

PH0356379

DATA SHEET

Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Rockingham
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE: JAN 7 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: ** The Rundlet-May House
AND/OR HISTORIC: The Rundlet-May House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 364 Middle Street
CITY OR TOWN: Portsmouth
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First
STATE: New Hampshire
CODE: 33
COUNTY: Rockingham
CODE: 015

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY: Building
OWNERSHIP: Private
STATUS: Occupied
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Restricted
PRESENT USE: Private Residence

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Cambridge Street
CITY OR TOWN: Boston
STATE: Massachusetts
CODE: 025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

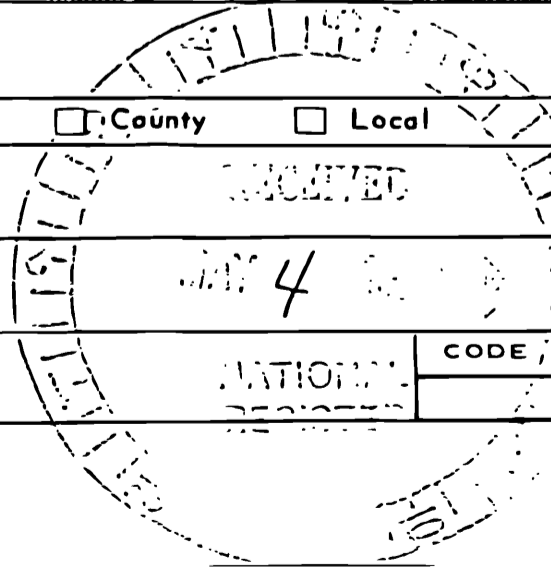
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Rockingham County Registry of Deeds, County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER: Hampton Road
CITY OR TOWN: Exeter
STATE: New Hampshire
CODE: 03883

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: None
DATE OF SURVEY:
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
STATE:
CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Rockingham
ENTRY NUMBER:
DATE:
FOR NPS USE ONLY



7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

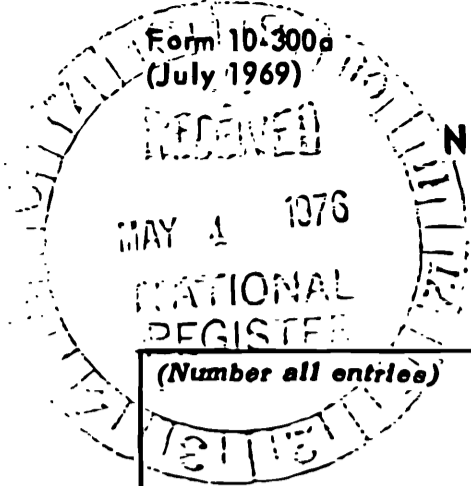
Present Physical Appearance: Located in a Portsmouth residential section near the intersection of Middle and Summer Streets, and otherwise surrounded by two- to three-story houses, the Rundlet-May House is directly across Middle Street from the multi-story yellow brick Masonic Temple. The three-story, almost square house with attached north carriage-shed and stable sits in the southeastern corner of the nearly two acre lot which bounds 215.7 feet on Middle Street and extends the length of the block about 450 feet, to Austin Street which it bounds 174.5 feet. ¹ The lot is outlined by wooden board and picket fences and occasionally also by tall lilac hedges. Behind the house, to the northwest of it, terraced perennial flower beds border dirt walks; some of the walks extend, by themselves, into the orchard near Austin Street. Two helical rose arbors are at the foot of the second terrace's wooden steps and a long rose arbor runs along the southwest elevation of carriage-shed. Lilacs surround the house on the northwest and on the southwest. Also to the southwest, a rectangular peony bed encloses a sun-dial, and across a path, is the pet cemetery, begun by Dr. James Rundlet May, and including at least nine white marble grave markers. ² Numerous shade trees are on the grounds. The U-shaped arrangement of the house with its attached outbuildings creates a stable yard area to the northeast of the house, with a dirt entrance drive.

The white-clapboarded house has an asphalt shingled shallow hip roof with a white wooden balustrade. The roof's trim consists of a boxed cornice having a sloped soffit; the decoration on its frieze is repeated on the entablature friezes of the first- and second-story windows and of the front entrance portico. The fenestration of double-hung sash windows, all having black shutters, black wooden muntins, and lug sills, is regular on all elevations, with the exception of the placement of a second-story arched window on the back, northwest elevation, looking out from the stair-landing. The first and second-story windows are (6/6), have moulded wooden surrounds and entablatures. The third-story windows are (3/3) and also have moulded wooden surrounds, the tops of which nearly reach the bottom of the roof cornice frieze.

