

## THE R.A.F. BALTIC CRUISE

**A**LTHOUGH we have already briefly recorded, week by week, the cruise in the Baltic Sea, of the four Supermarine "Southampton" flying boats of No. 201 (F.B.) Sqdn., R.A.F., under Group Capt. E. R. C. Nanson, C.B.E., D.S.C., last September, we think the following official report on the cruise will be of interest.

The object of the cruise was to provide training to the personnel of a flying-boat squadron operating away from its base for a month. Petrol and oil were provided, but, apart from this, the flying-boats were entirely self-contained.

Valuable experience and training was obtained during the cruise in landings and manœuvring in strange harbours and mooring up to various types of buoys, and also in refuelling the flying-boats in various ways and under different conditions.

### Narrative of Cruise

Four flying boats of 201 (F.B.) Squadron left Calshot for Felixstowe on September 2 to carry out an extended cruise in the Baltic Sea during the month of September. The boats were refuelled at Felixstowe on arrival, and left the next day for Esbjerg, the sea-crossing taking about 6 hr. All boats were refuelled at Esbjerg on the morning of September 4, and inspections of machines and engines were carried out.

On September 5, the Squadron left for Copenhagen, and crossed the southern part of Jutland at a height of 3,000 ft., the land crossing being about 30 miles. On arrival at Copenhagen, the aircraft were refuelled during the afternoon from a refuelling boat. On September 6, machine and engine inspections were carried out in the forenoon, and aircraft were visited and inspected during the afternoon by H.M. Minister and officers of the Danish Naval Flying Service. H.M. Minister and the Rear-Admiral Commanding the Air Service were given a flight.

On Sunday, September 7, the wind sprang up from the north north east and it was impossible to approach the boats in dinghies, owing to the rough sea. At 0200 on September 8, it was reported the S. 1228 was drifting ashore. The crews of the aircraft and the personnel of the station entered the water and, when the machine had drifted close enough, secured lines aboard by which they dragged her to the slipway. This action was considered to be the only possible means of saving the machine, and owing to the promptness with which it was carried out, no damage was sustained.

Later during the day, when the sea appeared calmer, the aircraft was taxied back to her moorings. It was found impossible to take the crew off in a dinghy, so they were floated astern in a rubber dinghy, two at a time, and picked up by a motor boat.

The cause of the breaking away of S. 1228 was that her main pennant and Yarmouth gear were secured to a patent spring hook in the mooring wire, and this hook had pulled out straight. During the gale, S. 1058 and S. 1229 dragged their moorings about 100 yards. The gale gradually abated during September 8, but still the boats could not be boarded, and the departure of the squadron for Stockholm had to be delayed a day.

On the morning of September 9, a thorough inspection of all boats was carried out, and the Squadron left for Stockholm. S. 1234 forced landed south of Cape Sandhammar, at 1130 hr., but signalled that she would require no assistance, and actually proceeded in about 10 min. The cause of the forced landing was a cracked oil pipe from the engine to the oil-pressure gauge. Three machines arrived at Stockholm at 1640 hr. S. 1234 arriving at 1700 hr.

On September 10, 25 hr. inspection of machines and engines was commenced, and the machines refuelled during the day. Inspections were continued on the 11th and were finished by midday. September 12 was given over to sight-seeing. Before leaving on September 13, S. 1228 changed the airscrew on the starboard engine for the spare one which was carried. On taking off, however, the vibration was found to be worse, and so the machine landed again at Stockholm and replaced the original airscrew.

S. 1058, S. 1229, and S. 1234 arrived at Helsingfors at 1420 hr., and S. 1228 at 1540 hr., having been further delayed by a slight oil-pressure trouble.

The boats were refuelled during that afternoon, and the morning of the following day. Inspections were carried out on the 14th, and the starboard radiator of S. 1228 taken ashore in order that a small leak should be stopped.

During the morning of the 15th the boats were cleaned up, and later visitors were received. The British Minister and the General Commanding the Finnish Air Force were given a flight.

