock, and James Mathie (27), Hillfoot Avenue, Dumbarton.

They were spotted by another climber, who raised the alarm.

Many of the Lochaber Moun-

tain Rescue Team had spent the night in a hut at the foot of the north face, and had to return up the mountain at lunchtime to join the search.

Meanwhile other climbers had succeeded in getting the less seriously injured man to the hut.

The helicopter, piloted by Flt. Lt. Dave Cosby, flew the 2000ft. to the hut to pick him up.

"The wind was pretty unpredictable with a lot of draughts," he said. "After we made three attempts to land at the hut, we jettisoned some fuel and landed at the fourth attempt."

The man was taken to Belford Hospital, Fort-William.

The second man was taken to the hut by the rescue team, but the helicopter was unable to get back up to pick him up in the rapidly deteriorating weather and the onset of darkness.

The man was taken down the mountainside to Belford Hospital, where both men were last night said to be "comfortable".

The helicopter crew, whose other members were co-pilot F.O. Ian McFarlane, winch operator Sgt. Mick Headleand and winchman Flt. Sgt. Robbie Sutton, spent the night at Fort-William.

HILL WALKERS
CRITICISED:
SEE PAGE 2

18 JAN 1981

Dave Cosby
Ian Macfarlane
Mick Headleand
Robbie Sutton

N. Wales climbers hit by avalanche

SIX climbers from the National Mountaineering Centre at Capel Curig were caught in an avalanche in the Cairngorms last night and swept 500 feet.

Five of them including two instructors were injured.

They were airlifted from the slopes by an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter to hospital in Inverness.

The injured were climbing instructors David Alcock of Plas y Brenin, who received a broken leg and Nigel Timmins, of Llanrwst. Helen Evans, of Birmingham also broke a leg, and the others were David Elmar of Rossendale, and John Black of Millom, Cumbria.

The party were climbing on 3700 feet Craig Meagidh and split into two groups. Mr Timmins (28) was behind the other six climbers in his group when they were struck by the slab avalanche about 1000 feet from the summit.

The other group of 10 were climbing in another gully at the time and escaped it.

Mr Timmins said: "I looked up and saw a pile of snow coming past me and I saw a body in it. Then the others came falling past me and then I was hit by the snow."

He said he was bounced around and swept about 500 feet down the mountain. He landed in snow and when he looked around he saw nearly everyone had landed close together. One member of his group managed to escape the avalanche and came running down to help.

Mr Timmins said they were fortunate not to have been seriously injured. Another party member Richard Dowsett (25) made his way to Aberarder Farm House, Laggan—about 10 miles away where he telephoned to raise the alarm while the injured were helped down the mountain by unhurt climbers.

At the Plas y Brenin last night, deputy director, Roger Orgill was standing by for more news of what had happened.

He said: "All I know for sure is that we have one instructor and one student with a broken leg each."

"There is no serious injury. They are clean breaks and there are no complications as far as I know."

11 FEB 1981

Geoff Clements
Mike Lakey
Bill Campbell
Roger Whitehead

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Crippled boat is taken under tow



Aberdeen fishers are safe
after drifting helplessly

AN ABERDEEN fishing boat was safely under tow last night after drifting helplessly for nearly 24hrs in the storm-lashed Atlantic.

The 206-ton great-line fishing vessel Ardenlea was taken under tow by the Polish bulk carrier Ziema Maszowiecka near Rockall, about 180 miles west of the Outer Hebrides.

Coastguards said last night they were heading for the Pentland Firth — their actual destination was not known.

The drama began on Wednesday night when the Ardenlea's rudder was damaged,

By MITCHELL REID

leaving the vessel with no steering.

Attempts by her nine-man crew to repair the damaged rudder only succeeded in fouling up the propeller, according to Clyde coastguards, and the vessel began drifting helplessly in Force 9 gale conditions.

The coastguards said the Ardenlea asked a Russian factory ship about 150 miles away for help but they refused.

A spokesman said last night: "As it was not a distress or May Day call the Russians were not obliged to help."

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth flew to Ben-

becula as a precaution and two fishery protection vessels, the Westra and the Jura, were put on standby off St Kilda. All were stood down, however, once the Polish vessel had the Ardenlea under tow.

The Ardenlea, skippered by Mr Bob Patrick from Anstruther, has a five crew. She was due to return to Aberdeen from the Rockall grounds in about a week.

It was her first trip in about two months. Normally she would not have been fishing off Rockall at this time of year because of the weather conditions but she moved because the Faroes grounds are closed.



THE ARDENLEA ... damaged rudder

REDS LEAVE BOAT TO DRIFT

By GAVIN DOCHERTY

A GIANT Russian factory ship today refused to help a Scots fishing boat drifting helplessly in the storm-tossed Atlantic.

The captain of the Konstantine Olchanski said "Net" when asked by coastguards to respond to the distress call.

Instead a fishing vessel from Shetland is now on its way to the Aberdeen-registered Ardenlea with nine men on board.

RUDDER

It has been drifting helplessly 200 miles west of Benbecula in the Hebrides since 6.30 p.m. last night.

Clyde coastguard Ron Drysdale, who is co-ordi-

nating the rescue, said: "We made a radio request to the Russian captain for help. His ship was the only one in the area."

It is on its way back to Russia and was about 140 miles north of where the Ardenlea was drifting.

Its captain said he did not wish to turn back since the nine fishermen were in no apparent danger.

An RAF Sea King helicopter stood by at Benbecula as a Polish bulk carrier made its way to assist the Ardenlea.

Coastguards say that the chopper is on alert because of gale force winds which might prevent the ship from taking the fishing vessel in tow.

A spokesman said "The situation is causing us concern because of deteriorating weather conditions."

5 FEB 1981

Mike Lakey
Ian MacFarlane
Mick Headleand
Roger Whitehead

An Inverness climber was recovering last night after a fall on Beinn Dearg, near Dundonnell.

David Jenkins (22), 34 Balmakyle Road, was one of a party of four Inverness mountaineers who were climbing in Pinnagill Gully yesterday afternoon when Mr Jenkins fell and injured his head.

One of his companions, Brian Ledingham, made his way down the mountain to a phone kiosk at the head of Loch Broom and raised the alarm.

Dundonnell Mountain Rescue team and a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth were called out and Mr Jenkins was flown to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. His condition last night was said to be "satisfactory".

22 FEB 1981

Jim Gatherer
Geoff Clements
Bill Campbell
Robbie Sutton

23 FEB 1981

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Ron Webb
Rick Bragg

The Press and Journal

234th Year

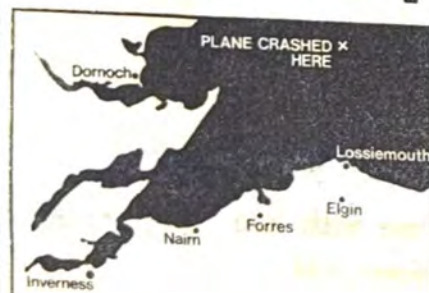
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RAF Lossie pilot missing after jet hits sea



A YOUNG RAF student pilot was missing presumed dead last night after his Hunter jet aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth spun out of control and plunged into the Moray Firth, 20 miles north east of Lossiemouth.

The pilot was later named as 23-year-old Flt-Lt Laurence Warner from Leigh on Sea, Essex. A bachelor, he had been in the RAF for four years.

The accident happened around 4 pm yesterday when two single seat Hunters from the station's No. 2 Tactical Weapons Unit — one of them

By BRUCE TAYLOR

piloted by an instructor — were taking part in a routine training exercise.

An RAF spokesman said: "The two aircraft were flying at a height of 1700ft. when one of them inexplicably went onto a steep dive and hit the sea."

"The instructor had radioed to the student to eject but received no response."

A Sea King search and rescue helicopter from Lossiemouth 202 Squadron was over the crash scene within half an hour and located a small amount of debris floating on the sea.

The helicopter stayed at the

scene until after dark. A marine craft from Alness continued the search throughout the night and divers were on their way.

A board of inquiry has been convened to probe the cause of the crash — the fourth involving a Hunter since the Tactical Weapons Unit was established at Lossiemouth in late 1978.

On completing their flying training, student pilots pass to the Tactical Weapons Unit to train in weaponry and tactics in warlike conditions.

The other crashes involving Lossiemouth Hunters were:

July, 1979 — Hunter crashed into Enard Bay, Wester Ross; pilot ejected safely.



A HUNTER jet similar to the one which crashed yesterday.

February, 1980 — Hunter crashed into to Coolins, Skye; pilot killed.

May, 1980 — Hunter crashed into hillsides at Dufftown; pilot ejected and injured.

Holiday couple die in the Coolins

A COUPLE who perished in the Coolin mountain range in Skye died three-quarters-of-a-mile apart, the man only two miles from the safety of their remote holiday cottage.

His body lay off the path they had taken together when going into the mountains last Tuesday morning. The woman's body, badly injured, was on the slopes of a hill beyond.

Miss Alison Willis (26), from the Oxford area and Australian Mr Keith Tate (32), rented a cottage near Sligachan road junction last Monday for four days.

They went to Skye from Keswick, Cumbria, for a short break. Jobless, they had worked in youth hostels in the Keswick area last year.

Last Tuesday Mr Tate phoned the local police saying he and Miss Willis were going hill walking in the Coolins named the area, and said they would return by 6 p.m. that evening.

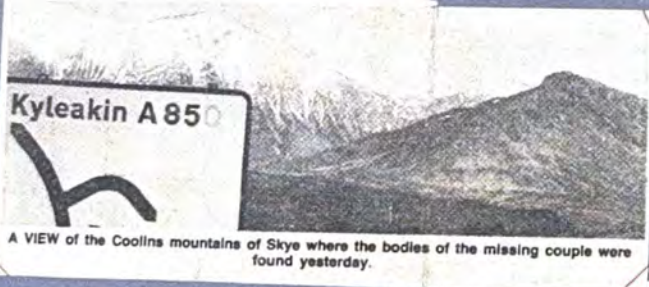
Inquiries started on Wednesday morning when no further

word was heard from the couple and the cottage at Allt Derag showed no traces of their return. Later in the day some members of Skye Mountain Rescue team went to the area stated by Mr Tate and possibly passed his body where it lay below the glen path. They searched until midnight then quit the hills for an early start on Thursday morning.

Around lunch-time yesterday the RAF helicopter spotted Mr Tate's body on its fourth sweep of the range and landed to recover the remains. About 90 minutes later a group of ground searchers discovered the body of Miss Willis. Post mortems are to be held in Inverness.

It is believed Miss Willis was injured in the afternoon of the day they set out, Tuesday, and Mr Tate made her as comfortable as possible before setting out for help, the nearest place being the Sligachan Hotel near their holiday cottage.

But, on his way, possibly going too fast for the uncertain terrain, he fell from the path and suffered head injuries from which he died.



Fell walkers found dead

THE bodies of a fell walking couple missing since Tuesday on the Isle of Skye were found yesterday by rescue teams. Australian Mr Keith Tate (32) is believed to have fallen to his death from a path while seeking help for his companion Miss Alison Willis (26), who is from the Oxford area. Their bodies were found three-quarters of a mile apart on the Cuillin mountain range after an intensive search by mountain rescue teams and an RAF helicopter.

Bodies of couple found on mountain

The bodies of a couple missing since Tuesday on the Isle of Skye have been found by rescue teams.

Australian Mr Keith Tate (32), is believed to have fallen to his death from a path while seeking help for his companion Miss Alison Willis (26), who is from the Oxford area.

Their bodies were yesterday found three-quarters of a mile apart on the Cuillin mountain range after an intensive search by mountain rescue teams and an RAF helicopter.

An earlier theory that a third person was with them was discounted.

The couple, who had been living in Keswick, Cumbria, were both experienced fell walkers.

They told police on Tuesday they were going out but would return to their holiday cottage by 6 p.m.

The search was launched when they failed to turn up.

Climbers found dead

TWO climbers missing since Tuesday on Skye were found dead yesterday and there are fears for the safety of a companion.

The bodies — found three-quarters-of-a-mile apart — were spotted by an RAF helicopter after a six-hour air and ground search of the Cuillins.

They were identified as Mr Keith Tate, 32, an Australian, and Miss Alison Willis, 26, who came from the Oxford area.

The helicopter spotted Mr Tate's body in Glen Sligachan and search parties later came across the woman's body nearby on the slopes of foothills.

One theory is that Miss Willis was injured in a fall and Mr Tate went for help, only to die of exposure on the way back in the worsening weather.

Puzzle of Skye hillwalker who died twice

By ALAN HUTCHISON

The deaths of two hillwalkers on Skye last week are believed to have revealed a bizarre fake suicide in England last year. Last Thursday, a 32-year-old man, known as Keith Tate, was found dead less than a mile from the body of his woman companion, Miss Alison Willis (26), a professor's daughter from Oxford.

He is now thought to be the same person who was believed drowned last April when a pile of clothing on a beach in Dorset led police to list Mr Keith Greenfield-Hunter, a married man, of High Street, Pembury, Kent, as "missing presumed drowned."

When police tried to contact the next of kin after last week's tragedy on Skye they found the man had given a false name.

DOCUMENTS

Mr Andra Haughney, Procurator-Fiscal at Portree, Skye, said that positive identification by relatives must wait until later today at Inverness.

But a spokesman for Kent police said that the man who travelled to Skye under the name Tate was found to have Greenfield-Hunter's passport and other documents on his body. Scottish police telephoned his father and wife in Bristol and they were now travelling to Inverness to identify the body.

The Kent spokesman added that after Greenfield-Hunter's disappearance from his home in April last year, his car and clothing were found in Dorset, and it was believed he had drowned himself in the sea.

The spokesman said that after his apparent "death" Greenfield-Hunter had travelled extensively. His passport indicates he went to Los Angeles and later to France and Israel.

From July last year he had lived under the name of Tate and worked as assistant warden

at a youth hostel in the Keswick area, the spokesman added.

Miss Willis had also worked at a hostel in the area and Mr Bob Barnaby, the warden, described the pair as "very pleasant people."

"I only saw Keith when he came to visit Alison and, as far as I knew, he was just a perfectly ordinary person who came up for the season to do the job and that was that."

He is believed to have told friends in the Keswick area that his wife had been killed in a car crash.

Miss Willis's father, Dr B. T. Willis, a physicist, said yesterday: "This is a purely private matter. My daughter fortunately was totally ignorant of the correct name of the man with whom she was walking."

NO TRACE

Post-mortems on the bodies of the man and Miss Willis showed he had died of exposure and she had apparently fallen 500 feet, receiving multiple injuries.

Mr Haughney refused to speculate on the true identity of the man but it is understood he had been identified as Keith Tate by Mr David Cox, of Keswick. A social worker, Mr Cox and his wife Jan had the couple staying with them recently while they were jobless.

Last Sunday they stayed in a Portree guest-house then booked a remote holiday cottage for four nights and moved in on Monday. On Tuesday morning the man phoned the local police to say he and his woman friend intended hill-walking in a certain area of the mountains and would return to the cottage at nightfall.

On Wednesday morning no trace was found of them and a search by the island's mountain rescue team was organised by police. The search resumed on Thursday, aided by an RAF helicopter and dogs, and at noon the body of the man was found near an entrance to a corrie. Soon afterwards a search party found the body of Miss Willis inside the corrie and about half a mile from her companion.

26 FEB 1981

Dave Cosby
Graham Cannell
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg



Lossie copter in daring rescue

SEAMAN David Burdett was recovering in hospital last night after being plucked from an oil supply boat in treacherous seas on Saturday.

He was rescued by an RAF helicopter as the vessel was pounded by 50m.p.h. winds in Peterhead's outer harbour.

Mr Burdett's left leg was broken and gashed from knee to thigh when he was trapped between two heavy containers on board the Oil Mariner.

The heavy swell prevented the boat from docking and coastguards called in a Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth.

A winchman was gingerly placed on the rolling deck and the injured man was brought

Seaman is plucked from vessel in Peterhead Bay

up with a doctor who had been put aboard by a pilot cutter.

Mr Burdett (41) East Cowes, Isle of Wight, was flown to the Accident and Emergency Unit of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary where last night his condition was "comfortable".

The helicopter touched down briefly at Peterhead Links to pick up plasma blood substitute from the Cottage Hospital.

Winchman Sgt. Rick Bragg (27), 29 Ashfield Drive, Elgin, said: "There was quite a swell. If it had been in the open sea it would have been impossible.

"But due to crew co-opera-

tion and practice it all went very well."

The crew of the rescue helicopter were FO Geoff Clements, co-pilot Flt Lt. Jim Gatherer, winch operator Flt-Sgt. Mick Headleand and Sgt. Bragg.

DANGLING precariously from the winch wire of an RAF Lossiemouth Sea King search-and-rescue helicopter the winchman closes with the stern of the gale-lashed Oil Mariner in Peterhead Bay.

28 FEB 1981

Jim Gatherer
Geoff Clements
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg

Search for crew as fishing ^{A342} boat sinks

Coastguards and an R.A.F. helicopter were searching for two men missing after a fishing boat sank off the West coast of Scotland to-day.

The other two men in the four-man crew of the boat, the Loch Erisort, have already been rescued, said a spokesman for Stornoway Coastguards, co-ordinating the search.

The fishing boat sank at 3 a.m. to-day in the area of Lochinver, on the West coast of Sutherland. It is thought it may have hit a rock.

The boat was fishing from the small fishing port of Lochinver, although it is based at Ullapool, some 10 miles further south, the spokesman said.

Air-sea ^{A342} search for men

COASTGUARDS and an RAF helicopter are searching for two men missing after a fishing boat sank off the west coast of Scotland early today.

The other two men in the four-man crew of the boat, the Loch Erisort, have already been rescued, said Stornoway Coastguards, who are co-ordinating the search.

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The boat was fishing from the small fishing port of Lochinver, although it is based at Ullapool, some ten miles further south, coastguards said.

Coastguards are checking the shoreline along Loch Inver and other fishing boats are searching the sea.

ANOTHER TWO BUCKIE FISHERS MISSING ^{A342}

Coastguards and an RAF helicopter are searching for two men, missing after a fishing-boat sank off the West coast of Scotland early today.

The other two men in the four-man crew of the boat have already been rescued, said a spokesman for Stornoway Coastguards, who are co-ordinating the search.

The fishing boat sank at 3 a.m. today in the area of Lochinver, Sutherland. It is thought it may have hit rocks.

The Survivors.

The crew were on their way back to their homes in Buckie to attend a remembrance service for the six-man crew of the Buckie boat Celerity which went down in the Pentland Firth only 10 days ago.

Missing are skipper Ian Smith (26) of Blantyre Terrace and David Bruce (22) of Seatown, both Buckie.

The two survivors are Kenneth Bruce (19) of Whinhill Road, Banff, David's brother and Douglas Smith (19) of Douglas Crescent, Buckie who is not related to the skipper.

One survivor was picked up by another fishing boat while the other managed to reach shore.

An RAF helicopter from Lossiemouth is taking part in the operations.

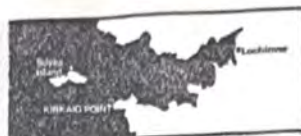
Search for fishermen

Coastguards and an RAF helicopter are searching for two men missing after a fishing boat sank off the west coast of Scotland early today. The other two men in the four-man crew of the boat, the Loch Erisort, have been rescued, said a spokesman for Stornoway Coastguards.

Buckie mourns again as two more are lost at sea Searches prove fruitless

By PAUL
BRENN

A BOAT searches Lochinver Bay for the missing Buckie fishermen.



ON THE DAY when the Scottish fishing community paid homage to the six crewmen of the Buckie fishing boat *Celerity*, which went down without trace just over a week ago, Buckie was again plunged into gloom with the loss of two more fishermen.

Skipper Ian Smith (28), 2 Blantyre Terrace, Inverness, and Banff-born David Bruce (22), 17 Seatown, were lost early yesterday when the Ullapool-registered Loch Erisort struck rocks and overturned off Lochinver, West Sutherland.

Skipper Smith, who gave up studying chartered accountancy to go to sea, leaves a wife Linda and sons Craig (9) and six-year-old Mark.

David Bruce leaves a wife Margaret and sons Ryan (3) and Jody, a year old. Mrs Bruce is the third sister in one family to be widowed by drownings.

The other crewmen on the Loch Erisort, David Bruce's brother Kenneth, and Douglas Smith, both 19, were saved.

DARKNESS

Last night, hopes of finding the missing men had faded after vain land, sea and air searches of the area just off Kierkaig Point at the entrance to Lochinver Bay.

The accident happened in darkness just after 1 a.m. as the Loch Erisort and sister trawler *Ilene* were returning to Lochinver after a short fishing trip. The night was calm and neither vessel was heavily laden with fish.

The *Ilene* was about five minutes in front.

As the Loch Erisort went to pass Kierkaig Point she struck the rocks. The skipper called the *Ilene*, but as she turned back to the rescue, the Loch Erisort climbed the rocks, overturned and sank in about 60ft. of water.

The *Ilene* sent off distress flares and turned her spotlights to where the boat had been. All they could see was the stern and a propeller sticking out of the water — but these quickly disappeared.

In the light of the flare they saw Kenneth Bruce in the icy waters. They dragged him aboard and continued the search for the other crew.

Then they spotted Douglas Smith shouting and waving to them from a rocky ledge on the reef. They launched a lifeboat but it was unable to manoeuvre close enough to pick him up.

A second lifeboat was launched from another fishing boat, the *Vigilant* of Lossiemouth, under Skipper Sandy Smith, which had joined the rescue attempt. But this also failed to get near enough to the rocks.

By this time Lochinver lifeboat had been launched, and it eventually manoeuvred close enough to the rocks to rescue Douglas Smith.

About a dozen other boats from the harbour had by this time joined the search, including the *Oliver Leaf*, skippered by Mr George Smith, the missing skipper's uncle.

The survivors were taken to the Fishermen's Mission at Lochinver where they were looked after by Lynn Cook (25) until they went back to help in the search.

AIRLOCK

She said: "They were tired but not injured. We fed them but they were very anxious to get back out to the search."

"At first we could not believe that a fishing boat had been lost because the weather was so calm and the night so clear."

Divers Alistair Ross, Bonar Bridge, and Chris Murray, Dornoch, were called in to search the sunken boat to see if the missing men were still on board — perhaps still alive in an airlock.



MISSING skipper
Mr Ian Smith
and his wife, Linda



27 MARCH 1981

Dave Cosby
Dave Simpson
Mick Headland
Vic Oliver

MISSING crewman David
Bruce

She spotted flare go up



THE emergency services were alerted when the distress flare from the *Ilene* was spotted by Mrs Gladys Thomas (above), Bad na Ben, whose bungalow overlooks Kierkaig, where the Loch Erisort struck.

"I looked out my window and saw the flare go up. I could not believe my eyes. I told my husband to phone 999," she said.

Costguards were mobilised by police at Dornoch and the Lochinver lifeboat and auxiliary services were called out. A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was also scrambled, but returned to base after about three hours.

They found the Loch Erisort lying upside down against the rocks with the bottom of the boat about 30ft. below the surface.

They searched the wheelhouse, alley way and lockers but found nothing. It was found to be too dangerous to enter the accommodation area or engine room as an under-water swell was rocking the boat.

As dawn broke the search continued and an RAF helicopter joined in from D Flight, 202 Squadron, Lossiemouth.

Costguards combed the rugged coastline and coves around Kierkaig Point, and Assynt Mountain Rescue Team joined in.

But as the day wore on hopes of finding the two men grew slimmer.

In the late afternoon a life-jacket from the vessel was found floating near the rocks by a fisherman — but there were no sign of further survivors.

The search was finally called off in the late afternoon, but will resume again this morning, when searchers will concentrate on the coastline.

A spokesman for Stornoway Coastguard station said: "A very intensive search was carried out by land, air and sea — but it was fruitless."

Second Sinking Stuns Buckie TWO FISHERMEN FEARED LOST: TWO SAVED

TWO Buckie fishermen were feared lost yesterday when the Ullapool-registered boat Loch Erisort capsized and sank off the West Coast fishing port of Lochinver.

Another two crewmen were plucked to safety minutes after the vessel went down in the early hours of the morning.

The cause of the sinking was not immediately clear but there were reports that the boat had struck rocks.

The missing men are the skipper, Mr Ian Smith, Tanera, Blantyre Terrace, Portessie, and Mr David Bruce (21), 17 Seatown.

The two who were rescued were named as Mr Bruce's 19-year-old brother Kenneth, 21 Whinhill Road, Banff, and Mr Douglas Smith (19), 86 Douglas Crescent, Buckie. Mr Smith is not related to the skipper.

One of the survivors was picked up by the Lochinver lifeboat, the other by the vessel *Ilene*, which is skippered by Mr Ian Smith, son, father of the missing skipper.

A Sea King helicopter with powerful searchlights was scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth as a full-scale search of the area got under way for the missing crewmen.

A flotilla of small boats

and other vessels in the area joined in at first light and divers were called in to search the wreckage of the Loch Erisort, which was lying in less than 50ft of water, in the hope that the men might be trapped in an air pocket inside the hull.

Meanwhile coastguards and volunteers made a series of checks along the rugged coastline around Lochinver in case they had been swept ashore by tidal currents.

OIL SLICK

The pilot of the RAF helicopter, Flt-Lt Dave Cosby, reported seeing an oil slick in the area where the Loch Erisort had gone down, but there was no sign of any survivors. The Sea King returned to its base at Lossiemouth around 9.30 a.m.

The Bruce brothers were

at the centre of a sinking drama only four months ago when the Inverness-registered fishing boat *Marandra*, of which David Bruce was skipper, foundered on rocks near Stromness in Orkney.

The four-man crew took to a lifeboat as the vessel started to break up and succeeded in reaching the shore without injury. It was Mr Bruce's first trip as skipper.

News of the latest tragedy filtered through to Buckie just as the community was preparing for a memorial service yesterday afternoon for the six-man crew of the local boat *Celerity* which sank during a storm in the Pentland Firth only last week.

That loss brought to 22 the number of Buckie fishermen who had died at sea since June 1979.

BIG SEARCH ON FOR MISSING N.E. SEINER

A FULL SCALE search got under way off the North Coast of Scotland today as fears mounted for the safety of the Buckie seine net fishing vessel Celerity which has a crew of six on board.

The last contact with the vessel was at 5.15 a.m. as she ploughed her way in gale force conditions through the Pentland Firth.

A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was scrambled to carry out a search of the area between Dunnet Head and Duncansby Head.

All other shipping in the area has been asked to keep a look out and a watch is also being kept along the Caithness Coast.

The Celerity — which normally fishes off the West Coast — is skippered by Mr Sandy Bruce.

ROUGH

The alarm was raised early this morning after the staff registered vessel Crystal Sea — which had been sailing through the firth astern of the Celerity — lost radio contact with it.

A Wick radio spokesman said: "All attempts to contact the Celerity have failed so far. We are now broadcasting to all shipping and fishing vessels in the area to 'p a look out.'"

"Wick coastguards, who are coordinating the search, said that the vessel's last known position was five miles off Dunnet Head.

"The weather is pretty bad in the area," said a coastguard spokesman. "The sea is extremely rough and there is a westerly gale. We have alerted all shipping to have people keeping a look out along the shore."

A search for the Celerity got into action at first — and shortly after 9 a.m. — when a Sea King rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth, piloted by F/Lt Mike



Skipper BRUCE

Lahey took off from the Moray air station.

An RAF spokesman said that because of the strong winds, the helicopter would take some time to reach the search area.

A spokesman for the vessel's agents, the Fishermen's Mutual Association, (Buckie) Ltd, said: "All we have heard is that the coastguards have called in a helicopter."

"We have no further information at this stage. It could well be that she has taken shelter because of the weather conditions."

Skipper Bruce normally returns to Buckie from the West Coast grounds at the weekend.

An RAF Nimrod was diverted from a routine training mission to make a wide sweep of the area and a Navy minesweeper and the Orkney ferry St Ola also joined the search.

The 65ft Celerity was launched in 1972 from the Buckie yard of George Thomson and Son.

Skipper Sandy Bruce lives at Binview, Cathy Terrace, Cullen.

16 MARCH 1981

Ian Macfarlane
Mike Lahey
Bill Campbell
Vic Oliver

Airlifted

A PETERHEAD fisherman, who was airlifted from a trawler yesterday morning by a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth, was said to be in a "satisfactory" condition at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Foresterhill, last night.

Mr William Reid (42), 20 Hay Crescent, Peterhead, was picked up from the Peterhead trawler Strathgarry, 20 miles from Peterhead, and flown to hospital in Aberdeen. He is suffering from a hand injury.

20 MAR 1981

Graham Cannell
Dave Cosby
Bill Campbell
Vic Oliver

The terrible toll

By IAN MACKINTOSH

BUCKIE was a town in mourning last night.

The little fishing port has already lost 22 fishermen in the past 11 years — 15 since June 1979. Now the death toll has risen to 28.

The loss of the Celerity means that 120 men have lost their lives off the northern shores of Scotland in the past 15 years.

Among the tragedies were:

December, 1969 — SIX lost from the seine netter, Coral Isle, East of Shetland.

June, 1979 — SIX lost from the Carinthia off Orkney.

December, 1979 — SEVEN lost from the Ocean Monarch off Shetland.

1980 — THREE lost from the Bounteous off Cornwall.

The worst disaster was the loss of the registered oil survey ship Compass Rose with 18 men in April, 1975.

The tally also includes a Polish ship, the Nurzec,

lost with four men in January, 1974, the Longhope lifeboat, lost in March, 1969, with eight men, and the Fraserburgh lifeboat lost in January, 1970, with a crew of five.

Buckie councillor Alex Murray, who comes from a family of seafaring men, said: "Death is almost a part of life up here."

FAMILIES PRAY AS HOPE FADES

Air-sea search fails to find six Buckie fishermen

Hopes faded with the darkness last night for the Buckie fishing boat *Celerity* and her crew of six, missing in severe gale conditions off the north of Scotland since early morning.

As the day-long air and sea search was called off at nightfall, no trace of the vessel had been found and fears increased that the 65-foot *Celerity* had become yet another tragic statistic in the recent sad history of the Moray Firth fishing port.

Mrs Margaret Watson, sister of the *Celerity*'s skipper, Mr Sandy Bruce, said, "This sort of thing is every fisherman's family nightmare.

"The waiting is the worst thing.

"We haven't given up hope yet.

"We are praying they will all come through safely."

It had been hoped that the vessel had taken shelter from the force 8 gales in one of the small bays along the Pentland Firth, but even that last possibility had been discounted after an air and coastal hunt.

The *Celerity*, nine years old and built at Buckie, is skippered by Mr Bruce (38), married with a family of four who lives at 7 Cathay Terrace, Cullen.

Four of the other members of the crew live at Buckie, John Innes (45), married with three children, Cluny Terrace; Francis Goodall (30), married with two children, 28 McKenzie Road; Richard Clark (47), married with three children, 10 Linn Crescent, and George Reid (35), married with two children.

The sixth member of the crew is 21-year-old William Grant, 28a Gordon Street, Portgordon, who was married only last

October and whose wife is expecting their first child.

Related

As is common along the Moray Firth fishing ports, some of the crew are related.

George Reid is the brother-in-law of Richard Clark who is also father-in-law to William Grant.

Last night, the families were clinging to a dwindling hope that the vessel may have been blown north off course and had taken shelter somewhere along the Orkney coastline.

The final stages of yesterday's search were concentrated on the west end of the firth where the vessel was last known to be.

She had been in radio contact at 5.15 a.m. with the Banff fishing boat *Crystal Sea*, as both boats headed eastwards for home after fishing off the west coast.

Atrocious

The *Celerity* was then astern of the *Crystal Sea* with conditions atrocious.

Force 9 and 10 gales whipped the sea into huge waves with occasional showers of sleet and snow reducing visibility.

When the Banff vessel reached east of Duncansby

Head, there was no sign of the *Celerity*, and she could not be raised on the radio.

The skipper of the *Crystal Sea* contacted Wick coastguards who immediately asked other shipping in the area to keep a look-out for the vessel, and later a Sea King helicopter, piloted by Flt-Lieut. Mike Lahey was alerted at R.A.F. Lossiemouth.

R.A.F. Nimrod

Later a Nimrod from R.A.F. Kinloss was diverted from a routine training mission to help and the Orkney ferry *St Ola* and a Royal Naval minesweeper also joined the hunt.

The earlier squally showers died out, allowing perfect visibility for the searchers in the later part of the day.

"The *Celerity*'s last known position was five miles north of Dunnett Head," said a Wick coastguard spokesman.

"Conditions were very bad at that time, with a westerly gale and high seas.

"It is possible that the vessel may have run for shelter, but so far no trace of her has been found."

The search will be resumed at first light, with both aircraft and shipping expected to take part.

Agent's grief

Agents for the *Celerity*, which is owned by Skipper Bruce and others, are Fishermen's Mutual Association (Buckie) Ltd.

Mr Colin Clark, financial controller, said, "We sell their fish and know the crew well.

"We're just like father and mother to them.

"I had to go round the families and tell them that the boat was overdue."

The father of George Reid, Mr William Reid, 6a Richmond Place, Portgordon, has been at sea all his working life.

He said last night, "I can't hold out any hope for the boat.

"I know what the Pentland Firth is like.

"You get bad tides ripping through and that, with the gales, makes it a death trap.

"We would have heard something by this time if they were alright."

Early command

Skipper Bruce is one of the port's most successful fishermen.

He gained his skipper's ticket when only 23 and has been in command of the *Celerity* since it was built at Thomson's yard at Buckie in 1972.

Buckie was a port that had escaped the major sea tragedies of recent years up to June 1979, when the *Carinthia* was lost off Shetland with seven of a crew.

In December of the same year, another Buckie boat, the *Ocean Monarch*, disappeared off Shetland with the loss of seven of a crew, and a few weeks later, the *Bounteous* of Buckie capsized off the Cornish coast with the loss of three of her crew of six.

Since 1971 a total of 13 vessels from the Moray Firth ports have been lost, with 46 fishermen giving their lives.



SKIPPER SANDY BRUCE



William Grant



Richard Clark



Francis Goodall



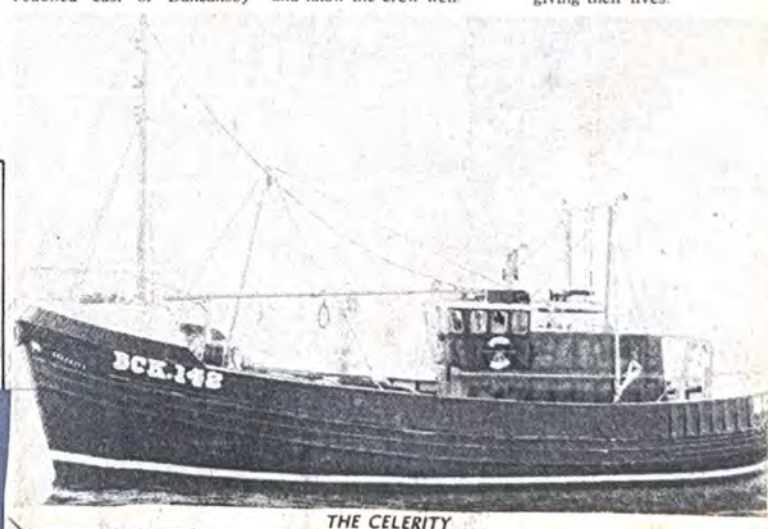
John Innes



George Reid

Historic appointment

For the first time in its 1680-year history the little European republic of San Marino elected a woman as head of state yesterday. She is Maria Lea Pedini Angelini, a ministerial secretary and a Socialist, who will act as one of its two joint captains-regent.



THE CELERITY

LOST IN THE SEA OF DEATH



FRANCIS GOODALL



JOHN INNES



GEORGE REID



RICHARD CLARK

A FISHING boat with six crewmen on board was feared lost last night.

Inshore trawler the *Celerity* had been running before a storm in the Pentland Firth, pounded by 30-foot waves.

The boat, from Buckie, Banffshire, was in full view of another trawler, the *Crystal Sea*.

Then a squall cut visibility. When it cleared the sea was empty. The *Celerity* had vanished. There was no S.O.S.

Last night the air search for the trawler was called off when the RAF helicopter ran out of fuel.

The *Crystal Sea*, which had searched for hours, put into Wick, Caithness.

For little Buckie, it was the fourth time in less than two years that tragedy had struck.



Skipper Sandy Bruce and his wife Elizabeth.

By ALAN DOW and IAN CAMERON

Six more names would be added to the 16 fishermen lost since June, 1979. Fourteen more children would be orphaned.

The *Celerity*, 42 tons and 65 feet, was skippered by father-of-four Sandy Bruce, 38, of 7 Cathy Terrace, Cullen.

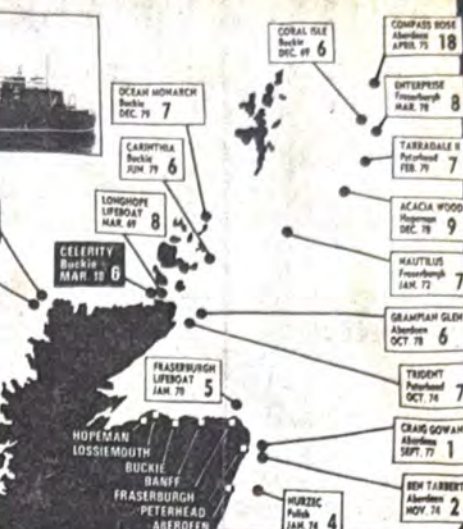
The crew were: John Innes, 45, of South View, Cluny Terrace, Francis Goodall, 30, of 28 McKenzie Road, Richard Clark, 47, of 10 Linn Crescent, George

Reid, 35, of 126 Douglas Street, all Buckie, and William Grant, 21, of 28A Gordon Street, Portgordon.

