

Telegraphists are 'Guinea pigs'

Sunday Times Staff Reporter

UNDERGOING extreme tropical conditioning for any future war in the Pacific, six volunteers from the Royal Navy are shut in a room every day at the Tropical Research Unit, General Hospital, Singapore.

Subjected to heat up to 105 degrees while taking wireless messages at 22 words a minute, these men, already accustomed to the tropics, will show the effect of climatic conditions likely to be found in gun turret engine

room or "ops" station.

The experiment is being carried out under the supervision of Mr. R. D. Pepler, of the Medical Research Council of Applied Psychology.

This sweltering group of wireless telegraphists is the third batch to be tested in the past few months. Previous "guinea-pigs" included radar workers whose job entails long, monotonous hours spent watching a tickering screen, alone.

The danger among radar men is that of falling asleep, so their tests consisted of sitting alone watching a blank clock with one hand ticking, and noting the rare occasions when the hand ticked twice.

"There is no shortage of

volunteers for the job," Mr. Pepler told the Sunday Times. "The men get a shilling a day extra pay and one day's extra leave for each of the eight weeks they spend preparing for an undergoing the tests."

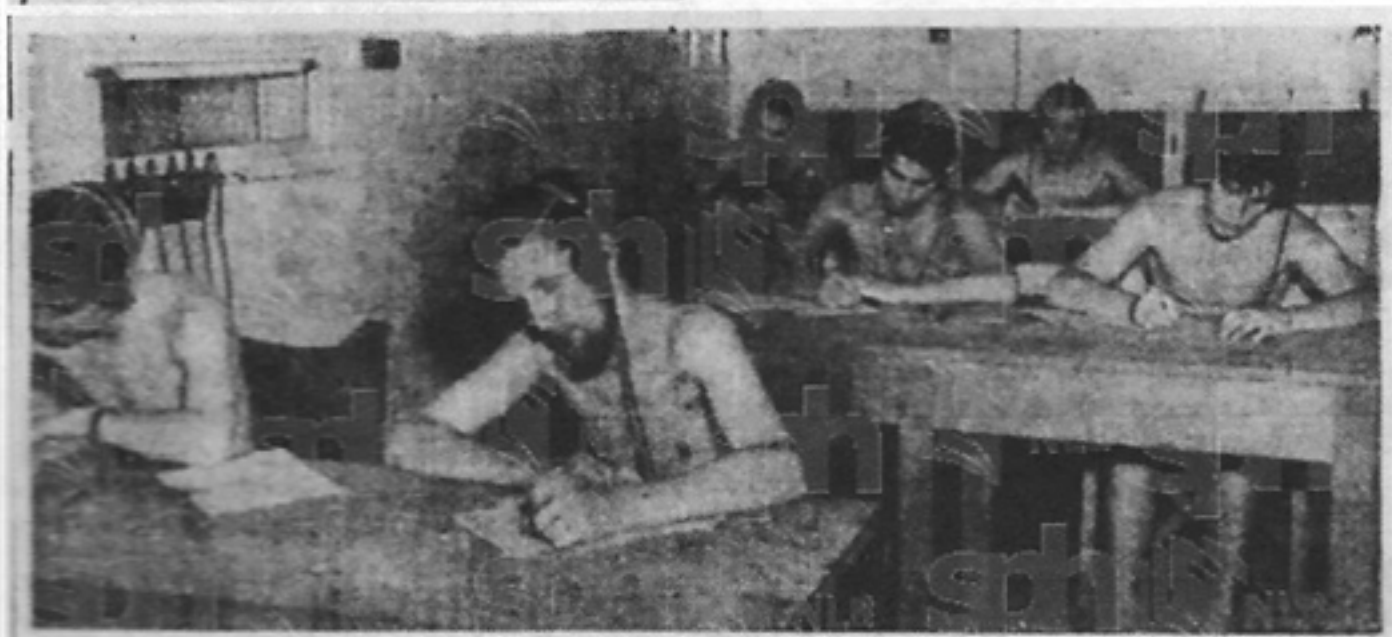
Tel. Barry Jones, of Burton-on-Trent, said "It's a welcome break from watch-keeping—particularly having to get up in the middle of the night. But I have lost about 7 lb. in weight already."

"Only temporarily," said Mr.

Pepler, "That will be very quickly recovered."

Tels. C. Sucksmith and N. Sides thought they had gone off form a bit at football, but otherwise were feeling fine.

In any case they are doing a job which may help other fellows in the unhappy event of war in the Pacific.



Naval telegraphists hard at work in the Tropical Research unit's hot room.—Sunday Times picture.