The five-bay facade has a central entrance, whose door is obscured by the placement over it of a presumably twentieth-century white wooden vestibule, itself having a door with two wooden panels and nine glass panes and set in plain wooden trim surrounds. The vestibule, however, does not obscure the original door ornamentation, including a recessed eight-pane fan-light and flush side panels with lights, all panes being set in black lead muntins. The vestibule projects on the granite floor of the open entrance portico consisting of an entablature supported by two fluted Tuscan columns and matching pilasters. The straight granite steps leading from the

See Continuation Sheet 1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE	
New Hampshire	
COUNTY	
Rockingham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 7 1976

(Number all entries)

Rundlet-May House, Portsmouth, N.H.

7. DESCRIPTION, continued

Present Physical Appearance: (continued)

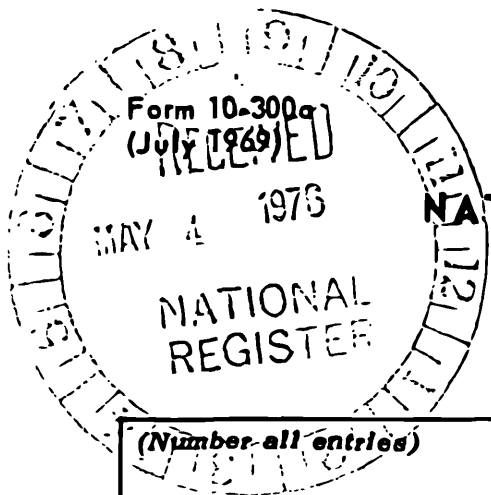
Middle Street gateway to the front entrance has a black iron chain railing attached to turned white wooden posts. The gateway consists of two rectangular wooden posts having a recessed panel with moulded rails on each of their four sides, and topped with a white wooden urn ornament.

The house's four end chimneys - offset left on the northeast elevation, offset right on the southwest elevation, and offset right and left on the back, northwest elevation - are all white painted brick laid in stretcher bond. All, except the northwest offset left, have caps consisting of three brick arches. The foundation is cut stone.

A one-bay wide, one-story scullery with flat roof and brick foundation is attached to the house, offset left on the back northwest elevation and projects beyond the northeast elevation. The first section of the one-bay wide, one-story carriage shed is located near the center of the back, northwest elevation, and its northwesterly gable roof intersects the northeasterly gable roof of the second section at right angles. The first section has five-and-a-half elliptical archway openings; the second section has six-and-one-half such openings. All these openings are covered with black boards and the remainder of the carriage shed is covered with white boards.

The two-story stable, on the other hand, is covered with white beveled olapboards and is attached to the carriage shed's northeast elevation. Its southeast facade has three entrances. The large central one is an elliptical archway ornamented with plain wooden trim and a keystone. It is flanked by two smaller rectangular batten doors topped with circular shuttered windows. The doors and window shutters are painted black. The stable's southwest elevation also has two rectangular entrances and two shuttered windows.

Original Physical Appearance: On August 9, 1806, the Portsmouth merchant, James Rundlet, purchased a house lot in that city from Elizabeth Gookin.³ His purchase that same month of 7,146' of boards and planks from Nathaniel Jewett for \$75 signaled the beginning of Rundlet's construction of a house, whose buildings process, component materials, and constructors, he carefully recorded in his accounts.⁴ His itemization of his expenses offers a detailed and clear picture of the supplies -when they were purchased, from whom, the quantities, and their prices. Lumber, nails, bricks, lime, hair, hearths, jambstones and woodwork are all listed.⁵ His dated expenditures for "blowing rocks", for digging the cellar, for the construction
See Continuation Sheet 2



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Rockingham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
1111 7	1078

(Number all entries)

Rundlet-May House, Portsmouth, N.H.

7. DESCRIPTION, continued

Original Physical Appearance: (continued)

of chimneys, and finally, the last relevant entry, dated December, 1809, to William Deering, for "carved work" shows that the overall construction of the mansion took about three years.