SCHOOL

Waiting fearfully for news was a 19-year-old bride. Her husband, father and uncle were on the *Celerity*. Bank clerkess Mary Grant, married William in October. She is now expecting their first child.

Richard Clark is Mary's father and



Lost at sea... where 120 men have perished in 13 years.

George Reid her uncle. Last night Mary was under sedation.

Skipper Bruce went to sea straight from school and had his own boat when he was 23. His wife, Elizabeth, 38, was also under sedation.

The couple have four children—James, 15, Keith, 14, Stephen, 12, and Melissa, eight.

John Innes's wife Veronica was with their children, Karen, 20, Leslie, 18, and Peter, 11. Francis Goodall and his wife Jean have two sons, aged four and eight.

FASTER

Richard Clark is the father of a son and two daughters. George Reid has two boys, George, six, and Martin, two. His father William, 66, said: "I went to sea all my life and I can't see much hope for them."

Coastguards were last night working on the theory that the *Celerity* had been overtaken by giant waves travelling faster than herself. One officer said:

"A wave, perhaps larger than usual, would shoot under the boat's stern and lift her side-on to the following seas. She would be quickly capsized with the waves acting like hammer blows."

Driven to take risks

THE most hostile waters in the world take a heavy toll among Scots fishermen.

The dreaded "lump of water"—a gigantic wave that can smash a ship—may have been to blame for the disappearance of the *Celerity*.

But last night some veterans were criticising the risks which smaller inshore vessels are now driven to take.

The need to catch fish, land it swiftly and pray for reasonable pierhead

prices, is a constant worry to inshore men saddled with high loans.

Boats under 80ft. run the gauntlet of the notorious Pentland Firth

Change

And fishermen are often reluctant to change.

Only this week Gilbert Buchan, president of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, warned his men that if they did not use the "open line" radio link they would risk losing the service which costs £90,000 a year.

The mercy link is open from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. each night with Wick, Stonehaven and Oban radio stations operating.

It is intended for use by skippers for ship-to-shore messages about weather conditions, warnings of mechanical problems and "good neighbour" calls.

Buoy

But there has been a reluctance by skippers to use the service properly—because it alerts rivals to a successful shoal position.

The circumstances of the *Celerity*'s dis-

appearance may have been different, but skippers who don't use the service take a terrible risk.

For years there has been talk of an emergency distress buoy which will automatically release itself from a sinking vessel and transmit signals to guide rescuers to the scene.

Lossiemouth hotelier Peter Lewis got an award from Prince Charles in Glasgow last month for such a design.

He has now formed Lossiemouth marine distress systems to manufacture the device

Helicopter might have saved wife, inquiry told



Coastguard
Leonard Scott

By IAN SHARP

A SENIOR Coastguard admitted yesterday failing to call out a helicopter to search for a missing couple because they were wrongly assumed to be dead.

When coastguard Leonard Scott declined an RAF offer of a helicopter the couple were still alive, lashed to their upturned rubber dinghy in the middle of a gale, an inquiry was told yesterday.

By the time the couple, on holiday from Germany with their children, were found following their 24-hour ordeal the woman had just died and her husband was weak from exposure.

Mr Scott, aged 44, the Coastguard district controller at Oban, told a fatal accident inquiry into the death of Mrs Margarete Zehnder, aged 56, of Bad Mergentheim, Stuttgart, West Germany, that he had requested the use of the helicopter on the first night of the search but abandoned the scheme the following day.

The Zehnders left Fionnphort on Mull in their 12ft inflatable dinghy to circumnavigate Iona while on holiday

last August. They pushed off on a Saturday morning at 11 a.m. in their four-sail vessel, waving to their three sons.

Within two hours the dinghy had upturned and the couple drifted helplessly for 24 hours before being found off the west coast of the Isle of Coll following a land and sea search which included the Islay lifeboat.

Mr Scott told Sheriff Donald MacDairmid at Oban Sheriff Court that he telephoned the Royal Naval Air, Search and Rescue Unit at Prestwick on the Saturday night, but there was no reply.

He contacted the RAF at Pitreavie Castle, Fife, and was told that because of the darkness and bad weather the helicopter crews thought it too dangerous, but they would have a helicopter standing by at first light on Sunday.

"At first light the possible use of helicopters was discussed by me with my controller at Greenock, but because of weather conditions and the length of time the couple had been missing it was

decided not to call them in," said Mr Scott.

"All the conditions were taken into account. We have written guidelines for these circumstances and life expectancy for the couple was down to a maximum of six hours if they were in the water. The temperature of the water was 11 degrees centigrade.

"By this time they had been missing for 16 hours and we thought their best bet was if they had gone ashore somewhere. If they had succumbed to the severe temperature and were in the water we believed they would have been already dead."

Mr Scott said that Strathclyde Police had requested an air search for the missing couple but that his superior, Commander John Douglas, of HM Coastguard, Greenock, who had statutory control of the operation, refused.

Mr Scott agreed with Sheriff MacDairmid that his superior had assumed the couple were already dead.

Questioned by Mr David MacNeill, procurator fiscal, about the possible use

of a helicopter, Mr Scott said: "It would not have been 100 per cent effective. It does not have an overall view and the crew become fatigued after a while. It would have had only a remote chance of finding the couple."

Mr MacNeill asked: "You are not saying helicopter crews are blind? Could the use of a helicopter not have contributed greatly in finding this couple?"

He replied: "No. By all accounts they should have been dead."

Mr Reginald Maling, a company director of Butler's Cross, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, told the court that he had been holidaying on Tiree and had volunteered to fly a policeman in his private light aircraft, at his own expense, in search of the couple.

At the end of his evidence Mr Maling asked if he could make a statement, and he said: "I was told by the police that the survival period was over and that I was being asked to help locate bodies."

"I now feel very strongly that a helicopter search should have been undertaken. I felt that if an air search

started at dawn on Sunday then Mrs Zehnder would have been found alive.

"I spoke to the RAF at Pitreavie Castle and they told me that the Coastguard ends survival times prematurely." Earlier the dead woman's husband, Herr Robert Zehnder, aged 56, a bookseller, broke down several times in the witness box as he told of the tragedy.

Mr Zehnder said the family had been holidaying in Scotland and were staying in a guest house on Mull when he and his wife decided to sail round Iona, telling the children they would be back for dinner at night. The weather was fine when they left.

"We were coming down the West Coast of Iona about 1 p.m. on Saturday when we were suddenly upturned by a wind 300 yards from the island," Mr Zehnder said through an interpreter.

At one stage they hoped to drift on to a tiny island, Reith Eilean, north of Iona, but they passed it by and at 5 p.m. they waved to a passing helicopter, but it failed to spot them.

As darkness fell they lay exhausted in the upturned craft and laboured themselves together and to the boat. Later a strong breeze blew up.

As dawn broke at 5 o'clock the dinghy drifted close to the Dutchman's Cap island, almost halfway to the Sound of Coll.

"My wife said that surely a helicopter would find us in the daylight, but I was the only thing that would save her. It would be a helicopter. As we were would have been used in any circumstances," said.

Eventually at 12.55 p.m. on Sunday the dinghy was spotted off Coll, and the Arinagour and half an hour later the couple were taken on board the Islay lifeboat, but a doctor pronounced Mrs Zehnder to be dead.

Mr Alisdair Campbell, aged 46, the coxswain of the Islay lifeboat, was searched all night for the couple, and "The use of a helicopter would have been invaluable, almost necessary. They can cover a great deal of ground in a short time."

The inquiry continues today.

Dinghy death: 'copter call was withdrawn

A fatal accident inquiry into the death of a woman off the west coast of Scotland last summer heard yesterday that a request for a helicopter was withdrawn by the coastguards.

Mrs Margarete Zender, from Bad Mergentheim, Stuttgart, died after drifting for hours on the upturned hull of a rubber dinghy.

When the inquiry opened in

Oban on Monday her husband Robert claimed that he and his wife would have been rescued far sooner if a helicopter had been used.

Yesterday, Wing Commander John Busey, operations controller at the maritime rescue headquarters at RAF Pitreavie, Dunfermline, said the decision on whether to deploy a helicopter was the coastguard's responsibility.

He explained that it was decided not to use a helicopter during the night because of weather conditions, and later the coastguards withdrew their request for help from first light.

"A success"

Commander John Douglas, regional coastguard controller at Greenock, defended his decision not to ask for helicopter aid in the morning.

"I expressed my view at the time and do not see why I should change it now," he said.

"The search operation was a success as one person was found alive."

Mr Zender described how disaster struck when their 13-foot dinghy capsized as they were sailing round Iona on August 16.

He and his wife drifted throughout the night on the upturned hull before being picked up the next day by a lifeboat.

Mrs Zender was found to be dead when they reached the shore.

Mr Zender admitted they set sail without life jackets or flares and told only their children where they were going.

Sheriff Donald MacDairmid will issue his judgment on Monday.

N.E. fishers plucked from liferaft CREW SAVED AFTER FIRE

FIVE North-east fishermen were plucked from a liferaft last night after they had been forced to abandon their blazing fishing boat seven miles off Cape Wrath.

All were reported safe and well after a major rescue alert which involved an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter and several vessels.

They were aboard the the Fraserburgh-registered Hamnavoe on what was believed to be Skipper William Beedie's first visit to the West Coast fishing grounds.

Mr David Nicol, Fraserburgh manager of the Fishermen's Mutual Association (Buckle) Ltd., the agents, named the men as Skipper Beedie, mate Ernest Tait, William Downie, Roseheartly, and father and son Clive and Trevor Summers, from Fraserburgh.

The Norwegian vessel Liebus picked up the crew and were taking them to Stornoway.



The Hamnavoe's fuel tanks blew up and the boat was reported to be sinking.

The helicopter encountered difficulty in trying to pick up the men and the pilot was quoted as saying: "I nearly got my fingers burned."

Minutes after Skipper Beedie sent out a mayday call the crewmen took to the liferaft. Less than an hour later they were rescued.

Skipper Beedie, 16 Buchan Place, Fraserburgh, radioed that the boat was on fire shortly before 9 p.m.

Coastguards alerted RAF Lossiemouth and a helicopter was scrambled to go to the Hamnavoe's aid.

Standing by were the northern lightship, Pharos, the English fishing vessel Golden Fleet and Durness Coast Rescue Company.

Well alight

Stornoway coastguards reported that the weather in the area was calm and that the Hamnavoe was well alight.

Mr Nicol said: "The Hamnavoe normally fishes the North Sea, but the fishing had not been good. The skipper had heard there was a bit of fishing on the West Coast."

Mr Nicol said the Hamnavoe sailed nine days ago. She normally lands into Peterhead.

He said he had been told she was "well ablaze" and that the crew had taken to a liferaft.

Mr Tait is understood to be the skipper of a Fraserburgh purser which is at present tied up.

The 74ft Fraserburgh-registered vessel, built at Peterhead in 1966, was on her first trip to the West Coast fishing grounds.

31 MARCH 1981

Jim Gatherer
Graham Cannell
Bill Campbell
Roger Whitehead

RESCUE DASH

Crew flee boat blaze

THE crew of a Fraserburgh fishing boat took to their liferaft last night as a fire raged through their vessel.

The drama was taking place three miles from the shore, and six miles east of Cape Wrath — Britain's most north-westerly corner.

The crew of the seine-netter Hamnavoe called the Wick Coastguard shortly before nine p.m.

By BILL MOWAT

They said: "Fire raging fiercely — we are abandoning ship."

A coastguard spokesman said the caller did not have time to give details of crew numbers.

A Sea King helicopter took off from RAF Lossiemouth.

CREW

And the lighthouse service tender-ship Pharos was on its way to the scene.

The local lobster boat Golden Fleece put out from the pier at Rispond, on Loch Erriboll, to help the stricken crew.

The coast rescue team from Durness, Sutherland, headed for the cliffs opposite the burning boat.

Visibility was three to four miles and it was calm at the time.

Coastguards can't make no comment on RAF move

COASTGUARDS had no comment yesterday on an RAF statement clearing a senior search-and-rescue expert. Wg. Cdr John Busey of any criticism over his evidence at an Oban inquiry into the death of a woman holiday-maker in a boating accident.

Wg. Cdr Busey had told the inquiry last month there was a high possibility that the woman and her husband would have been found in time if the coastguards had not turned down the offer of a rescue helicopter.

But the coastguards were cleared of any blame by Sheriff Donald MacDairmid, who disagreed with the wing-commander.

At a subsequent internal inquiry a statement issued on behalf of the assistant RAF Chief of Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Kenneth Hayr, said he had every confidence in the wing commander and his abilities.

Chief Coastguard Cdr Tim Fotherston-Dickie said yesterday: "All I have seen is a copy of the judgment and, until I get all the facts via a transcript of the evidence, I cannot say anything."

Sheriff backs coastguard action in dinghy search

By IAN SHARP

A SHERIFF cleared the coastguard service of any criticism yesterday for not summoning a helicopter to a sea search in which a woman died lashed to her upturned dinghy.

Sheriff Donald MacDairmid said that if an RAF Sea King helicopter had been called in it may not have found the woman and her husband on the storm-lashed seas off Coll.

He backed up the coastguard's handling of the 24-hour search for holidaymakers Mr Robert Zehnder, 50, of Stuttgart, West Germany, last August after the couple's inflatable dinghy upturned as they tried to circumnavigate Iona.

However, he criticised the RAF's top search and rescue officer in Scotland, Wing Commander John Busey, of Pitreavie Castle, Fife, who told the inquiry that one of his helicopters could

have found the missing couple in time if the coastguard had ordered one in.

Coastguard Leonard Scott, 44, of Oban, told the inquiry in the Sheriff Court last week that he and his superior, Commander John Douglas, decided against accepting the offer of the helicopter on the second day of the search after the laid down survival time for the Zehnders had run out, but they continued the search on land and sea.

In his judgment yesterday Sheriff MacDairmid said that he estimated Mrs Zehnder's time of death to within two-hours of her being found. Death was due to drowning, said the Sheriff, but he said that no reasonable precautions had been taken by the couple before they set out leaving their three children playing happily on the shore at Mull.

Sheriff MacDairmid said he approved of all the action taken

by the Coastguards and said that according to the Merchant Ship Search and Rescue Manual the expected time of survival for persons in the water in the search area was less than six-hours. "By dawn the couple had been missing for 16 to 18 hours," he said.

"On the Sunday morning it was decided by Mr Scott and Commander Douglas that the helicopter offer should be declined. There were two main reasons for this decision," said the Sheriff.

"The first was the length of time the couple had been in the water," he said. "The second was that the use of helicopters is limited."

The sheriff said that a Nato manual states that helicopters are primarily rescue vehicles and not search vehicles.

"Not even the aggressive, loquacious and very opinionative views expressed by Wing Commander Busey, could establish more than the fact that a helicop-

ter might have found the upturned dinghy," he said.

The Sheriff criticised the Zehnders for believing that their inflatable dinghy was unsinkable and for not taking advice or seeking even a weather forecast before pushing off without lifejackets or distress flares or proper waterproof clothing.

Later Commander Douglas said: "I am happy that the sheriff judged that we took all the right action in the circumstances and my headquarters in London feel there is no need to review any of the procedures."

Wing Commander Busey said yesterday: "Thirty times in the past few months helicopters have been used successfully to search for small craft similar to that of the German holidaymakers and 10 of these searches have been ordered by the Oban and Clyde Coastguards who declined the offer of a helicopter for the Zehnders."

Dinghy death could have been averted, says RAF chief

By IAN SHARP

AN RAF Wing Commander claimed in court yesterday that a woman who died lashed to her upturned dinghy would have been found in time if the Clyde Coastguard had not refused his offer of a Sea King helicopter in the search.

Wing Commander John Busey, 46, told an inquiry into the woman's death at Oban Sheriff Court that police were pressing him for a helicopter and that his own controller was so concerned he called him into operational headquarters.

He said: "I telephoned the coastguard headquarters at Greenock and told them a helicop-

ter was available and of the police request, but they replied that they were in charge of the search.

"Our offer to help was declined by the coastguard," said Wing Commander Busey, who is in charge of the search and rescue unit at RAF Pitreavie Castle, Fife.

"Had we been asked to search, I feel, with the wisdom of hindsight, that the helicopter would have found the dinghy," he said.

Earlier the inquiry was told by the coastguard at Oban that he did not believe helicopters to be "100% efficient" as search vehicles and that the survival time for Mrs Margaret Zehnder

and her husband who was with her in the dinghy had run out.

In fact, while a search for the couple's bodies was underway on the second day they were still alive, lashed together on top of their upturned, 12-ft sailing dinghy.

Wing Commander Busey told the inquiry a Sea King could have been over the search area by 5.15 a.m., eight hours before the couple, on holiday from Germany with their three children, were found.

Mrs Zehnder, 50, of Bad Margentheim, Stuttgart, West Germany, died just before they were spotted off the coast of Coll.

Her husband was weak from exposure after 24 hours at sea.

Their inflatable dinghy upturned last August as they tried to circumnavigate Iona.

Commander John Douglas, 62, regional controller of HM Coastguard at Greenock, told the inquiry he stood by the decision of the Oban coastguard not to call in a helicopter.

Asked by the fiscal: "Surely a helicopter at first light would have found the couple?" Commander Douglas replied: "Your comment may be right with hindsight."

Sheriff Donald MacDairmid adjourned the hearing until Monday when he will give his verdict.



Wing-Commander Busey

RAF rescue expert cleared of criticism

By IAN SHARP

A SENIOR RAF search and rescue expert, Wing Commander John Busey, was cleared by his superiors yesterday of any criticism over his evidence at an inquiry into the death at sea of a woman holiday-maker.

Following a top level meeting at the Ministry of Defence in London yesterday, a statement was issued on behalf of the wing commander.

An RAF spokesman said: "Air Vice-Marshal Kenneth Hayr, assistant RAF Chief of Staff, told the wing commander that he had every confidence in him and his abilities."

Wing Commander Busey blamed Coastguards at the inquiry in Oban last month for declining the offer of a Sea King helicopter in the search for the woman and her husband and said they could have been "found in time" if one had been scrambled.

The coast guards, who were cleared of any blame by Sheriff Donald MacDairmid, admitted cancelling their request for the helicopter because they wrongly assumed the couple to be dead.

In fact, Mrs Margaret Zehnder, 50, a graduate of Edinburgh University, and her husband, Robert, 56, both of Stuttgart, West Germany, were at that time still alive, lashed to their upturned dinghy in the sea between Iona and Coll.

MONDAY APRIL 13 1981

Fishers' thank-you



SPECIAL guests at the Scottish White Fish Producers Association and Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association joint dinner-dance at the Benfif Springs Hotel, were helicopter and back-up crews from 'D' Flight, RAF Lossiemouth. It was the associations' thank-you to the copter crews for their assistance to the fishing industry in the past year.

PRESS & JOURNAL 13 APRIL 1981

FIRE services in the Highlands were stretched to the limit yesterday attending a spate of heath and moorland fires.

The worst outbreak was near Invergarry, where a moorland blaze threatened to spread to a forest, and a family had to be evacuated as a precaution.

At one stage it was feared that three hill walkers might have been caught in the fire and an RAF rescue helicopter was called out. But the trio turned up safe not long after the alert was raised.

A total of 2000 acres was destroyed, but thanks to the work of more than 30 firemen from Fort-William, Fort-Augustus and Inverness and Forestry Commission workers, the fire was stopped about 200yd. from Glengarry South Forest.

Police advised forester Mr Dick Preston, his wife, Evelyn, and three young children to leave their remote forestry house as the fire threatened to spread. The fire was brought under control at 5.30 p.m.

Copters to the rescue in hill blazes

HELICOPTERS were called out to two serious heath fires in the Highlands yesterday.

More than 100 firemen and volunteers dealt with a total of nine hill fires.

One copter ferried men to the Kishorn area of Wester Ross

where burning heather got out of control.

Later an RAF rescue helicopter was called out to blazing moorland near Invergarry, Inverness-shire, where hill walkers were believed to be in danger, but they turned up safe and well.

14 April 1981

Dave Simpson
Graham Cannell
Nick Headland
Robbie Sutton

RAF MIGHT HAVE SPOTTED DINGHY

Officer tells death inquiry

By Nigel Benson

THE Royal Air Force claimed today they might possibly have found two holidaymakers drifting in the Atlantic in a rubber dinghy if they had been allowed to search for it.

Wing Commander John Busey (46), in charge of the rescue co-ordination centre at RAF Pitreavie Castle, was giving evidence on the second day of an inquiry into the death of Mrs Margaretta Zehnder of Stuttgart.

Mrs Zehnder (50), and her husband were swept out to sea last August from Iona in a small orange dinghy and were found a day later in Coll.

Mrs Zehnder was dead and witnesses have already told Oban Sheriff Court that an RAF helicopter was not called out because coastguards presumed that after six hours in the water they were looking for bodies and not survivors.

Wing Commander Busey said — "From all the information I had I consider that the helicopter could have been used with a possibility of success had it started out at first light. The weather conditions were suitable."

Quizzed on the coastguard assumption on survival times of six hours as laid down by the Merchant Ships Search and Rescue manual Wing Commander Busey said — "We don't use that table. We take each incident on all information available."

■ THE role of the Sea King helicopter in sea searches was brought into sharp focus at an inquiry in Oban last week. A German woman had died within minutes of being rescued from the sea by life-boat. She had spent 23 hours in the water after a dinghy capsized. Her husband survived the ordeal.

But at the inquiry an RAF officer claimed the woman might also have been saved if the helicopter had been called in. It was a view that Oban Sheriff Donald MacDiarmid dismissed this week.

But today the Record looks at the part the Sea King has to play. And presents a different opinion.

SEA KINGS TO THE RESCUE...

SAVIOUR OF THE SEA



Special Record report by ARNOT McWHINNIE

THE Westland Sea King helicopter is the finest aircraft of its kind in the world.

That may seem a sweeping statement about the machine that was designed primarily for search and rescue.

But the man who holds that opinion should know.

Flight Lt. Mike Lahey, 33, from the RAF's 202 Search and Rescue Squadron at Lossiemouth, has spent three years flying them.

HE and his crew have saved so many people from death in searches over storm tossed seas, moors and mountain, that he's lost count.

The Royal Navy use Sea Kings for hunting submarines.

But the RAF's redesigned versions are used solely for search and rescue.

Two are based at RAF Lossiemouth and others in Northumberland, Norfolk and Pembroke.

"There is simply not one corner of Britain not covered by a Sea King," said Flt. Lt. Lahey.

They can fly for 700 miles at 120 mph or stay in the air for up to six hours.

And Flt. Lt. Lahey reckons his crews can pin-point the smallest target possible.

A month ago an RAF Hunter jet crashed into the sea. Unfortunately the pilot died, but the Sea King searching for him found small pieces of paper from his flight log floating in the sea.

Visibility from the two bubble shaped search windows is the best from any aircraft the Flt. Lt. has flown in.

He explained: "You can view right down underneath

the aircraft. It's pretty damned perfect.

"In an eyeball search our crews are taught to look up and down from the limit of visibility to immediately down below.

"Any unusual object or something colourful in the sea immediately catches the eye."

Visual searches come into their own in heavy weather conditions at sea. Sea Kings have three powerful rotating spotlights.

ONLY the very worst weather can prevent them from searching at night.

But they also have an incredible navigational computer which can help keep a chopper directly over its target, and radar which in calm seas can locate an

object as small as a five gallon oil container.

"Even the Americans don't have this computer. If a Sea King lookout spots an object below him he just shouts 'Fix' and the fix button on the computer is pressed.

"The Sea King can then turn and automatically home in on the target and automatically hover over it.

"It's especially valuable in fog or heavy seas when something is spotted and momentarily lost."

During the inquiry at Oban it was revealed that the Coastguards, who were commanding the search for the German couple, took the decision not to call in a Sea King.

They had decided that figures contained in sur-

vival-at-sea tables indicated they could not have survived for more than six hours.

Flt. Lt. Lahey doesn't believe in survival tables.

"You are searching for a survivor with the feeling that perhaps it's too late. Suddenly, you locate them and they are still alive.

"Our philosophy is to search and search until we are more than 100 per cent certain there's no hope."

IT is a philosophy that might have saved the life of the German woman if, as seems likely, the couple did stay with their dinghy after it capsized.

For unofficial calculations never revealed to the inquiry, estimate the couple could have been found and flown to hospital between four and five hours after a chopper search had started.

RECORD VIEW

Call in all the rescuers

SHERIFFS can't always give a perfect judgment... but the findings of Sheriff MacDiarmid into the Oban drowning tragedy are most unusual.

He says, quite rightly, that the cause of the fatality was the German couple's own conduct in taking a small boat out to sea.

● But then he launches into a strange and surprising criticism of the function of Sea King helicopters.

● Attacks the RAF Wing Commander in charge for being "opinionated" on what helicopters can do.

● Attacks the Press for their "sensational" reporting of helicopter rescues.

● And says that while the primary function of helicopters is rescue, they are only "useful" when it comes to SEARCHING for people at sea.

Joined

There's no doubt there was a bit of acrimony between coastguard and helicopter services on this particular emergency.

Sheriff MacDiarmid should not have joined the argument over whether coastguards OR helicopters are better at searching.

Surely in an emergency EVERY assistance must be called upon—including helicopters, which can cover large areas of sea much faster than boats.

The courageous crews of the Sea King service have proved themselves in the past—so "useful" in fact, they've been called in 30 times SINCE the Oban tragedy.

If any of us were to be lost at sea—including Sheriff MacDiarmid—we'd like to think both coastguards AND helicopters were searching for us.

And not arguing about rescue procedures.



HEROES' WORK

LIMBER John Black, suffering facial injuries and a rampon wound in one leg after being caught in an avalanche in the Highlands, is lifted on to an RAF search and rescue helicopter. Last year Air Force helicopters flew 1,900 rescue missions, ranging from the high drama of a capsize North Sea rig, to a search for a student pilot who lost his bearings in the West Country. David Briggs spent two weeks photographing the men of D Flight 202 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth



Rescue in the Scottish Highlands. Sledge transport for a man with two broken legs.



a fireman's lift for another



and all are safely guided by the rescue crew to the helicopter.

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**FLORAD
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TO YOUR HO**

[illegible]



MIKE LAKEY learnt to fly helicopters with the Army. Now, at 33, he is fulfilling his life's ambition—to be an RAF search and rescue helicopter pilot. It's not the medals and the tributes that appeal—and for the men who operate the 18 RAF rescue helicopters based around the British Isles there is no shortage of these.

"When we get it right," he says, "it's very satisfying. Acutely satisfying. So little that people do for a job today gives them that true satisfaction. Even other jobs in the armed forces are basically a deterrent. This one produces a tangible result."

What he means is saving lives. Last year the nine two-helicopter teams in Britain flew 1,000 missions rescuing or evacuating to safety 600 men, women and children.

They were established to look after military needs—crashed or missing air crew and aircraft—but most of their "clients" are civilians.

The men work long shifts—24 hours on, 24 off—with routine flights daily punctuating the long hours of waiting on call.

Their work is peculiarly seasonal. In the summer bathers swept to sea on their airbeds in the South while in winter it's climbers in distress in Wales and Scotland.

Lakey, a flight lieutenant and one of eight pilots based at Lossiemouth, returns this weekend from Los Angeles after being awarded the International Helicopter Heroism Award by the Aviation and Space Writers' Association in collaboration with the Avco Corporation.

The Americans' enthusiasm for Lakey and his fellow crew members arose from their efforts on the night of October 1 last year when, with winds gusting up to 70 mph and waves of 60 feet, they rescued 22 crew members, wives and children from the decks of a burning Swedish chemical tanker, the *Finneagle*, off the Orkneys.

Listeners to BBC Radio Scotland voted him Scot of the Year 1980 (he comes in fact from Wiltshire) for the same brave episode. Ironically just half an hour before the *Finneagle's* distress call reached

them Lakey had returned from London where he had been told at a reception he was to receive the Prince Philip Helicopter Award for the rescue of 36 survivors of the capsized North Sea accommodation rig, the *Alexander Keilland*.

Both those rescue missions were dramatic and dangerous. Others are more mundane—like whisking an expectant mother to maternity hospital from a remote Scottish farmhouse.

The avalanche sortie was one of several winter climbing mishaps. It was one o'clock on February 11 when seven climbers from a visiting party of 17 from the Plas Y Brenin National Centre for Mountain Activities in Wales neared the end of a 700ft climb on Crag Meagaidh, near Inverness.

They were less than 30 feet from the top of the climb when an avalanche of snow, piled high on the lip of the ledge above them by fierce winds, crashed down.

Five of the climbers—30-year-old Helen Evans, David Elmer, 19-year-old John Black, David Alcock and Nigel Timmins—were hurled downwards.

One of the two uninjured tended as best he could while the other made for a nearby farm to raise the alarm.

Lakey, with second pilot Geoff Clements, 28, radar operator Bill Campbell and winchman Roger Whitehead, took off in their Mark 3 Sea King helicopter five minutes after the call was received.

It took them about 45 minutes to reach the scene. Buffeted by strong mountain winds and with visibility impaired by snow, the Sea King was unable to land at the spot.

Whitehead, the winchman, was lowered to the group to give immediate assistance and the helicopter landed by a nearby loch, its rotors turning at full speed to counter the vicious downward draughts.

The crew, helped by others from the Plas Y Brenin party, including Lakey's brother-in-law, the climber Rob Collister, began to move the injured down the slopes.

David Alcock, 41, both his legs broken, was sledged down to the helicopter and eased on, grimacing with severe pain. Helen Evans, slung on a stretcher made of a groundsheet and climbing ropes, was carried to the helicopter.

David Elmer, with a twisted ankle, John Black, suffering facial injuries and a crampon wound in one leg, and Nigel Timmins, who was shocked, were helped and carried down after them.

By four o'clock the Sea King had delivered them to the Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, and was preparing to head back to Lossiemouth. It was, according to Lakey, "fairly straightforward". He says: "It wasn't a dramatic rescue on our part although conditions were extreme and the wind was very strong. But that's the job. You just do everything you can to help." ●



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19 APRIL 1981 • CONTENTS No. 2



The London Gazette
of Monday, 13th April 1981

QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICE IN THE AIR.

For his coolness, courage and outstanding professionalism shown during the course of a search and rescue operation in the night of 2 October 1980 when 22 persons were rescued to safety from the burning and disabled Motor Vessel Finneagle.

Air Force Cross

Flight Lieutenant Campbell is a radar and winch Operator of 'D' Flight 202 Squadron at Royal Air Force Lossiemouth. During the night of the 2 October 1980 the captain of the Motor Vessel Finneagle broadcast a Mayday message from a position fifty miles north-west of Orkney reporting that the vessel was on fire amidships and requesting immediate assistance. There were twenty-two persons on board the Finneagle and the 'D' Flight first standby helicopter was scrambled to attempt their rescue. Realising the seriousness of the incident and considering the likely number of people to be rescued, Flight Lieutenant Campbell assembled a second helicopter crew from off-duty personnel and volunteered to join it himself as the Radar and Winch Operator. At the time of the incident, the crew were advised that the first Sea King had been forced to abandon its rescue attempt, due to the prevailing conditions. The wind was blowing at a mean speed of fifty knots with gusts of seventy knots and there was a very high sea with gung wave heights of sixty feet. The captain of the Finneagle had assembled his crew and passengers on the foredeck and was maintaining an into-wind course in order to give them the maximum possible protection from the effects of the fire and its associated fumes. A civilian S61 helicopter which had been scrambled from its base had been in an attempt to make winching contact with the vessel had also been forced to abandon its rescue attempts. Together with his aircraft captain and other crew members, Flight Lieutenant Campbell decided to try to lower the winchman on to the stricken vessel. The only feasible winching position was off the vessel's port bow requiring a constant and highly accurate hover to be maintained in accordance with Flight Lieutenant Campbell's verbal directions. Because of the very close proximity of the vessel's high forward superstructure and foremast and the vessel's motion, it proved impossible to place the winchman on deck and he was recovered to the cabin. The helicopter crew then decided to adopt the Hi-line winching technique which does not require the helicopter to maintain a precise overhead position. From his position at the rear of the helicopter Flight Lieutenant Campbell was fully aware of the hazardous nature of this undertaking. Below and slightly to his right the vessel continued to burn furiously with intermittent explosions, whilst the foremast followed an erratic path up and down, and frequently at the same height, as the rear fuselage of the helicopter. Flight Lieutenant Campbell directed his captain with unflinching determination for twenty minutes before it was possible to position the H-line on the Finneagle's deck. With his rescue stops on the winch hook the first survivors were just about to be winched to safety as a huge wave pitched the ship perilously close to the aircraft. Whilst calling to the vessel to take evasive action he skillfully operated the winch thereby saving the first survivors, both women, each of whom was clutching a child. Winching continued until eight survivors had been lifted safely from the vessel. Then it was learned that the Finneagle's cargo was highly dangerous and included a consignment of carbide. The men were well on fire and the remaining fourteen survivors on board were experiencing difficulty in breathing due to the fumes from the burning cargo. At this moment the Finneagle's captain radioed that he considered the vessel to be in imminent danger of sinking. However, the rescue was continued, regardless of the obvious dangers, and Flight Lieutenant Campbell resumed his tasks of talking his pilot into the overhead hoist and supervising the stowage of survivors. The remaining fourteen survivors were successfully winched to safety, despite the fact that the Hi-line required renewing the H-line twice during the winching period. With complete disregard for his own imminent danger, Flight Lieutenant Campbell ignored the effects of the fire's intense heat, during the last winching operation which lasted for a period of one and three quarter hours. Realising the imminent danger to his own life and by his skill, courage and bravery he saved twenty-two people from a perilous situation. His gallantry was in the highest traditions of the Service.

Published by Authority

GEORGE MEDAL

Flight Lieutenant Michael John LAKEY (222229), Royal Air Force, was the first Flight Lieutenant Lakey is the deputy Flight Commander and a search and rescue helicopter captain of 'D' Flight Number 202 Squadron at Royal Air Force Lossiemouth. During the night of the 2 October 1980 the Motor Vessel Finneagle transmitted a Mayday message from its position fifty miles north west of Orkney. The vessel had suffered an explosion and was on fire amidships, with twenty-two persons including three women and two children on board. The first standby had already been scrambled and although 'D' Flight has no requirement to maintain a second standby helicopter during the hours of darkness, it was decided to assemble an off-duty crew to assist. Flight Lieutenant Lakey volunteered to captain the second crew and took off at 2350 hours to go to the assistance of the stricken vessel. The conditions at the scene of the incident were appalling, with a mean wind speed of fifty knots gusting to seventy knots and a very high sea state giving wave heights of sixty feet. The first Sea King had been forced to abandon its attempts to put a line on the vessel's deck and a civilian S61 helicopter, after making several similar attempts, was also forced to withdraw from the scene. The Finneagle's captain had assembled the crew and passengers on the vessel's foredeck. He was forced to maintain an into wind course because of the severe weather conditions and to prevent the fire and resulting fumes from reaching those on board. Flight Lieutenant Lakey had no choice other than to attempt to position his helicopter for winching from the vessel's port bow despite the fact that this would require him to manoeuvre very close to a foremast and a high forward superstructure. The Finneagle had lost electrical power and the only illumination available was from the helicopter's own lights and the glow of the fire. An attempt was made to lower the winchman on to the foredeck but because the vessel was pitching and rolling extremely violently, Flight Lieutenant Lakey's efforts to maintain a steady hover caused the winchman to swing through a dangerously wide arc. Flight Lieutenant Lakey therefore decided to employ the Hi-line winching technique which obviates the necessity for the helicopter to maintain an absolutely precise overhead position. The prevailing conditions were so bad that it took twenty minutes to achieve an accurate positioning of the Hi-line on the Finneagle's deck. Two rescue strops were attached to the winch hook and as the first survivors were about to be lifted a massive wave pitched the ship so close to the aircraft that immediate evasive action was necessary. By his exceptional skill not only the aircraft but also two female survivors, each clutching a child, were saved. After lifting eight survivors Flight Lieutenant Lakey learned that the vessel's cargo was highly dangerous and included a consignment of carbide. The vessel was well on fire, with intermittent explosions taking place, and the remaining fourteen survivors were experiencing difficulty in breathing due to the fumes from the burning cargo. At this moment the Finneagle's captain radioed that he considered the vessel to be in imminent danger of sinking. Flight Lieutenant Lakey rapidly assessed the situation and having discussed it together with his crew decided to carry on with the rescue, undeterred by the obvious danger. The remaining fourteen crew members were then successfully winched to safety, despite the necessity of renewing and re-positioning the Hi-line twice during the winching period. Continuing to display instinctive skill, Flight Lieutenant Lakey flew his aircraft to safety with twenty seven persons on board. Although he had been on duty for over nineteen hours Flight Lieutenant Lakey, with outstanding coolness, courage and exceptional flying skill remained in a close hover position with the violently pitching and rolling vessel for a period of one and three quarter hours. He inspired and led his crew by his magnificent example throughout the operation, displaying personal gallantry in the very highest traditions of the Service.

QUEEN'S COMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

For his outstanding coolness and devotion to duty during a search and rescue operation when rendering medical assistance to 22 survivors rescued by winching during the night of 2 October 1980 from the burning and disabled Motor Vessel Finneagle.

AIR FORCE MEDAL

D8140974 Sergeant Richard John BRAGG, Royal Air Force.

