

FROM ALL QUARTERS

Royal Radar Visit

WHEN the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Radar Research Establishment at Malvern on April 24 during their tour of the Midlands, it was announced that Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to command that henceforth the establishment should be known as The Royal Radar Establishment.

At the establishment the Queen and the Duke, who were accompanied by the Minister of Supply, Mr. Aubrey Jones, inspected workshops before going on to the south site three miles away where, under strict security precautions, they saw guided-weapon equipment and airborne radar equipment demonstrated.

[Reference to the R.R.E.'s new honour, and to its history, is made in a leading article in this issue.]

Maurice Wright

WITH deep regret we record the death, at Stanmore, Middlesex, on April 27, of Major M. E. A. Wright, A.F.C., B.A., F.R.Ae.S., a director of the Fairey Aviation Co., Ltd. He was one of the best-liked figures in the industry, and his career—as a pilot and later as an executive—was exemplary.

Maurice Wright was born in 1893 and was educated at Marlborough and Caius College, Cambridge. Shortly before the First World War, as an air-minded undergraduate, he frequented Eastchurch, Isle of Sheppey, where he met the late Sir Richard Fairey (Dick Fairey, as he was at the time). A friendship began which was to last for more than forty years. In 1914 Maurice Wright volunteered for the Royal Naval Air Service and flew throughout the war on operations in the North Sea, the Dardanelles, Bulgaria, Syria, Aden and Egypt. After transferring to the R.A.F. in 1918 he became an Air Ministry test pilot, and in 1924, with long experience of seaplanes and flying-boats, he joined the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment at Felixstowe as chief technical officer. In 1925 Dick Fairey, who had formed his own company in 1915, invited Maurice Wright to join the Fairey Aviation Company as a director. In his thirty-two years with the company the latter flew a great number of different Fairey aircraft—the last as recently as 1948—bringing his total of types flown to more than 170.

He was chairman of Avions Fairey and a member of the Council of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors.

Major Wright leaves a widow and a son and daughter. General sympathy will be extended to them—as, indeed, it will to the Fairey company: this is the third grievous loss they have suffered within seven months, for the death of Sir Richard Fairey occurred on September 30 last year, to be followed on February 9 by that of his successor to the chairmanship, Mr. R. T. Outen.



Major Wright.

Swedish Hunters

WHILE confirming Stockholm reports that the Swedish Air Force had grounded its Hunters, a Hawker Siddeley group spokesman last weekend denied that ten accidents had occurred. He said: "Sweden has been operating Hunters for eighteen months. In that time there have been five Hunter crashes, four of them since January. These were from different causes. The aircraft have been grounded for investigation."

Rolls-Royce Future

IN comments on the effect of the Government's new defence policy on Rolls-Royce, Ltd., published in the works magazine, Mr. J. D. Pearson (deputy chairman) says that it "alters the whole character of the military aero-engine business in this country," and he adds: "While we have tried to anticipate these changes and have taken what we consider to be the necessary steps to meet them, we will not know how successful we have been until more details are available."

"While we are fortunate that our engines are in at least two of the three V-bombers and in the English Electric P.1 fighter, our main hopes for the future of the aero-engine division must rest on the civil side."

New U.S. Transport

USING the appellation Turboboxcar, Fairchild are developing a completely new short-field military and civil transport powered by four 1,600 h.p. Lycoming T55 turbines (the engine specified for the rather similar Douglas 1906 and 1940).

Employing boundary-layer control, the high-wing Turboboxcar will weigh 75,000 lb, cruise at 216 kt and lift 32,181 lb for short hauls and 21,439 lb over 1,500 miles ultimate. Minimum landing and take-off distances are, respectively, 1,610 and 1,750ft. A prototype may be financed with company money and could fly in twelve months' time.

Reggie Brie Retires

THE end of April was a milestone for one of British aviation's best known exponents of rotating-wing flight, W/C. R. A. C. Brie, A.F.R.Ae.S., A.F.I.Ae.S. It marked his retirement, at the age of 61, from his present post of official-in-charge of B.E.A.'s Helicopter Experimental Unit, a position he has held for the past ten years.

Reggie Brie served in the R.F.C. in the first world war and from 1930 to 1940 was with the Cierva Autogiro Co. Holder of British Helicopter Certificate No. 1, he was the first British pilot to fly the Sikorsky helicopter.

Jean Lennox Bird

WE regret to record that Miss Jean Lennox Bird, who in 1952 became the first woman pilot to qualify for R.A.F. wings, was killed last Monday shortly after taking off in a Miles Aerovan from Ringway Airport, Manchester. Two other occupants of the aircraft, which was owned by Meridian Airmaps, Ltd., of Shoreham, also lost their lives in the accident; Mr. Christopher Harman and Mr. D. G. Willcocks.

At the time she qualified for her flying brevet Miss Bird (then a pilot officer) had some 3,100 hours to her credit, on more than 90 aircraft types.

Daimler-Benz Agreement

AN agreement has been concluded between Daimler-Benz A.G., of Stuttgart, and the American Curtiss-Wright Corporation, Studebaker-Packard Corporation and Utica-Bend (a motor-manufacturing firm) concerning the expansion of exports of Mercedes-Benz cars, commercial vehicles and engines to the U.S.A. At a later date, the maintenance of Curtiss-Wright aircraft engines, and their production under licence in Germany, will be undertaken. The agreement will eventually result in co-operation "in the production of aircraft engines."

Helicopters at Suez

A LARGE audience gathered at Londonderry House on Thursday of last week to hear a lecture by Lt-Col. J. F. T. Scott, T.D., R.A., who commanded the Joint Experimental Helicopter Unit in the recent operations in the Middle East. The meeting was arranged by the Helicopter Association in conjunction with the Royal Aero Club; and Lord Brabazon, president of both bodies, presided.

Lt-Col. Scott gave an interesting account of the part the helicopters had played in the landings. Originally, when the operation was being planned in the nature of a precautionary exercise, it had been intended that their rôle would be casualty evacuation. Later, however, it was decided to attempt the landing of commandos on the beach-head. The helicopters worked a shuttle service to lift over 400 officers and men from the ships lying a few miles offshore in a period of 80 minutes. Turn-round time on the deck, for refuelling and re-equipping, was reduced with practice to six minutes. Subsequently, a large volume of stores and equipment was flown in to support the landings.

The remainder of the first day was spent in evacuating casualties, of which over 100, including a number of Egyptians, were flown back to the ships for medical attention. The lecturer cited the instance of one unfortunate (or perhaps fortunate) commando who was back on board having a wound dressed in the sick-bay only 19 minutes after he had first left the ship to take part in the assault; he had fought his short-lived battle in the intervening period. Lt-Col. Scott emphasized that the complete success of the helicopter operations had been mainly due to careful preparations during the work-up period immediately beforehand. This had been the first entirely British helicopter operation of this nature and the machines [Whirlwinds and Sycamores] had shown up to good advantage in every rôle that had been undertaken. Many of the tasks could have been accomplished in no other way.