

Shipborne Helicopter Operations

At a Meeting of the Association held at The Royal Aeronautical Society, 4 Hamilton Place, London, W 1, on Saturday, 3rd October, 1953, at 2 30 p m, the following Speakers presented Papers for discussion

Lieutenant-Commander H R SPEDDING, M B E , R N

and

A E BRISTOW

In the Chair Wing-Commander R A C BRIE, A F R A e S , A F I A e S

Introducing the Author of the first Paper, the Chairman said We are going to have a fairly full session this afternoon, with two Papers which are full of interest Our first speaker is Lieut -Commander H R SPEDDING, R N , and the subject on which he is going to speak, another aspect of which will be dealt with by Mr BRISTOW later, is "Problems of Helicopter Operation peculiar to Shipboard Use" We all know that with the basic characteristics of the helicopter it is possible to take off and to land in extremely small areas Hence a small platform located at the stern of a merchant vessel is but another form of rotorstation or heliport Operation from shipboard, however, can pose some problems which are unique and which call for specialist handling

On a ship in a smooth sea we have conditions somewhat similar to those which face any helicopter pilot when operating from a small area on land In a rough sea, however, this same stern platform becomes extremely unstable owing to vertical and rolling displacements The resultant corkscrew wallowing motion introduces pilotage problems of an acute nature because not only during an approach to land for instance is the landing area continually shifting its position in relation to the aircraft, but in addition the pilot can expect little assistance from the deck handling crew I think we shall gather from the Papers which are to be presented to us that, whilst solutions can be visualised, their nature has not by any means yet been determined

Lieut -Commander SPEDDING joined the Fleet Air Arm early in 1940 and was with fighter squadrons until shot down and taken a prisoner of war in 1943 On returning to this country in 1945 he recommenced flying and served in various carrier —and shore-based squadrons He transferred to helicopters in July, 1952, and soon after took command of No 705 Helicopter Squadron of the Royal Naval Service at Gosport Last year he was active with his squadron in Holland, where during the floods over 800 people were saved For this valuable effort he was awarded the M B E He also had the honour, earlier this year, of flying H R H the Duke of Edinburgh to and from Buckingham Palace His total flying hours to date are approximately 2,000 of which about 500 have been with helicopters

(Lieut -Commander Spedding then read his Paper, which was illustrated by a number of epidiastope pictures)