Sergeant Bragg is a winchman of 'D' Flight Number 202 Squadron at Royal Air Force Lossiemouth. During the night of the 2 October 1980 the Motor Vessel Finneagle transmitted a Mayday message from its position fifty miles north west of Orkney. The vessel had suffered an explosion and was on fire amidships with twenty-two persons, including three women and two children on board. Although 'D' Flight has no requirement to maintain a second standby during the hours of darkness, it was decided to assemble an off-duty crew to assist the first standby helicopter which had already been scrambled. Sergeant Bragg volunteered without hesitation for duty as the winchman. At the scene of the incident the conditions were appalling with a wind of fifty knots with gusts to seventy knots and a very high sea state giving wave heights of sixty feet.

The first Sea King had been forced to abandon its attempts to put a line on the vessel's deck and a civilian S61 helicopter, after making several similar attempts, had also been forced to withdraw from the scene. The Finneagle's captain had assembled the crew and passengers on the severe weather conditions and the need to prevent the fire and resulting fumes from reaching those on board. The helicopter captain had no choice other than to attempt to position the Sea King for winning from the vessel's bow, despite the fact that this would necessitate manoeuvring in very close proximity to a foremast and a high forward superstructure. The Finneagle had lost electrical power and the only illumination available was from the helicopter's own lights and the glow from the fire. Showing exceptional courage in the face of great danger and in weather conditions more hazardous than any he had previously experienced Sergeant Bragg was loosed from the helicopter in an attempt to position him on the vessel's foredeck. The Finneagle was pitching and rolling extremely violently and the pilot's efforts at maintaining a steady hover caused Sergeant Bragg to swing through a dangerously wide arc. In view of the very real danger to Sergeant Bragg's life the helicopter captain ordered him to be recovered to the cabin. The helicopter crew then decided to adopt the Hi-line winching technique which obviates the necessity for the helicopter to maintain an absolutely precise overhead position. Sergeant Bragg positioned himself to assist the Winch Operator for the duration of the winching operation. From his station at the rear of the helicopter he was fully aware of the hazardous nature of the undertaking. Below and slightly to his right, the vessel's amidships continued to burn fiercely with intermittent explosions, whilst the foremast followed an erratic path close to and frequently at the same height as the rear fuselage of the helicopter. With two rescue strops on the winch hook, the first eight survivors were safely lifted from the vessel. It was then learned that the Finneagle's cargo was considered to be highly dangerous and included a consignment of carbide. The vessel was well on fire and the remaining fourteen survivors on board were experiencing difficulty in breathing due to the fumes from the burning cargo. At this moment the Finneagle's captain radioed that he considered the vessel to be in imminent danger of sinking. The rescue was continued regardless of the obvious dangers and Sergeant Bragg continued with his tasks assisting with the positioning of the rescue strops and getting survivors on board the helicopter. The remaining fourteen crew members were successfully winched to safety despite the fact that the Hi-line required renewing and repositioning twice during the winching period. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Sergeant Bragg ignored the effects of the fire's intense heat, the intermittent explosions and the possibility that he was breathing dangerous fumes during the entire winching operation, ability that he was breathing dangerous fumes during the entire winching operation, ability that he was breathing dangerous fumes during the entire winching operation, ability that he was breathing dangerous fumes during the entire winching operation, ability that he was breathing dangerous fumes during the entire winching operation, coolness, courage and determination in attempting to board the vessel, his subsequent efforts while assisting the Winch Operator undoubtedly prevented the total winching time being perilously extended.

The Edward & Maisie Lewis Award**

It is with great pleasure that we announce the first presentation of the Edward & Maisie Lewis Award, to be given each year for the most outstanding air/sea rescue. This new Award results from a donation made last year from a family Trust by Mr. Richard Lewis in memory of his father and mother, Sir Edward and Lady Lewis and will consist of a cash sum and a Trophy of unusual interest. Sir Edward Lewis was Chairman of Decca Ltd. and on the occasion of the production of the 10,000th Decca Navigator MK21 Receiver, his workforce presented him with a splendid replica, suitably inscribed. This his son has now given to the Society and the Trophy is to be held for a twelve-month period by the winner or winners of the Award. We record here our grateful thanks to Mr. Lewis for his generosity in providing the Society with a new Award which we know will be greatly valued by all who are privileged to receive it in the years to come. It is presented this year to Flight Lieutenant M. J. Lakey and the crew of 'D' Flight, 202 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth for the helicopter rescue of the crew and passengers of the M.V. *Finneagle*, following an explosion and fire which occurred when the vessel was some 50 miles north-west of Orkney on the night of 2nd October, 1980.

On behalf of the Council.

O. ST. J. STEINER, *Chairman*

V. G. AUSTIN, *General Secretary*

1 North Pallant,
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8th September, 1981

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George Medal For Lossie Pilot

GALLANT CREW HONOURED

THE top peacetime award for bravery — the George Medal — has been awarded to the pilot of a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth for his part in the dramatic rescue of 22 people from a crippled Swedish ship in the Atlantic last year.

Ft-Lt Mike Lakey, who lives in Elgin with his wife and two young children, becomes the only serving officer at Lossiemouth ever to have received such a high honour for gallantry.

The skill and courage of the four men who were with him on the mission has also been recognised, with the winch operator Ft-Lt Bill Campbell getting the Air Force Cross, winchman Sgt Rick Bragg the Air Force Medal, co-pilot Ft-Lt Dave Simpson the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air, and Squadron Leader Hamish Grant, senior medical officer at RAF Lossiemouth, the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.

The crew of the Sea King search and rescue helicopter — part of 202 Squadron — were hailed as heroes following the successful rescue attempt, and they have already been presented with a number of bravery awards. Only this week Ft-Lt Lakey (33), was in the United States for

yet another tribute in connection with the incident.

The drama began late one October evening when an explosion ripped through the coaster Finneagle, 50 miles west of Orkney.

The vessel was on fire amidships, with 22 people

on board, including three women and two children. The first standby helicopter at RAF Lossiemouth was scrambled, but because of the seriousness of the situation it was decided to assemble an off-duty crew to assist.

Ft-Lt Lakey, who had arrived back from London only minutes earlier, volunteered to captain the second crew, and Squadron Leader Grant also volunteered to fly with them, despite the fact that he had been on duty since six o'clock in the morning.

CONDITIONS

The scratch crew, comprising mainly off-duty personnel, took off just before midnight and arrived at the scene in appalling conditions, with winds gusting to 70 knots.

The first Sea King had been forced to abandon its attempts to put a line aboard the blazing Finneagle and a civilian helicopter was also forced to withdraw after making several abortive attempts.

The Finneagle's captain had assembled the crew and passengers on the fore-deck, and with the vessel having lost electrical power the only light available was from the helicopters' own powerful searchlights and the glow of the fire.

Ft-Lt Lakey fought to maintain a steady hover as the winchman, Sgt Bragg, was lowered on to the stricken vessel, and two female survivors, each clutching a child, were saved on the first lift. After winching aboard eight survivors, the helicopter crew were told that the vessel's cargo was considered to be highly dangerous and included a consignment of carbide.

By this time the Finneagle was well ablaze, with intermittent explosions taking place, and the remaining 14 people on board were experiencing difficulty in breathing due to the fumes. At that moment the captain radioed that he considered his vessel to be in imminent danger of sinking.

Ft-Lt Lakey and his crew rapidly assessed the situation and together decided to continue with the rescue, undeterred by the obvious dangers to themselves and their aircraft. All those still on board the coaster were then successfully lifted to safety, despite the fact that the winch-line required renewing and re-positioning twice during the operation.

Ft-Lt Lakey already holds the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air, awarded for his part in the rescue operation which followed the capsizing of the accommodation platform Alexander Keililand in the North Sea.



The crew of the Sea King helicopter who rescued 22 people from a blazing ship. Standing, from left: Sqdn Ldr Hamish Grant (Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct), Ft Lt Michael Lakey, the captain (George Medal), and Ft Lt Thomas Campbell (Air Force Cross). Front: Ft Lt David Simpson (Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air) and Sgt Richard Bragg (Air Force Medal).

Gallantry awards for helicopter heroes

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER

THE four members of a Sea King helicopter of No. 202 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, and the Senior Medical Officer at the station, are to receive gallantry awards for the rescue of 22 survivors, including two women and a child from a blazing chemical cargo ship.

They braved gale force winds and 70ft waves to go to the assistance of the crippled Swedish ship Finneagle, 50 miles north-west of Orkney on the night of Oct. 2, 1980.

The captain and pilot of the helicopter, Ft Lt Michael Lakey, who is awarded the George Medal, inched his helicopter into position above the blazing ship. There were intermittent explosions and toxic fumes from the burning chemicals.

The life of winchman Sgt Richard Bragg, awarded the Air Force Medal, was in danger because of the violent rolling and pitching of the ship which caused the helicopter pilot to take emergency evasive action.

Imminent danger

The operation, which lasted a total of three and a half hours, went ahead despite a warning from the ship's captain that his vessel was in imminent danger of sinking.

When Sea King returned to base it carried 27 people in a space designed for only 15.

Ft Lt Lakey said later: "I can't really believe we managed to do what we did." He and members of his crew have since received several other honours for their heroism.

Other awards were: Ft Lt Thomas Campbell, who carried out a "vital rôle" the Air Force Cross; Ft Lt David Simpson, the co-pilot, the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air; Sqdn Ldr Hamish Grant, the Senior Medical Officer, who volunteered for the rescue mission, the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct.



Rescue hero Ft-Lt Mike Lakey (centre) and his Sea King crew who plucked 22 people to safety from a blazing ship, a feat that has earned them all gallantry awards. Back (left to right) Squadron Leader Hamish Grant and Ft-Lt Bill Campbell and (kneeling) Ft-Lt Dave Simpson and Sgt Rick Bragg.

CONGRATULATIONS

MP for Moray and Nairn, Mr Alex Pollock, this week sent the following message to Ft-Lt Lakey:

"Please allow me, as Member of Parliament for Moray and Nairn, to extend warmest congratulations to you and your crew in respect of the gallantry awards announced today.

"The recognition of the brave exploits of yourself and your crew last October will be met with enormous pleasure and satisfaction by all those who know the difficult and dangerous work that you carry out not only for the Royal Air Force but for the community at large.

"I trust that you will convey my warmest congratulations to the rest of your crew on this splendid and well merited achievement."



HELICOPTER heroes . . . Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey (second left), with his crew (from left) — Sgt. Rick Bragg, Flt. Lt. Bill Campbell, Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson and Sqn. Ldr. Hamish Grant.

George Medal for pilot

RAF Lossie crew rewarded for outstanding rescue

A ROYAL Air Force Sea King helicopter crew who braved gale force winds and 60ft. waves to rescue 22 survivors from a blazing chemical cargo ship, are to receive five gallantry awards.

The George Medal is awarded to Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey, captain of the helicopter from 202 Sqn., RAF Lossiemouth, which went to the assistance of the crippled Swedish ship Finneagle on the night of October 2 last year.

Flt. Lt. Bill Campbell, radar and winch operator on the rescue mission, receives the Air Force Cross. Winchman Sgt. Rick Bragg is awarded the Air

Force Medal, and co-pilot Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson receives the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air. Sqn. Ldr. Hamish Grant, senior medical officer at RAF Lossiemouth, is awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct for his part in the rescue.

The champagne corks will be popping with an almost military precision at RAF Lossiemouth today as station personnel raise their glasses to the helicopter heroes of the Finneagle rescue drama.

But the champagne crescendo could well reach explosive heights next Monday when Flt. Lt. Lahey arrives back in Lossiemouth.

For last night, when news of

his award of the George Medal was revealed, Flt. Lt. Lahey was in America attending a banquet in Hollywood, and picking up yet another helicopter heroism award for the Finneagle rescue.

But the award of the George Medal — the very pinnacle of peace-time decoration for bravery — is the highest military award ever to be gained by a serving officer at RAF Lossiemouth.

"We will certainly be organising a welcome home party when Mike gets back," said Station Commander, Group Capt. Sandy Wilson. "It is just a pity he will not be here to celebrate when the news becomes official."

"Needless to say we are all absolutely delighted that this quite epic rescue has been recognised in this manner. Everyone at Lossiemouth is extremely proud of Mike Lahey and his crew."

"Their was a marvellous team effort — a truly marvellous achievement — and they deserve any honour and recognition that comes their way."

On the night of the incident a distress signal was received from the Finneagle, which was on fire amidships following an explosion. The duty crew on the Lossiemouth Sea King flight had already been scrambled, and although a second standby helicopter is not normally on call during the

hours of darkness, Flt. Lt. Campbell recognised the seriousness of the situation and assembled a volunteer crew from off-duty personnel. As there was a possibility that survivors might require immediate treatment for burns, Sqn. Ldr. Grant volunteered to join the rescue attempt.

Arriving at the scene 50 miles north west of Orkney, the crew were advised that both the first Sea King and a civilian helicopter had been forced to abandon rescue attempts due to appalling weather.

Despite winds gusting to over 70 m.p.h. the decision to attempt another rescue was made. This was made even more difficult because the only feasible windward would bring the helicopter perilously close to the vessel's foremast and forward superstructure.

The Finneagle was without electrical power, and with the only available illumination coming from the helicopter's lights and the glow of the fire, a first attempt to lower Sgt. Bragg on to the deck was made. This was unsuccessful due to the near-impossibility of maintaining a precise hover, and the violent pitching and rolling motion of the ship, which posed a very real threat to Sgt. Bragg's life.

The helicopter crew then decided to adopt a different technique which did not require the Sea King to maintain a precise overhead position. For 20 minutes the helicopter was inched into position under the direction of Flt. Lt. Campbell.

The Finneagle continued to burn fiercely with intermittent explosions, and the foremast which was at the same height as the near fuselage of the helicopter, came dangerously close on many occasions.

After a total of eight survivors had been recovered, Flt. Lt. Lahey learned that the Finneagle's cargo was highly dangerous, and included a consignment of carbide. Fire was sweeping the ship and the remaining crew members were having breathing difficulties due to toxic fumes, which were also reaching Flt. Lt. Campbell and Sgt. Bragg in the rear fuselage. At this moment the Finneagle's captain radioed that his opinion was the vessel was in imminent danger of sinking but the rescue, continued, despite the obvious dangers.

The remaining crew members were winched to safety and Flt. Lt. Lahey flew his helicopter to safety with a total of 27 people on board.

Since the rescue, the helicopter crew have received many marks of esteem from organisations throughout the world.

The owners of the Finneagle presented them with a replica of the ship's bell and the Swedish Lifeboat Organisation awarded life saving medals.

Flt. Lt. Lahey (33), born in Salisbury, joined the RAF in 1965 and lives with his wife and family in Elgin. He was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air in last May for his part in a previous rescue from the captured North Sea oilfield accommodation platform Alexander Kiehlund.

MEDAL FOR PILOT

THE GEORGE Medal has been awarded to the Bath-educated captain of an RAF helicopter who braved gale force winds and 27 ft waves to rescue 22 survivors from a blazing chemical cargo ship. The medal goes to Flt. Lt. Michael Julian Lahey, 33, formerly of Melksham, who was born in Salisbury and educated at Bath Technical School. The citation praises "his outstanding coolness, courage and exceptional flying skill," and states that "he inspired and led his crew by his magnificent example throughout the operation."

Flt. Lt. Lahey joined the RAF in 1965 and lives with his wife and family in Scotland.

Throughout the three and a half hour rescue operation, 50 miles West of the Orkneys, the crew — all volunteers — were in danger not only from the storm, but also from the burning, exploding Swedish ship. Two other helicopters had been forced to abandon rescue attempts, but this crew persisted with its efforts and eventually winched all the ship's personnel, including women and children, to safety.

Flt. Lt. Lahey has already been awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air for his part in a rescue from the captured North Sea oil platform Alexander Kiehlund. He has had his latest effort recognised in several countries — he received the Golden Lion award from the Netherlands.

Melksham hero honoured

AS a Melksham RAF man is visiting America to receive a heroism award, there is news that he is also to be presented with the George Medal "for great valour" in helping save 22 people from a burning ship.

But it's all been a bit of a mystery. The father of Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey — a former head postmaster in Melksham, Mr. Albert Lahey — heard about the latest award on the radio on Tuesday morning.

"That's all we know really," said Mr. Lahey senior, who lives with his wife at 26 Trent Crescent.

It was last October that Flt. Lt. Lahey defied 70 mph winds and 30ft-high seas to fly his Sea King helicopter over the North Sea to the stranded passengers and crew of a ship bound from New Orleans to Sweden.

Two other helicopters had had to turn back because they had run short of fuel. The ship had sailed into trouble after an explosion on board and a fire.

Flt. Lt. Lahey, who is stationed in Scotland, is now in America to receive a "helicopter heroism award" of a medallion and 500 dollars.

Although air-sea rescue is his main job, he has also saved climbers who have got into trouble on mountains.

Kielland rescuers honoured



On what was virtually the first anniversary of the most massive maritime rescue operation ever mounted, following the capsize of the accommodation rig Alexander Kielland in the North Sea on March 27 last year, the rig's owners, Phillips Petroleum, presented awards of merit to RAF and RN units involved in the rescue of 89 survivors.

The awards, in the forms of bronze plaques, were presented at Maritime Headquarters, Portsmouth, by Mr Jacques E Welin, deputy managing director of Phillips Petroleum Norway. The units receiving the awards were:

Edinburgh Rescue Co-Ordination Centre, Pitreavie, who closely co-operated with the rescue operation, involving a number of fixed-wing aircraft, 11 helicopters and 47 ships.

RAF Kinloss, which provided the aircraft to act as on-scene command.

RAF Kinloss, which provided the aircraft to act as on-scene command.

A special award was made to Flt Sgt Mike Yarwood from A Flight, 202 Squadron, Boulmer. He was the watchman aboard one of the first rescue helicopters sent to the Kielland when it capsized with 214 workers on board.

He threw himself from his cable to swim in the turbulent seas, to help survivors. His actions earned him the Air Force Medal.

"It was marvellous that my services were required from this tragedy," said Mr Welin, presenting the awards. "I can only praise the tremendous co-operation and co-ordination of all those involved."

Air Vice-Marshal Tim Lloyd, Air Commander Northern Maritime Air Region, said that although a great many lives were lost, comfort could be gained from the fact that past national boundaries were forgotten in the great effort to save lives.

Mr Jacques Welin, deputy managing director of Phillips Petroleum, presents awards to RAF and RN units involved. There was a special award to Flt Sgt Mike Yarwood, seen here with Mr Welin and, on his right, Air Vice-Marshal Tim Lloyd, Air Region Others receiving awards are (left to right) Flt Lt Paul Hearn, on behalf of Edinburgh Rescue and Co-Ordination Centre, Flt Lt Al Bone (RAF Kinloss), Flt Lt Bob Neville (A Flight, 202 Sqn, Boulmer), Flt Lt Jim Bellingall (C Flt, Colishall), Flt Lt Jim Gatherer (D Flt, Lossiemouth) and Flt Lt John Ware (HMS Lindsdale).

American woman's Coolins escape

AN AMERICAN woman climber had a lucky escape when struck on the neck by a dislodged rock in the Coolins yesterday.

Miss Linda Croxson (35) was able to walk down to Glen Brittle aided by a companion, Mr Philip Ward, and others and was taken by RAF helicopter to hospital at Broadford where she was treated for bruising and concussion. She was kept overnight for observation.

Miss Croxson and Mr Kent, both artists, live at Herne Bay, Kent. They were climbing on Cotre Grunda near the mountain ridge when the rock fell.

22 APRIL 1981

Mike Lahey
Ian MacFarlane
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead

Climber hurt

A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth last night went to the aid of a climber badly injured in a fall in the Coolins, Skye. The injured man is believed to have a fractured pelvis after the accident on the Bad Steps overlooking Loch Coruisk.

The helicopter was to pick up members of Skye Mountain Rescue Team who planned to carry the injured man to a point where he could be air lifted to hospital.

19 APRIL 1981

Jim Gatherer
Graham Cannell
Ron Webb
Vic Oliver

Tragedy off south coast of Skye

MALLAIG CLAM DIVER DIES

Man collapses soon after surfacing for second time

A DIVER collapsed and died shortly after surfacing from a dive off the south coast of Skye last night. The man, who has not been named, had been diving for clams from the Mallaig-based fishing boat Elsa II, about three miles south-west of the Point of Sleat.

It is understood he was on his second dive of the day, to about 90ft., when he got into difficulties. When he got back on board he became ill and collapsed with what appeared to be an attack of the bends.

The crew radioed Oban coastguards asking for immediate medical assistance and began heading back to Mallaig, giving the diver the kiss of life in a desperate bid to save him.

A Sea King rescue helicopter was scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth and the Underwater Training Centre at Fort-William were asked to have a decompression chamber ready.

The helicopter, piloted by PO Ian MacFarlane, with Flt. Lt. Dave Crosby, winch operator Flt. Sgt. Ron Webb and winchman Flt. Sgt. Robbie Sutton, arrived over the Elsa II about one and a half miles from Mallaig.

Flt. Sgt. Sutton was lowered to the boat, where he gave the diver oxygen and continued resuscitation.

The helicopter crew decided it was not practical to winch the man on board and the Elsa II continued toward Mallaig, where she arrived shortly before 7 p.m. A doctor went on board and pronounced the man dead.

Police were withholding his name last night until relatives had been informed.

The Elsa II is owned and skippered by Mr Bill Simmons, 43 Cottagechan Hill, Mallaig. He was not available for comment last night. It is understood there were two other crew members on board.

The death is the second in three months involving divers off the West Coast. In February, Mr Neil Brown (28), 4 Glenshellach Terrace, Oban, died during a dive off the Isle of Jura.

Rescue bid too late for diver

A DIVER died last night before a rescue helicopter could fly him to the mainland for treatment after a dive for clams off Skye.

The drama began about 5.30 p.m. when the 62ft fishing boat Elsa II, which is used as a diving boat, radioed coastguards at Oban that a diver appeared to have the bends. RAF rescue headquarters at Pitreavie were alerted and scrambled a helicopter from Lossiemouth.

Shortly after surfacing and going on board the diver became ill and collapsed. It is thought he did not compress long enough under water.

Police are withholding the man's name until relatives had been informed.

Diving tragedy

A DIVER suffering from the bends died last night before a rescue helicopter could fly him from the Isle of Skye to the mainland for treatment.

The drama began shortly before 5.30 pm when the fishing boat Elsa II, which is used for diving and operates out of Mallaig, radioed coastguards at Oban that a crew member appeared to have the bends.

An RAF helicopter lowered a winchman onto the vessel and he gave the unconscious man oxygen but he was dead when the boat reached port.

26 APRIL 1981

Ian MacFarlane
Dave Crosby
Ron Webb
Robbie Sutton

Airman may be dead — police

Fears grow as Day 2 of huge hunt ends

THE AMERICAN serviceman missing in the Grampians may already be dead, the police officer co-ordinating the hunt admitted yesterday.

Insp. John Duff, Ballater, said he was now "fairly concerned" about the hillwalker.

As the second day of the hunt ended in frustration, Insp. Duff said volunteers searching for Sgt. David Deneau (23), from RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk, were still working very much in the dark on a "needle in a haystack" task. It was the biggest operation for five years.

He added: "If he has the proper equipment it is perfectly possible for him to survive. If not, it is most unlikely."

Though Sgt. Deneau's Deneau's believed presence in the hills is still only described as a "probability", there have been reported sightings from the weekend of a man resembling his description.

Grampian Police say that for elivation purposes they want to trace the man, who was seen near the waterfall at Glas-allt Shell about 2 p.m. on Sunday. He is described as in his early 20s, 5ft. 6in. to 5ft. 7in. of slim build and with fair, light-brown hair.

He was wearing a red or blue checked shirt, denim or brown knee-length walking trousers, brown hill-walking boots and was carrying a rucksack.

Sgt. Deneau should have been back on duty on Wednesday. He told his girlfriend on Saturday he was going climbing in Glen Muick and when he did not reappear she raised the alarm.

The airman's car was found in the square at Ballater and there is a possibility he left a note — which has since gone — saying he was taking to the hills.

The police are left with a whole series of don't-knows. They don't know:

- If he is in the area at all.
- If he is, where he might have gone walking.
- If it was to the Lochnagar area, why he did not leave his car at the Spital of Glenmuick?
- If he is experienced — the reports are conflicting.
- If he stayed in Ballater overnight on Saturday — the police have drawn a blank.
- If he had a tent and other equipment with him.

Yesterday's search over 300sq. miles, encompassed an area bounded by Loch Callater to the west, Dinnet to the east, the Hill of Morven to the north and Glen Clova to the south. More than 140 men, backed by a helicopter and tracker dogs, were involved.

They included 49 members of Tayside Police and civilian mountain rescue team; 25 from Gordonstoun; 18 each from RAF Kinloss and Aberdeen mountain rescue teams; 17 from RAF Leuchars and 14 from the combined Braemar and Grampian Police teams.

Also out were two members of the Search and Rescue Dog Association. A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth swept the area first light.

Insp. Duff said Sgt. Deneau was supposed to have stayed in bed and breakfast accommodation at Ballater on Saturday, but police inquiries had failed to establish where he appealed for anybody in the Ballater area who takes in bed and breakfast guests to let the police know if any body of Sgt. Deneau's description had stayed with them.

The airman is described as 5ft. 6in. of slim build, with fair hair. He may have been wearing blue jeans and a checked shirt.

Insp. Duff also appealed for people to look out for any stray tent with no visible occupier.

He said today's search would begin at 7 a.m. and concentrate on the Lochnagar area.

Huge hill search ... for man who may not be lost

ONE OF the biggest ever Scottish hill searches was mounted today ... for a man who may not even be lost.

More than 140 rescue men backed by a helicopter and tracker dogs were combing 300 square miles round Ballater for an American serviceman who should have been back on duty two days ago.

Police say they know Sgt. David Deneau (23), intended climbing in Glenmuick and has not returned to his car in Ballater — but they are not sure he is still on the hills.

Search co-ordinator Sgt. Kenneth Duguid of Grampian Police said today: "We have no evidence that he is out there — apart from finding his car — so it is just a case of carrying on until we find him."

Sgt. Duguid said it was certainly the biggest foot search he had ever been involved in, in terms of the size of the team.

Involved in today's search are 49 members of Tayside Police mountain rescue team, 25 from Gordonstoun, 18 each from RAF Kinloss and Aberdeen mountain rescue teams, 17 from RAF Leuchars and 14 from the combined Braemar and police teams.

Also out are two members of the Search and Rescue Dog Association.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was sweeping the area for the second day since first light.

Sgt. Deneau of RAF

Lakenheath, Suffolk, told his girl friend on Saturday that he was going climbing in Glenmuick.

His car was found in the square at Ballater and police conducted door-to-door inquiries at boarding houses in the village and broadcast appeals from radio car.

A senior police officer in Aberdeen said today: "Despite all these efforts, and the fact that all the publicity has failed to turn up anything, we are beginning to think he may well be on the hills."

Cairngorms hunt may not have been needed

By SUSAN WELSH

A MASSIVE four-day search in the Cairngorms, which at its peak involved 140 rescue team members and a Sea King helicopter, may have been in vain.

For yesterday the missing U.S. Serviceman who sparked off the hunt was listed absent without official leave.

Grampian Police reported that they have ceased inquiries into the whereabouts of Sgt. David De Neau.

Investigations are now being carried out by service authorities and police in Suffolk where Sgt. De Neau (23), was stationed with the U.S. Air Force at RAF Lakenheath.

Only two days after the intensive search in the hills above Deeside US officials were contacted by a friend of De Neau whom he had telephoned.

Following this and "other pertinent information" the USAF took action to change his official status to AWOL. He has still not been traced.

Sgt. De Neau, who serves with the 4th Avionics maintenance squadron, had been due to report back to duty on April 28. He was last seen on April 24 before leaving to go mountain climbing.

Concern for his safety grew when he failed to contact a girlfriend and his black Mazda car was found abandoned in The Square at Ballater.

With no clues to help them, the rescue teams began scouring a 300 square mile area in the biggest search in the area for five years.

The helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth covered the area twice, and at the weekend police feared the young American might not be found alive.

The search, with tracker dogs, was finally abandoned on Monday and police investigations switched to other parts of Scotland, including Edinburgh.

The latest information from Sgt. De Neau's base raises doubts about his ever being in the hills — and if he is still alive, where he is now. However, members of the

rescue teams involved in the search — from Gordonstoun School, Tayside and Grampian Police, Aberdeen, Braemar and RAF Kinloss and Leuchars — yesterday discounted any views that they might have been wasting their time, money and efforts.

The headmaster of Gordonstoun School, near Elgin, where 22 senior pupils spent two days searching the area, said "I think it is always worthwhile because you cannot afford to take risks. When the teams are called out there is still the chance that someone can be found."

A member of the Braemar Mountain Rescue Team, Mr Raymond Bernard, said that no search is ever a waste of time, even if it is discovered that the missing person is elsewhere.

"We are all volunteers and we have a duty to go into the hills. We did not have much to go on this time but we did our best and none of us can feel angry about that."

An RAF Sea King helicopter does not give much change out of £1000 an hour, and the machine spent seven hours in the air.

But time is given voluntarily by members of the mountain rescue teams. And if there had been no search, the RAF men would probably have been camping in the mountains in an outdoor exercise anyway.

Sgt. De Neau is married with two children. His wife, who lives at Virginia Beach, Virginia, has not heard from him since he was reported to have left for Scotland.

He has been with the USAF for about five years.

USAF officials are asking for anyone with information about Sgt. De Neau to contact local authorities or security police at Lakenheath.

Search For Climber Called Off

The search for Sergeant David Deneau, who has been missing for over a week has been called off.

Mountain rescue teams from Grampian and Tayside, tracker dogs and RAF helicopters, were involved in the search for the American serviceman in the hills around Loch Muick.

"We have absolutely no idea of his whereabouts," said Police Inspector Duff, of Banbury, who co-ordinated the operation.

"Although there was a possible sighting in the area of Loch Muick and the Dubh Loch, a man has come forward fitting the description and he has been eliminated from our inquiries."

"We will be concentrating on tracing Sergeant Deneau's movements in the Ballater area, but there will be no further hill searches unless some new information comes to light."

30 APRIL 1981

Bob King
Mike Lakey
Mike Cornes
Rick Bragg

1 MAY 1981

Dave Cosby
Geoff Clements
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead

Injured Kinloss airman flown to hospital

AN RAF sergeant from Kinloss was seriously injured in the neck and airlifted to hospital in Aberdeen yesterday.

Sgt. George Anderson (28), a married man from Forres, was hurt while working on a Nimrod aircraft at RAF Kinloss.

He was flown by an RAF Wessex helicopter to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, accompanied by a medical officer from RAF Kinloss.

1 MAY 1981

John Prince
Frank Cannell
Rick Beckett
Rick Bragg

Helicopters prove their worth if needed for a sea search



An apprehensive Captain Fetherston-Dilke gazes out of the Sea King.

THE CHIEF Coastguard, Captain Tim Fetherston-Dilke, went for a tour round some of the Western Isles this week to see how useful RAF helicopters can be in a sea search.

Story: **STUART LINDSAY**
Pictures: **IAN HOSSACK**



The chief Coastguard is lowered on a rope

Afterwards Captain Fetherston-Dilke admitted he was very impressed by his first flight in a Sea King.

His trip on a Sea King from D Flight, 202 Squadron RAF, Lossiemouth, followed a fatal accident inquiry at Oban in March when Sheriff Donald MacDairmid said the usefulness of helicopters was limited since they were primarily rescue vehicles and not for searching.

In the decision following the inquiry the sheriff found that a German holidaymaker who died in August after her inflatable dinghy overturned off Iona might not have been found even if the coastguards had not refused the offer of a helicopter to search for her.

He cleared the coastguards who had decided the woman would be dead, although her husband survived.

During the inquiry coastguards said a helicopter would only have had a remote chance of finding the couple, although the RAF's top search and rescue officer in Scotland, Wing Commander John Bussey, said the helicopter would have found the couple's dinghy, which was eventually spotted from the Coll shore.

Concerned, and in private undoubtedly angered, about some aspects of the decision, the RAF mounted what might be termed "Operation Willing and Able" to allay fears expressed in some of the islands.

After the exercises the Chief Coastguard said: "In general, round the whole of Britain, co-operation between the Coastguard and the rescue services is extremely good and if one incident has revealed a difference of judgment we

will be working to prevent a recurrence.

"I regard that one incident as a thing of the past and I am quite confident it will not occur again. We have reassured the islanders that we have their interests at heart."

The RAF prefer to let the facts speak for themselves but Wing Com-

mander Bussey pointed out that little more than two weeks after the Oban decision a 13ft. dinghy, adrift off the Ayrshire coast was found by one of his helicopters after drifting all night and seeing a searching lifeboat on two occasions which had missed them because of high waves.



Back on the ground with Wing Commander John Bussey in Tiree.

Why RAF will defy the coastguards

ANGRY RAF helicopter rescue crews have decided they will fly on lifesaving missions — even if coastguards tell them not to.

They believe the life of a German holidaymaker who drowned off the West coast of Scotland could have been saved if they had gone to the rescue.

The decision to call in the helicopter squads has always lain with the coastguards. But, after a bitter row between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade, the RAF at Pitreavie, Fife, has said: "In the future we will decide if we're needed."

The tragedy which led to the row occurred last August, off the island of Coll, when mother-of-

By **GEORGE HUME and RODERICK FORSYTH**

three, Frau Margarette Zehnder, (50), died lashed to a capsized rubber raft about 60 minutes before a lifeboat drew alongside to rescue her and her husband.

The RAF believe that if their pleas to send a helicopter out at first light to search for them had been listened to the tragedy may have been avoided. But a request for a helicopter to aid the search was cancelled by the coastguard in Oban.

The Maritime Search Committee in Whitehall is now understood to be considering whether control of sea searches

for civilians should be taken out of the coastguards hands and put with the Ministry of Defence.

Whatever the decision of that committee the RAF at Pitreavie has opted for unilateral action and will now put up a rescue helicopter when they feel it warranted.

The row that has simmered since that August night of high winds and driving rain when the Zehnders drifted from just off the shore of Iona to the beaches of Coll, some 25 miles, has surfaced with the early retirement this week of Commander John

Douglas, (62), regional controller of coastguards in the Clyde area.

Commander Douglas intends to appeal against his early retirement on full pay. But he has refused to comment.

A spokesman for the Department of Trade said of Commander Douglas's early removal from office: "We would not take a decision about this based on one incident." But he would not enlarge on that remark.

The crux of the row concerns the call-out of a helicopter for the Zehnder search by the coastguard at Oban at 21.55 on the night of Saturday, August 16.

But at 4.55 a.m., the request for a helicopter was cancelled by the

coastguard at Oban. The Ministry of Defence say that the controller at Pitreavie was unhappy

So, too, were the police. Senior officers at Lochgilphead made repeated phone calls both to the coastguard and the RAF for a helicopter. But the RAF, working under the ruling that the coastguard is in control of the search, were unable to take any action.

At the fatal accident inquiry into Frau Zehnder's death, Commander Douglas said he stood by the decision of the Oban coastguard not to call in a helicopter.

Strangely, though, the coastguard on duty in Oban, Mr Len Scott, was never asked

A ROW between the crack RAF air-sea rescue unit and the Clyde Region coastguards is set to take another twist.

For RAF top brass, whose helicopter crews have become famous for their daring sea rescues, have decided to go it alone.

They will tell senior coastguard officers at a Defence Ministry meeting in the next few weeks that they will act on their own initiative in an emergency if the coastguards fail to call them out.

The coolness between the two sides started after the death of 50-year-old German tourist Mrs Margarette Zehnder in August last year.

She had been adrift off the West coast of Scotland for 23 hours and Clyde Region coastguard grounded a Sea King helicopter that was standing by to help because they assumed the woman was dead.

But she was found alive by Islay lifeboat off Coll after a horrifying ordeal, only to die of exposure soon after.

Her husband claimed that if a helicopter had been sent out they would have been found hours earlier—a view shared



Wing Commander Busey and Lt. Commander Featherston-Dilke on their tour of the islands.

Mercy flight men go it alone

by Wing Commander John Busey, head of operations at RAF Pitreavie.

ROLE

But at an Oban inquiry in March, Sheriff Donald MacDiarmid supported the coastguard and launched a personal attack on the wing commander.

At the weekend, despite their differences, Wing Commander Busey and

By STEVE SAMPSON

Britain's chief coastguard Lt.-Commander Jim Featherston-Dilke visited three west coast islands to meet the locals.

Wing Commander Busey said: "I have been told that should I judge that a helicopter could be used to search for anyone missing and so save lives then I am empowered to scramble

any of our aircraft I think appropriate.

"The coastguard do not know of this order

"I do not know how they will take the decision when they hear it formally but we are not looking for a fight over this.

"Our role is to save lives."

Lt.-Commander Featherston-Dilke said: "We would hope that the Oban controversy is

going to be a thing of the past and I do not want to comment on the rights or wrongs, save to say that we should have the closest possible links with the RAF.

"The Sea King has an invaluable role to play in searching for and rescuing survivors.

"I will be passing on my thoughts on to Clyde and I am quite confident that differences will not occur again."

Record View—Page Two

Lifeline decision

IT'S very unfortunate that two vital rescue services have fallen out.

But following a controversial drowning at Oban there has been a dispute over who should authorise the call-out of a rescue helicopter.

Should it be the Coastguard's decision to decide when a chopper is needed . . . or shall the RAF launch the rescue mission?

