



# CITY DIVERS AID BUCCA SALVAGE OPERATION

(By Evening News Naval Correspondent)

Divers from the Admiralty Experimental Diving Unit, Portsmouth, took part in the operation to recover a Royal Navy Buccaneer II strike aircraft from the sea-bed, ten miles off the Lizard.

They joined divers from Plymouth Command and the diving trials ship H.M.S. Reclaim, the springboard for the salvage operations.

Ten divers carried out the salvage at a depth of 360ft.—the deepest operation of its kind by divers.

Breathing a mixture of helium and oxygen, they used techniques developed by the Experimental Diving Unit and the R.N. Physiological Laboratory at Alverstoke, Gosport.

The £1-million Buccaneer, from the carrier Victorious, crashed into the sea on June 9, the two-man crew ejecting to safety.

## HAZARDS

Announcing the salvage operation today, the Navy Department

says that it was vital for the wreckage to be recovered so that the cause of the crash could be found.

The minehunters H.M.S. Maxton and H.M.S. Nurton located the wreckage, and Reclaim, co-operating with the salvage vessel Pintail, started the salvage operation a few days after the crash.

Says the Navy Department: "The divers, who worked at such great depths with a visibility of around ten feet, were faced with several hazards. There were cases of gas narcosis and decompression sickness—the 'bends.'

"One diver, suffering from a minor 'bend' had to spend 15 hours in a decompression chamber."

Describing it as a "copy-book" operation, the Commander-in-Chief, Plymouth (Vice-Admiral Sir Fitzroy Talbot) said that the divers' "courage and tenacity are to be commended."

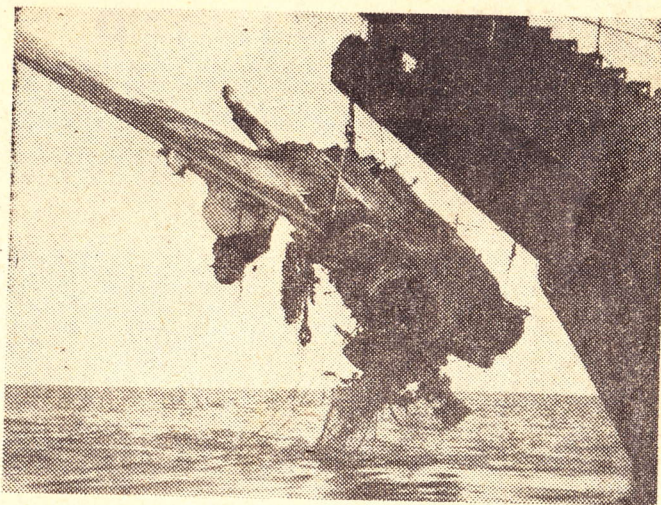
A spokesman for the Admiralty Experimental Diving Unit told me that the unit provided the experimental equipment, a submersible decompression chamber, and underwater television cameras.

In charge of the salvage operation was Lieut.-Cmdr. Morty Drummond, R.N., of the sea trial unit in H.M.S. Vernon.

The divers included Lieut.-Cmdr. Jackie Rea, of Chestnut Avenue, Bedhampton; Petty Officer D. J. Lott, of The Thicket, Purbrook; Petty Officer J. Maher, of Northern Parade, Hilsea; Ldg. Seaman J. Quinn, of Cottage Grove, Southsea; Ldg. Seaman D. Ford, of Chatsworth Avenue, Cosham; and Able Seaman B. Smallwood, of Westcliff-on-Sea.

The diving team was led by Lieut.-Cmdr. Mike Grubb, of Plymouth.

The aircraft's wreckage is to be studied at the Naval Accident Investigation Unit at H.M.S. Daedalus, Lee-on-Solent.



The wrecked Buccaneer being lifted by the salvage vessel Pintail.

## Ballyhoo on sea gas says Robens

Lord Robens, Chairman of the National Coal Board, went to Scarborough today with a message of hope for the coalmining industry.

It was that despite the competition from oil, nuclear power and natural gas, the coal industry had the physical assets and the potential to be the country's main supplier of energy beyond the end of the century.

He told delegates to the annual conference of the National Union of Mine...

questions were when would natural gas make an impact and where.

## LONG TASK

The government was now considering those matters and the timing of its introduction was important because the overall energy requirement was building

# Gathering the '64 bomb crop

FORTY-FIVE years after the first world war and 20 years after the second, the arsenal of explosive weapons embedded in our beaches and building sites does not diminish. Curiously, the tally of discoveries remains constant, at some 11,000 major items a year.

Last week's chief sample was the 250-lb. phosphorous bomb in the City. Three weeks earlier there was the discovery on a Jersey beach of 25 phials of chemical warfare gases—some of them the type that attacks the nervous system. During one week in July a naval team under Lieut.-Commander Jack Rea destroyed a torpedo warhead off Felixstowe, 60 4-inch and 3-inch anti-aircraft shells and a rocket-head in Stiffkey Marsh, Norfolk; 70 rocket-heads, 40 grenades and several mortar bombs in the Isle of Wight and a German parachute acoustic-magnetic mine near the Whitstable oyster beds.

Responsibility is neatly divided: the R.A.O.C. handling all surface

explosive objects and the R.E. buried ones. Beyond high water the Navy takes over.

Last year, the 60 men of the five R.A.O.C. teams travelled a total of 295,000 miles by road to answer 4,300 calls and clear nearly 4,500 items like anti-tank weapons and artillery shells, plus 20,000 smaller objects like smoke grenades, and 12 tons of small arms ammunition.

## Engineers

They also made some 150 journeys to remove schoolboy explosives from garden sheds; another 120 to take away charges thieves had inexpertly applied to safes. The Engineers destroyed four large bombs, 48 mines and 521 missiles.

The Navy has its busy time when holidaymakers saturate the beaches. So far this year Lieut.-Commander Rea's team has answered 260 calls.

"There just isn't a sign of an end to it," says Rea. "There's

enough stuff down there to keep us going indefinitely."

The beaches where explosive material is most often found include the stretches from Dornoch Firth to Wick; the Northumberland coast up to Seahouses; near Dyffryn Ardudwy in Merionethshire; parts of the Devon coast near Brixham; Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset; coastal areas near Bradwell and Tollesbury, Essex; Birling Gap to Beachy Head; Orford Ness, Suffolk; and Stiffkey Marsh, Norfolk, where a regular six-monthly search never fails to yield explosive material.

Most dangerous of all is the three-mile stretch of Norfolk coast from Mundesley to Overstrand, which is still closed to the public. Beach mines were laid in cliffs 25 years ago, but the cliffs have fallen and the plans—if they existed—have been lost. The Army keeps a residential disposal squad there and the local council bemoans the loss of a fine holiday beach.



