



ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 1**

The Council of the Society in 1968

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The 1977 Edition of Volume I

In preparing this edition of Volume I no attempt has been made to correct historical errors that may have been published in the original issues. One or two minor typographical errors have, however, been amended.

The most important additions are the illustrations and consequently the layout has been considerably changed from the 1968/69 volume. The sources and acknowledgements are given at the back of the volume.

The only omissions are the lists of members and the donations received.

VOLUME I

CONTENTS

Notes

From the Chairman of the Council	Page 2
Editor's Notes - Enigma Variations	Page 13
Thank You and Adieu	Page 29
Corps Museum Notes	Page 4, 20, 27, 37, 39
New Paintings Acquired by the Corps	Page 20
Obituary - Colonel G W M Grover OBE	Page 25

Articles

An Interesting History of a Pistol	Page 5
A Cry from the Heart	Page 6
Gathering Information	Page 23
Woolwich's Old Marines Barracks to be Demolished	Page 8
Dress of the Royal Marines 1832-34	Page 10, 28
The Shako Plate That Never Was	Page 12
General Sir Edward Nicolls KCB	Page 14
Miniature Marines	Page 16
Royal Marines in the Boxer Rebellion	Page 18
Band of the Chatham Division RM	Page 21
The Horse Marines	Page 22
The Sepoy Marine Battalion	Page 24
Discipline in the Old Days	Page 26, 47
Crete, 1941	Page 30
Those Elusive Badges	Page 36
The Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot	Page 38
The Royal Marines and the Dockyards	Page 40
RMA Colour Sergeant's Badge of Rank	Page 43
The Royal Marine Artillery, 1804-1923	Page 44
Relics of Early Marine Occupation Found in Portsmouth	Page 47

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCILLIEUTENANT COLONEL EDWARD POTTS RM

As each second in time goes by, our every individual and corporate action and thought, be it trivial or momentous, becomes on the instant a matter of history, but very infrequently does awareness of this fact follow immediately to the individual or group concerned. The passage of a subsequent minute or hour rarely does anything to sharpen one's awareness of "history in the making", and thereafter true recollection of precisely what did happen, or what one thought soon becomes difficult. Very fortunately, much of little consequence can be lost from memory without lasting damage to posterity.

Days and weeks after an event, recollection of the exact details thereof can become fragmented in an individual memory - retaining only that which one wants to recall perhaps - and, as month succeeds month and memories are related to others, the gaps between these fragments of truth may even be bridged by figments of imagination, if only to present a complete story to following generations! It is hardly surprising therefore that years and centuries later, students of pure history - as opposed to folklore - find difficulty in establishing the exact truth of the past, particularly if detailed and accurate contemporary record has not been made.

There have been in the past some such students who have applied their research particularly to the history of the Royal Marines - one recalls Gillespie, Edye, Field and Blumberg - and thereafter placed on permanent record the results of their labours. Their published works became reference books for the Corps itself, as well as for those not in the Corps but keenly interested in this particular aspect of military record. Not surprisingly, these books have been the basis of Corps history taught to succeeding generations entering the Marines; the story of an evolving and glorious past as an example to be emulated in the future. However, as the years covered by these several volumes became more and more remote from the years in which the latest serving marines found themselves, it is again not surprising that these younger generations in the Corps began to look upon the books and their contents as very dusty and having diminishing relevance in this second half of the 20th century.

Tragedy lies in the fact that, in this age of tremendous advance in the various means of communication, those who are fortunate to have a deep regard for history (made and in the making) have largely failed to convince these younger generations that their particular experiences and actions are another chapter in the continuing record of their Corps, inexorably linked to the past. Perhaps it was ever thus.