The RAF has now taken a clear-cut step to end any doubts.

They will send out helicopters in any emergency when alerted—without waiting for the formal call to proceed.

Minutes and seconds can make the difference between life and death.

We think the RAF initiative is right.

Two workers killed in N.E. accidents

DEATH ON A CHIMNEY

TWO men died at work in separate accidents in the North east yesterday. One, a steeplejack, was killed at the top of a chimney at Boddam power station; the other a joiner, was killed when a mobile crane crashed at a Westhill building site.

The dead steeplejack was Trevor Rossiter (39), from Bristol. The victim of the Westhill tragedy was Mr Brian Johnston (28), Bon-Accord Street, Aberdeen.

The steeplejack's body was last night still suspended in a safety harness 550ft. above the ground.

Attempts to bring the dead man down were suspended as mist rolled in from the North Sea, turning the tricky operation into an extremely hazardous one.

Mr Rossiter had been one of a team carrying out maintenance work, employed by a Bristol firm, Jordan Engineering.

He had been carrying out an inspection of the chimney when he was struck on the head by a heavy beam, part of the lifting gear.

A workmate made the long limb down an outside ladder to raise the alarm.

RESCUE BID

An RAF rescue helicopter was sent from Lossiemouth, in case it was possible to lift the man off and take him to hospital.

The helicopter, which was later joined by a second one, was held over the top of the chimney by its pilot while the rest of the crew took stock of the situation.

It was established the man was dead and that it would be extremely difficult for the airforce's winchman to extricate him.

The dead man, suspended in safety harness, hung over the inside edge of the chimney, which is about 20ft. in diameter.

The helicopters flew back to Lossiemouth and a team of steeplejacks travelled from Inverness to try to winch the body down.

Last night, as mist began to shroud the chimney, two steeplejacks climbed to the top. They established that the dead man was trapped under a beam and a pile of rope.

At Pesley Close, Withywood, Bristol, where Mr Rossiter lived with his wife, Shitley, and children, Tracy (15) and Trevor (10), neighbours were stunned by his death.

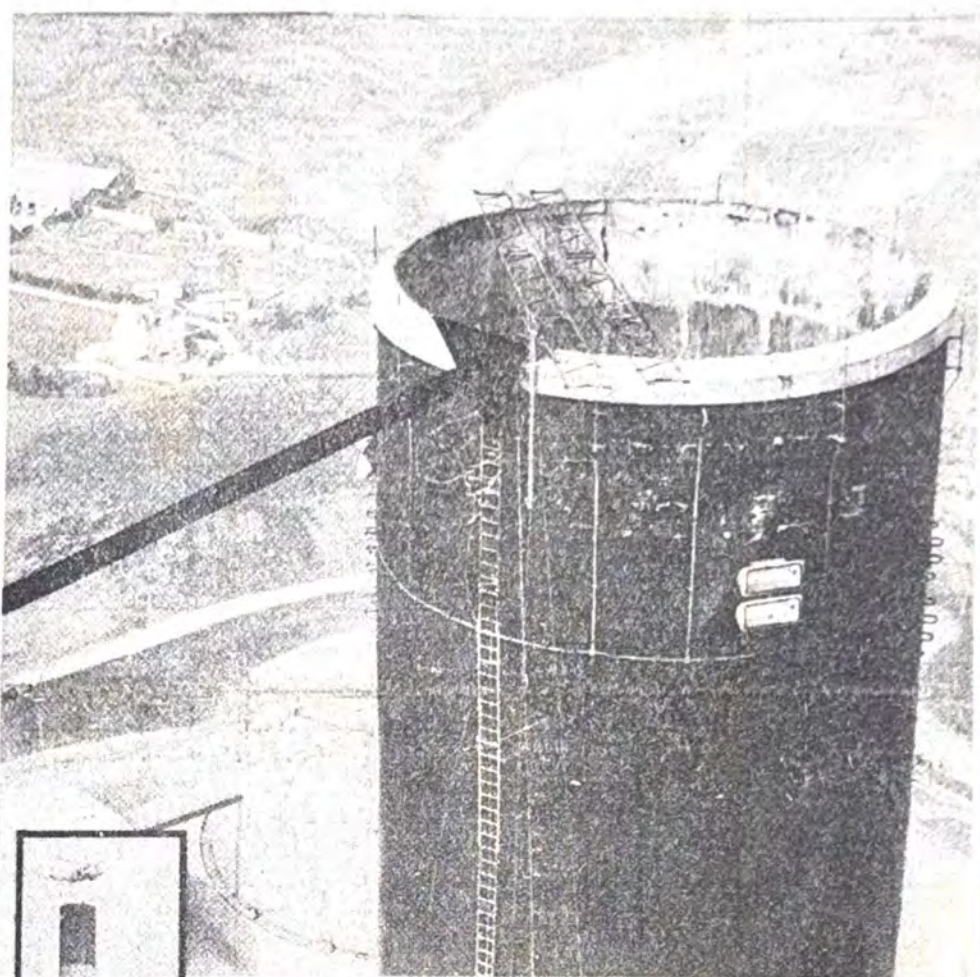
Next door, Mr Michael Williams said: "He was a great guy. He would do anything for anyone."

He said Mr Rossiter loved his work and was very safety conscious. "His daughter has been working off the days on the weekend until he came home for her birthday."

He had bought her a moped, but he wouldn't let her ride it until her birthday.

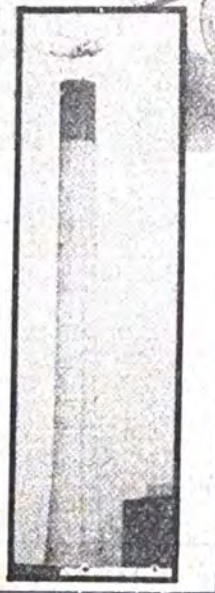
Mr Rossiter's workmates were badly shocked by the accident and would not comment on it as they left the power station. Other workers at the site were given the rest of the day off.

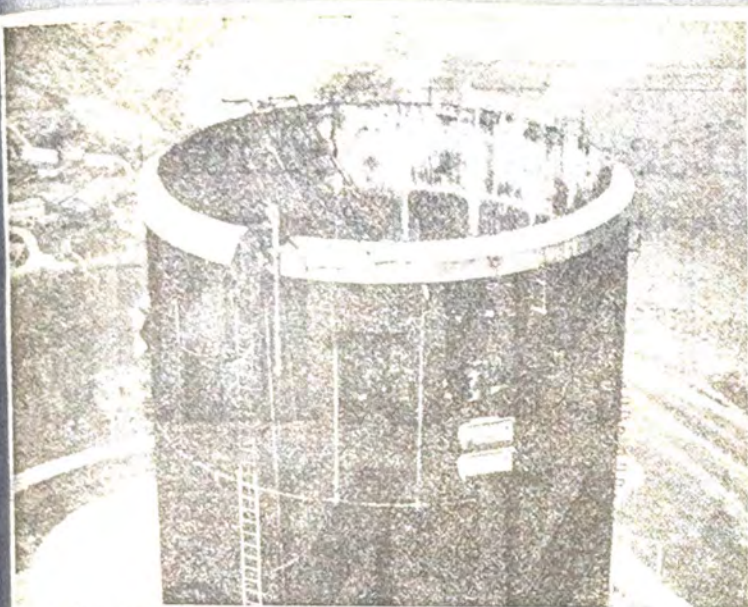
The £30 million Boddam power station is at the Lossiemouth site.



THIS was the picture of Boddam power station taken yesterday from a rescue helicopter of 202 Squadron, D Flight, RAF Lossiemouth. The arrow indicates where the man was killed.

LEFT — The helicopter hovers over the chimney.





Like a rag doll, the steeplejack's body hangs over the chimney lip

Horror death of steeplejack

A STEEPLJACK was killed in a horror accident on top of a 550 ft. power station chimney near Peterhead, yesterday.

Trevor Rossiter, 39, died when a steel hoist beam collapsed on him, almost severing his head.

His body, pinned by the beam, hung over the tip of the chimney "like a rag doll," a workmate said.

The accident happened at Boddam power station.

Mr Rossiter, a chimney inspector, married with two children, was with another

inspector from Jordan Engineering of Chipping Sodbury, near Bristol, preparing the giant chimney for cleaning.

Another man was killed and two others were seriously injured when a crane toppled at Westhills, Aberdeen, and they were struck by the jib.

The dead man was joiner Brian Johnston, 28 of Bonaccord Street, Aberdeen, who died instantly.

By WILLIAM BEATTIE

Steeplejacks recover body from giant N.E. chimney

THE body of steeplejack Mr Trevor Rossiter was recovered last night from the top of a 550ft. power station chimney at Peterhead.

Mr Rossiter (39), a Bristol man, died on Tuesday in an accident on top of the chimney at the Hydro Board's Boddam station.

Mist hung low over the station for most of yesterday preventing any recovery taking place, but there was a temporary break in the mid-evening and a four-man team of steeplejacks from Edinburgh set about reaching the body,

By DAVID STEELE

which had been on the chimney since Tuesday forenoon.

The steeplejacks had to free the body from a beam and rope in which it was entangled.

They were then able to lower the body to the ground as the mist closed in again.

A doctor was in attendance to examine the body.

Earlier in the day an RAF helicopter from Leuchars had been flown to the North-east to assist in the recovery operation. But the mist prevented it from being of any use.

The machine, a Wessex,

piloted by Flt Lt Tom Taylor, remained on standby.

Mr Rossiter died when a beam, part of lifting equipment, fell on him as he worked on top of the giant chimney.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth went to the chimney in a recovery bid on Tuesday, but there was too much turbulence around the chimney for it to stay in position. The Wessex, which has not so much down-draft, took its place yesterday.

Relatives of Mr Rossiter are expected at Peterhead today.

Police said a report on the accident was to be sent to the procurator fiscal.

12 MAY 1981

Jim Gatherer

Ian Macfarlane

Mick Headleand

Rick Bragg

Vain search for holiday pair HOPES FADE FOR FISHERS

Gear off missing boat washed up at Gourdon

By ANDREW STEELE

A PETROL can, a plastic float and an oar were washed ashore at the Kincardine village of Gourdon late yesterday as hopes for two men missing since Thursday faded. The two men, Mr Ian Dallas and Mr Andrew Pearson, are both constables with Strathclyde Police.



IAN DALLAS



ANDREW PEARSON

They arrived in Gourdon on Tuesday for a few days' fishing holiday, and had made several trips before they disappeared in thick mist.

Mr Dallas (32), 5 Barr Place, Newton Mearns, is a frequent visitor to Gourdon, and has spent many holidays fishing off the Kincardine coast.

But shortly after he left the harbour with colleague Mr Pearson (27), 40 Holeburn Road, Newlands, the mist descended, cutting visibility to only a few yards.

The alarm was raised yesterday after they failed to return in Tern II, a 14ft fibreglass boat with outboard motor, owned by Mr Dallas.

All rescue services swung into operation immediately, on land, in the air and at sea.

A rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth patrolled the coastline for several hours, while mountain rescue teams from Braemar and Aberdeen scoured the cliffs north of Gourdon, up to Stonehaven.

The RNLI inshore rescue boat and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology's rescue vessel, both based at Stonehaven, searched the cliffs,



Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team being briefed by police in the search for the missing men.

while the Montrose lifeboat made a search further offshore.

All search attempts drew a blank, however, until late afternoon when a float and a petrol canister, believed to be similar to the one on board Tern II were washed ashore at Gourdon harbour.

An oar from the boat was picked up last night 700 yards from the harbour entrance. It was found 25 yards below high water mark by Mr John Ritchie, Arbutnott Street, Gourdon.

Mr Dallas visited Gourdon often because of family connections.

His wife, Christine, comes from the Mearns village. Her parents, Mr and Mrs Bobby Craigie, live at 3a Seibie Place.

Mr Craigie said his son-in-law was an experienced sailor and knew the coastline around Gourdon well.

"The boys had been out in the morning, and went back down to fish in the afternoon. But just as they went out the mist came down," he said.

The weather conditions were bad enough to keep the Gourdon fishing fleet at home for the day.

The last person to see the two policemen was Mr Jimmy Brown, 2 Tom's Buildings, who was at the harbour when they put out to sea.

Mr Brown said he had been out earlier, and had intended returning to sea, but had decided against it because of the mist.

Dog waits

As news of the missing men spread, fishermen joined the search operation. Two boats, the Intrepid and the Day Dawn, returned after scouring the coastline for several hours without success.

And as hope for the missing men faded with the last light last night, the only evidence of the day's drama was Mr Pearson's abandoned car on Gourdon jetty.

And in a caravan at the top of the cliff, a springer spaniel, Mr Dallas's pet, refused to be moved by the police, as he waited for his master to return.

Grampian Police said last night that a coastline search would be continued for the two men at first light today.

Mr Pearson joined Strathclyde Police in September 1976. He worked with Mr Dallas in the Green Division of the force.

He is married, with a son and a daughter, and lives at 40 Holeburn Road, Newlands.

Rescue bid off Mull

A HELICOPTER from RAF Lossiemouth took off late last night to go to the aid of the fishing boat Spes Bona, aground on Flaada Isles in the Treshnish, West of Mull. The vessel sent out a may-day saying that her three-man crew was taking to their liferaft. Islay lifeboat was launched and several other vessels headed for the scene. An RAF Nimrod aircraft was diverted and last night was circling the area.

20 MAY 1981

Ian Macfarlane
Dave Cosby
Mick Headland
Rick Bragg

15 MAY 1981

Dave Cosby
Geoff Clements
Mick Headland
Roger Whitehead

horn canoeist was
tre of night search

sea search was launched in the
of yesterday morning after a
in Kishorn had been reported
me (22), a works preparator at
Doris construction yard, arrived
1.30 a.m. unaware of the night of
RAF coastguards, police, Navy, RAF
boat owners his canoe trip had
who lives at the Howard Doris
ation camp, had cast off from
his canoe at 8 p.m. on Thursday,
car on the jetty.

limber
alls to
death in
Glen
Etive

UNKNOWN climber
killed last night when
fell from Sron na Creise,
in Etive.
Inverness Mountain Rescue
team and a helicopter from
RAF Lossiemouth were called
but when they reached the
climber he was dead.

Death fall

A HILL walker who had set out
with two companions to cover
the Highland Way between
Glasgow and Fort William fell
to his death on Wednesday
night in Glen Etive,
Argyllshire.
He was named as Keith
Redding (45), 16 Booth Lane
South, Weston, Favel, North-
ampton.
With his two companions Mr
Redding had decided to come
off the Way near Glencoe to
tackle some ridge climbs on
the mountains between Glen-
coe and Glen Etive. Appa-
rently while trying to dodge
falling stones on a scree slope
on the 3000ft. Sron na Creise,
Mr Redding overbalanced and
fell 100ft.

20 MAY 1981

Ian Macfarlane
Dave Cosby
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg

Missing man turns up at work

By HELEN MACRAE

When he had not returned to his car by
midnight several of his friends became
concerned and notified the police.

Coastguards at Oban were alerted and
when Mr Frame could not be traced on land
by 2 a.m., a sea search began. A boat was
launched by the auxiliary coastguard on
Skye and a vessel from the Applecross naval
base was also called in.

22 MAY 1981
Geoff Clements
Dave Simpson
Bill Campbell
Roger Whitehead

A search was made of Loch Kishorn, the
Sound of Raasay, and the surrounding area.
When there was no trace of the canoe by first
light a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth
joined the search and covered a wide area
for two hours before flying to Skye to refuel.
The operation was called off when Mr
Frame reported for work at the Kishorn
yard at 7.30 a.m.

He explained he had paddled to Lochear-
ron where he had stayed overnight at a
friend's caravan, not realising he would be
reported missing.

Two men hit by lightning

RAF helicopters last night air-
lifted two men to hospital after
they were struck by lightning in
separate incidents.

RAF Pitreavie, who organised
both rescues, said that a Sea King
from RAF Lossiemouth took a
man and his ten-year-old son to
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness,
after lightning struck the father.
They were on Beinn Eighe, in the
Torridon area, when the accident
happened.

Police at Inverness said that
they had no details of the acci-
dent, but it appeared that the
man was not seriously injured.
The boy was uninjured.

On the same trip, the Sea King
also picked up a woman who is
thought to have fallen on another
mountain in the area, Mullach
Coire Mhic Fhearchair. She was
taken to Raigmore Hospital with
head injuries.

The other rescue was in Snow-
donia. A helicopter from RAF
Valley, Anglesey, was scrambled
to pick up the man struck by
lightning.

Thousands of homes in the
Borders and Midlothian were
without electricity for up to 90
minutes last night after overhead
electricity lines were damaged by
lightning.

26 MAY 1981

Dave Cosby
Derek Mead
Mike Cornes
Vic Oliver
Doc Kay

Climbers struck by lightning

A man was struck by
lightning while climbing in
Ross and Cromarty yes-
terday.

The climber, who has not yet
been named, was with his 10-
year-old son in Mullach Coire
Mhic Fhearchair.

The man and his son were
taken off the mountain by
helicopter, the boy suffering
from exposure.

Both were flown more than 60
miles by RAF helicopter to
hospital in Inverness where
they were both said to be
"comfortable".

Snowdon death

In another incident involving
lightning, a man died 3000 feet
up Snowdon at Crib Goch. He
was among a party of seven.

The man, believed to be
middle-aged and from the
Midlands, was given heart
massage and oxygen during a
five-minute flight from Valley
Anglesey to Bangor Hospital,
but there was no response.

Lightning hits four climbers

FOUR climbers, hit
by lightning in two
separate incidents, were
being taken last night by
RAF helicopter to Raig-
more Hospital in Inver-
ness.

They were scaling
3300ft Beinn Eighe, in
Ross-shire, when they
were caught in a
thunderstorm.

They split into two
pairs to seek shelter and

both parties were struck
by lightning.

Electricity supplies to
thousands of homes in
the Borders were
blacked out for about
two hours last night
after a thunderstorm
damaged power lines.

Injured on mountain

MRS. Sue Alting, 31, of Queen's
Drive, Heaton, Mersey, was
been detained in hospital with
a gashed head and shock after
being knocked off her feet by
a bolt of lightning. She and
her husband, Henk, were
walking on a mountain in Ross
and Cromarty in the North of
Scotland when they were
caught in a violent storm.

Describing the incident, Mr
Alting, also 31, said: "There
was a flash and a bang and I
felt a shove. My wife, who was
walking behind me, was
thrown off her feet amongst
some boulders. She was bleed-
ing from the face and quiver-
ing all over. I blew my whistle
until two other climbers
arrived. One of them, a fell
runner, went for help."

An RAF helicopter took Mrs.
Alting and her husband, as well
as two other climbers who had
been injured to Inverness. She
was said later to be in a
"comfortable" condition.

Climber saved by rubber boots

By STEWART LINDSAY

A CLIMBER struck by lightning
on a mountain in Wester Ross
yesterday thanked her thick
rubber-soled boots for saving her
life.

Recovering in the Royal
Northern Infirmary, Inverness,
Mrs Sue Carpenter-Alting, 31, of
Queen's Drive, Heaton Mersey,
Stockport, had cuts and bruises on
her face and a large blister on her
foot, as well as scorched hair.

"I was thrown about 18ft.
through the air on to some
boulders, and I was unconscious
for about 20 minutes," she said.

"My feet never blister, so I
assume the mark on my foot is
where the lightning exited. I'm
told I'm very lucky to be alive,
and it must have been the thick
rubber soles of the boots that
saved me."

Mrs Carpenter-Alting was
walking on a ridge in Beinn Eighe

during a holiday at Diabeg. It was
raining and they heard thunder in
the distance, but the lightning
which struck her was the first in
their area.

Another hill walker, Mr Ralph
Whitehead, 40, from Leamington
Spa, was also struck nearby at the
same time and his son,
Christopher, 10, called help.

All four were airlifted from the
mountainside by a Sea King
rescue helicopter.

SKYE TRAGEDY FOR BROTHERS

CLIMBER KILLED IN CULLINS

A man who was injured when he fell while climbing in the Cullins in Skye was found to be dead late last night when rescuers reached him.

Earlier reports had suggested that he was still alive but efforts to airlift him by an RAF helicopter were hampered by low cloud. Last night the Skye mountain rescue team were carrying the body down to Glen Brittle. The man, who was climbing alone, was unidentified last night.

29 MAY 1981

Geoff Clements
Ian Macfarlane
Mick Headleand
Roger Whitehead

Climber dies in Skye after fall

A LONE climber found injured in the Cullins in Skye yesterday died as rescuers were carrying him to a waiting helicopter which was unable to reach the accident scene because of poor visibility.

Other climbers came across the injured man in Coire Lagan. He had apparently fallen about 100ft. down a steep slope.

An RAF Sea King helicopter was sent from Lossiemouth but a change of weather over the Western Isles brought in low cloud and mist with heavy rain and increasing winds.

Skye Mountain Rescue Team were put on standby and were eventually brought into action. Team members were ferried from Glen Brittle by helicopter to just below the cloud level and from there they climbed to the accident spot.

Soon after 10 p.m. word came that the man had died. The rescuers carried his body across the foothills to the campsite in the glen.

The dead man has not been named.

A YOUNG English climber has been killed on Skye—only days after his brother was injured in a similar accident.

Twenty-two-year-old Gareth Noonan, an unemployed computer programmer from Watford, plunged 100 feet while climbing alone in the Cullins.

On Monday his brother Anthony (29), a teacher, was hurt while climbing there.

He was released from McKinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford, yesterday—in time to identify his brother's body.

The brothers, both experienced mountaineers, arrived on the island last week-end for a climbing holiday.

When Anthony was injured, Gareth decided to challenge the Cullins alone.

GAVE WAY

He visited his brother in hospital on Friday telling him he intended to climb near Coire Lagan on the southern tip of Skye.

That was the last anyone saw of him until he was spotted spread-eagled on a rock by two climbers.

Seconds later the rock gave way. Gareth's body was later recovered by Skye mountain rescue team.

The Cullins are a notorious climbing area at the best of times, but recent heavy rain has caused loose rock.

It's thought this caused Gareth's death.

Skye police issued a safety warning to mountaineers this week-end. Yet rescue team leader Gerry Ackroyd said the Cullins were packed with climbers.

Mountain rescue

TWO women climbers were injured last night when a rockfall swept them 30 feet down a mountainside on the Isle of Skye.

One was winched aboard an RAF Sea King rescue helicopter and taken to hospital.

Because of deteriorating weather and bad light the second woman could not be winched up to the helicopter and had to be carried down the mountainside by members of a mountain rescue team.

Police said both women, who have not been named, were not seriously hurt and were in a satisfactory condition in Broadford Hospital.

LIGHTNING

Meanwhile, a 29-year-old man was killed and his golfing partner injured when they were struck by lightning yesterday.

Chemist Alan Hood, of Symington, Ayrshire, was killed instantly as he sheltered under a golf umbrella during heavy rain at Prestwick golf course. He was married, with a baby daughter.

His playing partner, Mr Sandy Turnbull (30) on holiday from Crowborough, East Sussex, received chest burns and was taken to Ayr County Hospital.

INJURED WOMEN IN PEAK RESCUE

TWO women climbers were injured last night when a rockfall swept them 30 feet down a mountainside on the Isle of Skye, Scotland.

One was winched aboard an RAF Sea King rescue helicopter and taken to hospital.

Because of deteriorating weather and bad light the second woman could not be winched on board the helicopter and had to be carried down the mountainside by members of a mountain rescue team.

Police said both women, who have not been named, were not seriously hurt and were in a satisfactory condition in Broadford Hospital, Skye.

27 MAY 1981

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Bill Campbell
Rick Bragg

Rescue for women climbers after fall

TWO women climbers were injured when a rockfall swept them 30 feet down a mountainside on the Isle of Skye (Scotland).

One was winched aboard an RAF Sea King rescue helicopter and taken to hospital. The second woman had to be carried down the mountainside by members of a mountain rescue team. Both women, who have not been named, were not seriously hurt.

Climbers injured in Skye rockfall

A LEEDS woman was covering in a Skye hospital yesterday after being injured in a rockfall on the Main Ridge of the Cullins.

Another woman was injured in the Leeds area was swept down for about 40ft. by the rocks and had treatment at the hospital at Broadford.

A third woman and a man were also caught by the falling rocks.

An RAF Sea King helicopter flew to the scene and at nightfall, and in low cloud, airlifted Mrs. P. Andrews (27) to the hospital.

But on its return to the island the cloud had settled lower and Mrs. Catherine Webb (30) could not be reached.

Some of her companions, and two members of the Skye Mountain Rescue Team, managed to start a slow descent from the ridge with Mrs. Webb.

She was given treatment and discharged from hospital later in the day, while Mrs. Andrews is expected to get out on Saturday.

Rescue team leader Mr. Jerry Ackroyd said that a climber above had dislodged a rock which caused the slide.

Climbers rescued

TWO women climbers were injured when a rockfall swept them 30 feet down a mountainside on the Isle of Skye, Scotland.

One was winched aboard an RAF Sea King rescue helicopter and taken to hospital.

Because of deteriorating weather and bad light the second woman could not be winched on board the helicopter and had to be carried down the mountainside by members of a mountain rescue team.

Police said both women, who have not been named, were not seriously hurt and were in a satisfactory condition in Broadford Hospital, Skye.

URED
FMAN
"COPTER
ASH

OUNO RAF man was
ed to hospital in Aber-
by helicopter after a
crash.

Kevin Hampson (20),
RAF Kinloss, received
serious face injuries after an
incident on the Firthhorn
dunes road.

Mr Hampson was taken to
Craig's Hospital, Elgin,
for treatment and was later
transferred by sea King
helicopter to Aberdeen
for further treatment. His con-
dition is "satisfactory".

The accident happened at
the entrance to Firthhorn
dunes caravan site. The
RAF man was with Stuart Dickson (21),
RAF Kinloss, and another passenger, Ian
MacLeod (19), both RAF, re-
sulting in minor injuries. No
other vehicle was involved.

1981
Ron Webb
Clements
Roger Whitehead

pregnant woman tells of helicopter rescue drama



Mrs
NICOLSON
...frightened
when the boat
wouldn't start.

A YOUNG Inverness woman who is expecting a baby "any minute now" today relived her dramatic helicopter rescue from a stricken boat in the Moray Firth.

Eunice Nicolson (20), of 68 Craigton Avenue, and her father, husband and her sister's fiancé were rescued when the engine of their 13-foot boat "Chips" broke down during a fishing trip.

This morning she was no worse for her experience, although she said she had been "very frightened" at the time.

TIGHTS

The boat belongs to Mr Donald MacLeod, of 4 Stewart Court, Culloden. He went out at about 8 p.m. with his daughter, her husband William and 19-year-old Ian Peters, the fiancé of Mr MacLeod's daughter Shirley.

They went out into the Firth and stopped

Fishing trip becomes nightmare Pregnant mother airlifted from stricken boat



Mrs EUNICE NICOLSON

A FAMILY fishing trip turned into a nightmare for a young Inverness mother, who is expecting her second child "any minute now".

Mrs Eunice Nicolson (20), 68 Craigton Avenue, was struck by sea sickness after her father's boat broke down off Nairn and drifted helplessly for more than an hour. Later she had to be winched aboard an RAF helicopter in a mid-night rescue.

Mrs Nicolson, who has a two-year-old son, Keith, was none the worse for her experience yesterday but was under strict orders to "take things easy".

She insisted on joining the party because it would be her last boat trip for some time. She set out from Nairn on

Sunday evening with her father, Mr Donald MacLeod, 4 Stewart Court, Culloden, her husband, William, and her sister's fiancé, Mr Ian Peters, 29 Caledonian Road, Inverness, in a 13ft. cruiser, named Chips.

The trouble began when Mr MacLeod lifted anchor at about 10.15 p.m. and the engine would not start. He discovered the fan belt was broken and used Mrs Nicolson's tights as a makeshift replacement. Mrs Nicolson recalled: "It seemed to work but then the starter got waterlogged."

"The boat was rolling quite a bit, and I suffered quite badly from sea sickness. It was also

very cold — especially without my tights!"

Mr MacLeod sent off a flare at 10.40 p.m. because he was worried about Eunice's condition. Another was sent up 25min. later. It was spotted near Nairn golf course and the emergency services were alerted.

It was too late for boats to sail from Nairn Harbour because the tide had turned, and although Invergordon lifeboat was placed on stand-by, a Sea King helicopter was scrambled.

Mrs Nicolson said: "We were joking about a helicopter being called to rescue us when we heard one overhead. My husband and Ian were air-

lifted first and then I went up. I must have looked a peculiar sight, with no tights, my slippers in one hand and my dress billowing all over the place!"

"It was very sore and my stomach muscles are still feeling a bit tender. But apart from that I'm fine. I'm sure my doctor will give me a telling off when I see him next."

The helicopter landed on a playing field alongside Nairn beach, guided by lights set by the coastguard. Mrs Nicolson was offered hospital treatment but declined and the family returned home by car. The helicopter immediately returned for Mr MacLeod, who had remained with the boat.

The helicopter set down on a playing field alongside Nairn beach, guided in by lights set by the coastguard, and the family drove home, none the worse for their experience.

All three men are keen fishermen, and it was Eunice herself who persuaded them to take her with them.

She said: "I knew that with the baby due this week it would be my last chance for a long time, so I insisted on going out with them."

"It was very cold later on — especially after they had had my tights to mend the fan belt! While we were drifting I was too busy being sea sick to be frightened but I didn't like the helicopter part."

"They took up Ian and my husband first of all, and then I went up, with no tights, my slippers in one hand and my dress billowing all over the place!"

"When we landed they asked me if I was all right and they were going to call an ambulance, but I said I was fine."

Mum-to-be in sea rescue

● AN RAF helicopter crew were involved with a big problem when they were called out to rescue a stranded fishing party for it included Eunice Nicolson, 20, who expects a baby today.

● After the rescue from Scotland's Nairn coast Mrs Nicolson, of Craigton Avenue, Inverness, said last night: "They had to open their winch harness full out to lift me up. But at least the helicopter didn't have to play the stork."

28 JUNE 1981

Ian Macfarlane
Dave Simpson
Mick Headland
Roger Whitehead

"It was very sore going up in the winch, and my stomach muscles are feeling it this morning, but apart from that I'm fine. I'm going to the doctor's today, and I think I might get a row about it!"

Ian Peters said: "Mr MacLeod wanted to stay with the boat which he had only had a for a couple of months, and the helicopter brought the three of us ashore first."

"But the coastguard said he couldn't stay out there, so the helicopter went back for him."

A spokesman for the coastguard service at Inverness said: "It was a copy-book rescue. When a red distress flare is reported we respond immediately because we have no way of knowing whether someone is in the water, who is in trouble or any details at all."

Overdue
Louise
not
hurried
by copter
rescue



EVEN A dramatic helicopter rescue could not hurry Inverness baby Louise Nicolson into the world.

For she has been born almost three weeks after her mother Mrs Eunice Nicolson (20), 68 Craigton Avenue, was plucked from a boat drifting in the icy waters of the Moray Firth on what should have been the day the baby was due.

Yesterday Mrs Nicolson cuddled her newborn 9lb 10oz baby girl in the comfort of Raigmore Hospital and said she had expected the birth to be earlier because of the incident. This was despite the history of late arrivals in her family.

Not only was her elder child, Keith (2), a few weeks late but she was also overdue when she was born.

Mrs Nicolson said: "I thought the helicopter lift might have made some difference but it didn't. She was still a fair bit overdue despite all the excitement."

"But we are all delighted now she is born. My husband William and I both really wanted a girl."

It was on June 28 that Mrs Nicolson insisted on going for a trip in her father's boat, despite the imminent arrival of the baby. Also in the boat was her husband, her father Mr Donald Macleod, 4 Stewart Court, Culloden, and her sister's fiancé, Mr Ian Peters, 20 Caledonian Road.

The happy trip turned into a nightmare when the boat broke down off Nairn. They drifted helplessly for more than an hour until their distress flares were noticed and a rescue operation was mounted around midnight.

An RAF Lossiemouth helicopter winched Mrs Nicolson aboard. The worst she suffered during her ordeal was a slightly tender stomach from the air-lift and some seasickness when the boat was drifting.

By PAUL GREEN



Helicopters will never make the stork redundant!

THE excitement is all too much for baby Louise Nicolson, who enjoys a lengthy yawn in the arms of mum, Eunice, at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, yesterday.

Picture by
DAVID
MURPAY

Offshore Drama As Boat Capsizes

TWO Hopeman men had a narrow escape on Monday night when their small speedboat capsized 100 yards out at sea off Hopeman beach.

Mr William McIntosh, 63 Harbour Street, and his companion, Mr Norman More, 31 Manse Road, got into difficulty shortly after leaving Hopeman harbour.

Anxious onlookers alerted the coastguard after they had seen the boat capsize in the swell and an air and sea rescue helicopter was scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth.

By the time the Sea King arrived, however, fisherman Mr Ian More had set

out in his salmon coble to rescue Mr McIntosh who had clung to the hull of the boat. Mr Norman More had managed to swim to the shore.

Neither man was injured.

Speaking after the incident Mr McIntosh said: "The boat filled up rapidly with water and keeled over after a rope had got caught in the propeller."

"The craft was salvaged but the engine is badly damaged," he said.

6 JULY 1981

Mike Lakey
Derek Mead
Ron Webb
Rick Bragg

LOST CREWMAN ADrift.. IN A PUB

A BIG air-sea rescue operation was launched when crewman Robin Ross was reported overboard from the fishing boat Supreme in the Moray Firth.

But the search, which cost £3000, was called off two hours later when Mr Ross was discovered **IN A PUB** at the boat's home port of Lossiemouth.

Yesterday a coastguard criticised the crewman's "irresponsible" behaviour.

He said: "A Sea King helicopter was scrambled from the nearby RAF Lossiemouth base and Buckie lifeboat was launched."

ANNOYED

"Skipper Innes McPherson had just sailed for the North Sea fishing grounds late on Saturday when he noticed the crewman was not there."

"We understand that the man jumped off the boat as it was being cast off and went first to the

By BILL MOWAT

Brander Arms Hotel and then went up the road to the Lavrock Bank Hotel.

"It was a highly irresponsible thing to do and put a lot of people to a considerable amount of unnecessary bother."

Skipper McPherson who returned to Lossiemouth said: "I am embarrassed and annoyed at having put people to unnecessary trouble."

He added: "Obviously when I discovered Mr Ross was not on board, four miles east of our home port, I had no option but to involve the rescue services."

Mr Ross was not available for comment last night.

1000TH JCB

Search

A SEA and air search was launched off Lossiemouth on Saturday for a missing crew member of a Lossiemouth fishing boat. A Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth was scrambled and Buckie lifeboat was launched after it was thought that a crew member had been lost overboard from the Supreme.

The man was found to be missing when the boat was about four miles off Lossiemouth.

But after the search had gone on for an hour it was discovered the man was still ashore.

A coastguard spokesman said last night that it was a false alarm with good intent.

11 JULY 1981

Graham Carnell
Dave Simpson
Bill Campell
Roger Whitehead

Palace honours for RAF Lossiemouth copter crew

MEMBERS of the RAF Lossiemouth helicopter crew who pulled off a seemingly impossible rescue by airlifting 82 men off a sinking ship in the North Sea had their valiant efforts rewarded at a Buckingham Palace investiture yesterday.

The pilot, Ptl. Lt. Mike Lakey, received the George Medal, the highest decoration that can be awarded for bravery in peacetime. Despite massive waves, 70 m.p.h. winds and toxic gases from the burning Finneagle's cargo, he held the helicopter steadily over the deck to allow the crew to be winched up.

The radar and winch operator on the mission, Ptl. Lt. Bill Campbell, and winchman Sgt. Rick Bragg were also decorated, with the Air Force Cross and Air Force Medal respectively.

The senior medical officer at RAF Lossiemouth, Rgn. Ldr. Hamish Grant, earlier this month received the Queen's Commendation for Brave Con-

duct for his part in the mission.

The co-pilot, Ptl. Lt. Dave Simpson, is to receive the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

At yesterday's London ceremony, the former chief executive of Highland Regional Council, Mr Frank Armstrong, became a CBE.

Mr Armstrong (68), of West Craigton Road, Academy Street, Portree, retired recently, but is about to become the new civil defence co-ordinator for Scotland.

Vice-chairman of Aberdeen Football Club and secretary of Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Mr Chris Anderson, 36 Victoria Street, Aberdeen, received the insignia of the CBE.

Two men received the insignia of the MBE. Mr John Abbott (34), 3 Cairness Terrace, Breichside, Aberdeen, is group superintendent radiographer of Grampian Health Board, while Mr Cecil Adhesad, of Edinburgh, is secretary of East Scotland and Aberdeen Local Dock Labour Board and National Dock Labour Board manager.

Rescue team carry boy to safety

A BANKHEAD Academy pupil is recovering in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with a broken leg after being rescued by Braemar Mountain Rescue team from the fells above Deeside.

James Reid (15), 6 Hopetoun Gardens, Buckburn, was hill-walking with fellow pupils on Beinn A'Bhuidr in Glen Quoich when he slipped and fell on a rock.

Atrocious weather conditions hampered the 15-man rescue team, who were aided by an RAF Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth.

James was stretchered to safety early yesterday and taken to Aberdeen.

Tayside and Aberdeen Mountain Rescue teams were also involved in a rescue after a Carnoustie man lost his way in the mist near Gleneloch.

Navigator Graham Holland (28), 16 Kinloch Park, was found safe after he was reported missing by his two walking companions.

