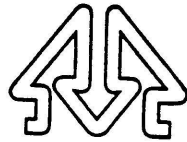


The Hovercraft Society



PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR ON

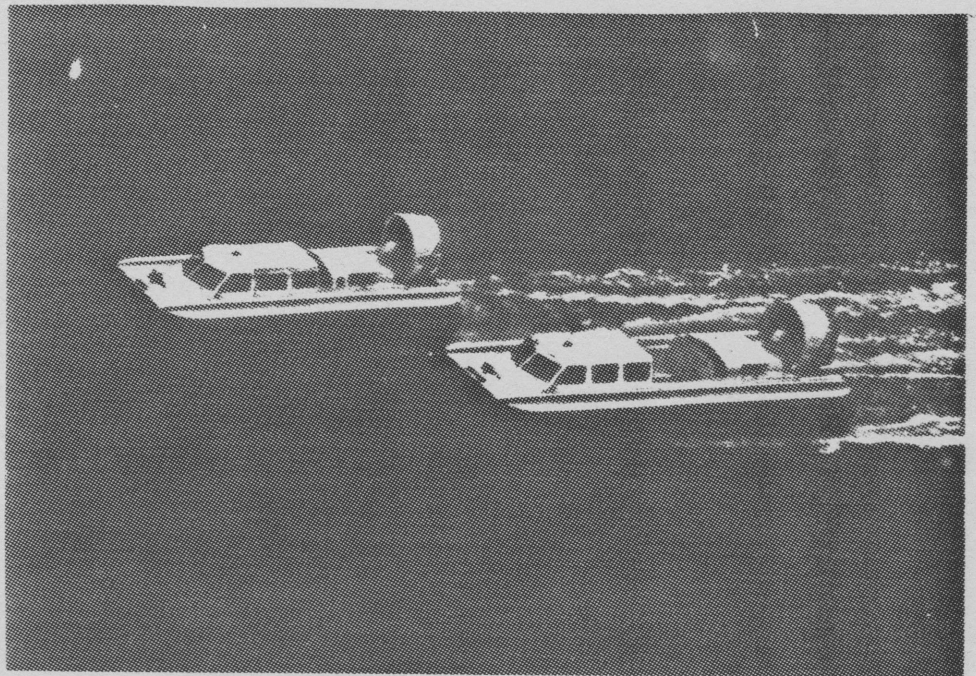
HOVERCRAFT TO THE RESCUE

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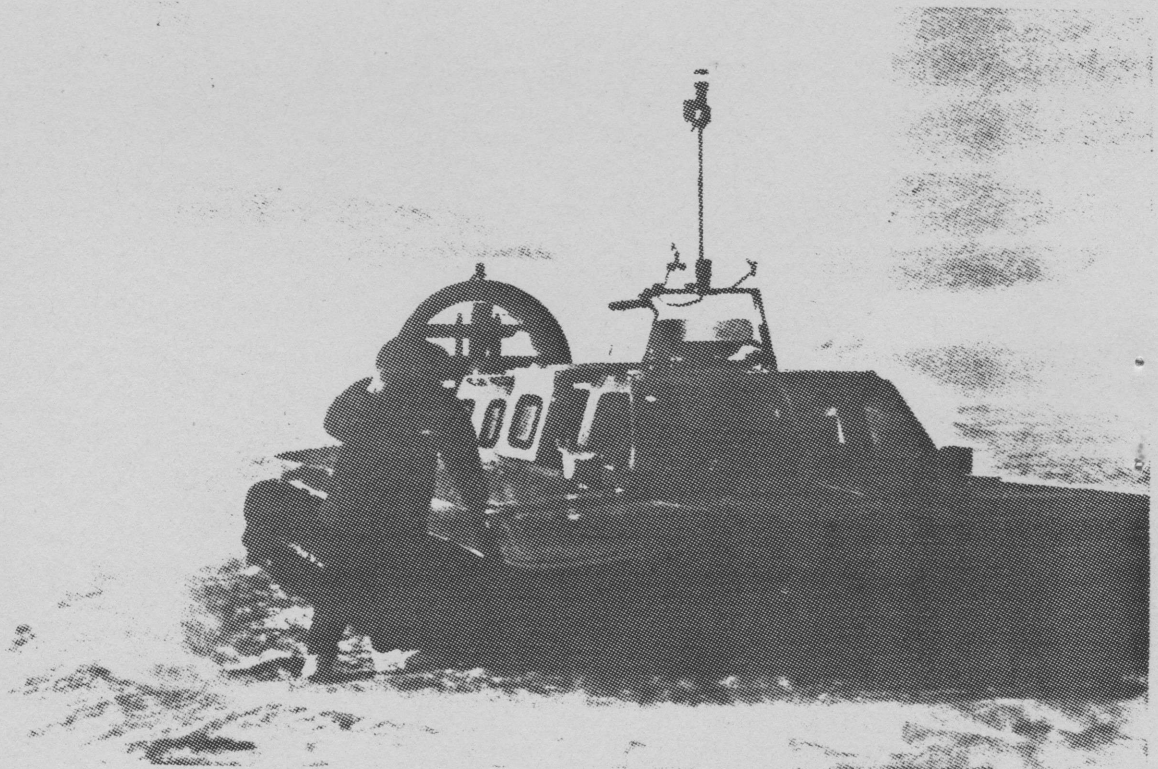
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PREFACE

