Missiles and Spaceflight

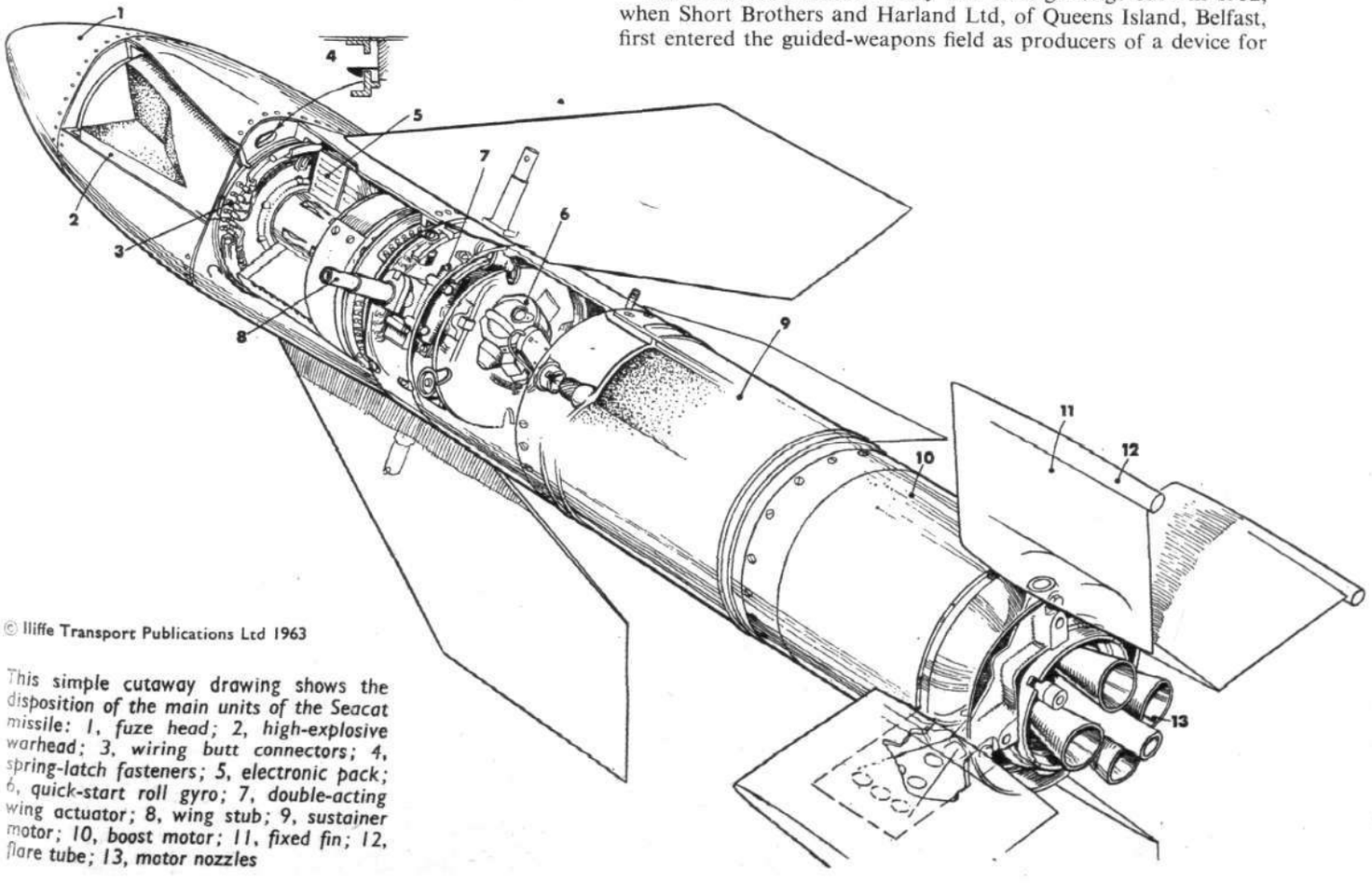
SEACAT

The Guided Missile to Defend Small Ships

ONE of the British missile industry's biggest success stories of recent years was the announcement, in August 1962, that the Short Seacat had completed its acceptance trials within five years of the first development contract. Already a best-seller overseas, Seacat then gained the distinction of entering service faster than any other British missile.

After that Seacat was almost continually in the news. It became the first guided missile to be fired by operational ships of the Royal Navy; it began acceptance trials on a Swedish destroyer, thus becoming the first British missile to be fired by a foreign navy; it became the first British naval weapon to be integrated with foreign fire-control equipment; follow-up export orders for Seacat were placed; and New Zealand reported a successful beginning to sea trials.

This remarkable success story had its beginnings back in 1952, when Short Brothers and Harland Ltd, of Queens Island, Belfast, first entered the guided-weapons field as producers of a device for



This simple cutaway drawing shows the disposition of the main units of the Seacat missile: 1, fuze head; 2, high-explosive warhead; 3, wiring butt connectors; 4, spring-latch fasteners; 5, electronic pack; 6, quick-start roll gyro; 7, double-acting wing actuator; 8, wing stub; 9, sustainer motor; 10, boost motor; 11, fixed fin; 12, flare tube; 13, motor nozzles