Mr Holland's party were walking on Glas Maol, near Tyllachan Lodge, when the mist came down and reduced visibility to a few yards.



PRESENTATION OF AWARDS FOR 'FINNEAGLE' RESCUE
15 JULY 1981

THE George Medal is to be awarded to the captain of an RAF Sea King helicopter, Lt. Michael Lakey, who braved gale force winds and 60-foot waves to rescue 22 survivors from a blazing chemical cargo ship last October after two previous rescue attempts had failed. His crew of four are also to receive gallantry awards.

20 JULY 1981

Ian Macfarlane
Geoff Clements
Mick Headland
Rick Bragg
Norman Pringle

SEA KING ON BEN WYVIS



Kinloss, Lossie teams win awards

FLIGHT crews from the RAF stations at Kinloss, Lossiemouth and Leuchars have winged their way home with major trophies from a sea-search competition held at Greenham Common Air Tattoo.

Overall winners in the helicopter section were the three-man crew of a Wessex from B Flight, 22 Squadron, Leuchars, and a Sea King from D Flight, 202 Squadron, Lossiemouth, won the Concours d'Elegance Trophy.

In the fixed-wing section, where competitors had to find and photograph objects — a liferaft, a submerged sub-

marine with only its snorkel showing above the sea surface, and another target sprung on them at short notice by the umpires — a Nimrod from Kinloss proved its reputation as the finest search aircraft flying anywhere in the world.

Ft.Lt. Tony Cowan accepted the Canon Trophy. He and his crew have played a major part in several outstanding rescues, including the Alexander Keilland oil-rig disaster in the North Sea.

The competition had entries from several countries as well as UK-based agencies, civil and Service.

GREENHAM COMMON INTERNATIONAL AIR TATTOO 1981



Five magnificent men in their flying machine went back to school yesterday, landing their Sea King helicopter slap in the middle of the school lawn which didn't please the groundsman very much but which sent the pupils of Edenside Primary School, Kelso, wild. The children, who had read in *The Scotsman* of the day last October when an RAF rescue team lifted 22 people to safety from the burning Swedish freighter *Finnegale*, off Orkney, had invited the team to school to talk of their life in the rescue service. The men, left to right, Flt-Lt. Bill Campbell, Sgt. Rick Bragg, Flying Officer Ian Macfarlane, Flt-Lt. Dave Simpson and Sqdn-Ldr. Hamish Grant, are pictured against the wall painting of the *Finnegale* rescue done by the children as part of project on flight.

Brave Conduct award at Lossie



SENIOR Medical Officer at RAF Lossiemouth Sqdn. Ldr. Hamish Grant (left) receives the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct from Air Vice Marshal D. P. Hall.

Sqn. Ldr. Grant (33), who comes from Inverness, received the award for his part in a dramatic airlift.

He volunteered to accompany the crew of a Sea King helicopter of "D" Flight 202 Sqn. on the night of October 1 and 2 last year, when a call was received that the Swedish ferry MV *Finnegale* was on fire 40 miles north of Orkney.

All 22 people aboard the ship including women and children, were rescued in appalling conditions, and Sqn. Ldr. Grant helped to settle them into the helicopter and administered first aid.

He lives at Lossiemouth with his wife and three children.

HELICOPTER RESCUED

WHEN I went for a pleasure trip on my father's boat two days before my baby was due, I had no idea it would end with me being winched on to an RAF helicopter in a dramatic air-sea rescue.

My baby was due on Tuesday, June 30. The Sunday before was a beautiful sunny day, and my husband William and I decided to make a trip to Nairn, about 15 miles from our home in Inverness.

Wise decision

Nairn, on the Moray Firth, is where my father Donald keeps his cabin cruiser.

I've always loved the water and I knew it would be my last chance for a boat trip or quite a while with the baby being due soon.

We dropped off our son Keith, who is almost two, at my mother-in-law's and then travelled the seven miles to Culloden where my parents live and picked up Dad and my sister Shona's boyfriend, Ian Peters.

Shona decided she would rather stay at home. What a wise decision that turned out to be!

Then it was back to Nairn and, with a feeling of excitement, we boarded the cabin cruiser "Chips."

It was about 8 p.m. when we set off, and, after we'd travelled for a while, the engine was switched off, and Dad, Ian and William fished with a rod and line.

I was given a hand line to look after — I don't think they trusted me with a rod!

Everything was fine until about 9.45 p.m. It was beginning to get chilly, and we prepared to return to Nairn. I was looking forward to a nice hot supper.

Sea-sick

Dad switched on the ignition, but the engine gave a feeble cough. He tried again, and again, but there was no life in it at all.

My husband, who is very good mechanically, examined the engine and decided the trouble was a broken fan belt.

All eyes turned to me. Without a word being spoken, I knew what had to be done.

Despite the now freezing wind, I peeled off my tights and handed them to William for him to use as a makeshift fan belt.

The sea was becoming choppy and the boat swayed

continuously. For the first time that I can remember I was violently sea-sick.

All the time I was worrying about my baby. I kept on having horrifying thoughts that the baby might just decide to put in an appearance before we managed to get back to shore.

After what seemed like an eternity they fixed my tights on to the engine and tried to start it again. I waited with bated breath, hoping to hear the familiar throb, but once more it was only the hollow noise of the starter failing to make the engine catch.

My stomach continued to heave and every minute I

felt colder and colder. My pinafore dress and sweater were no protection against the icy wind coming off the sea, and the beautiful summer's evening was now just a memory.

By 10.40, William had decided that the starter was at fault. Without parts and the proper equipment, it was impossible to fix.

Looked pale

In the meantime, my husband was being sea-sick for the first time in his life.

And my dad, who has heart trouble and is supposed to avoid excitement and danger, was looking worryingly pale.

The only thing we could do was set off our emergency flares and hope that someone would notice them. The first flare soared off into the dusky sky and my hopes rose a little. They very quickly sank over the next half hour when nothing happened.

At ten past eleven we set off the second one hoping that we would have more luck.

Unknown to us though,

the first flare had been sighted and the RAF alerted.

Just before 11.30 we heard a helicopter nearby and, seconds later, it was hovering over the boat.

The downdraught from the blades of the helicopter was buffeting the water so badly we all had to go into the cabin to avoid the stinging splashes. Twice the winchman missed the boat, because of the wind.

Just when we thought he was never going to manage to get on board, the wind let up for a few seconds, and suddenly we had another passenger.

He took one look at me and turned a whiter shade of pale. He asked when my baby was due. When I told him, "In two days," he groaned.

Dad insisted on staying with the boat for a while as he had to make sure the anchor was secure because there were some nasty rocks not far away.

Great relief

Despite our protests he was determined, and we had to let him have his way.

Ian and William went up first on the winch and seemed to manage it without any trouble.

Then the dreaded moment came — it was my turn. The harness fitted across my back under my arms and then across my chest.

It slowly started to take my weight. It was very painful and I couldn't lift my arms to hold on above my head, as I'd been instructed to do.

The winchman took hold of my feet and legs and gently helped me off the deck. Only when I was too high did he let go.

The harness strained against my chest, and I could feel an ache in all the muscles in my side. I didn't once open my eyes, and tried to ignore the swaying and twirling.

The extra weight I was carrying was causing me untold pain, and it was with

MUM-TO-BE



Eunice Nicholson — safely back home.

"I kept on having horrifying thoughts that the baby might just decide to put in an appearance before we managed to get back to the shore"

Her own story

by Mrs Eunice Nicholson

THE PROBLEM I FACED

The feature that presents a moving human predicament

great relief — in spite of being afraid of flying — that I was hauled into the 'copter. The winchman was hauled aboard and the helicopter flew the few miles to Nairn Golf Course where a landing space had been marked out with torches. What a relief it was to get my feet back on dry land!

While William went to fetch our car, the helicopter made a second trip out to our boat and this time returned carrying my dad.

Declined

I was asked if I would like to spend the night in Nairn hospital, but I declined as I was dying to see my son Keith and return to my own home.

We took Dad home to Culloden after we had collected Keith. Although she knew we were late, Mum hadn't realised there was anything wrong until we arrived and told our story.

The next morning everyone was extremely stiff and sore. I had a checkup but, according to the doctor, was suffering no ill-effects.

My father and a friend went out that day and towed the boat back ashore, with no further damage other than the faulty starter.

Despite our adventure, I haven't lost my love for the sea. As soon as I can I'll be back in the boat again though, hopefully, future trips will be less eventful!



● Doctor — What makes you think you've got water on the knee?

Patient — "Because my right knee is hot and my left is cold!" — B. C., Jersey.

WEEKLY NEWS

Lossie crew's marathon mission



THE helicopter hovers above the ocean weather ship Lima after lowering winchman Roger Whitehead on deck.

AN RAF Lossiemouth helicopter crew arrived back at the Moray air station yesterday afternoon after a marathon 24-hour mercy mission.

The Sea King helicopter, captained by Flt-Lt. Mike Lahey had been "pushed to the limit" to pluck an injured crewman from the British weather ship Lima, more than 250 miles out in the Atlantic.

The helicopter had to battle through swirling 40 to 50 m.p.h. winds, in poor visibility, as the weather ship was being tossed by 12ft. high waves.

Even Flt-Lt. Lahey, a veteran of several dramatic helicopter rescues, admitted last night: "It was a tricky one."

"Because of the circumstances we had to keep a very careful eye on our fuel level all the time".

The injured crewman Third Officer Alex Cameron (52), from Glasgow was flown by the helicopter to hospital in Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

He is suffering from a severe back injury after being thrown against a stanchion on Monday afternoon.

The Lossiemouth helicopter was originally scrambled shortly after 2 p.m. on Monday, and flew to Benbecula to refuel and to allow the crew a rest period before the long Atlantic trip.

Because the weather ship, the converted corvette Admiral Fitzroy, was still well out of range of the helicopter's radius, the Sea King crew were unable to take off from Benbecula until 5 a.m. yesterday, by which time the weather ship was 100 miles near land.

"Even then it was pushing the helicopter to its absolute limit," said a spokesman at the Pitreavie rescue centre headquarters.

"There was not much room for error or delay in the winching operations, because weather conditions were pretty miserable. The operation

was a pretty hazardous one, but it was completed successfully."

Helicopter winchman Roger Whitehead was lowered on to the pitching deck of the weather ship and helped hoist the injured man back on board the helicopter.

Mr Cameron was treated by RAF Kinloss medical officer Sqr.Ldr. Chris Williams — who had been picked up en route — during the three hour flight to hospital.

The other members of the Sea King crew who took part in the rescue marathon were co-pilot Flt-Lt. Graham Cannell and Flt-Sgt. Mick Headleand.

The Lossiemouth helicopter was helped in its task by a Nimrod aircraft from RAF Kinloss.

The Nimrod of 201 Squadron, captained by Flt-Lt. Hugh Mackenzie, was called out at 3.30 a.m. to pinpoint the weather ship and provide top communication cover



FLT-LT. MIKE LAHEY ... captained copter.

Copter crew beat weather hazard in mercy mission

AN RAF Lossiemouth Sea King helicopter was "pushed to the absolute limit" today to pluck an injured crew member from the British weather ship Lima 250 miles out in the Atlantic.

With visibility down to only 100 feet because of low cloud and 40 to 50 m.p.h. wind whipping the sea to 12 foot waves, the winching operation was described as hazardous by a Pitreavie Rescue Centre spokesman.

The weather ship crewman — Third Officer Alex Cameron (52), from Glasgow — received a serious back injury as a result of a fall on board the vessel yesterday.

Today he was taken on board the helicopter and flown to hospital in Londonderry.

The Lossiemouth Sea King taking part in the marathon mercy mission was captained by Flt-Lt. Mike Lahey.

It left Lossiemouth yesterday afternoon to fly to Benbecula for a refuelling stop and to allow the crew a rest period before they tackled the long Atlantic flight.

DELAY

Because the weather ship was well out of range of the helicopter's radius, the Sea King crew were unable to take off until 5 a.m. today by which time the weather ship was 100 miles near land.

"Even then it was pushing the helicopter to its absolute limit," said the Pitreavie spokesman. "There was not much room for error or delay in the winching operations because weather conditions were pretty miserable."

"We have now heard that the lift has been successfully completed however and that the injured man is on his way to hospital in Northern Ireland."

The Lossiemouth helicopter was helped in its task by a Nimrod aircraft from RAF Kinloss.

The No. 201 Squadron Nimrod, captained by Flt-Lt. Hugh McKennie, took off at 3.30 a.m. today and pinpointed the weather ship before homing the helicopter in for the rescue mission.

Marathon mercy mission for N.E. copter

A SEA KING rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was taking part in a marathon overnight mercy mission early today, more than 300 miles out in the Atlantic.

The call for help came from the British weather ship Lima, one of whose crew members had serious back injuries following an accident on board.

The Lossiemouth helicopter, piloted by Flt-Lt. Mike Lahey, took off from the Moray air station yesterday afternoon to fly to Benbecula.

Following a stop for refuelling, and for the crew to get some rest, the helicopter left at midnight on the 360-mile trip to the weather ship — the converted corvette Admiral Fitzroy.

The injured crewman was then to be flown to hospital in Londonderry, where the Lossiemouth helicopter expected to touch down at about 8 a.m. this morning.

Mercy dash

AN RAF helicopter made a mercy dash from North Sutherland to Inverness yesterday with a critically ill woman.

The Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth picked up Mrs Sallyanne Edwards, of Loch Hope, after an emergency call from the local doctor. It is understood she was suffering from heart trouble.

She was airlifted to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, where last night she was undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit.

Mrs Edwards and her husband Mark and their young daughter live in an isolated farm cottage at Loch Hope, about 10 miles from Tongue.

Late last night a hospital spokesman said Mrs Edwards' condition had greatly improved.

3-4 AUGUST 1981

Mike Lahey
Graham Cannell
Mick Headleand
Roger Whitehead



Helicopter heroes honoured



PRESENTATION OF AWARDS BY FAROESE GOVERNMENT
FOR RESCUE OF THE CREW OF 'BORGIN'

FOUR RAF Lossiemouth helicopter heroes who plucked four Faroese fishermen to safety after their boat had run aground in a gale off Lewis last December yesterday received bravery medals from the Faroese Government.

The awards were handed over at a formal ceremony at Lossiemouth by the Faroese Deputy Prime Minister and Fisheries Minister, Mr Olaf Olsen (centre left).

Receiving his is F1LL Dave Simpson, the Sea King helicopter captain. Looking on are (left to right) F1t-Sgt. Ron Webb; Mr Sofus Poulsen, Faroese commercial attaché in Aberdeen; Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss; Wg. Cdr. John Lumsden, acting CO at RAF Lossiemouth, and F1LL Dave Crosby.

Also in the crew was Winchman George Muir.

Mr Olsen said: "We who make our living on the high seas greatly appreciate the services of those who at all hours and in all weather conditions are willing to put their own lives at risk to rescue those in peril. It is thanks to you gallant gentlemen that our fishermen were saved."

The Faroese vessel — the Borgin — ran aground on the rocks off Lewis late in the afternoon of December 2 after engine failure.

POUNDED

Initial attempts by other vessels and by coastguard teams to get to the stricken vessel proved unsuccessful — and when the Lossiemouth helicopter was called out, it took more than two hours to reach the scene because of strong headwinds.

When the Sea King arrived, the Borgin was being pounded by heavy seas — with her sails still rigged.

The effect of the wind and the helicopter's downwash on the sails caused the boat to swing erratically, making it impossible to lower a winchman.

The pilot had to hover "blind" and had to act only on verbal instructions, as a line was lowered to the deck and the four fishermen were winched aboard.

The fishermen were then flown to Stornoway, none the worse for their ordeal, but leaving the Borgin a total wreck.

At yesterday's presentation ceremony, Air Marshal Curtiss, AOC No. 18 Group, also presented F1LL Simpson with the Queen's Commendation for Valuable service in the Air for his part in another epic Sea King rescue — the lifting off of 22 people from the Swedish ship Finneagle, which caught fire off Shetland in October, 1980.



The crew of an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter who rescued four fishermen from their sinking vessel off Lewis last winter have been presented with commemorative medals by the Faroese Government. They are Flt-Lt Dave Simpson, the helicopter captain; co-pilot Flt-Lt Dave Cosby; and Flt-Sgt Ron Webb, radar/winch operator. Our photograph shows (left to right) — Flt-Sgt Webb, Mr S. Poulson; Faroese deputy Prime Minister Mr O. Olsen, who made the presentations; Flt-Lt Simpson; Air Chief Marshal Sir John Curtiss, AOC No 18 Group; Wing-Commander John Lumsden; Flt-Lt Dave Cosby. The other member of the crew, who was unable to be present, was winchman MALM George Muir. Air Marshall Curtiss also presented the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air to Flt-Lt Simpson for his part in the rescue of 22 people from the Swedish ship Finneagle last October.



Conservative Backbench MPs with a special interest in defence, Mr Alex Pollock (Moray and Nairn) right, and Mr Robert Atkins (Preston North) left, about to board a Sea King helicopter at RAF Lossiemouth prior to taking part in a routine training flight.

VISIT TO COPTER SQUADRON

MORAY and Nairn MP, Mr Alex Pollock, and another back bench defence committee MP, Mr Robert Atkins (Preston North), had a first hand insight into the role carried out by RAF Lossiemouth's No 202 Squadron Sea King helicopters when they visited the station at the weekend.

They were just un-

strapping themselves following a routine training trip in one of the helicopters when an emergency call came through and one left on a mercy mission.

14 AUGUST 1981

The end of another rescue mission, but every time the mountain rescue teams are mobilised — whether for a genuine emergency or irresponsible hoax — the taxpayer counts the cost in thousands of pounds. Allan Gill talks to Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team leader Malcolm Duckworth about the dilemma.



The cost of saving lives

GERMAN holidaymaker Christian Eichhorn took the most expensive walk of his life last week. For the 37-year-old Berlin policeman, who is an enthusiastic hill-walker, took the wrong turning at Glen Derry, got lost, and thereby triggered a dawn search involving three mountain rescue teams (28 men); four Land-Rovers and an RAF helicopter.

Fortunately Herr Eichhorn was found safe, if a trifle weary, four hours after the hunt began. But the cost of mounting that one brief operation was £2050. And that figure is only the total for the fuel bill and helicopter charge. It does not take into account any proportion of the cost of wear and tear to the very expensive rescue equipment involved like vehicles, radios, ropes, first-aid gear or team members' protective clothing — most of which they buy out of their own pocket.

But the last thing on Malcolm Duckworth's mind is the cost involved. The Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team leader and his 25 members are only concerned with saving lives when they go out onto the hills. The idea that the police alert may be a false alarm does not for a minute enter the equation.

"It depends on what you constitute to be a false alarm," he challenges on my proposition that perhaps the hunt for Herr Eichhorn was premature and a waste of time and taxpayers' money. "As far as I am concerned a guy who walks 30 miles out of his way is in trouble.

Every time someone is reported lost in the mountains the police are the authority who must take the decision whether or not to mobilise a search. The duty is an onerous one, often involving scant and conflicting information.

For example in the recent case of the search for an American airman police found Sergeant David Denaue's car in Ballater three weeks ago.

At that precise moment they had nothing else to go on, so preferring to be safe than sorry, an immediate search was ordered — one of the biggest ever to take place in the Cairngorms. Gradually information filtered through to indicate that Denaue's disappearance was simply a hoax. He is now known to be well and back in America.

The almost criminal irresponsibility of such an action is obvious involving

The cost of searching for Christian Eichhorn

	£'s
Fuel for four Land-Rovers	50
Helicopter hire at £1000 per hour	2,000
	2,050

The cost of equipping Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team

Two Land Rovers	15,000
Radios	10,000
Ropes, climbing gear, stretchers, first aid equipment, flares and casualty bags	5,000
Team members' personal equipment including boots, socks, gaiters, sleeping bags, rucksacks and waterproof clothing	260
	30,260

The above list does not take into account costs in terms of police or search team man hours spent in hunting for lost hill walkers. Nor does it include medical costs in the event of injury as such calculations are not available.

more time, money and effort than Malcolm Duckworth cared to calculate. But in the more normal cases involving a lack of experience he emphasised the following important points you should know before setting foot in the hills:

- The need to have a map and a compass — and the ability to use them properly.
- Always get a weather report before you set out.
- Always leave a map of the route you intend to walk with someone.
- Be prepared to alter your day in the light of the weather or with regard to the weaker members of your party (three is an ideal number).
- Always take a reasonable standard of equipment plus ample food supplies and warm clothing.
- If you do get lost but finally manage to find a main road, contact the authorities as soon as possible.

The more people who follow these common sense guide-lines, the greater will be the amount of resources at the disposal of the mountain rescue teams for the real emergencies.

Constable at centre of rescue alert

PORTsmouth police coordinated a rescue alert at the Port of Portsmouth early this morning.

Services were provided by the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, HMS Raleigh, and the Royal Naval School of Maritime Studies, HMS Raleigh.

The alert was held in fact to test the crew of HMS Raleigh, who were to be able to launch and recover a helicopter in the event of an emergency.

The alert was held in fact to test the crew of HMS Raleigh, who were to be able to launch and recover a helicopter in the event of an emergency.

safety had grown at the port following an alert that the crew of another cabin cruiser, The Crutur, had hit an unidentified object in the firm.

As RAF rescue helicopter helped the Invergordon lifeboat and the Cormarty Fish Port Authority's launch Udale, in a search of the area.

It was the port-authority crew who found Constable MacLeod and Mr Boone, and they towed the stricken cabin cruiser back to Invergordon.

Meanwhile, three crew members of The Crutur received minor injuries after the vessel was severely jolted in a collision.

Aboard the boat, were skipper Mr John Bowie, 11

Birchwood, Invergordon, his son Mr William Bowie, same address, Mr Ronald Dalgarno and his wife Christine, 50 High Street, Invergordon, and Mr Hugh McClatchie, 21 Queen Street, Invergordon.

The Crutur was towed into Invergordon by the skipper of another cabin cruiser, The Omega — shoe shop-owner Mr David Murdoch, 31 High Street, Invergordon.

Mr John Bowie received cuts and bruises about the face. He said the other members of the crew received bruising.

His boat and Mr Murdoch's were returning from Cromarty where they had been watching a raft race.

He said his boat had been badly damaged.

The object responsible for the collision has not yet been identified, but is thought to have been either a log or an abandoned anchor.

The Press and Journal

234th Year

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Injured climber air lifted from Coolins

TWO RESCUED IN MOUNTAINS

Drama in dark on Glencoe peak

AS AN injured climber was being airlifted from the Coolins of Skye last night, another was recovering in hospital after a dramatic Glencoe rescue.

In yesterday's incident, Mr David Allen (39), a doctor of botany, Bottisham, Cambridgeshire, was climbing with his wife Janet and her

cousin Mr Duncan Sutherland, Dundee, when he slipped on the tourist path on the 3000ft. high ridge of the mountains.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth took him to the MacKinnon Memorial Hospital at Broadford, Skye, where he was admitted for treatment

to a suspected fractured ankle.

The other injured climber was recovering in Belford Hospital, Fort-William, yesterday after being rescued on Sunday night while hill walking in Glencoe.

Warehouse manager John Phillips (28), 9 St Julians Road, London NW6, fell on Aonach Dubh while walking alone.

His cries for help were heard by other climbers and Glencoe mountain rescue team and a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth were called in as darkness fell.

The team located Mr Phillips but as the helicopter was unable to fly farther south than Fort-William because of adverse weather, he had to be carried down the mountainside to a waiting ambulance.

Mr Phillips had nearly reached the top of the mountain when he slipped and fell at least 120ft, breaking both his legs, smashing his teeth, fracturing his jaw and badly damaging his face.

Despite the pain, he realised that if he stayed where he was in the gathering darkness he would be unlikely to attract the attention of other climbers.

Said Mr John Grievie, Kinlochleven, in charge of Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team: "He must have dragged himself at least 300ft. down the mountain knowing that every time he reached the edge of a drop he would be plunging down several feet. But he kept going. Finally he got to the ledge, a favourite winter ice climb, but a waterfall during the rest of the year, and from there he began shouting.

"It's a miracle he's alive and he would probably have died if his shouts had not been heard by a Glasgow climber."

Mr Grievie also said that this climber had done a marvellous job in reaching him under the dark, wet, conditions. By the time he got to Mr Phillips the injured man was so weak he couldn't shout for help.

The Glasgow climber took over and his cries for help attracted the mountain rescue team who were already on the mountain, but higher up. They had to abseil down to the scene.

The rescue itself was a spectacular one with a 500ft. rope being strung across a gully and Mr Phillips being "cabled" across it in a stretcher and then carried down the mountain. The whole operation took five hours.

23 AUGUST 1981

Geoff Clements
Dave Simpson
Ron Webb
Vic Oliver

24 AUGUST 1981

Graham Cannell
Geoff Clements
Ron Webb
Vic Oliver



21 SEPTEMBER 1981

Derek Mead
Dave Simpson
Nick Headleand
Rick Bragg

AIR HUNT FOR LONE SAILOR

By TOM VINCENT

AN RAF helicopter and Mallaig lifeboat today searched in gale-force conditions for a Scots yacht missing off the north-west coast of Argyll.

The yacht, piloted by a lone sailor, was last seen at 10 a.m. on Saturday when it left Loch Carnan in South Uist for the short sail to Broadford, Skye.

The vessel has no radio transmitter.

Coastguards are also searching the shoreline of the Hebridean island for signs of the 24ft. vessel, named Saigon.

Five killed in black weekend on the roads

Weathermen say the strong winds off the north-west coast — some of them reaching 40 m.p.h. — will not die down for at least another 48 hours.

The lone sailor, as yet unnamed, is thought by the coastal authorities to be a "relatively inexperienced seaman."

Concern grew after the sailor had not reached his destination by late last night.

A spokesman for the Coastguard service at Oban said: "The fact that he is overdue is causing concern, but the possibilities are endless. The vessel could be sheltering somewhere. We are trying to check everything possible."

The Oban lifeboat was also in action today when it recovered two men reported missing in a rubber dinghy off Tobermory, Mull.

STRANDED

The men were found stranded in their dinghy at the entrance to Tobermory harbour and taken back to the town.

Five people died during the weekend's horrific weather conditions.

Road accidents in Dumfriesshire accounted for three of the deaths. A motor cyclist was killed in Glasgow and a pedestrian died in Musselburgh, Midlothian.

The dead men were: Paul McCormick (21), of Park Crescent, Stranraer; Robert Minto (15), of Station Road, Beattock; Derek Vriery (22), of 1/7 Northfield Grove, Portobello, Edinburgh; Andrew Martin (18), of Pleaknowe Crescent, Moodiesburn; and Edward Fitzsimmons (42), of Wallyford, Midlothian.

Killer storms lash Britain

LONE FISHER'S GALE TERROR

Copter plucks Buchan man from tiny boat

By HENRY MILNE

A ROUTINE lobster fishing trip turned into a nightmare on Saturday for Mr John Ritchie after the engine of his 14ft. yawl failed and left him at the mercy of a violent gale and 60 m.p.h. winds. It was one of many weekend weather incidents throughout Britain which claimed nine lives.

Fraserburgh lifeboat was launched when Mr Ritchie (40), 10 Church Street, Cairnbulg, was reported overdue. It carried out a fruitless search before returning to port and re-launching at first light.

But it was a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth called out by Peterhead coastguard, which homed in on Mr Ritchie's tiny boat, Catherine — named after his wife — and winched him on board.

Cold and wet, he was flown to Lossiemouth where a doctor's examination gave him the "all clear" and he was driven home by a friend.

Safe at home last night, Mr Ritchie said: "The whole thing is a bit unreal now that I am back in the warm and dry."

Mr Ritchie recounted how, after his engine failed, he had to start manual bailing and then had to try to take shelter in the open boat.

"I rigged up a jury mast and sail with a spar I had on board to try to stop her from drifting too much, but it was blown down and it took me all my time to prevent myself from being pitched overboard," he added.

He said that at one stage during the early hours of Sunday he caught a sight of the Fraserburgh lifeboat heading for him about a mile away, but she did not see him and veered off.

"I normally carry flares," he said, "but I did not have any with me on Saturday."

Mr Ritchie, who has four of a family, left Cairnbulg in the early afternoon and was picked up in Aberdeen Bay, about five miles west of his starting point, at 9 a.m. yesterday.

The Catherine was towed back to Fraserburgh by the lifeboat.

Mr Ritchie was full of praise for the rescue services and said the helicopter lifted him off the pitching deck "in a matter of minutes."

"Everything was done very efficiently and I was given first class attention," he said.

20 SEPTEMBER 1981

Ian MacFarlane
John Prince
Mike Cornes
Vic Oliver

Buchan crew in fire drama

THREE Buchan fishermen were plucked to safety by a helicopter early yesterday after they abandoned their boat when it caught fire in the Moray Firth.

The crew of the Peterhead-registered *Bona* were rescued by an RAF helicopter from Lossiemouth.

Skipper James Bruce, 16 Lower Grange Road, Peterhead, was treated at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, for a back injury.

He was released yesterday afternoon.

The other members of the crew were his brother, Mr Albert Bruce, 4 Bruin Court, Fraserburgh, and his nephew, Mr James Bruce, c/o 11 Balmoor Terrace, Peterhead.

The *Bona* had traversed the Quadenian Canal and was making for Fraserburgh when a fire broke out in the crew's quarters off Nairn.

Skipper Bruce said: "I had only time to send out one call on the radio, but I managed to fire off all our distress flares. I understood someone on shore raised the alarm."

The skipper said he had thrown the boat's two liferafts

overboard, but only one had inflated. However, they had managed to get into it and get away.

At one point when it looked as if the blaze was going out, they paddled back to the boat and he and one man went back on board while the other remained in the liferaft.

But the flames had started up again and they had had to think of getting off quickly.

However, the inflated liferaft had drifted away while the other one, still uninflated, was floating about six feet from the boat.

Mr Bruce, a non-swimmer, leapt into the water to try to get it, and succeeded.

He said: "When your life's at stake you will do anything. I jumped in, paddled to the liferaft, got it on board and inflated it. We then got in and got away from the boat."

After a while the three men were picked up by the helicopter.

Mr Albert Bruce said at his home at Fraserburgh: "The boat was an inferno and there was nothing we could do. We had tried to put it out with extinguishers, but it was no use."

CREW FLEE AS BLAZE HITS BOAT

A FISHING boat skipper told yesterday how his crew abandoned ship as fire swept their vessel.

The drama happened when his 50-foot prawn trawler *Ron* was homeward bound from the West Coast.

The blaze started when the boat was off Nairn—just a few hours sailing from their home port of Peterhead.

By ALAN DOW

On board were skipper James Bruce, 41, of 16 Lower Grange, Peterhead, his brother Albert, 45, of 4 Bruin Court, Fraserburgh, and James Duthie, 25, of 15 Balmoor Terrace, Peterhead, Aberdeen-shire.

Skipper Bruce, who required treatment for back injuries, said:

"The fire started in the galley. I sent off a

Mayday and fired off all our flares. We threw our two liferafts into the sea and jumped into the one which inflated."

Later they made an attempt to reboard the boat when the flames died down, but had to take to the liferaft again when the fire flared up.

The three were picked up by a helicopter and flown to hospital as the burning hulk finally sank.



28 SEPTEMBER 1981

Dave Simpson
John Prince
Ron Webb
Mel Ward



■ GORDON MUIR

Glider wreckage found in forest

THE WRECKAGE of a glider piloted by former Scottish Special Housing Association boss Gordon Muir has been found in a forest between Aviemore and Kingussie.

There are no reports so far of the whereabouts or condition of 50-year-old Mr Muir who went missing yesterday.

The discovery was made by helicopters about a mile from the Cairngorm Gliding Club's airfield at Glenfeshie, from which Mr Muir had taken off.

An instructor at the club said the missing man was an experienced pilot who had been flying for about five or six years.

HOLIDAY

Chartered surveyor Mr Muir, of Whitehouse, Cardross, Dunbartonshire, was on the last day of a holiday with his wife at Drumguish in Kingussie.

About midday he took off in a Skylark glider.

Chief Inspector John Maclean said Mr Muir was believed last seen in a place known locally as the Bowl, near the airfield.

He said: "There was some trouble there at that time with turbulence and other gliders left the area. Mr Muir was not seen after that."

The search involved two Sea King helicopters from Lossiemouth and a Wessex from Leuchars in Fife.

The RAF mountain rescue team from Kinross and Cairngorm team also took part.

See picture of search on Page Seven.



WRECKAGE of the Skylark glider which crashed and killed pilot Mr Gordon Muir.

A FORMER chairman of the Scottish Special Housing Association was killed when his glider crashed into a forest in the foothills of the Cairngorms.

The body of Mr Gordon Muir (50) was found yesterday near the wreckage of his aircraft which had plunged into a dense plantation in Glenfeshie.

The spot was about two miles from the Cairngorm Gliding Club's airstrip at Laggan, from which Mr Muir had taken off on Monday afternoon.

He had been reported missing on Monday night and a search of the area was mounted at first light yesterday. The search was carried out by two Sea King helicopters from RAF Lossiemouth, a Wessex helicopter from RAF Leuchars and two mountain-rescue teams — Cairngorm and RAF Kinross.

By mid-morning, one of the Sea Kings had spotted the wreckage of Mr Muir's Skylark glider in part of the Forestry Commission's Inshriach plan-

tation, about three-quarters of a mile south-east of Dainavert Cottages.

The wooden single-seater glider appeared to have come straight down, and there was no sign of it having cut a swathe through the treetops.

Mr Muir is believed to have died instantly. His body was winched up by helicopter yesterday and flown to the mortuary at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.

Mr Muir, The White House, Crodross, Dunbartonshire, had been spending the Glasgow holiday weekend with his wife, Joanna, at their holiday cottage at Drumguish, near Kingussie.

Chief Insp. John Maclean, Kingussie, said yesterday: "They were planning to return home on Monday night, and about midday Mr Muir went up in his glider to soar in the vicinity of the airstrip. He was last seen about 1.45 p.m. over a place known locally as 'The Bowl'. At that time there was some trouble with turbulence, and other gliders left the area.



Mr GORDON MUIR experienced pilot.

"He was reported missing after 8 p.m."

Chief Insp. Maclean said a report would be submitted to the procurator-fiscal. The ground search of the area would continue until police were satisfied that all parts of the glider had been accounted for.

Yesterday a spokesman for

Pilot is killed as glider crashes in Cairngorm foothills

the British Gliding Association said they would be conducting an inquiry into the accident, with technical assistance from the Department of Trade. He said: "At the moment, we have no idea what might have gone wrong."

Mr Muir, who leaves two sons and two daughters, was a member of the Cairngorm Gliding Club and an experienced glider pilot.

A chartered surveyor, Mr Muir had been a member of a number of organisations concerned with the house-building industry in Scotland. He was the current chairman of the Scottish branch of the National House Building Council and was chairman of the Scottish Special Housing Association from 1972 to 1978. He was a partner in a Glasgow firm of chartered surveyors and was also a director of the building firm Wattlings Ltd.

He had also been a member of the former Glasgow Corporation from 1966 to 1972, and for part of that time served as a magistrate in the city.



29 SEPTEMBER 1981

Dave Simpson
John Prince
Ron Webb
Mel Ward

FOUR RESCUED IN BLAZE BOAT DRAMA

By ALASTAIR BISSETT

FOUR fishermen fled from their blazing boat in an early morning drama off Lossiemouth today.

The men took to their liferaft after sending a Mayday call from the prawn boat Luran.

A full-scale emergency search — involving a rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth and all other fishing vessels in the area — was launched as a fierce fire raged on the Lossiemouth-registered boat.

The drama happened shortly after midnight when fire broke out in the Luran's engine room.

Skipper Ian MacKenzie, of 28 Dean Terrace, Lossiemouth, and his three crew members — Robert Anderson, Derek Coston and Andrew Gordon, all from Burghead — were picked up half-an-hour later by the Lossiemouth vessel Fame, skippered by Alex Ralph.

The Luran blazed fiercely about five miles offshore with the Lossiemouth seine-net vessel Fruitful Bough standing by. It finally sank around 4 a.m.

At his home at 6 Inchbroom Avenue, Lossiemouth, Skipper Ralph today spoke of the rescue drama.

NEAREST

"We didn't pick up the original Mayday call, but when it was relayed to us we knew that we were the nearest boat to the Luran," he said.

"We started to search and about 20 minutes later we saw the light flashing on top of their liferaft. Just as we arrived we could see the flames beginning to break through the deck of the Luran.

"We put tyres over the side of our boat and brought the life raft alongside. There was no difficulty in getting the four men on board.

"Fortunately the weather had not been too bad and the men were all in good condition. They told me that they had been working on deck when the fire suddenly developed down below.

"They had no choice but to take to the liferaft."

A coastguard spokesman said that the original Mayday message from the Luran had not been too clear and it had not been possible to get an exact location for the vessel.

Although there were several other vessels in the area at the time it had been decided to scramble a Sea King rescue helicopter.

The men had been safely picked up by the Fame before the helicopter arrived, however.

LAURAN skipper Ian MacKenzie said today: "We were just shooting our second haul when I smelled smoke coming up through the pipes.

"I went down below to the engine room to check and when I opened the door I could see flames coming from the switchboard area. The engine room was full of smoke.

"I went back up on deck and told the crew to get the liferaft ready. We used one of our extinguishers but to no effect, added Mr MacKenzie (31).

"By this time the smoke was billowing up on deck and I decided that the best thing to do would be to abandon ship.

"Before doing that I put out a distress call. We were picked up by the Fame within about 20 minutes or half-an-hour."



The rescue boat, Fame.