Although the only entry in the accounts apparently relating to the house's architect is dated November, 1808, and is against Jacob Marston for a "new architect book", Rundlet's payment of \$555.05 in January of 1808, to "E. Clifford" for joiner's work was the largest single bill paid during the construction, and might suggest that it was Clifford who was the master joiner. This "E. Clifford" was very likely the Ebenezer Clifford who worked with Bradbury Johnson, later Portsmouth's master-builder, in the design of many of Exeter's outstanding late nineteenth-century buildings. William Deering, whose name appears opposite entries in Rundlet's accounts for items such as "carved capitals" and "carved work", was an experienced Portsmouth craftsman, whose work included carving on the ships PORTSMOUTH (1798), MERRIMACK (1798), CONGRESS (1799), and WARREN (1799), as well as carved work for the New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company (1804), now the Portsmouth Athenaeum, and the Portsmouth Academy (1809), now the Public Library. James Nutter, builder of the Rundlet-May House fence, was Portsmouth's leading joiner who designed the Portsmouth Academy, among other buildings.

As originally constructed, the house was to have two sills 48' long and two sills 38½' long, twelve large cross beams, and a 7'4" ridge pole. The scullery was to have sixteen beams and a 6'7" ridge pole; the wood house was to have a 51' long sill and seven cross sills.

The only currently known alteration of these structures from their original appearance is the placement of an outside vestibule on the front entrance. This addition does not appear in a circa 1890 photograph and so it is assumed to date to the twentieth century.

Rundlet's early nineteenth-century purchases included pear trees, poplars, peach trees, grape vines and rose bushes. An 1812 map framed and hung in the Rundlet-May House shows the landscape of the property today, with its orchard, perennial flower beds and paths, does not significantly differ from Rundlet's time. The major exception to this would be the location of a pet cemetery to the southwest of the house. This was established by the house's fourth owner, Dr. James Rundlet May who, while serving as Acting Assistant Surgeon during the Civil War, discovered an abandoned dog on a Southern plantation.

See Continuation Sheet 3

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet) 3

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Rockingham	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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	JUN 7 1978

(Number all entries)

Rundlet-May House, Portsmouth, N.H.

7. DESCRIPTION, continued

Original Physical Appearance: (continued)

He named it "Flora" and brought it home with him to Portsmouth. Upon its death, Dr. May erected a small stone monument on its grave and the family continued the tradition with later pets. ¹⁴

¹ Lot Plan #35, Portsmouth City Hall.

² SPNEA's Rundlet-May House Permanent File, MS transcript of an oral history with Ralph May.

³ Rockingham Deed 176:96.

⁴ Ralph May, Among Old Portsmouth Houses (Boston, Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1946), 16.

⁵ Ibid, 16.

⁶ Ibid, 29.

⁷ Ibid, 30; James L. Garvin, "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect," (unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969), 181-182. Subsequent research indicates that there may have been only one "Ebenezer Clifford" rather than two, uncle & nephew. (Garvin, personal communication, 1975)

⁸ Garvin, op. cit., 175.

⁹ May, op. cit., 28-29; James L. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture," Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 2, (Summer, 1971), reprint, 19.

¹⁰ May, op. cit., 27; Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua," 23.

¹¹ May, op. cit., 23.

¹² May, op. cit., 29.

¹³ May, op. cit., 24, 26, 28.

¹⁴ SPNEA's Rundlet-May House Permanent File.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1806-1809**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture:

James Rundlet's careful accounts of the construction, 1806 to 1809, of the Rundlet-May House, an otherwise typical example of Portsmouth's Federal era, show the house to be at least doubly unique.¹ Because of this exact documentation of its construction, the house provides an opportunity for the scholar of the Piscataqua region Federal-period building techniques and craftsmen to correlate documentary with architectural evidence. The accounts also show that some of Portsmouth's major craftsmen of the period participated in the construction of the Rundlet-May House. William Deering, whose carving for Portsmouth buildings included the capitals for the Fire and Marine Insurance Company (1804) and the Portsmouth Academy,² (1809), carved capitals and other woodwork for the house. James Nutter, Portsmouth's foremost joiner, built the Rundlet-May House fence.³ It is possible that the architect of the house was Ebenezer Clifford, who participated with Bradbury Johnson in the design of some of Exeter, New Hampshire's outstanding late eighteenth-century buildings.⁴

Commerce:

James Rundlet (1771-1852) was born in Exeter, New Hampshire and came to Portsmouth in 1794. He began business that year and by 1801 he invested in "adventures" to Calcutta, India and to Alexandria, Virginia. In 1802, he embarked on trade with correspondents in Amsterdam and built a brick store in Portsmouth. A few years later, credit was extended to him in Rotterdam and Nantes.⁵ Rundlet's great-grandson, Ralph May, points out with some pride, that his ancestor possessed enough business acumen to "begin business in 1794 with a capitol of a few hundred dollars, and ten years later was granted a credit of over \$14,000."⁶

During the second decade of the nineteenth-century, Rundlet changed his investments from trade to local real estate and to local businesses. He was one of the incorporators of the Portsmouth Savings Bank, established in 1823, and acted as Trustee from 1823 to 1840, and as its President in 1839 and in 1840.⁷

See Continuation Sheet 4

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garvin, James L.. "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect" (unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969).