The Squadron left Helsingfors for Tallinn (Reval) on September 16, arriving at 1030 hr. Refuelling was carried out from a lighter. Flights were given to the British Minister and three distinguished Estonian Military and Air Force officers.

The Squadron left Tallinn for Riga on September 18. Aircraft took off independently from outside the harbour, where a rough sea was running, but got off without difficulty. S. 1228 was delayed with oiled plugs on the port engine, but followed shortly afterwards. On arrival at Riga, the formation was met by a Latvian seaplane and escorted to the Stintsea, where the moorings were laid. All machines refuelled on September 19, and a 15-hr. inspection was carried out on the engines and aircraft. A flight was given to two distinguished Latvian military officers.

The Squadron left Riga for Memel on September 20, and were escorted to the Latvian-Lithuanian Frontier by a flight of three Latvian seaplanes. The moorings at Memel were laid in the river, and a landing was made alongside the buoys, the wind fortunately being up and down the river. One boat refuelled on arrival, the remainder refuelling on the following day.

The Squadron left Memel on September 22, and landed at Puck without

incident. Refuelling was commenced the following day from rowing boats, each machine using its Zwicky pump.

On September 24, the Squadron left Puck and flew over Gdynia, the Polish Naval Base, at the request of the Polish Naval Authorities. The Squadron continued to Stockholm, and arrived without incident.

At Stockholm, 25-hr. inspection of engines and machines were carried out and machines were refuelled on arrival, the refuelling being completed on the following day, September 25. The petrol was brought alongside in 50-gallon drums in dinghies and Zwicky pumps were used. The British Minister was given a flight.

On September 26 the Squadron left for Goteborg, and landed in the river, outside the Naval Harbour. The original scheme was for the buoys to be laid in the Civil Aviation Harbour, some way outside Goteborg, but the Swedish Naval Authorities decided to alter the position of the buoys in order to make them more convenient to the city.

On September 28, the Squadron left for Oslo, and made the destination in very fine weather and without incident. Refuelling was carried out the following day from a petrol barge using a semi-rotary pump, and hose provided by the Shell Co.

The Squadron left Oslo for Esbjerg on October 1, and arrived at 1830 hr. All boats refuelled on arrival, and inspections were carried out that evening.

On October 2, the Squadron left Esbjerg for Felixstowe. S. 1234 landed at 1350 hr. in the North Sea, with a serious oil leak. It was found that the vertical drive of the starboard engine (starboard block) had become unscrewed. This was tightened up, and the machine proceeded with the others and arrived at Felixstowe at 15.45 hr., and refuelled on arrival. The aircraft left Felixstowe at 0930 hr., arriving at Calshot at 1145 hr.

### Weather Reports

The organisation provided by the Meteorological Office, Air Ministry, for the supply of weather forecasts worked extremely well.

The Meteorological Bureau at Stockholm was of the greatest assistance in providing forecasts and reports before leaving Copenhagen and supplying further reports, through radio stations, en route. Again, on Putzig-Stockholm and Stockholm-Goteborg flights, several weather reports were received via Stockholm, Flyghamn (Airport) Radio from places on the route, which were of great value.

Generally, the weather throughout the month of September at the places visited was good. It appeared, however, that the Squadron's itinerary coincided generally with fair weather. Adverse winds were generally experienced, but not of considerable force.

"Rain-fog," in conjunction with rough sea and strong winds only prevented the Squadron's departure on one occasion, viz., from Copenhagen. Delay of one to two hr. was also necessitated by fog locally at Memel, and on the Stockholm-Goteborg route. Visibility on Esbjerg-Felixstowe flight on October 4, 1930, was very poor, varying between 1,000 yards and three miles with a maximum of five miles. At Copenhagen, Helsinki and Putzig, the Air Forces of these countries provided the Squadron with their own forecasts.