■ Skipper
Alex
Ralph



■ The liferaft used by the rescued men.

30 SEPTEMBER 1981

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Mike Cornes
Mel Ward

AIR DRAMA AS MAN DIES

A MAN died and another had a remarkable escape when their plane ditched into the sea in the Hebrides yesterday.

Four men in a dinghy battled against mountainous seas in a vain bid to reach the plane, an Aero Commander, near the small island of Floddaymore.

The drama began

when the single-engined aircraft, on a flight from Tiree to Stornoway, reported engine trouble.

The pilot radioed he was heading for Benbecula but he began to lose height and had to ditch.

MAIL REPORTER

the men put to sea in a dinghy.

Team leader Donald MacPhee (56) said they had to turn back because of "suicidal" waves.

The crew of the Sea King praised Captain Stark's flying.

SHORE

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Dave Simpson, said: "He did a brilliant job."

The helicopter reached the scene after spotting smoke flares dropped by an RAF Nimrod diverted from a North Atlantic mission.

Both men are thought

to have tried to swim the 200 yards to shore. But Mr Milne may have been held back by his heavy clothing.

In a second emergency, the Sea King crew airlifted a farm worker who had been gored by a bull on the isle of Canna and took him to hospital in Inverness.

● A search for a missing light plane with five people on board was continuing off the Channel Islands last night.

Two French planes and surface vessels were combing the stormy Guernsey waters to find the twin-engined aircraft.

MAYDAY

The man who died was Mr John Milne of Great Staughton, Huntingdon, who was a passenger.

The pilot, Captain Stark, of Binbrook, in Lincolnshire, swam from the wreck on to some rocks.

He was picked up by a Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth and taken to hospital on Benbecula suffering from exposure.

The fire team at Benbecula went on emergency standby as soon as the Mayday call was received. But when the pilot ditched, four of

Lincs pilot safe: passenger dies

A STURGATE-BASED pilot was today recovering from a weekend ordeal when his single engine aircraft crashed in the North Sea, writes **PETER REYNOLDS**.

Captain Hugh Stark (47) was rescued by RAF helicopter from an uninhabited island in the Outer Hebrides after swimming through mountainous seas.

But his passenger, Huntingdonshire businessman Mr. J. H. Milne was swept away and drowned. Mr. Milne's body was recovered from the sea by the RAF rescue team.

Captain Stark was piloting a light aircraft belonging to air taxi operators Eastern Air Executive, of Sturgate, from Tiree to Stornoway, on a business trip in connection with Mr. Milne's contracting operation.

Lost power

The aircraft developed trouble and as Captain Stark tried to divert to Benbecula in the southern group of the islands, the aircraft lost power and went down in the sea near the uninhabited island of Ronay.

A spokesman from Eastern Air Executive said both men climbed out of the sinking aircraft and, in mountainous

seas, swam towards Ronay.

"As they were dashed against the rocks, Captain Stark managed to cling on, but the passenger was swept away," he said.

"Despite being knocked back into the sea again, the pilot managed to scramble on to the rocks and climb a 20ft. cliff."

Shaken

An RAF rescue helicopter, guided by a Nimrod search aircraft, winched Captain Stark to safety and recovered the body of Mr. Milne from the sea.

Capt. Stark spent 24 hours under observation in Benbecula military hospital before being flown back to Lincolnshire in a company aircraft.

"He is a bit shaken but he is safe and well and resting at home," said the spokesman.

Capt. Stark, who lives at Binbrook, is the company's chief pilot. He is a former RAF squadron leader and an ex-Central Flying School instructor.

Plane Passengers See Death Crash

Pilot and passengers of a Loganair flight could only helplessly yesterday as they saw a chartered aircraft two aboard crash into the sea off the Hebridean island of Ronay.

Captain Francis Stark (48), of Birnbeck, Lincolnshire, swam ashore from his single-engined Rockwell Commander.

His passenger clung to the wing. But Mr John Milne (50), was dead by the time he was picked up. He was a company director from Great Staughton, Cambridgeshire.

The Rockwell sent out a Mayday after developing engine trouble. It was heard by the pilot of the Loganair Trident.

Captain Ed Bewley from Stromness was on a scheduled flight from Benbecula to Stornoway. He diverted in time to see the Rockwell hit the water.

The Loganair pilot was later praised by the captain of an R.A.F. Kinloss Nimrod for the "highly professional" way he remained over the stricken plane and helped guide a Sea King helicopter from R.A.F. Lossiemouth.

The Nimrod directed the rescue.

The helicopter, commanded by Flight-Lieutenant Dave Simpson, winched the two men up just over an hour after the ditching.

He flew them to the military medical centre at Benbecula where Mr Milne was found to be dead.

Captain Stark was suffering from exposure. Last night he was said to be satisfactory.

As weather conditions worsened, the Nimrod was forced to divert to R.A.F. St Mawgan instead of returning to its Moray Firth base.

Meanwhile the Sea King helicopter was ordered on another mercy mission to Cannich.

Mr Ian Mackinnon (47) had been gored by a Highland bull which was being loaded on to a ferry for Oban.

The island doctor felt he needed hospital treatment. The helicopter could not land him at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, because of the weather.

It diverted to Dalacross Airport. But conditions were so bad it had to fly out to sea before dropping down almost to ground level and making a careful approach.

Mr Mackinnon was then taken by ambulance to the hospital. He has a lacerated thigh.

3 OCTOBER 1981

Dave Simpson
Graham Cannell
Mick Headland
Rick Pragg
Bob Alderson
Eric Ditchburn

15 OCTOBER 1981

John Prince
Derek Mead
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead
S/L Hamish Grant

Mercy dash

AN RAF helicopter made a mercy dash to hospital at Inverness yesterday with a man taken ill while on a sea study in the Western Isles. Mr Malcolm Savage (56), 28 Whitegate Crescent, Wilsonton, North Wirral, was taken to Raigmore, and later transferred to Cuddihel Hospital, Inverness, which specialises in chest ailments and infectious diseases. A hospital spokesman said last night that Mr Savage was under observation and his condition was "quite comfortable".

RAF Lossie corporal wins safety award

SEA SECTION

A SURVIVAL equipment fitter at RAF Lossie, Cpl. Lossie Gowdy (right), has been awarded the Douglas Weightman Safety Award, 1981, by the Civil Aviation Authority's Flight Safety Committee.

The committee present the award each year "for an outstanding contribution to flight safety". The award consists of a framed certificate of commendation and a cheque and Cpl. Gowdy (42), receives it for the development of a Hi Line suitable for use by search and rescue units.

Hi Line is a method of guiding winchmen on to the deck of a vessel in high seas, avoiding masts and rigging. The idea was first used by Norwegian helicopters using a length of weighted rope, but it required considerable refinement for R.A.F. use. Cpl. Gowdy, working with D Flt, 502 Squadron, based at RAF Lossiemouth, was asked by the flight commander to develop the technique for use by Sea King search and rescue units.

He worked on the development for three months from October, 1979, and subsequently produced equipment that was more efficient, and much safer than the original rope and weight concept.

The Hi Line is now used by many R.A.F. Sea King and Wessex units, and is employed as a matter of routine on search and rescue operations. It was an essential ingredient in the success of the following rescues:

Six people from the Fendryke on December 26, 1978, from the Finnegan on October 2, 1980.

Four from the Borgin on December 1, 1980. Cpl. Gowdy will receive the award at the annual meeting of the Flight Safety Committee tomorrow.

Cpl. Gowdy, who comes from Rosyth, joined the R.A.F. in 1960 after completing his time as a time served seaman at Rosyth Dockyard between 1954 and 1959.



PRESS & JOURNAL 12 OCTOBER 1981

Award for inventor of helicopter safety device

A SURVIVAL equipment fitter at RAF Lossiemouth, Corporal Lossie Gowdy, 42, from Rosyth, has been awarded a top safety award by the Civil Aviation Authority's Flight Safety Committee.

The Douglas Weightman Safety Award is presented annually for an outstanding contribution to flight safety. Corporal Gowdy will receive his commendation certificate and a cheque tomorrow for the development of a method of guiding winchmen with R.A.F. search and rescue units on to the decks of

rescue of more than 30 people.

It was used in the rescue of 22 people, including women and children, from the Swedish cargo ship Finnseagle off Orkney on October 2 last year. The helicopter crew has already been honoured in Britain, Sweden and the USA.

Corporal Gowdy, who is married with two sons, joined the R.A.F. in 1960 after serving his time as a sailmaker at the naval dockyard, Rosyth. He now works in the main survival equipment section at RAF Lossiemouth.

vessels in high seas avoiding masts and rigging.

The device, known as Hi Line, was first operated by Norwegian helicopters using a length of weighted rope but it required considerable refinement for R.A.F. use.

Corporal Gowdy developed the equipment and technique in three months while he was with "D" Flight 202 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth.

The Hi Line is now in use with R.A.F. Sea King and Wessex rescue helicopter units and has been an essential ingredient in the

BIG HUNT FOR MAN WHO WAS IN BED!

By JOYCE SUMMERS

A MASSIVE mountain rescue bid was launched in the Highlands at first light today ... while the "missing" man was safely tucked up in a hospital bed.

Hillwalker Paul Bumstead (36), was admitted to Inverness's Raigmore Hospital four hours before the alert was raised!

And the rescue bid involving police, a Lossiemouth helicopter and Dundonnell Mountain Rescue Team was called off only after he called his Inverness office this morning.

At Raigmore Hospital today a mystified Paul Bumstead, of Tigh-na-Otraigh, near Inchavanie, Strathpeffer, said he knew nothing of the alert until this morning.

He had been climbing alone on Ravens Rock, near Strathpeffer, yesterday when he fell 20 or 30 feet and suffered crushed vertebrae and bruised ribs.

In considerable pain, he walked over a mile to Achternead where the alarm was raised. A doctor was called and he was taken to hospital by ambulance.

When he contacted the careers service office where he works this morning, he was told of the search.

REASON

Mr Bumstead said the only reason he could give for the alert was friends had seen his car and assumed he was still on the hills.

"By that time I was here and somewhat heavily drugged," he said.

Mr Bumstead said that he often went climbing alone. "It's a risk you take, and mostly someone knows where I am."

"Yesterday I was just out for a practice — it proves I need more practice than I thought."

And it looks as though he might be in for a rough ride in the near future — for he personally knows members of the mountain rescue team who were called out to find him.

"I'm in trouble," he said light-heartedly.



PAUL BUMSTEAD... knew nothing of rescue alert.

'Missing' climber was asleep in hospital

A CLIMBER lay in a hospital bed yesterday morning unaware that a massive rescue search to locate him had been launched in the hills near his East Ross home.

Later the Northern Constabulary — who co-ordinated the search — claimed the waste of manpower could have been avoided.

The search — involving an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter, Dundonnell Mountain Rescue Team and police with tracker dogs — was launched early yesterday for Paul Bumstead (36), Tigh-na-Otraigh, near Inchavanie, Strathpeffer.

The alarm had been raised just before midnight by friends who knew Mr Bumstead was climbing. They spotted his car at the end of a forestry road and feared he was missing in the hills.

But several hours earlier Mr Bumstead, a careers information officer, had been admitted to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, after being injured in a fall while climbing.

Mr Bumstead had been in so much pain and was later sedated and did not think of contacting anyone to say he was safe.



HILLWALKER Mr Paul Bumstead... safely tucked up in his hospital bed.

The first he knew of the hunt for him was when he phoned his office at 9 a.m. The search was then called off.

From his hospital bed, Mr Bumstead said that he had been climbing alone on Ravens Rock when he fell 20ft to 30ft.

He has a crushed vertebrae and bruised ribs.

Despite the pain he managed to stagger more than a mile to Achternead to raise the alarm.

A doctor was called and he was taken to Raigmore by ambulance, arriving at about 5 p.m.

Mr Bumstead said: "I presumed friends would have been notified that I had been taken to hospital. I was in considerable pain after the accident and later I was somewhat heavily drugged and never thought to do it."

He said he normally went out climbing alone and accepted the risks involved. But mostly someone knew where he was.

He added that he knew several members of the mountain rescue team and thought he might be "in trouble" with them when he was discharged.

A police spokesman said a considerable amount of work and manpower had been involved in mounting the search. Under the circumstances when the alarm was raised there was nothing that could have been done.

He said they accepted that Mr Bumstead did not realise the fuss that had been caused, but added: "If an effort had been made to let either his friends know he was safe or the police, this waste of manpower could have been avoided."

26 OCTOBER 1981
Geoff Clements
Ian MacFarlane
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead



Spanish Seaman With Neck Injuries

20 OCTOBER 1981

Mike Lakey
Derek Mead
Mike Cornes
Rick Bragg

Fisher crushes hand in sea mishap

AN ABERDEEN fisherman was airlifted by helicopter to hospital yesterday after he crushed his hand in a winch.

Mr William Anderson (36), 32 Logie Place, was on the vessel Integrity III, 40 miles off Aberdeen when the accident happened.

The crew of the Pittenweem-based boat called for help and a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth winched Mr Anderson on board. He was taken to Aberdeen Airport then transferred to the accident and emergency unit of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Last night Mr Anderson was transferred to Woodend Hospital where his condition was "satisfactory".

6 NOVEMBER 1981

Geoff Clements
Derek Mead
Ron Webb
Rick Bragg

The Press and Journal

234th Year

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 1981

No. 39,546

15p

FOR SOMETHING
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cats**
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Aberdeen 8 Tel. 2641

Missing woman: Caller may hold clue

POLICE investigated another lead in the disappearance of 57-year-old mother of three Mrs Jean Sutherland, Balvaird, Dornoch, yesterday. They were told of a mystery caller at secluded Cambusmore Lodge, just off the main Inverness-Wick road at the mouth.

Twenty-four hours after Mrs Sutherland is thought to have left her isolated croft-house in heavily wooded country at Balvaird, the doorbell rang at the lodge, where she worked in the summer as a part-time housemaid.

Housekeeper Mrs Wendy Boulton-Lear (29), said last night: "I heard the doorbell ring at the lodge front door, but thought it must be the phone because there's no one in the lodge this weekend. I picked up the phone but heard the doorbell go again, so I sent my daughter to see who it was."

Louise (8), came back and told her mother there was no one there.

Husband Roger, sawing a fallen tree in the driveway, said: "No one came up or down the drive on Saturday morning. It's all a great mystery."

Mrs Sutherland's home is less than two miles over the hill from Cambusmore Lodge, and it would have been possible for her to have walked there without being seen, because the route is hidden from the main road.

She was a regular summer help at the lodge, which is owned by Mr R. M. Abel-Smith, whose estate extends along the south shore of Loch Fleet south of Golspie.

As soon as they heard from Mrs Boulton-Lear, the police sent tracker dogs and searchers into the wooded glen behind the lodge, but found no trace of the missing woman.

Mr John Sutherland, a plasterer in Dornoch, stayed in his cottage yesterday after spending Friday night and all day Saturday searching for his wife in the hilly country behind their home. His son Derek (24), and son-in-law David Murray (20), Golspie, joined the large band of volunteers who were assisted by an RAF helicopter on Saturday morning.

Their daughters, Mrs Donella

Murray (19), and Jeanette (17), their father, The Rev John MacPherson, Free Church minister at Dornoch, who went out on the search on Saturday, said special prayers for the family yesterday.

Mrs Sutherland had been unwell for the past few weeks and had been attended by the local doctor. He called to see

her at 11 a.m. on Friday morning, after her husband had gone to work and found the house empty.

Last night the police decided to call off the large search dogs of the past two days and concentrate in an area close by Balvaird.

They again appealed for volunteers to help in the search. Transport will be provided from Dornoch Police Station.

Ten members of the emergency services of East Sutherland WRVS roamed and served 160 two course meals to searchers yesterday.

7 NOVEMBER 1981

Geoff Clements
Derek Mead
Ron Webb
Rick Bragg

One dead, one missing in dinghy accident

By HENRY MILNE

THE small North-west Sutherland community of Kinlochbervie was in mourning yesterday following an accident involving two young fishermen.

Bachelor Mr Derek Morrison (32), 4 Manse Road, and 18-year-old Gary Morrison, Rhiconich, set out on Sunday afternoon to take their 14ft. dinghy to more sheltered water in the modern harbour at Loch

North port mourns

Bervie, but they never reached their destination.

Gary's body was found by searchers early yesterday on the beach near the old fishing pier at Loch Clash. The dinghy was

found washed ashore about a quarter-mile farther north.

Despite a day-long search by helicopter, police and coastguards there was no trace of Mr Morrison. Lochinver lifeboat, fishing boats and a civilian diver were also involved.

Police and coastguards said last night they would continue the search today.

The accident has stunned the close-knit population at Kinlochbervie.

A neighbour of Mr Morrison's parents said the village was "very sad".

A number of theories on the cause of the accident were being voiced including the possibility that the tiny boat capsized in a heavy swell.

Derek was the eldest of a family of three brothers and a sister. He was educated at Dornoch Academy.

Gary, who was not related, was the elder son of community councillor Mr Robert Morrison, The Chalet, Rhiconich. His later education was at Golspie High School.

16 NOVEMBER 1981

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Mike Cornes
Vic Oliver

Copter crew from Lossie win award

A NEW award by the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society for air/sea rescue is to go to the crew of an RAF Lossie-mouth helicopter.

The Edward and Maisie Lewis Award will go to Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey and team on D Flight from 202 Sqn. for their dramatic rescue in atrocious North Sea weather off Orkney on October 2, of the 22 people on board the m.v. Finneagle.

Flt Lt. Lahey will share the award with Sqn. Ldr. Hamish Grant, Flt. Lt. Bill Campbell, Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson and Sgt. Rick Bragg.

The Finneagle sent out a mayday after an explosion. She had 22 people on board including three women and two children.

Flt. Lt. Lahey had to hover very close to the foremast and the only illumination was from the helicopter's own lights and the fire's glow. Only in the middle of the rescue did the crew learn that the ship's cargo was highly dangerous and the survivors were having difficulty breathing due to fumes.

The award will be handed over at the Fishmongers' Hall, London, on November 25, by the Duke of Norfolk.

Another award for Lossie copter heroes

ANOTHER honour has come the way of Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey and his four-man crew from D helicopter flight, 202 Sqn., RAF Lossiemouth.

They were presented with the Edward and Maisie Lewis award for outstanding air-sea rescue — another acknowledgement of their rescue of 22 people from the cargo vessel Finneagle last year — at the annual meeting in London of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society.

The award for the October 1980 North Sea rescue was presented by the Duke of Norfolk, president of the society.

Also honoured by the Duke were Mr William Jolly, the society's honorary agent for Kirkwall, and his wife. They were deeply involved in the care of the Finneagle survivors.

Mr Jolly received an inscribed barometer-clock and his wife received the society's gold brooch.

ANOTHER AWARD

THE skill and courage of the crew of a rescue helicopter from RAF Lossie-mouth who airlifted 22 people to safety from a burning cargo ship has been further recognised.

The crew were presented this week with the Edward and Maisie Lewis Award for outstanding air-sea rescue at the annual meeting of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society in London.

The incident which earned them the award took place in October of last year when the Swedish coaster Finneagle caught fire during a storm in the North Sea off Orkney.

The rescue helicopter from 202 Squadron at Lossiemouth was piloted by Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey.

HELICOPTER MEN GET NEW AWARD

By Our Air Correspondent

A Royal Air Force Sea King search and rescue helicopter crew who carried out one of the most skilful and hazardous rescue missions of 1980, are the first recipients of a new award for air-sea rescue presented by the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society.

The award goes to Flight Lieutenant Mike Lahey and his four-man crew on No. 20 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, for their outstanding rescue of 22 survivors from the burning Swedish chemical cargo ship M.V. Finneagle.

PILOT DIES AS JET BLOWS UP



ESTATE worker Mr Norman Graham who was one of the first on the scene of the Jaguar crash and his wife Audrey who saw it plunge.

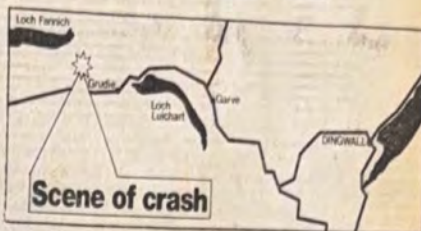
Woman tells of crash horror

By DUNCAN ROSS,
BRUCE TAYLOR
AND AUSLAN CRAMB

AN RAF pilot was killed yesterday when his Jaguar jet exploded in a "ball of fire" and crashed into the hills of mid-Ross above Loch Luichart.

Eyewitnesses spoke of a terrific explosion — apparently in mid-air — and pieces of wreckage falling over a wide area in the Fannich Hills near Grudie Bridge power station.

The Jaguar, which was being flown solo from RAF



Lossiemouth, was on a low-level training exercise with another aircraft. There was a heavy snow shower in the area when the crash happened about lunchtime yesterday.

It also seems that the jet narrowly missed a store of explosives, being used in connection with nearby roadworks.

It was the second fatal plane accident in as many days. Earlier yesterday the body of a pilot missing between Inverness and Glasgow in a light aircraft was discovered in the Trossachs.

Last night a Loch Luichart woman who saw the Jaguar crash spoke to "The Press and Journal".

Mrs Audrey Graham (47), Grudie Cottage, heard the aircraft pass over her home seconds before the explosion. She said: "We are used to low-flying jets in this area, and it does not bother us, but this one did not sound right. It sounded too low. As it flew over, the whole house shook and all my ornaments rattled."

"As I was going out of the back door to see what was wrong, there was an almighty bang, and I saw a ball of fire in the sky."

She added: "The impression I got was that it had exploded in the air." Mrs Graham then called the police.

Her husband, estate worker Mr Norman Graham (47), was one of the first on the scene of the crash. He said the wreckage was strewn over an area about 1000 yards long and 150 yards wide, stretching from the River Grudie, across an estate road, and up a hillside. There was "nothing left" of the aircraft, he said. "It was just in little pieces".

It was also apparent from the wreckage that the pilot had died.

Mr Graham said: "Thank God it did not hit the explosives store, otherwise none of us would be here."

It was snowing heavily at the time and visibility was poor, he said.

Mr Graham, who served as an armourer in the RAF during his National Service added: "I think that if the aircraft was in trouble the pilot may have been trying to avoid hitting the houses and the power station."

Forestry worker Mr Sandy MacArthur, Keepers Cottage, Strathgarve, was working nearby when the aircraft blew up.

Burning debris

"I heard it coming in and then the explosion," he said. "I saw a ball of flames in the sky and burning debris falling to the ground."

The sound of the explosion was heard six miles away at Garve.

Yesterday afternoon, RAF personnel flew in by Sea King helicopter and mounted guard on the wreckage overnight. They will start to inspect the wreckage, and try to recover the pilot's body this morning.

The pilot is not being named until relatives have been informed.

It is the seventh RAF Jaguar to have crashed this year and the 11th from RAF Lossiemouth since 1973.

And it brings the total of pilots from the air base killed in Jaguar crashes to 10. Since the Anglo-French aircraft came into service with the RAF in 1973, 30 have crashed.

Lossiemouth is the training area for Jaguar pilots before they join the "front line" squadrons in Germany and at RAF Coltishall, Norfolk.

Two instructors from the base operational conversion unit ejected to safety after their aircraft crashed in Angus on June 1 this year.

The last fatality was in August, when a 33-year-old pilot died in a crash in County Durham.

The authorities at RAF Lossiemouth were aware that something had gone wrong when the pilot was overdue in returning from a routine training flight.

Then they received several reports from the public that the aircraft had crashed. A Sea King helicopter from the station's search and rescue squadron was scrambled immediately.

The RAF have set up a board of inquiry to investigate the cause of the crash.

18 NOVEMBER 1981

Paul Martin
Geoff Clements
Nick Headleand
Rick Bragg



Airmen Kept Busy As Storm Rages

RAF FLIGHT crews at both Lossiemouth and Kinloss were working almost round the clock as storms raged throughout the North-east in the early part of the week.

A helicopter was scrambled from Lossiemouth on Monday night to investigate sighting of a red flare in the Beaulie Firth near Kossack Bridge but after a thorough search of the area the crew could find no signs of any boats in distress.

A spokesman for Moray coastguards said the flare, which was spotted around 6.50 pm, could be assumed to have come from land.

The Lossiemouth rescue team were in action again early on Tuesday when a garbled "May Day" call from the Peterhead fishing boat Palmyra was picked up by oil installations in the Forties field.

A Nimrod from RAF Kinloss — which had been shadowing the drifting oil rig Transworld 58 which broke its mooring in the Argyll field with 68 men on board — was immediately diverted to locate the Palmyra and after a short search was able to pin-point the vessel's exact location.

The helicopter homed-in and air-lifted two crewmen before heading for the Forties Kiwi installation to pick up a water pump. However, the

other six crewmen on board, including skipper Mitchell Hughes (55), apparently declined to be taken off the boat.

The helicopter was called back to the scene twice before the crew eventually agreed to give up their fight to save the vessel and be winched to safety.

The action of the Palmyra's crew was, however, to cause a storm of another kind when the rescue party landed in Aberdeen.

Wing Cdr John Bussey who was coordinating the rescue from RAF Pitreavie in Fife criticised the fishermen who, he said, had forced the Lossiemouth airmen to undertake one and a half hours of unnecessary flying by not agreeing to be taken off their vessel immediately.

Their actions, he said, had meant the crew having to mount a deck rescue in darkness rather than daylight.

But skipper Hughes denied the RAF's claims of "time-wasting" saying that his call had only been for assistance initially and that only one call asking to be taken off had been made.



THE PALMYRA.

Sig — My husband was skipper of the eight-man crew rescued from the sinking Peterhead boat Palmyra in the North Sea on November 24.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the pilot, Squadron-Leader Peter Chadwick, and his men of Rescue 37 based at Lossiemouth, and the rescue co-ordination centre at R.A.F. Pitreavie, in Fife, for the dedication and heroism they displayed in taking the men off the boat in such atrocious weather conditions.

As the wife of a fisherman for 34 years I know the worry that the loved ones of the helicopter crews must go through every time the men go out on a rescue.

Theirs is often a dangerous and thankless task.

They put their lives on the line time and time again to help those in need at sea and on land.

I just hope that this letter can go some way towards expressing the gratitude of myself and family towards everyone concerned in the rescue, including the coastguards.

(Mrs) M. Hughes.

28 Balmoor Terrace,
Peterhead,
Aberdeenshire.

Drama as oil rig drifts in North Sea gale

MORE STORM STORIES

— Pages 2, 6 and 7

IT WAS a day of high drama and heroic effort in and over the North Sea yesterday as lashing gales brought intense activity around its coasts.

An oil rig was set adrift and another was badly buffeted, fishing boats were battered and damaged and a Norwegian coaster the Soerstrand, was sunk off Denmark, with the loss of one life.

But many were saved from the storm's fury, owing their lives to the courage of helicopter crews. More than 65 men were brought safely to land.

Scottish and Scandinavian coastguards dealt with some dozen alerts during the day. The oil rig which left its

moorings, the Transworld 56, used as a production facility in the Argyll Field, was late last night still adrift with 20 men on board, 48 others having been evacuated to Stavanger by helicopters from Aberdeen. Four vessels were standing by ready to secure the rig once the weather had moderated.

In the Norwegian Ekofisk Field, the Sedco Phillips 88, a semi-submersible emergency vessel, was badly buffeted by the gale and lost an anchor, but a spokesman for the operators denied that it had drifted to within 600ft of another rig, the Tor. He said the semi-submersible had remained on location although a tow line had been attached to an anchor-handling vessel as a precaution. There were no plans to evacuate the 112 men on board.

Off the Fair Isle, the search for two of three men lost overboard from the Aberdeen trawler Clarkwood was abandoned.

Eight men were strifted off the Peterhead fishing boat Palmyra 100 miles north-east of Aberdeen, and the Peterhead fishing boat Stanhope III was under tow to port in mountainous seas.

A huge search continued for the Norwegian coaster Hammerholm—missing with a crew of five—and two Lowestoft boats, the Boltby Queen and St John, were in difficulties with power failures.

Regional controller of the coastguards in the East of Scotland, Cdr. Michael Woolcombe, said last night: "It has been an extremely busy day with a large number of incidents following the very severe weather."

Even busier were the Norwegian and Danish coastguards. At one point yesterday morning the Norwegians were dealing with four mayday calls and two alarms at the same time.

With north-westerly winds

boats in trouble were being swept towards the Scandinavian coast.

The RAF rescue service were so stretched that at the height of the alerts no other helicopter was immediately available in the North of Scotland had another incident broken. But they could still claim they had had many even busier days.

Meanwhile, the weather experts took it all in their stride. A Dyce Meteorological Office spokesman said warnings of the intense low had been given "I do not think anybody should have been taken by surprise."

The low developed around Faroe and ran down towards Southern Norway and Sweden. The result was strong winds in the North Sea with a mean wind speed of 100 m.p.h. and gusts of 120 m.p.h.—hurricane force.

Last night, the spokesman said the winds had decreased a lot and would continue to moderate.

SEINER CREW IN RESCUE ROW

But Peterhead skipper denies RAF claim of 'time wasting'

By BERT OVENSTONE

DAVID STEELE

ALASTAIR BISSET

THE crew of a North-east fishing boat were strongly criticised yesterday for wasting the valuable time of an RAF rescue helicopter.

On two occasions—with the helicopter hovering above the waterlogged vessel—they refused to be winched to safety.

But last night, Skipper Mitchell Hughes (55), of the Peterhead vessel Palmyra, denied reports that they had twice asked to be taken off. The request for the men to be air lifted had been made only once. A previous request had only been for assistance.

The aircraft was eventually called back and lifted them off. The drama ended in darkness late yesterday afternoon in atrocious weather in the North Sea's Piper Field.

Wing Cdr. John Bussey, of the rescue co-ordination centre at RAF Pitreavie, Fife, said the RAF Lossiemouth helicopter had been forced to undertake one and a half hours of "unnecessary flying" and this meant that the six remaining crewmen had to be taken off in darkness when they could have been airlifted in daylight.

The Palmyra's eight crew refused to speak to reporters after being flown to Aberdeen Airport.

But later last night at his home, Skipper Hughes described how a massive "jump" of water smashed down savagely on his wooden-hulled



PILOT of the rescue helicopter, Sqn. Ldr. Peter Chadwick (left), with the crew of the Palmyra at Aberdeen Airport

PICTURE BY DAVID SUTHERLAND

vessel while it tried to ride out the fury of the gale.

Said Skipper Hughes: "It was a wonder how the boat recovered from that blow and came up again. Now I know how it is vessels can disappear without a trace."

The skipper, unshaven and showing the strain of the long battle by himself and the crew against the elements, said: "I think it was the worst weather I've ever experienced. The winds were 11 to 12 Force at times."

"We saw the lump of water coming, but there was little we could do."

He said the lump had hit the vessel on the bow and smashed up various parts of the boat as well as pouring water inside her.

Debris such as papers and books from the crew's quarters were washed into the bilges, blocking the outlets as they became mashed up, and the vessel's main radio was flooded and put out of action.

They could send out messages on their "little radio" but could not receive on it. It was on that they had sent out the mayday.

After being told there had been criticism that the message was so garbled that rescuers had had difficulty pinpointing the boat's position, Skipper Hughes said it was a junior member of the crew who had sent out the message—at a time when there had been "a bit of a panic on".

He himself had been busy

elsewhere trying to save the boat.

He said: "It looked as if we might manage it and we made a big attempt over three hours. But the water kept gaining on us and our pumps gave up. But if we had got another pump right away we might have succeeded."

He said he had decided not to carry on with a replacement pump when he realised it might fail during the hours of darkness, leaving the crew in a very dangerous position. He had then decided it was time for his crew to be taken off.

It was at 11.30 a.m. that several oil installations in the Forties Field received the garbled call.

Regional coastguard controller for the East of Scotland, Cdr. Michael Woolcombe, said: "The mayday was very incomplete with no clear identification of the vessel's name and no indications as to her position."

However, Piper was mentioned in the message and from this and the signal strength, coastguards deduced that the vessel had to be somewhere between the Forties and Piper fields.

"The search was based on that scanty information," said Cdr. Woolcombe.

A Nimrod from RAF Kinloss, which had been shadowing the drifting oil rig Transworld 58, was diverted to the approximate scene and located the fishing boat after spotting a red flare.

EDITORIAL PAGE 10

24 November 1981

S/L Pete Chadwick
Ian Macfarlane
Mike Cornes
Roger Whitehead
John Reeson

"The Nimrod quickly found the Palmyra and it took some time to confirm positively that it was the Palmyra that sent the mayday message," said Cdr. Woolcombe.

The rescue helicopter was homed in and airlifted two crewmen before heading for the Forties Kiwi installation to pick up a pump. The remaining six declined to be winched up, it was claimed.

But the helicopter was called back to the Palmyra because she was taking on water fast. When the aircraft returned, the boat's crew again declined to come off.

But on the third trip all the fishermen were lifted off as it was thought there was little chance of saving the boat.

Wing Cdr. Bussey said he sympathised with the fishermen. In normal circumstances the rescuers would have gone out of their way to collect a pump, but not when there was no other available rescue helicopter.

"We expected to go there and pick people off before returning to base. I was petrified we would have another incident that we could be precluded from going to because we were messing about looking for a pump."

Cdr. Woolcombe said: "The crew twice asked to be lifted off from the vessel, but at the last moment said they did not want to come off."

He said the Palmyra rescue had complicated the overall situation because there were other vessels in difficulty and the Lossiemouth helicopter was "detained on the scene for much longer than would have been necessary had they agreed to be lifted."

As it turned out, no other vessels required assistance.

He appreciated that it was very difficult for a skipper to decide to abandon ship if there was a chance of saving the boat, but the skipper had to appreciate that he was putting the helicopter crew at risk.

The crew of the Sea King were pilot Sqn. Ldr. Peter Chadwick, co-pilot Flt. Lt. Ian Macfarlane, radar operator Mike Cornes and winchman Roger Whitehead.

Aberdeen coastguards said late last night that the Palmyra was still afloat and being watched over by an oil supply vessel.

The Palmyra, a 78ft. seiner, was formerly the Starcrest. She was built at Peterhead in 1971.

Airlift for injured crewman

AN RAF Sea King helicopter took an injured crewman from a North-east fishing vessel in the North Sea to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary's heli-pad yesterday afternoon.

A spokesman said the helicopter — from RAF Lossiemouth — was on a training exercise in the Orkney area when the pilot was told that a crewman aboard the Buckie-registered Adonis required hospital treatment.

The Adonis was three miles south of Mobb's Beryl Alpha platform at the time.

A medic from the Beryl Alpha had been put aboard the Adonis and confirmed that the crew member had a suspected broken back. The injured man was then airlifted to hospital in Aberdeen.

No condition report was available for the injured man, whose name was not released.



Corporal Roger Bevan (left), of RAF Lossiemouth, receives a "Good Show" award from the station commander, Group Captain Sandy Wilson — presented for spotting a defect in a Sea King Helicopter which could have caused a serious incident. Corporal Bevan could have caused a serious incident. Corporal Bevan (40), who was working on detachment to RAF Coltishall, Norfolk, at the time, showed vigilance outside the normal boundaries of his trade as a flight systems technician in noticing and tracing the cause of an oil leak. Married. Corporal Bevan comes from Peterborough, and works on D Flight, 202 Squadron.

6 DECEMBER 1981

Paul Martin
Ian Macfarlane
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead

DEATH IN FREEZING 'HELL'

Friends battle to save Peter

A NORTH Kent student died on a freezing mountainside despite a brave bid to get him to safety.

Peter Robinson, 18, of Downsvie, Chatham, died after becoming ill through exhaustion and the cold.

He was climbing on Hell's Lum in the Cairngorms over the New Year holiday.

A post-mortem was being carried out today.

He was with a five-man team from London's Imperial College's mountaineering club.

The team was taking a 450ft route to the summit of Hell's Lum — 3,500 ft above sea level near Aviemore.

STRUGGLED

When Peter was taken ill the team struggled to take him to the summit so an RAF helicopter could take him to safety.

Another member of the team, Mark Brown of Hinkley, Leicestershire, was blown over as he tried to get into a survival bag and slid more than 500ft down the mountainside. He is in hospital with head injuries.

An RAF helicopter and the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team were called out as Mr Robinson's colleagues tried to help him.

When a doctor arrived

Student, 18, collapses on mountain

on the scene, the student was dead.

His family were too distressed to speak about the incident.

A spokesman for the National Outdoor Training Centre at Glenmore Lodge, near the mountain, praised the team's efforts to save Peter.

He said: "There was an attempt by his colleague's during the night to raise him up the way. It was quite a sensible move."

"Though it is easier to lower people down a climb, in this part of the mountains there is no road into the bottom of the valley. When there was no guarantee of a chopper getting in because of the weather, raising him was a reasonable thing to do."

"Here were a group of people who became caught in bad weather. I think they tried very hard to minimise the effect."

Slip . . . then tragedy on Skye peak

CLIMBER DIES IN 200ft. FALL

Another is hurt in Ben Nevis plunge

By JOHN DUCKERS and GRAEME LYNCH

A YOUNG ENGLISHMAN fell more than 200ft. to his death in the Coolins mountain range in Skye yesterday and another English climber was in hospital in Glasgow after falling while climbing Ben Nevis.

The man who died was Mr Norman Powell (26), chartered surveyor, 74 Kettering Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

The accident happened as he was coming down from 3143ft. Bruach-na-Frithe. He was with his girlfriend and three others.

It is believed he saw what he thought was a short cut and left his companions to tackle it alone. He slipped, lost his ice axe, then fell between 200ft. and 300ft. to rocks at Fionn Choire.

