



The User Services

The first services to request co-operation with Raynet were the Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Brigade, both having very limited radio communications of their own. Numerous exercises highlighted the versatility of the ham possessing mobile and portable equipment with his ability to be right at the incident centre. Despite the teething troubles the exercises did not go unnoticed. Today Raynet has an excellent working relationship with both first aid groups, the Police, Fire brigade, the Coastguard and the County Incident Officers of most areas of the UK. Of course some areas are better organised than others — the best usually being districts where live incidents frequently occur. This is typical of the Englishman. Something has to happen on his doorstep before he is pushed into action — then completely unprepared — so Raynet means training. This is no more than an extension to the transmitting licence which is issued to promote self teaching and training.

Most groups hold message handling nets one evening per week, with a full scale exercise every couple of months. The Home Office have just granted permission for Raynet to exercise with the user services once a month. This should put more realism in to the operation with the opportunity to meet members of the user services.

The evening nets are often arranged such that every member takes his turn at being Controller; map reading ability is helped by the controller giving each member an NGR (National Grid Reference) in turn, after which each station is called in again to give the name of his NGR spot. Any other ability or training the member may have, such as a good knowledge of First Aid, climbing or caving will be of immense use. One thing that every Raynet member must have is an intimate knowledge of his immediate district and a good working knowledge of a larger surrounding area. This is what makes you most useful to the user service. Well organised groups will check the radio paths across

A Sea King helicopter 202 Search and Rescue squadron from R.A.F. Coltishall arriving to lift a casualty from a Norfolk beach in exercise 'Search' in which Raynet, Rover Rescue and the local Coastguards took part.