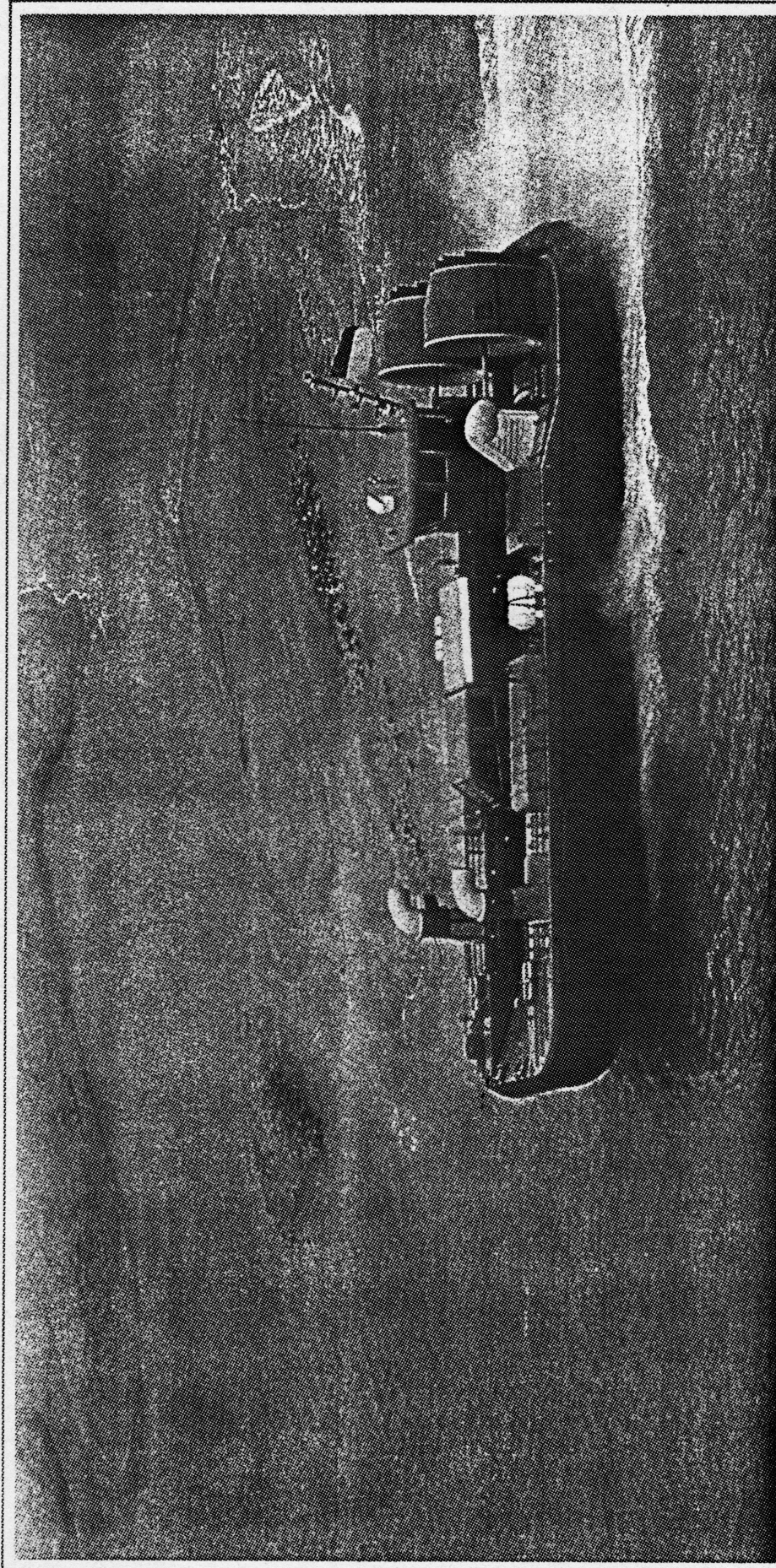
One of the difficulties experienced in disaster relief or rescue situations is transport of personnel, equipment or aid to the areas where they are needed. On some occasions, normal methods of road, rail or air transport can be used; on the remainder other means are required. This is either because normal methods of transport are not usable, because of loss of road and rail links, or airports; or transport is needed in marginal terrains.

This is where hovercraft can play a useful role, being able to operate in remote areas, on rapid strewn rivers, over shallow water, in marshes and swamps, snow and ice and over mudflats. Already, hovercraft have been used in many locations around the world, performing tasks beyond the capabilities of any other vehicle. Many people have already cause to be thankful that hovercraft were available.

But surely hovercraft - mainly built in developed countries, require a high level of expertise to build, operate and maintain? Whilst this may be true of some designs, there are many that can be manufactured, maintained and driven by ethnic personnel. Most disasters need a quick response and if hovercraft are not to hand any advantage may be lost. However, many of the current designs are air transportable by both large and small aircraft.

Papers presented at this seminar highlight many of the operations already undertaken by various hovercraft, and are given by those with a wealth of relevant expertise. The use of appropriate technology and engineering is addressed, as is the future potential of existing and planned designs. The scene is set by a definition of the requirements and we have every reason to believe that this Seminar will give rise to many questions and a lively discussion. It is our hope, however, that the adoption of Hovercraft to the Rescue goes beyond this stage and that the near future will see the adoption of these craft in greater numbers where their true potential can be realised.

The Editors



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