One of the group stayed with him while the others set off for assistance.

An RAF Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth landed on the main road beside a hotel three miles from the accident scene to pick up Skye mountain rescue team members. By late afternoon the helicopter had reached the scene and recovered the body.

Mr Powell's father is flying to the island today.

The accident brought a warning from Skye's senior policeman, Insp. Neil Drummond, that great care had to be taken at all times in the Coolins because conditions were constantly changing.

In the second accident, Mr Steve Blandford, 24 Lawrence Road, Huddersfield, suffered a fractured skull and other injuries after he fell from the north-east buttress of Ben Nevis.

He was with a party of climbers from the Vibram Mountaineering Club who carried him down to a hut about 2000ft. up the mountain.

A radio message alerted police at Fort-William and a helicopter from RAF Leuchars had to make two attempts to bring Mr Blandford off the mountain, due to bad weather.

It landed in a Fort-William car-park and Mr Blandford was taken to Belford Hospital before being transferred to hospital in Glasgow.

28 DECEMBER 1981

Paul Martin
Dave Simpson
Ron Webb
Vic Oliver

Cuillin death

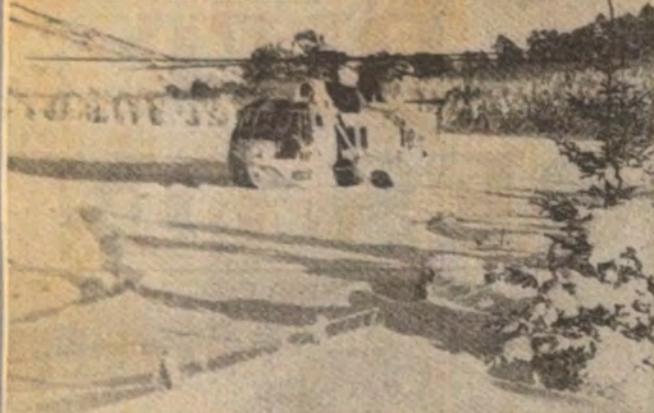
A climber fell to his death yesterday in the Cuillin mountains of Skye.

Norman Powell (26), from Market Harborough, Leicestershire, was taking what he believed to be a short-cut during the descent from the 3143 ft. peak of Bruach-na-Frithe.

After leaving his four companions he slipped, lost his ice axe, and then fell more than 200 feet on to rocks.

He was dead by the time an R.A.F. helicopter crew airlifted him to Sligachan, in the Isle of Skye.

Mercy mission



A MERCY mission by the crew of an RAF Sea King helicopter brought vital food supplies to an Inverness-shire shepherd's stranded flock of 300 sheep yesterday.

Mr George Phimister, from Cannich, was forced to request a food airdrop because his sheep had been without food for a week.

Snow as deep as 12ft. pre-

vented him from reaching hill-side grazings on Cougle Estate.

"It really is impossible to reach the sheep and I had no choice but to ask for help," said Mr Phimister, at 20 Mccoll Road, who also does joinery work.

Through SSPCA inspector, Mr Ian Graham, Inverness, Department of Agriculture officials were informed of the situation, and after establishing that Mr Phimister faced an emergency situation they sum-

moned the assistance of the RAF.

A crew from RAF Lossiemouth uplifted Mr Graham and Department of Agriculture field officer, Mr James Anderson, at Police Headquarters, Inverness, before heading to their destination.

Mr Phimister will learn within the next few days whether he will face a bill for the service. He reckons yesterday's food drop will keep his flock going for about another 10 days.

7 JANUARY 1962

John Prince
Dave Simpson
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg



SNOW HOLING EXPEDITION WITH CAIRNGORM MRT

D'FLT 202 SQN 1981 SCRAMBLES

1	2	FALLEN CLIMBER LADIES GIBBY	BODY RECOVERED	31	14	FALLEN CLIMBER ON SIX	1	THIRD
2	2	PERSONAL GEAR-SEA WITH INJECTION SEDITION	17	32	21	FALLEN CLIMBER ON SIX	1	THIRD
3	12	JENKIN FOR MISSING BOAT'S HUBRIDES	LOCATED BY FRANK VETTEL	33	26	SIXER WITH GEAR ON 11 S OF SIX	1	THIRD
4	13	WITNESS, PREGNANT WOM- ROAD BLOCKED BY SNOW	13	34	21	SIXER WITH GEAR ON 11 S OF SIX	1	THIRD
5	15	SINKING FISHING BOAT NORTH SEA	NAR RECALLED	35	30	SIXER WITH GEAR ON 11 S OF SIX	1	THIRD
6	15	WITNESSED DUTCH NAVY ATLANTIC	2 BODIES RECOVERED	35	30	SIXER WITH GEAR ON 11 S OF SIX	1	THIRD
7	17	MISSING CLIMBER STRAIT OF KEEL	LOCATED OKAY	37	1	RECOVERED - 1 KNOWN PERSON INVESTIGATED IN NARROW CANYON	1	THIRD
8	18/19	FALLEN CLIMBERS BEN NEVIS	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	38	10	MISSING CLIMBER AT LARGE CLIMBER	1	THIRD
9	19/20	MISSING CLIMBER TO BERNEVA	1 PLANNED	39	10	MISSING CLIMBER AT LARGE CLIMBER	1	THIRD
10	25	RED PLACES FROM GEMING OFF LASHMOUTH	3 RESCUED	40	12	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
11	29	MISSING CLIMBER WITH NECK INJURED	MISSING CLIMBER TO BE RECOVERED	41	12	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1	THIRD
12	5	MISSING CLIMBER TRUCKER ASBEST ON BECALL	NAR	42	15	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
13	8	RED PLACES FROM GEMING OFF LASHMOUTH	NOTHING FOUND	43	20	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
14	10	MISSING CLIMBER WITH NECK INJURED	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	44	20	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
15	12	MISSING CLIMBER TRUCKER ASBEST ON BECALL	NAR	45	22	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
16	22	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	46	26	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
17	26	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	47	28	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
18	28	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	48	29	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
19	30	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	49	30	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
20	32	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	50	32	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
21	34	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	51	34	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
22	36	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	52	36	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
23	38	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	53	38	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
24	40	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	54	40	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
25	42	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	55	42	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
26	44	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	56	44	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
27	46	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	57	46	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
28	48	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	58	48	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
29	50	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	59	50	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD
30	52	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	60	52	MISSING CLIMBER ON 1000' CANYON WITH APPROVED	1	THIRD

61	2	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	95	23	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
62	12	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	96	27	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
63	20	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	97	31	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
64	3	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	98	6	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
65	4	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	99	7	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
66	5	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	100	15	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
67	8	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	101	16	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
68	10	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	102	18	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
69	12	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	103	20	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
70	14	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	104	22	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
71	16	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	105	24	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
72	18	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	106	26	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
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74	22	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	108	30	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
75	24	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	109	32	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
76	26	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	110	34	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
77	28	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	111	36	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
78	30	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	112	38	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
79	32	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	113	40	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
80	34	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	114	42	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
81	36	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	115	44	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
82	38	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	116	46	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
83	40	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	117	48	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
84	42	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	118	50	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
85	44	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	119	52	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
86	46	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	120	54	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
87	48	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	121	56	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
88	50	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	122	58	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
89	52	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	123	60	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
90	54	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	124	62	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
91	56	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	125	64	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
92	58	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	126	66	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
93	60	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	127	68	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM
94	62	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM	128	70	MISSING CLIMBER ON SIX	1 PLANNED TO FT. WILLIAM

1981

MONTH	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
SCRAMBLES	7	9	5	9	12	7	6	10	9	9	8	2
MEDIVACS	4	0	1	=	1	2	=	2	1	2	3	4
TOTAL	11	9	6	9	13	9	6	12	10	11	11	6
NO. RESCUED	8	8	1	5	9	10	7	8	5	7	10	8

Whirlwind Total
Feb 1973-21 Sep 1978

SCRAMBLES	621
MEDIVACS	103
TOTAL	724
NO. RESCUED	345

21 Sep 78 31 Dec 78	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
23	85	67	93			
3	28	10	20			
26	141	77	113			
28	71	68	81			

The Press and Journal

235th Year

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 1982

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15p

Sea-ordeal boys rescued

Copter plucks them from drifting dinghy

TWO Inverness-shire boys were plucked from the sea to safety yesterday after a holiday fishing expedition went badly wrong.

The boys — Jonathan Ogilvie (14), Pine Trees, Easterton, Dalross, and Mark Melville (14), 20 Macleod Road, Balloch — were rescued by an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter after they had drifted out to sea in a small inflatable dinghy.

And later, as the boys relived their hour-long ordeal, they said they were terrified and at one time did not think they would make it to the shore.

The drama happened at lunch-time yesterday in the stormy waters of the Moray Firth about a quarter mile off Ardersier.

Jonathan and Mark are school-mates at Culloden Academy and

were off school for the local holiday. They are both keen on fishing and decided to try their luck at a spot below Jonathan's house which overlooks the firth. They took his father's inflatable and rowed about 50 yards from the beach.

Jonathan said: "It was quite calm when we went out but then a wind got up. We thought it was getting a bit dangerous and we decided to turn back."

"But the wind became too strong and we started to drift down the coast. I was rowing as hard as I could but getting nowhere."

"I was really frightened and getting tired. The dinghy was too

small for us to swop round and let Mark do some rowing. If we had tried we might have fallen in."

"I thought we were going to be blown right out to sea. But I just kept my mind on rowing."

Mark said he was terrified and did not think they would come out of it alive.

He said: "We were both wearing life jackets and I kept blowing the whistle and waving for help. We were both very cold and wet."

The plight of the boys was eventually noticed by Jonathan's father, a forestry officer, who immediately got in touch with the coastguard and a rescue operation was launched.

The security boat at McDermott's platform yard at Ardersier

was launched and an RAF Lossiemouth Sea King helicopter was alerted.

The helicopter was first on the scene and winched aboard the two frightened boys and then their inflatable. They were landed on the beach where Mr Ogilvie and anxious friends were waiting.

The helicopter crew were: pilot Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson; Flt. Lt. John Prince, Flt. Sgt. Eric Cox and Airload Master Vic Oliver.

The boys were none the worse for their ordeal as they relaxed later. Jonathan said that they had learned their lesson and would be careful about weather conditions in the future.



SAFE at home after their helicopter rescue yesterday — Mark Melville (left) and Jonathan Ogilvie.

8 FEBRUARY 1982

Dave Simpson
John Prince
Eric Cox
Vic Oliver

Body of man found in Glen Tilt

SEARCHERS hunting for missing Inverness-born hill walker Dr Kenneth MacRae yesterday found a man's body near Beltna A' Ghlo in Glen Tilt, Perthshire.

The body was found by one of the ground search teams and taken to Pitlochry for formal identification last night.

The find came late yesterday afternoon, the fifth day of a search which had involved more than 100 people, police tracker dogs and handlers from three forces, RAF mountain rescue teams, helicopters from Leuchars and Lossiemouth and civilian volunteers.

Last night, Tayside Chief Constable Robert Sim thanked the members of the public for their help during the search.

The hunt yesterday was concentrated around Beltna A' Ghlo, about eight miles north-east of Blair Atholl, with the helicopters making sweeps between the town and Glen Feshie to the north.

With an improvement in the weather, the two RAF helicopters were able to take a fuller part in the search. Previously, they had been mainly used to ferry ground parties around the area.

Dr MacRae (40), 6 Rethill, Penicuik, Midlothian, left home on January 13, and failed to return last Sunday, when his wife, Mary, raised the alarm.

His car was found near Blair Atholl Home Farm, Glen Tilt, on Monday.

Dr MacRae, a member of Edinburgh Mountaineering Club, was described as an experienced hill walker.

20/21 JANUARY 1982

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg

Geoff Clements
Ian Macfarlane
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead

Copter makes 999 call!



SYD AITKINSON
... area manager

By RON LYON

INVERNESS firemen have logged their strangest call-out of the year — a 999 call from 500ft up in the air.

It came from the crew of an RAF rescue helicopter who spotted flames shooting from a goods train as it neared Inverness.

The crew radioed air traffic control at Inverness Air-

port who relayed the message to the fire brigade.

It turned out to be a false alarm. Heavy braking by the driver as the train ran down the hill from Daviot had caused the sparks to fly.

From the air it looked like a continuous line of flame reaching half way up the side of the locomotive.

Mr Syd Aitkinson, BR area manager at Inverness, said today: "It certainly shows these fellows can spot things from up there."

CLIMBER

The Sea King helicopter from Lossiemouth was flying over Inverness on its way to the Lochaber area where a climber had been reported missing.

Flying Officer Ian MacFarlane, a member of the crew, said today: "Flames were licking up the side of the locomotive when we spotted it, about three miles out of Inverness."

"When it stopped in the goods yard, the flames weren't going up the side but it looked at though the springs were still glowing red hot."

He said they were about 500ft up when the flames were spotted, dropping down to about 300ft, as they circled the train. "But I don't know if the driver even saw us."

18 FEBRUARY 1982

Mike Lahey
Ian Macfarlane
Ron Webb
Rick Bragg

Climber hurt

A 16-YEAR-OLD climber was flown by helicopter to Fort William's Belford Hospital last night after breaking his leg in a fall in Lost Vally, Glencoe.

Alan Jameson, 28 Aikman Road, Motherwell, was "comfortable" last night.

A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth took the injured youth off the mountain in snow and mist.

21 FEBRUARY 1982

Geoff Clements
Mike Lahey
Mick Headleand
Vic Oliver
Bill Reid

Sea King airlifts man to Shetland hospital

A MAN suffering from appendicitis was rushed to hospital in Lerwick yesterday afternoon from a Royal Navy submarine north of Shetland.

The man, whose name has not been released, was flown to hospital in a Royal Air Force Sea King helicopter.

A spokesman at RAF Pitreavie said the man was in a "fairly serious condition" when he was picked up. Getting him from the submarine HMS Onslaught, had been a "difficult manoeuvre" because of the weather, but eventually the man was winched from the deck of the vessel.

The Sea King helicopter flew from RAF Lossiemouth. It was captained by Flt. Lt. Mike Lahey, who was recently awarded the George Medal for his part in the Finagle rescue operation in 1980.

The RAF spokesman said that he did not want to reveal

the exact position of the submarine.

The man was "as well as can be expected" in hospital yesterday.

A member of the Sea King crew Flt. Lt. Dave Simpson said the operation which was carried out in 10ft waves, was slightly more difficult than the normal deck rescue.

He said the submarine's conning-tower was "wobbling about a bit" in the wind, which made it tricky for the helicopter crew to winch the man on board.

The other members of the helicopter crew were Flt. Sgt. Mick Hedleand, Sqn. Ldr. Hamish Grant and Air Load Master Vic Oliver.

A helicopter returning yesterday from the Fulmar field with a full crew of oil workers had to make an emergency detour to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary's helipad after a passenger became ill.

The man, who has not yet been named, was employed by

a contractor on the Borgland Dolphin accommodation vessel alongside the Fulmar Alpha production platform.

A Shell UK spokesman said last night that the man had first become unwell on Tuesday night. He had made an appointment to see a doctor onshore after yesterday's regular crew-change flight.

He had been accompanied on the flight by a Shell member of staff trained as a medical escort, but had again become unwell during the journey.

The helicopter pilot decided to fly direct to the hospital before taking the rest of the passengers on to the heliport at Dyce.

The spokesman was unable to say how many passengers were on the flight.

24 FEBRUARY 1982

Dave Simpson
Mike Lahey
Mick Headleand
Vic Oliver

Copter takes off eight Lossie fishers

SNATCHED TO SAFETY

EIGHT fishermen were plucked to safety from a tiny bobbing lifeboat today after a huge lump of water smashed their boat.

The rescue drama came in pitch darkness this morning 22 miles east of Orkney after a tense three-hour hunt.

The crew of the 76ft. Boy Allan from Lossiemouth sent out a May-Day message as the vessel began to take on water rapidly in very heavy seas.

The radar and navigation equipment had broken and there were problems with the radio.

A coastguard spokesman said: "The crew were in great danger because the water was pouring in and the engine and pumps had failed.

"The wind was getting up to severe gale force 9."

The Sea King crew had to abandon a plan to call at Aberdeen Airport to pick up a pump for the crippled vessel because radio calls suggested she was taking water fast.

Finally, an RAF Sea King helicopter located the stricken vessel at about 5 a.m.

Despite gales of up to 55 miles an hour, 25ft. waves, heavy rain and low cloud, the rescue operation went smoothly, with all eight men winched aboard the helicopter within 45 minutes.

During the search the Aberdeen boat Deeside helped work out a new estimated position for the Boy Allan and she was spotted at the third attempt.

The Deeside later took the Boy Allan in tow and was heading for shelter.

Skipper tells of rescue drama

THE skipper of the Boy Allan recalled his dramatic rescue only hours after being plucked from the North Sea.

Mr Falconer Smith told how his ship battled in the dark against 25 foot waves.

The seine-netter left Lossiemouth last night about 5 p.m.

Disaster struck in the early hours of this morning as they fought a storm.

Mr Smith said: "We were steaming through pretty

wild weather about 1.45 in the morning when this terrific lump of water struck us."

WINCHED

Mr Smith said the crew were still on board but were asked by the helicopter to transfer to a life raft.

They were winched to safety two at a time in a rescue which lasted for 45 minutes.

The helicopter was piloted by Flight Lieutenant Paul Martin with F/Lt Derek Mead as second pilot

and F/Lt Mal Ternough and winchman Roger Whitehead.

F/Lt Mead said: "There was a wind of 50 knots and 25 foot high waves and the whole thing was a bit tricky."

The men were flown back to Lossiemouth about 7 a.m. and after a shower and a cup of coffee were reunited with their families.

Two members of the crew were on watch but as soon as the ship was hit the other

six crew on board rushed on deck.

Mr Smith continued: "The lump of water stove in and tore away about 30 feet of planking on our port side and we began to take water."

"It was pretty obvious that we were not going to save her."

The crew issued a distress call which was picked up by several ships in the area who alerted the rescue services.

The skipper added: "We were practically awash by this time."



SKIPPER SMITH
told of lump of water

PROBLEMS

Skipper of the Boy Allan is Falkner Smith (43), of 53 Boyd Anderson Drive, Lossiemouth, who was involved in a dramatic rescue from the Renown II. three years ago when it sank in the North Sea.

The rescued crewmen are skipper Smith; Douglas McDonald (30), Carvel Street, Hamish Smith, c/o 26 Coullardhill; David Gadd (19), of 26 Coullardhill; Ken McLachlan (40), of 51 Inchbroom Avenue; and David McFarlane (19), Queen's Lane, all Lossiemouth; Archie McPherson, Park Street, Hopeman; and David Inglis (40), Mossmill Park, Mosstodloch.

The helicopter crew are captain F/Lt. Paul Martin, co-pilot F/Lt. Derek Mead, radar operator F/Lt. Mal Ternough and winchman master air electronics operator Roger Whitehead.

When the men were spotted after firing a flare, the Seaking's crew told them to leave the boat and get into their inflatable life raft.

They were then winched to safety two at a time and flown back to Lossiemouth.

The rescue was co-ordinated from Orkney coastguard station.

6 MARCH 1982

Paul Martin
Derek Mead
Mal Ternough
Roger Whitehead

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The Yorkshire Evening Press

COUNTY

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1982

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No. 31,884

'THE CREW WERE IN GREAT DANGER' 8 rescued from sinking trawler

EIGHT fishermen were rescued by an RAF helicopter as their boat was sinking in rough seas off Scotland early today.

The crew of the Boyallen sent out a May Day message as it began to take on water rapidly.

Radar and navigation equipment had been broken and there were problems with its radio.

About half-a-dozen ships went to the last known position of the Boyallen — 80 miles north-east of Fraserburgh — but there was no sign of the boat.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth found the Boyallen 35 miles from her original position just after 3am, three hours after the distress call.

The men were winched to safety from their liferaft and flown back to Lossiemouth, the Boyallen's home base.

The rescue was co-ordinated from Orkney Coastguard station.

A coastguard spokesman said: "She was eventually found 35 miles to the south-west of her original position. It was lucky she was spotted by the helicopter."

"The crew were in great danger, because the water was pouring in and the engine and pumps had failed."

"The wind was getting up to severe gale force 9, there was heavy rain, poor visibility and high seas."

RAF Lossiemouth spokesman Flight Lieutenant Cynthia Blenkinsop said: "Conditions were very rough, but they were winched up safely. It appears no-one was injured, but the boat looks like a gonner."

Crew lifted to safety

EIGHT FISHERMEN, their boat sinking in rough seas, were rescued by an R.A.F. helicopter today.

The crew of the Boyallen sent out a distress message as their navigation equipment had broken down and their radio was out of order.

About half-a-dozen ships went to the last known position of the Boyallen — 80 miles North-East of Fraserburgh — but there was no sign of the boat.

A Sea King helicopter from R.A.F. Lossiemouth located the Boyallen just after 5 a.m., three hours after the distress call.

The plane's crew told the men to leave the boat and get into a life-raft.

They were then winched to safety and flown back to Lossiemouth, the Boyallen's home base.

The rescue was co-ordinated from Orkney Coastguard station.

A Coastguard spokesman said: "She was eventually found 35 miles to the South-West of her original position. It was lucky she was spotted by the helicopter."

"The crew were in great danger because the water was pouring in and the engine and pumps had failed."

"The wind was getting up to severe gale force 9, there was heavy rain, poor visibility, and high seas."

R.A.F. Lossiemouth spokesman Flight Lieutenant Cynthia Blenkinsop said: "Conditions were very rough, but they were winched up safely. It appears no-one was injured, but the boat looks like a gonner."

Thurso lobstermen escape ordeal on rocks

BOAT-WRECK TWO IN CLIFF RESCUE

And Lossie crew are
airlifted to safety

TWO THURSO lobster fishermen were rescued last night after their boat foundered on rocks under the cliffs of Whiten Head on the north Sutherland coast.

Crofter Ian Findlay, Achinliver, Talmine, spotted their fates as he was burning heather on the slopes of Ben Hualg. The two fishermen, 35-year-old Ron Aitkenhead and Callum Macleod (24), had managed to scramble ashore, shaken and bruised, under the cliffs. Mr Findlay guided them up through the rocks to the top, where they were airlifted by RAF helicopter to the Bignold Hospital, Wick.

Both men were being detained for observation. One has a head injury.

Their small vessel, the Wick-registered Sealair, was lifted on to the rocks by the heavy Pentland Firth swell as they attended to their lobster pots.

A spokesman for the RAF rescue squadron at Lossiemouth said last night: "Their vessel had struck a rock and tipped over, so the two men took to their dinghy which was also holed by the rocks. They ended up in the water but managed to scramble ashore. They decided there was nothing they could do about their boat so decided to climb the cliffs."

Police sergeant Bert Macleod, Thurso, Callum Macleod's father, last night recalled that this was the second time that Ron Aitkenhead and his son have been rescued in the same waters.

An earlier Sealair foundered off Loch Eribol almost exactly three years ago and the same two crewmen were picked up by another vessel.

But Sgt Macleod said their experience last night was much more dangerous. "The boat was holed and they had to abandon it before they could even get out a mayday call," he said after visiting his son in hospital.

Two fishers took to their liferaft but within minutes it was ripped open by the rocks in the turbulent water.

ON SATURDAY the eight-man crew of a Lossiemouth fishing vessel were airlifted to safety when she foundered in the North Sea.

A full search-and-rescue operation swung into action after the Boy Allan was struck by a big wave 22 miles east of Orkney.

She began to ship water after 30ft. of her port side was extensively damaged.

The radar and navigation equipment were put out of action but Skipper Falkner Smith (43) was able to send out radio distress signals.

These were picked up by a number of vessels in the area who alerted the rescue services but, because of some confusion over her position, it was some time before the stricken vessel was pinpointed.

Eventually, a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth spotted a flare.

To facilitate the rescue — by this time the vessel's deck was practically awash — the fishermen were advised to take to their liferaft and from there they were winched to safety two at a time in an operation lasting just under 45 minutes.

The rescue was carried out in a 50-knot gale whipped up 25ft.

Skipper Smith was flown to Lossiemouth along with the other members of his crew — Douglas McDonald (30), Carvel Street; Hamish Smith c/o 26 Coulardhill; David Gadd (19), 26 Coulardhill; Ken McLachlan (40), 51 Inchbroom Avenue; David McFarlane (19), Queens Lane, all Lossiemouth; David Inglis (40), Mossmill Park, Mosstodloch, and Archie McPherson, Park Street, Hopeman.

The Boy Allan was taken in tow by the Aberdeen vessel Deeside but sunk soon afterwards.

Also on Saturday, Arbroath Royal Marine, Raymond Weinstein (24), 27 Bernard Crescent, and his wife, Hanna, their dog and a fellow Marine Phil Howard (26), 53 Benedict Road, Arbroath, swam to safety after their 14ft. dinghy capsized 150 yards off Lunan Bay, near Montrose.

The party had set off in the dinghy to go fishing.

The wind was too strong for the outboard motor and they decided to sit tight hoping it would abate. A little later the dinghy capsized.

Mr Howard, with the dog clinging to his back, swam to the shore and raised the alarm.

Mr and Mrs Weinstein also managed to reach the shore and went to a nearby farm. All three were then taken to Montrose Royal Infirmary for a check-up.

Damage to the dinghy was confined mainly to the cabin, though its engine was missing.

7 MARCH 1982

Paul Martin
Ian Macfarlane
Mal Ternouth
Roger Whitehead

Anger over 'mayday' hoaxer

COASTGUARD officials yesterday condemned the actions of a hoax caller who put out a mayday call from the Cromarty area at the weekend.

And a search launched after distress flares were sighted off Kinnaid Head, Fraserburgh, on Friday was called off after nothing was sighted in the area.

The search off the Buchan coast involved a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth, fishing boats and rig supply vessels.

It is still not known whether the incident was a hoax or connected with a recent number of fake calls made in the area.

A Peterhead coastguard official said yesterday the latest call from the Cromarty area

was put out by someone using CB terms.

"He kept on saying 'Mayday, mayday', but said other things, like 'ten-four' and other CB language," he said.

A search was not launched because it was obvious by the nature of the call that it was a hoax. Officials said it was the action of a very irresponsible person.

Cdr. Michael Woolcombe, coastguard inspector for the East of Scotland, said yesterday that such calls were a great nuisance.

"We could be concentrating on something which is a hoax call, while others are in real danger," he said.

"We have been having rather more hoaxes than usual, which is to be deprecated."

"With the help of the police, we will manage to find out who it is," he added.

12/13 March 1982

Mike Lakey
Graham Cannell
Mick Headleand
Vic Oliver

North Sea helicopter's emergency landing

A BRISTOW helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing near Aberdeen Harbour yesterday after running short of fuel on a flight from a North Sea drilling rig.

The S76 helicopter with six BNOG personnel on board, landed safely on a grassy area near Torry Battery.

A Bristow spokesman said last night they had launched an immediate investigation into the lunchtime incident.

The helicopter was en route to Aberdeen Airport after picking up the oil workers from the rig Bendoran about 190 miles South-east of Aberdeen, when the pilot reported his fuel was running low.

Aberdeen coastguard alerted Aberdeen lifeboat, broadcast to shipping and called for a rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth.

Bristow's also alerted one of their own search and rescue helicopters but none of the services were required when the S76 reached land.

The pilot, who was not named by the company, said strong headwinds meant he was using too much fuel and added: "It was pretty hairy for a while."

The six oilmen had to wait on the aircraft until customs officers arrived to check their baggage.

The Bristow's spokesman said the full course of the incident would not be known until their investigations are completed but said it was probably due to a "combination of events".

He said the main reason seemed to be that the wind was stronger and from a different direction to that indicated in weather reports.

"The 'unforeseen headwinds' of 70 m.p.h. 'reduced the aircraft's fuel to a level we do not normally fly with,' he said.

Problems with the refuelling system on board the rig prevented the helicopters from returning there for more supplies.

Because of this, the pilot was forced to use the aircraft's reserve fuel supply. The spokesman estimated that when the S76 landed she had enough fuel left for about 15-20min. flying time, which he described as "a bit tight".

The investigation is being carried out by Bristow's managing pilot.



THE S76 helicopter where it landed, with Girdleness Lighthouse in background.

Kiss-of-life revives Glenshee skier

A SKIER had to be given the kiss of life at Glenshee yesterday after falling off a low lift and hitting her head.

Miss Fiona Ramsay (25), a hospital dietitian, 1 Rickerton Drive, Currie, near Edinburgh, was knocked unconscious as she tumbled into a metal support pylon and for a short time she stopped breathing.

An unnamed nurse, who later disappeared into the crowd, gave her artificial respiration while and ski rescue team brought her down from the hill, and she regained consciousness.

But officials of the Glenshee Chairlift Co were so worried about her condition that they asked for a helicopter to fly her to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. It was only the third time in 19 years that the company have called a rescue helicopter.

Miss Ramsay's condition was not available last night.

Her fiance, Mr John Byrne (26), a student from Edinburgh, flew with her in the helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth which was piloted by Flt Lt Fred Walker.

The couple were on the Tiger tow when Miss Ramsay apparently fell off and slid down the hill, before bouncing off a snow fence into one of the tow support pylons.

"We were on the T-bar when she lost her balance," said Mr Byrne. "Because she had gone, I thought it was best to get off too. I let go of the bar as best I could, but I fell and lost one of my skis."

He then slid to the bottom of the hill and it took him quite a long time to get back to where his fiancee lay.

Mr Dave Patterson, manager of the Glenshee Chairlift Co, said such accidents were rare because skiers using the Tiger tow are usually very experienced.

Most accident victims were taken to hospital by ambulance, he said. "But because she had stopped breathing and we had to use mouth-to-mouth to bring her round, we thought it was safer to call a helicopter."

17 MARCH 1982

Mike Lakey
Derek Mead
Mick Headleand
Rick Bragg

Ben Nevis search for injured climber

LOCHABER Mountain Rescue Team were called out last night after a climber was reported to have fallen and injured himself while climbing in the Coire Leis area of Ben Nevis.

Fort-William police received a radio message from the Scottish Mountaineering Club's CIC hut 2000ft up in the Coire Alt a' Mhuilinn and called out the rescue team.

Late last night the rescue team were battling through deep snow to reach the climber.

Climber falls

A badly injured climber was recovering in hospital today after falling while on Ben Nevis, Scotland.

Lecturer Mr William Stronnie, aged 45, of Cambridge, was taken to Belford Hospital, Fort William, by an RAF Sea King rescue helicopter late last night.

NEVIS RESCUE

HELICOPTER brought injured man off mountain around midnight and took him to Belford Hospital. Extent of injuries unknown.

The Press and Journal

235th Year

FRIDAY MARCH 26 1982

Vessel founders in storm

COPTERS SAVE 10

Lossie crew fail to find victim

A SEAMAN was still missing in rough seas last night after eight of his shipmates were winched to safety by an RAF helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth. Two other crew members were rescued by a helicopter from a Danish frigate.

The men were all part of what is believed to be an

11-man crew who abandoned the 500-ton Icelandic cargo vessel Suderland in the North Atlantic midway between Scotland and Iceland.

The men rescued by the RAF were aboard a liferaft, which was spotted by a Nimrod from RAF Kinloss.

The men were plucked from the raft by a Sea King helicop-

ter, which had flown 350 miles from Lossiemouth. They were flown 30 miles to hospital in the Faroes.

The ship radioed a mayday to Icelandic authorities shortly after 1 a.m. yesterday as it developed a 60-degree list.

The crew abandoned ship 30 miles north-west of the Faroes.

Wg Cdr John Bussey, of the Edinburgh Search and Rescue

Co-ordination Centre, said Icelandic authorities were responsible for the area but accepted an RAF offer of help.

He said: "Conditions in the area are not good, with 20ft waves and winds more than 50m.p.h."

The crew are all believed to be Icelandic.

Wg Cdr Bussey said later the missing man was the ship's boatswain, who was swept overboard while trying to launch a liferaft.

He said the sea also swept a second liferaft overboard.

But the 10 other crewmen managed to reach the second liferaft by paddling to it in a small aluminium boat aboard the ship.

Two of the men were later winched from the liferaft by a Danish helicopter.

The remaining eight, winched aboard the RAF helicopter were said to be suffering from hypothermia, but were otherwise unhurt.

Wg Cdr Bussey said: "The missing man was apparently wearing just jeans and a sweater. He had a lifejacket on, but it had no light or radio beacon attached to it. Things don't look terribly good for him."

He said the water temperature would probably be a maximum of 8C.

"But a man could survive many hours if he had the will to live," he said.

Reports from the scene said the ship had now sunk, he added.

The RAF planes were being joined by a US Forces search plane from Iceland.

The search for the missing man was later called off.

RAF helicopter in daring sea rescue

EIGHT Icelandic seamen were plucked to safety from the North Atlantic last night after a 350-mile dash by an RAF helicopter.

The men were hurled into raging seas after being forced to abandon their sinking freighter 40 miles north-west of the Faroes. Two others were rescued by a Dutch helicopter.

And last night, as 20ft-high waves and 40-knot winds swept the area, an international search was continuing for an 11th man lost when his lifeboat sank.

The drama began after the 500-ton cargo boat Suderland developed a severe list and sank two minutes after sending out a distress call.

Two of the crewmen were picked up by a helicopter from a Dutch frigate, but immediately afterwards it became too dangerous.

British rescue services then offered to help and, while an RAF Nimrod scoured the area searching for a dinghy to which eight seamen clung, a Sea King helicopter flew 350 miles from Lossiemouth.

Guided by the Nimrod, it was able to locate the Icelandic sailors. After picking them up, it flew them to Denmark.

All were suffering from hypothermia.

25 MARCH 1982

John Prince
Mike Lakey
Mick Headleand
Roger Whitehead

15 MARCH 1982

Mike Lakey
Derek Mead
Eric Cox
Rick Bragg

Airlift for injured Buckie driver

A BUCKIE man was flown by helicopter to hospital in Aberdeen with serious head and neck injuries last night following a road accident near Buckie.

Mr Andrew Thain (32), 11 Burns Square, was badly injured when his car was involved in a collision with a car driven by Mr Boyce Macleod (59), 69 Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness.

A passenger in Mr Thain's car, Georgina Reid, (55), 44 Wallace Avenue, Buckie, was trapped in the wreckage and had to be freed by firemen. Mr Thain's son Mark (4) was also injured.

All three were taken to Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin.

Later, it was decided that because of Mr Thain's condition that he required urgent hospital treatment in Aberdeen.

A Sea King Mercy helicopter was called in from RAF Lossiemouth. It landed at Elgin's Borough Briggs football ground to pick up Mr Thain.

His son Mark, who has head cuts and a broken arm, and Georgina Reid who has head cuts and is suffering from concussion — were both detained.

FRIDAY APRIL 9 1982

Climber apologises to rescuers

AN ENGLISH climber who was rescued yesterday after a nine-hour search in the Cairngorms was criticised for needlessly causing the alert.

Head of the Glenmore Lodge Outdoor Training Centre Mr Fred Harper said the man had been a fool to go hill-walking in an ill-prepared manner at this time of year.

After being plucked to safety by an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter piloted by Flt. Lt. John Prince, following a freezing overnight ordeal in blizzard conditions, electrical engineer Mr Colin Coulling (42), 134 Birkbeck Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex, agreed his conduct had been "crazy" and apologised to the rescue services.

Mr Coulling was at Aviemore with friends on a ski holiday when he caught a glimpse of the Lairig Ghru and was so impressed with the scenery that he decided to go hill-walking.

On Wednesday morning, he left his car by Loch Morlich and went

'My conduct was crazy,' he admits

By PAUL BREEN

walking up Braeriach. By mid-afternoon he got part way up to the Stron Na Lairig.

But suddenly the weather closed in rapidly and heavy snow and high winds caused blizzard conditions with zero visibility.

Mr Coulling said he had been well clad for the expedition but had forgotten to take his compass.

He took shelter behind a stone and built up a 1ft. snow wall. When this proved ineffective he was forced to build it up to 3ft.

He then climbed into his large rucksack which came to his waist and lay huddled there overnight.

Mr Coulling said: "I was extremely cold and when the snow changed to rain I got very wet. But I was quite happy and never despaired. I was in a good frame of mind. My only concern was if

the weather did not clear in the morning and I still could find my way out."

He said that at about 7.30 a.m. yesterday the weather cleared and he found himself only 50 yards from the edge of the Lairig Ghru. Three hours later he was picked up by the helicopter.

Mr Harper revealed that during the early hours of the morning searchers had passed within 200 yards of where Mr Coulling lay huddled but visibility was so bad they could not spot him.

More than 50 searchers from Glenmore Lodge, Cairngorm, RAF Leeming and RAF Kinloss mountain rescue teams as well as the Search and Rescue Dog Association began the rescue bid in atrocious conditions at 1 a.m.

Mr Harper said: "This man was very inexperienced and really

very foolish to undertake this expedition at this time of year without proper equipment.

"He had no compass or ice axe and was unable to use a map in zero visibility. The whole thing was absurd. He should never have been there. His actions showed a disgraceful lack of attention to the requirements of the activity."

Mr Harper said Mr Coulling had not even had the sense to be afraid during the night. He survived quite well because he was a strong man.

He added: "This whole incident was needlessly caused by this man. He wasted a great deal of time and effort by the rescue teams through his foolish behaviour."

Mr Coulling said he fully accepted the criticism levelled against him.

He added that he now appreciated what a good job the mountain rescue teams did and he apologised for the bother.

