BRITISH TROOPS ARRIVE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

The British landing ship logistic (LSL) Sir Lancelot, arrived at Port Alma, near Rockhampton, at the weekend after a 10-day trip from Singapore, carrying 400 troops of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry.

The troops were bound for the Australian Army's Shoalwater Bay Training Area, about 60 miles north of Rockhampton to take part in Exercise "Piping Shrike" with the South Australian based 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment.

About 200 troops from the KSLI had already arrived in Australia to take part in the exercise, and the latest arrivals bring the British force on the exercise to more than 600. Also aboard Sir Lancelot were 50 vehicles, three Sioux helicopters and tons of military supplies - all for use at "Piping Shrike".

Among the troops were 35 bandsmen and 25 buglers of the KSLI Band, who will perform at the Royal Melbourne Show with bands of the Australian Regular Army.

Sir Lancelot, operated by the Merchant Navy under contract from the British Ministry of Defence, is the first of about six similar vessels to serve with the British Army.

With a displacement of more than 5,600 tons, the 421-foot vessel has stern door and bow ramp loading facilities to allow direct roll-on roll-off loading and unloading directly onto the shore.

This technique was not used at Port Alma - the ship unloaded its entire cargo at the wharfside, using its own 20-ton cranes. Two convoys then moved from Port Alma to the exercise area, about 100 miles away.

The first convoy was of 10 buses and seven 3-ton vehicles carrying the British troops.

This was followed by a convoy of 30 vehicles and 20 trailers unloaded from the ship.

After unloading the troops, vehicles and other stores, the three helicopters, which were carried as deck cargo, were flown directly from the ship to Manifold, base for the exercise, in the Shoalwater Bay area at the Southern end of the rugged Clinton Peninsula.

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Lists: A

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