### Personnel

The personnel was as follows:—  
*Southampton S. 1229.*—Group Captain E. R. C. Nanson, C.B.E., D.S.C., A.F.C., commanding; Sqdn.-Ldr. E. F. Turner, A.F.C., First Pilot; Flt.-Lieut. M. C. Pascoe, Second Pilot and Navigator; No. 335772 Corp. L. Porter, Fitter; No. 342743 Corp. P. Bristow, Wireless Telegraph Operator.  
*Southampton S. 1228.*—Group Captain E. L. Gossage, D.S.O., M.C., Air Attaché, Berlin, Passenger; Flt.-Lieuts. A. C. Stevens, First Pilot; Flying Officer R. B. Council, Second Pilot; No. 243942 Corp. Osborne H., Fitter; No. 359229 A.C. 2 F. Gore, Wireless Telegraph Operator.  
*Southampton S. 1234.*—Flt.-Lieut. R. L. Ragg, A.F.C., First Pilot; Flying Officer K. F. Jones, Second Pilot; No. 335903 Sergt. S. Field, Fitter; No. 349454 Sergt. F. Roberts, Rigger; No. 370032 L.A.C. A. Revell, Wireless Telegraph Operator.  
*Southampton S. 1058.*—Flt.-Lieut. G. H. Smith, First Pilot; Flying Officer E. J. Laine, Second Pilot; No. 17396 Flt.-Sergt. A. Brookern, Rigger; No. 363590 L.A.C. V. Carter, Fitter; No. 354841 L.A.C. W. J. French, Wireless Telegraph Operator.

### Itinerary of Cruise

Date	From—	To—	Distance	Total Hours Flown.*
			Sea-miles	Hr. Min.
Sept. 2	.. Calshot ..	.. Felixstowe ..	159	11 20
Sept. 3	.. Felixstowe ..	.. Esbjerg ..	333	24 05
Sept. 5	.. Esbjerg ..	.. Copenhagen ..	200	13 20
Sept. 8	.. Copenhagen ..	.. Stockholm ..	358	25 45
Sept. 13	.. Stockholm ..	.. Helsingfors ..	225	17 10
Sept. 16	.. Helsingfors ..	.. Tallinn ..	43	4 14
Sept. 18	.. Tallinn ..	.. Riga ..	181	10 30
Sept. 20	.. Riga ..	.. Memel ..	206	13 30
Sept. 22	.. Memel ..	.. Putzig ..	109	7 40
Sept. 24	.. Putzig ..	.. Stockholm ..	286	15 50
Sept. 26	.. Stockholm ..	.. Goteborg ..	301	16 15
Sept. 28	.. Goteborg ..	.. Oslo ..	148	10 30
Oct. 1	.. Oslo ..	.. Esbjerg ..	290	16 35
Oct. 2	.. Esbjerg ..	.. Felixstowe ..	333	22 40
Oct. 3	.. Felixstowe ..	.. Calshot ..	159	10 25
			Totals ..	3,331 220 15
			Local flying time ..	6 05

Total time \*226 20

\* Total hours flown is the flying time of the four aircraft.

### Air Pageant for Dublin this Year

OUR Irish correspondent says it is suggested in Dublin that there will be an air pageant in Ireland during the summer of this year under the auspices of the Irish Aero Club. The suggested rendezvous for the pageant is the Phoenix Park, quite close to the city of Dublin itself, and where there would be plenty of room for a temporary aerodrome. The Irish newspapers have taken up the idea, but, unfortunately, have suggested gliding as an additional feature. In the County Dublin this is impossible, owing to the heavy prevailing winds being from the west. These cause a severe downdraught,

which is bad enough while flying an ordinary machine, but would be hopeless for gliding. An enquiry at the offices of the Irish Aero Club elicited the information that such a pageant is likely, but the club will have to become members of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale before anything definite can be said. The whole matter will probably be decided at the annual meeting of the club, which takes place at the end of this month.

### Aerodromes for Czechoslovakia.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is constructing six new aerodromes, and erecting 13 aerial beacons.