Garvin, James L.. "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture" Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 2, (Summer, 1971), reprinted in monograph form.

May, Ralph. Among Old Portsmouth Houses. (Boston, Mass.: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1946).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43° 4' 17"	70° 45' 52"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		<i>zone 19</i>		
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "		N-4770-020	E-356-450	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.86 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Barbara Chapin

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATE: **May 21, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Codman House, Codman Road

CITY OR TOWN: **Lincoln** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE: _____

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *[Signature]*

Title: **NH State Historic Preservation Officer**

Date: **July 7, 1975**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Active
[Signature]
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: **6/7/76**

ATTEST: **RBR for WJM**
5/28/76

Active
[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: **5-28-76**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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STATE	New Hampshire	
COUNTY	Rockingham	
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		JUN 7 1973

(Number all entries)

Rundlet-May House, Portsmouth, N.H.

8. SIGNIFICANCE, continued

Commerce: (continued)

The collection of Rundlet's bills, accounts, and business letters, located at the Rundlet-May House, promises to be a valuable source for scholars of Portsmouth's commercial history of the first half of the nineteenth-century.

Military:

James R. May, M.D., grandson of James Rundlet and father of Ralph May, was a volunteer officer in the United States Navy during the Civil War.⁸ After graduating from Harvard College in 1861, he was a medical cadet in the Navy in 1862. He served at the Judiciary Square Hospital in Washington, D.C. from July, 1862 to July, 1863. On February 25, 1864 he was appointed Acting Assistant Surgeon at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, and was attached successively on the Steamer "Kengphshea", the USS "E.B. Hale", the USS "Passaic", and the USS "Daylight". He resigned in June of 1865, and went to Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, from which he graduated in 1866.⁹

Literary:

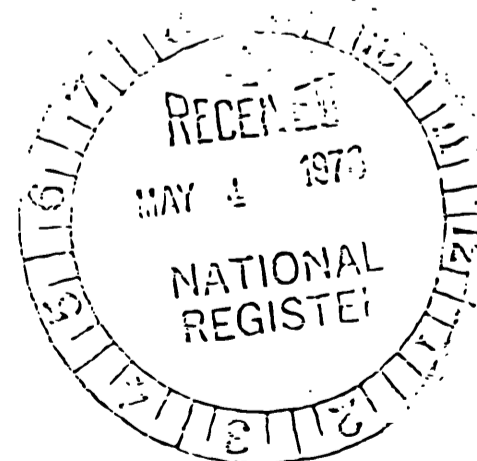
Ralph May, the last member of the family to occupy the Rundlet-May House before he left it to SPNEA, took a serious interest in the history and architecture of the Portsmouth area, and he published the book Early Portsmouth History (Boston, Mass.: Goodspeed, 1926) and a 1946 monograph entitled Among Old Portsmouth Houses.

¹Ralph May, Among Old Portsmouth Houses (Boston, Mass.: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1946), 16; James L. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture", monograph reprinted from Historical New Hampshire, XXVI, 3, (Summer, 1971), 41.

²May, op. cit., 29; Garvin, op. cit., 19.

³May, op. cit., 27; Garvin, op. cit., 23.

See Continuation Sheet 5



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet) 5

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Rockingham	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 7 1976

(Number all entries)

Rundlet-May House, Portsmouth, N.H.

8. SIGNIFICANCE, continued

⁴James L. Garvin, "Bradbury Johnson, Builder-Architect",
(unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1969), 175, 181/2.

⁵May, op. cit., 17-22, 33-35.

⁶May, op. cit., 21.

⁷May, op. cit., 33.

⁸Granville P. Conn, History of the New Hampshire Surgeons
in the War of Rebellion (Concord, N.H.: Ira C. Evans Co., 1906),
360.

⁹Ibid.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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DATE ENTERED	JUN 7 1976	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, Continued

10.2 UTM References

<u>ZONE</u>	<u>EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>
19	3 - 56 - 450	47 - 70 - 020