RIGHT: Mr Colin Coulling who was criticised yesterday for causing an alert in the Cairngorms.



28 MARCH 1982

John Prince
Derek Mead
Ron Webb
Vic Oliver

Hillwalker Safe: Dug Snow Shelter

A hillwalker missing in the Cairngorms was found safe today.

Colin Coulling (42), of Greenford, Middlesex, failed to return last night from a walk up Braeriach, near Aviemore.

A search, involving three mountain rescue teams and an RAF helicopter, was launched.

It is understood he dug in after being overtaken by a blizzard.

8 APRIL 1982

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Eric Cox
Roger Whitehead

A Nightmare Rescue For The Largsmouth Boys

THE SHIP WAS A FLOATING BOMB!

THE George Medal is only granted for exceptional acts of bravery.

One of the few people to receive it in recent years is Flight-Lieut. Mike Lahey, leader of D Flight, 202 Squadron, the rescue helicopter unit at RAF Lossiemouth.

The award was made for the rescue of the crew and passengers of the Swedish cargo ship Fineagle in the north-west Atlantic 18 months ago.

The ship was carrying a cargo of chemicals on two separate decks. Several of the chemicals could become dangerous if mixed.

In a raging sea, 80 m.p.h. winds threw her in all directions. Some of the drums of chemicals on her upper deck were ruptured. Their contents began dripping on to the cargo below.

Drums down there had ruptured, too. So the two chemicals, so carefully loaded to keep them safe, came together. Some exploded. Others burst into flames.

The ship was engulfed in clouds of thick, choking poisonous smoke.

Besides the 17 crew, the Fineagle had women and two children on board.

The skipper ordered a "May-day" signal to be sent out.

A Sea King from Lossiemouth was scrambled and got to the ship after 10.00 p.m. By then their fuel was low and they didn't have enough to carry out the rescue.

D FLIGHT'S second Sea King was called in, piloted by Mike Lahey and Flight-Lieut. Dave Simpson, with Flight-Lieut. Bill Campbell as winch operator and Sergeant Rick Bragg as winchman. The station doc-

tor, Squadron Leader Hamish Grant, was also on board. One problem facing them was the Fineagle's huge radio mast.

While the second 'copter was flying to her, the crew hacked down the mast with axes and butcher's cleavers! The first helicopter had carried out a full reconnaissance and was able to give a tremendous amount of advice to the second.

The two women were hauled up first. It was only when they were a few feet below the helicopter that the crew spotted they had the children in their arms.

Going up in a rescue strop in an 80 m.p.h. gale is difficult enough. To do it holding a small child verges on the impossible!

Fumes

FOR 40 minutes Rick Bragg supervised the lifting from the deck of the ship to the Sea King.

At the open door of the 'copter, Bill Campbell controlled the winch and told Mike Lahey and Dave Simpson exactly how the Sea King should be flown.

It was a superb four-way co-ordination in the worst possible conditions.

The Fineagle's captain played his part, too.

The damage to his ship had worsened as some of the chemicals exploded. The fire had spread. The choking fumes were everywhere. He'd lost control of his steering and had no lights or

● Rick Bragg (third from left) is "scrambled" with a Sea King crew at Lossiemouth. He was awarded the Air Force Medal for the Fineagle rescue.

instruments, yet he made superhuman efforts to work with the 'copter.

He stayed in the wheelhouse until the last minute, then leapt out, pulled on the strop Rick had ready for him, and they were hauled up together.

That meant there were 27 people in the Sea King, the largest number ever carried. As well as Mike Lahey's George Medal, the rescue earned the Air Force Cross for Bill Campbell and its equivalent, the Air Force Medal, for Rick Bragg. Dave Simpson and Hamish Grant were awarded the Queen's Commendation for valuable service in the air.

Later the drifting Fineagle was salvaged, repaired and is now sailing under a different name for North African owners.

Throughout the rescue, a Nimrod from RAF Kinloss circled the scene as "top cover".

This is a regular service for their neighbours.

Only a few days ago, an Icelandic fishing boat with 11 men got into difficulties west of the Hebrides.

A Lynx helicopter from the Danish warship, which patrols the Hebrides for NATO, lifted two crew off, but it's much bigger than the Sea King, and not specially equipped for a rescue role.

A Lossiemouth helicopter also, a Kinloss Nimrod flew to the ship and found an Icelandic helicopter on its way.

In a few days, the ship was salvaged and repaired.



During the train drivers' strike a while back, a Lossiemouth helicopter found itself involved in the hush-hush side of labour relations.

They'd been scrambled to pick up an injured climber when Rick Bragg noticed a goods train below them.

Three-foot flames and thick smoke were coming from the wheels behind the engine — and the next truck back along the train looked like a petrol tanker.

They raised the alarm by radioing Inverness airport, who called out the fire brigade.

The train was shunted into a siding and the fire put out. When the RAF made enquiries later to make up their report, they ran into a wall of silence.

Turns out they'd spotted a driver who didn't agree with the action taken by his colleagues!

IT'S little wonder any talk of flexible rostering makes the helicopter boys grin.

They work on a shift rota that has them on duty for 24 hours at a stretch, on 15-minute stand-by during the day and 45

minutes at night. On their day off, they're on one-hour stand-by. They do that rota for eight days, have a couple of days off, then it's back on duty. Radar on the Sea King has proved its worth time and time again.



An 18-year-old boy who set out from Cove Bay for Stonehaven in a motor cruiser ran out of fuel.

The lifeboat and other rescue services failed to find him before dark.

At first light, a helicopter was called in from Lossie.

Its radar picked up the boat three miles off the coast. The youth was winched up till the lifeboat came in sight.

He was then lowered back down and taken safely home by the lifeboat.

Turbulence

ALL the men at Lossie have a healthy fear of conditions in and around the Pentland Firth.

"It's the worst area we have to cover," says one pilot.

"There are three tidal streams which all rush in and out of a narrow stretch of sea, broken by rocks, reefs and islands.

"The cliffs around it create all sorts of updraughts and turbulence.

"Around Stromo, you can get spray from the sea in quite large quantities as high as 150 feet. It leaves our windscreens crusted with salt."

Flying overland in the Highlands isn't much easier.

There are so many glens, corries, spurs, peaks and cliffs that it's impossible to predict where the wind will come from.

But the conditions are generally beaten.

No wonder the RAF rescue teams are regarded as the best in the world.

Young climber

"serious"

A young Arbroath climber, Drew Coull, was said to be "serious" in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary last night, following an accident on Lochnagar on Tuesday.

Drew, 2 Morley Place, slipped and fell at Black Spout, near Raeburn's Gully.

He was rescued by members of the Braemar Mountain Rescue team flown to the spot in an R.A.F. Sea King helicopter.

18 APRIL 1982

John Prince
Graham Cannell
Eric Cox
Roger Whitehead

STRANGEST-EVER CALL-OUT FOR A LOSSIEMOUTH CREW

THE MAN WHO DIED TWICE . . .



THE rescue helicopter crews of the RAF have been called out to search for thousands of people in all sorts of strange places. But to the men of D Flight, 202 Squadron, at Lossiemouth goes a unique title—they went looking for a man who died 18 months after committing suicide!

A couple went missing while climbing in Skye. Police called out the mountain rescue team, who in turn scrambled a helicopter.

Flying over the area, various items of clothing and equipment were spotted before the two bodies were finally found. The couple had fallen from a ridge.

Post-mortems revealed they had died from the effects of their injuries and from exposure.

But even stranger facts emerged.

The man was identified as being someone thought to have committed suicide by walking into the sea on the south coast of England 18 months before!

His clothes had been found on the beach, but no other trace of him ever found.

What he had been doing and why he had faked his death were never properly explained.

But for the accident, he might well have succeeded for many more years with his fake suicide.

ANOTHER case involved an American serviceman who went walking in the Cairngorms after leaving his car and various messages near Braemar.

He disappeared into thin air. Lossiemouth helicopters searched for three days in



Ian McFarlane.

● Helicopters are expensive to operate.

A Wessex costs more than £2000 an hour to keep in the air, a Sea King as much as £3000.

some difficult conditions, but couldn't find a trace.

Mountain rescue teams, police and other climbers all joined in the search—to no avail.

Then it was found the man had both a wife and a steady girl friend, neither of whom knew about the other . . .

He turned up, alive and well, in America.

STRANGE cases for helicopter teams are more common than you might imagine.

Like the case of the man who'd been climbing a rock face near Dingwall when he fell and injured himself.

A companion went for help and a helicopter was sent out.

A two-hour search revealed no trace of the injured climber. Twenty-four hours later, still nothing.

Then the man's boss reported he'd been found.



Roger Whitehead.

The missing man had phoned to say he wouldn't be at work, as he was in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, recovering from his injuries!

He'd struggled to a road near the cliff face, and a passing motorist had taken him to the hospital.

Then there was the fishing boat crew who called for help, then refused it, and finally had to be almost ordered into being saved!

The Peterhead boat's skipper radioed that his ship had been damaged by a freak wave and was taking water.

Eventually, he sent out a "Mayday" signal.

The law of the sea says all rescue services must respond.

A Lossiemouth helicopter under Squadron-Leader Peter Chadwick, with second pilot Ian McFarlane, winch operator Flight Sergeant Mike Cornes, and winchman Master Air Electronics Operator Roger Whitehead, set off.

When they arrived, the crew wouldn't get off the boat, despite the damage and the bad weather.

The helicopter refuelled on one of BP's Forties oil rigs and went back again—in the dark.

By this time they'd had one-and-a-half hours of unnecessary flying.

Roger Whitehead went down to help lift up the first of the crewmen.



Mike Cornes.

It was only after a long argument that the last three, including the skipper, were taken with their mates to the oil platform.

SEA KINGS have a much longer range than the Wessex helicopters, and with radar can fly far more safely for long distances.

On top of this, the RAF have set up fuel dumps all over Scotland, where helicopters can put down and top up.

A couple of years ago, one of the Lossiemouth helicopters made a rescue at just about the maximum limit of their range of operations.

Forty miles south of Rockall, and 200 miles west of the Outer Hebrides, a Chinese

● The RAF have always maintained their system of sending a man down on a length of wire is by far the most efficient.

The Americans parachute men down or drop them from hovering helicopters.

Problem then is they frequently cannot get them back in the air.

seaman needed urgent medical treatment.

He'd been throwing old rescue flares overboard from his Panamanian bulk carrier

when one of them exploded. His hand was blown off, and there were fears for his life. Pilots Flight Lieut. Derek Watling, Flight Lieut. Dave Cosby and winch operator Flight Lieut. Bill Campbell took station M.O. Flight Lieut. Andy Kirk and medic Corporal Andy Robertson with them.

The seaman was winched up for the long flight back to land. The two medical men began first-aid.

All the time, Wong Tim Sung kept totally calm. He even tried to give them instructions on how he should be treated!

LAST year the Lossiemouth crews answered 114 calls and picked up 101 people. On one thing all the rescue men are agreed.

Too many of the people they've rescued shouldn't have been where they were in the first place.

Youngsters in inflatable boats or on airbeds.

Folk who've never climbed anything more than a ladder, but who decide to tackle a mountain on holiday.

Family outings to the hills where no one has any of the clothing or equipment necessary.

Last summer, a Lossie helicopter had to rescue a 16-stone Pakistani woman on Ben Nevis.

She'd got only a short way up the mountain path before she collapsed, seriously ill from the exertion.

And you wouldn't believe the number of people who haven't the foggiest idea where they are.

A Leuchars crew was called out to hunt for a German tourist who'd walked into a shop in Braemar and bought a bright, shining new compass.

He then set off to climb Ben Macdhui.

When he didn't return, the alarm was raised.

He finally turned up in Ballater, more than 25 miles away—still clutching his compass.

Doctor hurt

One of Islay's three doctors was "comfortable" in a Skye hospital today after falling in the Cuillins.

Dr Tony Perron, who was climbing with Islay ambulance man Peter Farrington, suffered head injuries when he fell 20ft. in the King's Chimney nearly 2500ft. up.

A helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth airlifted rescuers to the injured man.

Doctor in peak plunge 'comfortable'

ISLAY GP Dr Tony Perron was "comfortable" in the MacKinnon Memorial Hospital, Broadford, Skye, yesterday after a 30ft. fall while climbing in the Cuillins.

He was roped to Islay ambulance man Mr Peter Farrington as they tried to scale the King's Chimney on Sgurr Mhic Coinneach.

They were about 2500ft. up and Dr Perron was leading, 30ft. above and to the side of Mr Farrington when Dr Perron fell.

Mr Farrington who held him with the rope, was able to make Dr Perron secure by climbing to him and placing him in a bivouac bag and doing what he could for the injured man who suffered head injuries. The ambulance man then went for help at the Glen Brittle Climbing Centre where they had been staying.

Members of Skye Mountain Rescue Team were airlifted to the scene by a Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth.

Local GP Dr Alan Donald, who is a rescue team member, checked Dr Perron's condition before he was picked up.

Dr Perron lives at Bruichladdich, and Mr Farrington at Hawthorn Lane, Bowmore.



'D' FLIGHT 202 SQUADRON

R.A.F. LOSSIEMOUTH is now one of the busiest bases in Britain and is host to various squadrons, all of whom have a vital part to play within NATO in the defence of Europe. With so many aircraft flying over both land and sea in a variety of roles, the R.A.F. must provide an effective and efficient search and rescue service, should any airman find himself in difficulties. This service is provided at Lossiemouth by 'D' Flight of 202 Squadron, who operate the Westland Sea King HA3 helicopter. The flight have one aircraft at 15 minutes readiness during the day, which, in all weathers, can search for and recover people in distress. At night, readiness time is 45 minutes. During 1981 the flight received 120 requests for its services, of which about 10% were for Forces personnel. The remaining calls came from incidents involving civilians. These calls range from airlifting injured skiers from the slopes in the mountains to maritime rescues from vessels in distress at sea. The most widely publicised incident in recent times took place in October, 1980, 30 nautical miles north-west of the Orkneys, when the Swedish cargo vessel 'Finneagle' caught fire. F. Lt. Mike Lahey, in one of the two Sea Kings from

Lossiemouth despatched to the scene, rescued 22 crew members—including two babies and three women—from the vessel. The 'Finneagle' was carrying a cargo of chemicals which could easily have exploded, and the area was in the grip of a storm at the time, all of which made the rescue a particularly difficult one. There is no doubt that had it not been for the skill and determination of the airmen involved, then lives would have been lost.

The members of 'D' Flight are all modest chaps, who treat their life-and-death task with a quiet professionalism, and yet in the mess after a training flight exhibit a great sense of humour. They have even been known to use pseudonyms when giving names of pilots to members of the press!



The photograph shows a model of one of 202 Squadron's Sea Kings made by the author, Colin Russell, and presented to F. Lt. Mike Lahey during a visit to Lossiemouth in March.

20 MAY 1982

Geoff Clements
Stan Darcy
Eric Cox
Roger Whitehead
Al Robertson (Doc)



THE wrecked tent after the RAF helicopter had departed.

Adventure scheme gets RAF lift off!

By PAUL BREEN

THE LAUNCHING of the Government's new Services Youth Adventure Training Scheme at Fort George, near Ardersier, ended in unplanned drama yesterday.

For an RAF Lossiemouth Sea King helicopter wrecked the guests buffet tent when it hovered too near.

The down draught from the helicopter ripped the tent from its moorings and blew chairs, tables, food and drink into the air.

Fortunately most of the guests, as well as the instructors and the youngsters, were in another area of the barracks complex where the helicopter had given a display.

Although a few people nearby the tent were forced to

scatter and dive from the flying debris, no-one was injured.

Later an Army spokesman said the drama had been caused by an unfortunate accident. Hasty arrangements were later made to salvage what was left of the catering for the event.

Earlier in the day the Army had opened the barracks to launch the first Government sponsored course which is designed to instruct mainly unemployed 16 to 18-year-olds in adventure activities.

The two-week course is aimed at offering youngsters a challenge to benefit their characters.

Around 270 youngsters — including 60 girls — are taking part in the first course at Fort

George. They came from all over Britain and are being trained in canoeing, sailing, rafting, climbing, assault and obstacle courses.

They will also go on a four day expedition to the West of Scotland which will include a climb of Ben Nevis, and training in survival off the country, first aid, map reading, camping skills and handling pack ponies.

About 80 of the Army's best adventure training experts — from a variety of regiments — have been seconded as instructors for the courses. Their equipment ranges from the most modern land-satellite navigation gear to pack horses.

The commanding officer for the scheme — which will run throughout the summer — is world famous explorer Lt-Col John Blashford-Snell of the Royal Engineers.

The drinks fly as copter blows in

Express Staff Reporter

AN RAF helicopter caused chaos at an Army Open Day yesterday.

The Sea King, from RAF Lossiemouth, had just staged an air-sea rescue demonstration at Fort George, Inverness.

But there was trouble in the air as it slowly approached a large marquee pitched on the ramparts where the buffet and bar were set up.

The helicopter almost stopped overhead, and, as it tilted, the rush of air uprooted and scattered the tent.

Bottles of gin and whisky and trifles and lettuce flew through the air as some journalists fled or threw themselves flat on the ground.

As the machine left fists were waved.

The Press, TV and radio reporters were at Fort George, to cover the Army's

first youth adventure training scheme for teenage volunteers from all over Britain.

Later the Army's famous explorer Lieutenant-Colonel John Blashford-Snell said: "It was an unfortunate accident."

No jape

"But everyone was eating their lunch ten minutes later and we all had plenty to eat which shows our resilience in the face of hostile forces. That's what it is all about."

An RAF spokesman said: "This was no jape. It was not intentional although I must admit I laughed when I heard about it."

"The pilot had not been

briefed that the tent would be there and could not alter his routine."

But the RAF declined to name the pilot who reported the incident. He would not be carpeted, said a spokesman.

Blashford-Snell, or J.B.S. as the Army Press release calls him, is one of the world's last great explorers and has launched 60 expeditions to all parts of the world.

He was chosen to run the two-week courses taking 300 boys and girls through arduous sporting and survival courses.

They will climb mountains, cross rivers and have dawn dips in the freezing sea near the Fort.

Many of the volunteers have no permanent jobs or are unemployed, and one of the main aims of the courses is to build self confidence to help them find work.

Lost mountain boy is saved

A BOY of three spent 15 hours alone lost in rugged mountains. Three rescue teams, an RAF helicopter, police and volunteers searched throughout the night until David Vassie was found yesterday morning.

He had wandered in circles through peat bogs and over rocks in the mountains in the North West of Scotland.

A relieved Steve Chadwick, of the Dundonnell mountain rescue team, near Ullapool, said: "We heard him crying in distress after we stopped for a breather. He was about a mile away running like a hare in his big wellies across a ridge near the top of a mountain."

"We shouted and ran after him and he stopped. He must have been going round in circles all night and was about two miles from where he was last seen, and 1,800ft. up."

"His face was tear-stained and his nose was running. He was very white, but he was not suffering from exposure."

"He was a brave little lad and must have been tough to keep going over such rough country."

Earlier the searchers saw David's tiny footprints where

Daily Mail Reporter

he had struggled through peat bogs and streams.

"It's a great feeling when a search like this ends happily," said Mr Chadwick.

David's father, William Vassie, 47, a printer of Prickett Wood, St Albans, said: "We had climbed up the mountainside and David stopped to investigate something."

"We walked on a short distance and waited for him to appear but he didn't. After searching we went down to raise the alarm."

"It was very hot and we think he may have curled up and gone to sleep in the heather. He is a tough little lad but we are very relieved he has been found safe."

David was flown by an RAF Sea King helicopter to hospital in Inverness for a check-up and later flown back to his family.

Found ... little boy lost

STORY by
DUNCAN ROSS

PICTURE by
A HELICOPTER
CREWMAN



SAFE in the arms of helicopter crewman J-Tech Bob Dummigan yesterday, little David Vasey recovers from a 17-hour ordeal which saw him spending a chilly night alone on a Wester Ross hillside.

Three-year-old David became separated from his parents and two older brothers during a hillwalk on Monday, and a search by more than 50 rescuers failed to locate him by nightfall.

Wearing only a pair of cotton shorts and wellington boots, David apparently spent the night in the heather.

At dawn, a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth joined the search, but David was spotted later in the morning by one of the rescue teams.

Fears were growing for his safety by the time rescuers heard

him sobbing, and saw him ploughing through waist-deep heather on Meall Dubh (2100ft.), near Ullapool.

David was spending two weeks in a holiday cottage at Inverlael, near the head of Loch Broom, with the rest of the family — Mr William Vasey (47), his wife, Celia (42), and their two other sons, aged six and eight.

The Vaseys, 14 Bucknalls Drive, Prickett Wood, St Albans, Herts., had gone for a walk when they spotted deer near the top of Meall Dubh. They went for a closer look, then realised that David had lagged behind.

Mrs Vasey said yesterday: "We searched and shouted for more than an hour before going for help. It seemed hardly possible for him to disappear in such a short space of time."

The Dundonnell, RAF Kinloss and police mountain-rescue teams searched through the night assisted by local volunteers and were joined at dawn by the helicopter and members of the Assynt Mountain-rescue Team. Tracker dogs were also used.

Dundonnell team member Mr Steve Chadwick said: "We were starting to have doubts about finding him alive when we picked up his trail. He seemed to have been walking in circles and at one stage he must have been within yards of where his parents were looking for him. We heard loud sobbing about a mile away and then saw him running along a ridge. We gave chase and shouted on him to stop."

"He was pretty tear-stained and tired, and his legs were a bit chafed, but amazingly he was none the worse."

David was picked up by the helicopter and flown to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, for a check-up.

The leader of the Dundonnell team, Mr Bill Neale, said: "He was in comparatively good fettle and was flown back to a rapturous welcome at Ullapool, and a joyful reunion with his parents."



AND A SEA KING BUSY AT HOME

Peace work: Sea King ground crewman Bob Dummigan comforts little David Vasey after the youngster endured a night on the hills. Full story of the Scottish rescue: Page 8

TODDLER FOUND AFTER 15 HOURS ON A MOUNTAIN

A BRAVE little boy was found safe and well after being lost for 15 hours on a Scottish mountain.

After an overnight search involving 70 rescuers and an RAF helicopter, three-year-old David Vasey was spotted running frantically along a mountain ridge searching for his parents.

David was on holiday with his parents, William, 47, and Celia, 42, of St Albans, Hertfordshire, at a holiday cottage near Ullapool, Ross-shire.

David went astray on Monday when the family, including other sons Robert, eight, and Mark, six, went for a ramble up a mountainside.

1 JUNE 1982

Paul Martin
Derek Mead
Eric Cox
Roger Whitehead
Bob Dummigan

Boy (11) killed in hills fall

AN 11-year-old boy has died in a 350ft. fall in the Cuillins on Skye.

The body of Neil Grant, from Stockton-on-Tees, was found early today at the foot of the north face of Marasco, three miles up Glen Sligachan.

Neil was on a hill-walking expedition with his father, Ian, a university lecturer who left Aberdeen 15 years ago, and two men friends.

He ran ahead a few hundred yards in perfect hill walking conditions and vanished from view. His mother Mrs Incienne Grant, who comes from Skye had stayed at the bottom of the hill.

Skye Mountain Rescue Team searched until darkness. Early today Neil was found by members of the RAF Mountain Rescue Team flown in by helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth. Police search and rescue dogs from Inverness were also brought in.

Neil, who has an elder brother, was on holiday with his parents at a holiday cottage at Suardal, Dunvegan.

Mr Grant's sister, Sheila Grant, stays at Springhill Road, Aberdeen.

A police spokesman said: "It is a tragedy. The waste of a young life."

Neil is the second child to be involved in a hill-walking drama within three days in Scotland.

On Monday, three-year-old David Vasey was separated from his parents and was found the following day unharmed on Meall Dubh, near Ullapool.

Boy (11) found dead in Skye Coolins

AN 11-year-old boy was found dead in Skye yesterday below a 350ft. mountain face in the Coolins.

Neil Grant, Shearwater Lane, Stockton, Cleveland, lost contact with his father and two other adults as they walked up the east flank of Marasco in Glen Sligachan on Wednesday afternoon.

The boy went ahead and was last seen going up a gully as his Aberdeen-born father, information scientist Mr Ian Grant, and friends took another route. When they were searching for Neil they found his discarded pullover and eventually they decided to seek help.

Skye mountain-rescue team were on the mountain until 11 p.m. but not trace of the boy was found and darkness made the search too hazardous.

At first light a RAF Sea King helicopter left Lossiemouth with six members of the service rescue team from Kinloss and at a stopover at Northern Constabulary headquarters at Inverness two search and rescue dogs and their handlers, from Inverness and Fort William, were taken on board.

An hour after their 4.30 a.m. arrival at Glen Sligachan, a Kinloss-based Serviceman located the boy's body below a western face of Marasco. Skye mountain-rescue team leader Mr Gerry Akroyd said it appeared that Neil had been looking for his father and friends and stumbled over the edge of the drop.

The family, including the boy's Skye-born mother, Lucienne, were on holiday at a cottage near Dunvegan.

Mr Grant's sister, Sheila Grant, stays at Springhill Road, Aberdeen. Mr Grant has been away from Aberdeen for 15 years.

Mercy flight

A SEA KING helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth was scrambled yesterday afternoon for a long-distance mercy dash to help a Spanish trawlerman who may be paralysed after a fall on board his ship.

The helicopter was carrying the senior medical officer from the RAF station, who had to decide where to take the man after language difficulties meant coastguards had only limited information about his condition.

A spokesman for Clyde coastguards, who co-ordinated the rescue, said that the Spanish trawler Toki Argia was about 20 miles north-west of the isolated island of Rockall when she radioed for help.

The eight-hour round trip for the helicopter meant it had to stop at Benbecula to refuel before pressing on for the trawler last night.

The injured seaman, who is believed to have a fractured hip, was airlifted from his vessel about 10.30 p.m. and was being flown directly to the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow.

13 JUNE 1982

Derek Mead
Ian Macfarlane
Mick Headleand
Rod Davidson

3 JUNE 1982

Derek Mead
Geoff Clements
Ron Webb
Roger Whitehead

Heavy swell swamps small boat MAN DROWNS IN SEA DRAMA

Two girls snatched to safety at Peterhead

By DAVID STEELE

A YOUNG man was drowned yesterday after a small boat capsized in heavy swell in the sea off Peterhead. But two girls were snatched to safety.

The drama, which involved the calling out of an RAF rescue helicopter from Lossiemouth and the Peterhead lifeboat, happened as many people were enjoying sunshine along the shores of the River Ugie estuary during the Peterhead local holiday.

A pleasure trip turned to horror when a 14ft. fibreglass boat owned by factory worker Mr Ian Hendry (22), 14b St Mary Street, Peterhead, was overturned by a big wave.

He and his sister-in-law, Mrs Fiona Hendry (23), 5 Belgrave Terrace, Aberdeen and his step sister, Miss Margaret Reid (17), 27 Dickie Drive, Peterhead, were thrown into the water.

Late last night Ian's body was recovered on the gird course side of the estuary about 200 yards from the mouth of the Ugie.

After the boat capsized the three occupants were seen clinging to the overturned boat, but Ian and Fiona lost their grip and started swimming.

Fiona, a sheriff clerk depute, made it to the South Shore after a passer by, Mr James Duthie, 58 Churchill Drive, Peterhead, waded into the water and got a grip of the exhausted girl after swimming a few yards.

Margaret clung to the boat until she was rescued by three men in a salmon coble from nearby Buchanhaven.

The two shaken girls were taken to Peterhead Cottage Hospital but later released. Fiona is on holiday in Peterhead with her husband Brian.

Margaret is a waitress.

Last night the two girls were too shocked to talk about their ordeal.

Police said the accident apparently happened after the boat's outboard engine was swamped by a wave and while the occupants were attempting to take out the oars after failing to re-start it.

Ian, a bachelor who worked with Clarkson Tools in Peterhead, was the second oldest of a family of six.

He was last seen swimming quite strongly away from the boat but appeared to change his mind and turned back. Then he disappeared.

The helicopter and the lifeboat and several small boats took part in a search lasting several hours, but it was abandoned as light faded.

His body was found on the shore later.

Roy Ritchie (13), 34 Dingwall Drive, Peterhead, watched the drama.

Roy said: "I saw the boat stopping as they took water from a wave. Then another seemed to swamp them. The boat went over. One girl drifted away leaving two clinging to it. Then the boy drifted away."

Fiona's rescuer, Mr Duthie, a base supervisor with SB Off-shore, Peterhead, said that Fiona began to founder as she neared rocks on the shore. He was walking along the shore with relatives when he saw the accident.

"I ran 60 or 70 yards and went into the water. Eventually I was out of my depth and had to swim a few yards to reach the lassie. She was totally exhausted," he said.

She was taken to his house nearby before being transferred to hospital.

Margaret Reid was also taken there after she was pulled into the salmon coble by owner Mr Joe Yule, 5 Staffa Street, Peterhead.

With Mr Yule were Mr Andrew Bruce, 64 Churchill Drive, and Mr Arthur McKennie, 43 Hope Street, Peterhead.

Mr Yule said: "The girl told me she was a pretty poor swimmer and that is why she stayed with the boat."

He said that Ian had spoken to him and his companions shortly before taking the boat out and asked if the conditions were all right.

The Sea King rescue helicopter was crewed by Lt. Geoff Clements, second pilot, Fl Lt. Derek Mead, radar operator, Flt. Sgt. Eric Cox, and winchman was Vic Oliver.



AN RAF rescue helicopter surveys the mouth of the River Ugie after the accident, watched by youngsters on the promenade.



MR JAMES DUTHIE, who waded into the water and rescued one of the girls.



ROY RITCHIE saw boat overturn.

PICTURES BY GRAHAM ROBERTSON



THE BOAT which overturned at the mouth of the River Ugie.

6 JUNE 1982

Geoff Clements
Derek Mead
Eric Cox
Vic Oliver

The Press and Journal

235th Year

MONDAY JUNE 14 1982

Two men missing after sea and river incidents

TWO men were missing presumed drowned last night after separate incidents.

The first tragedy involved a helicopter pilot who fell overboard from a yacht en route from Norway to Shetland.

The second incident concerned a 17-year-old Dundee youth who disappeared after diving from a dinghy off Broughty Ferry, Dundee, early yesterday.

Lost in the yachting incident north-east of Shetland was

Capt. Hugh Walker (36), a Bristol pilot and instructor based at Sumburgh.

The yacht Enola arrived in Lerwick late yesterday afternoon with the surviving member of the two-man crew, Irishman Mr Sinclair Downie, Mr Walker's brother-in-law, at the helm.

Lerwick coastguard said Mr Downie was in the Enola's wheelhouse when the boat was hit by a big wave.

According to coastguards Mr Downie heard a faint shout

By BERT OVENSTONE

then saw Mr Walker in the water.

He fired off a flare, then started the auxiliary engine to turn the speeding yacht in an effort to pick up Capt. Walker who by this time had disappeared.

After the Saturday night Mayday call, an extensive search was launched from a rescue centre in the Cormorant oil platform, and the first

helicopter was on the scene within minutes.

Nine vessels joined the search which was postponed because of darkness and later resumed using a British Airways helicopter.

Plymouth-born Capt. Walker, 5 Dalsetter Wynd, Boddam, Shetland, joined Bristol in 1979 after serving with the Army and the Royal Marines.

He and his wife had recently bought a house at Westhill, near Aberdeen, but had not moved in.

The Dundee teenager was Kevin Dailly, 13 Balmoral Gardens, who vanished near the Broughty Ferry lifeboat shed.

Four youths, including Kevin, are understood to have been skylarking in the dinghy at about 2.30 a.m.

Kevin dived into the River Tay and began to swim to the shore, but he disappeared from view about 25 yards from the shore.

A mini-lifeboat and an RAF Lossiemouth helicopter searched the area, but failed to find him.

8 JUNE 1982

Ian Macfarlane
Paul Martin
Mal Ternmouth
Roger Whitehead
Doc Grant

Copter plucks two from mudflats

A MAN and a girl were airlifted from mudflats in the Beaulieu Firth last night.

The two were plucked to safety by a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth after their motorboat went aground around a quarter of a mile from the shore on the Inverness side of the firth.

The alarm was raised around 8.50 p.m. following a report of red flares.

The pilot of the helicopter, F.O. Ian Macfarlane, said they found the two walking across the mud towards the shore. F.O. Macfarlane added: "They seemed to be making good progress, but we picked them up in case they hit quicksand or soft ground."

The two, who were unhurt, were landed at Beaulieu.

The helicopter was captained by Fl-Lt Mike Lahey. The winch operator was Flt-Sgt Eric Cox and the winchman was Master Airfield Master Bill Payne.

14 JUNE 1982

Ian Macfarlane
Mike Lahey
Eric Cox
Bill Payne

JET EXPLODES IN AIR BEFORE CRASH

By BILL MACKINTOSH

AN AMERICAN jet "blew up" in mid-air seconds before crashing on a remote Highland hillside.

A woman and her daughter said the doomed F1-11 USAF fighter bomber was "a mass of flames as it passed over their tiny cottage in Strathconon, Ross-shire."

The two crewmen ejected safely before their supersonic jet smashed into the hillside.

Today United States Air Force officers were travelling from their base at Lakenheath, in Suffolk, to begin an on-site crash inquiry.

Mrs Margaret Kirkman (36), who lives with her mother at Porin in Strathconon, spoke today of her feelings as she watched the fighter shoot over trees in front of their cottage.

"I was absolutely mesmerised. I could hear it misfiring, but I couldn't see it at first."

TREES

"Then it came in just above the trees in front of me. It was very, very close. It was all one mass of flames."

Mrs Kirkman said she was in the garden when the jet came over. "I just stood there. The plane crossed in front of my eyes."

"I saw one of the men parachuting, but I didn't see the other."

"There was a tremendous amount of noise as it went over the hill."

Her mother added: "It seemed to blow up in the air. It was on fire coming down."

She and her mother went to the crash scene where other members of the community had already gathered.

The crewmen are Captain Stanley Szybillo (29) and 27-year-old Captain William Clendenen. They were picked up by a helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth and taken to hospital in Kinloss.

They were not seriously hurt and had apparently suffered only minor cuts.

The plane came from the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath. It was on a low-level bombing exercise.

The USAF spokesman said no civilians were injured, nor was any property damaged.

The Board of Inquiry will interview the two airmen as well as eye-witnesses.

RECORD

The F1-11 has been in service with the Americans since 1960 and is considered to have a good safety record.

However there have been a number of crashes—and two deaths—in the UK in recent years.

In 1979 two F1-11s collided in mid-air over the Dornoch Firth, although all four crewmen bailed out safely.

In February 1981, a plane came down in Norfolk, again with no fatalities, but in the previous year both crewmen died when their F1-11 crashed in Dorset.

Strathconon hotelier Mr Stanley Tough (52), ghillie Mr Duncan MacDonald and shepherd Mr Gend MacKenzie saw the aircraft explode before dipping over the forest and ploughing into the hillside.

They jumped into a Land-Rover and set off towards the scene of the crash and as they were racing along the single track road through Strathconon they saw the occupants drifting down to the west of the pillar of smoke, marking the crash.

The pilots both sat in a sturdy capsule which offers them protection after its rocket powered ejection has catapulted it 500 feet into the air away from the burning plane.

Mr Tough said today: "We saw a large piece fall off the aircraft as it exploded about a mile and a half away. We went up a forest track and could see the wreckage burning fiercely, about 600 yards away from the trees and seven hundred feet above the village."

"We didn't approach it for fear of another explosion so we went looking for the pilots."

"As we started to climb the slope, another jet flew over to check the wreckage, turned away and then we saw it flipping its wings, presumably to indicate where the survivors were."

Mr Tough and his companions headed in that direction to continue their search but before they found the survivors, the helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth flew past them, landed and picked up the survivors. They were about half a mile from the scene.

"Mr Tough added that the wreckage was not strewn over a wide area and there was nothing to indicate that the tangled and burning metal was once an aircraft."

SMOKE

"It was just a blazing inferno with jet black smoke billowing into the sky."

"It was a blessing that it didn't crash in the forest. The place is tinder dry and we would have had a very bad fire," Mr Tough went on.

About 15 hours after the incident truckloads of US Air Force men arrived in Strathconon after an overnight drive from their English base. Their job is to sift through the wreckage take photographs and obey the orders of the official investigation team.

It is expected to take between six months and a year before the cause of the crash will be known.

A USAF spokesman on the scene said: "It is customary for the pilot, if they have an opportunity, to direct the aircraft away from inhabited areas and this is probably what happened in this case."

Bomber crashes on North hillside

By DUNCAN ROSS

A MOUNTAIN rescue team from RAF Kinloss were on guard on a Highland hillside last night after a United States Air Force bomber crashed while on a low-level exercise.

The two crewmen safely bailed out after their F1-11 aircraft got into difficulties.

The crewmen were later picked up by a rescue helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth and taken to the medical centre at RAF Kinloss. Apart from cuts the two airmen escaped injury.

The wreckage was strewn over the hillside above Strathconon, Ross-shire, and the mountain rescue team will remain overnight until US Air Force personnel arrive on the scene.

A Board of Inquiry will be convened immediately, an RAF spokesman said last night.

The swing-wing light bomber is understood to have come from a base at Lakenheath, Suffolk, and was said to be on a routine exercise.

23 JUNE 1982

Ian Macfarlane
Derek Mead
Eric Cox
Roger Whitehead



24 JUNE 1982
TRANSPORTATION OF F111 CAPSULE FROM CRASH SITE
TO KINLOSS