It does seem, however, that lessons learned at one's mother's knee - in the case of the new recruit or young officer from the squad or batch instructor - once were accepted and assimilated more completely even if with little challenge. The continued use of this particular channel of communication has tended to tie regimental history within the Corps to basic discipline and to the drill specialist branch which, however creditably it has cherished the fund of such knowledge, is now unfortunately largely linked with minor punishment as soon as basic training has been completed, since ceremonial drill plays so much less part in the daily life of the Corps. Today the young man who presents himself for service in the Corps is blessed with a far wider general outlook than his forebears of an age ago, and he also has a much more critical approach. Surely this calls for close liaison between scholarship in the field of regimental history and the several means now available for the dissemination of this knowledge if the current apathy is to be countered.

Fortunately, throughout this period of declining general interest in the past and increasing clamour for the demanding immediacy of the present day, there has remained, both within and without the serving Corps, a genuine body of students concerned with Royal Marines historical matters. In addition, official support for gathering together valuable relics and documents of the past and for maintaining adequate contemporary records has been evident since World War II in the establishment of a Corps Museum and in the appointment of a Corps Historian. These two actions gave encouragement to students within the Corps and promoted ideas amongst them for the formation of an historical society, devoted particularly to Royal Marines matters.

When first proposals were made in 1964 for a private society to enable service ranks and others with no Corps connection except their genuine interest in its history to work together in this field, it was considered necessary to obtain official recognition from the parent Corps, as well as approval in the use of Royal Marines in the title of the society. The venture was given approval late in 1967.

During this three year gestation period, Graham Hennessey one-time and second Corps Historian, provided the impetus for persuading official circles to recognise the idea of a society like ours and carried out the initial work of preparing a draft constitution. After circularisation of those likely to be interested in the formation of such a body, the inaugural meeting of the Royal Marines Historical Society was held in the Old Admiralty Building on 2 April 1968; thirty-seven regulation paces away from the original sculpture of Admiral Lord Nelson, one-time Colonel of Marines, used in the preparation of his column in Trafalgar Square.

Nine provisional members, out of thirty-three who had declared interest, were present, five more having sent apologies for absence. Far from feeling any regret at these small numbers it was seen as an opportunity to limit the size of the Society for the first few months, until a clear policy had been evolved by the founder members. The list of potential members, all of whom were subsequently admitted to membership by the Council of the Society, represented a wide cross-section of serving and ex-serving members of the Royal Marines, civilian gentlemen recognised in military historical circles and other ladies and gentlemen having a genuine interest in history of the Corps from all parts of the United Kingdom and from abroad.

The Council, nominated at that inaugural meeting of the Society, has held three meetings since its formation. It has considered and approved applications for membership; prepared a final draft of the constitution, to be offered for ratification at the first Annual General Meeting; considered proposals and ideas submitted by members; formulated an editorial policy for the periodic newsletters, of which this is the first; and conducted, in conjunction with the officers of the Society, the necessary business to establish the pattern of operation. Council have also accepted the designs for the cover of this newsletter and for the Society's notepaper, both of which they hope will appeal to you. Finally, they have produced much of the copy from which this edition has been produced.

There are several ideas in hand for articles in subsequent newsletters and members of the Council are anxious to set an example in researching and publishing works about the history of the Royal Marines. But it is upon the efforts of the whole Society that the future success of the newsletter will depend. So please, do send your contributions and ideas to the Editor.

In conclusion it might be of benefit to state here the five aims of the Society, toward the achievement of which we should all now devote our efforts:

1. To encourage research into the history, uniforms, traditions and other aspects of Corps history.
2. To provide a means of communication between persons interested in the history of the Royal Marines.
3. To stimulate an interest within the serving Corps in the history and development of all activities of the Royal Marines.
4. To assist in the compilation of historical records in the Historical Reference Library of the Corps Museum, by the provision of study papers, reports and copies of portraits, prints, uniforms and other material.
5. To provide a means of informing the Curator of the Museum of any antiquities of interest to the Corps which may become available, so that they may be acquired for the Museum.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS BY THE CORPS MUSEUM

Pictures

Engraving of Lord Duncan's Victory and Admiral De Winter's resignation onboard the Venerable, October 11th 1797 by Orme.

Print - Capture of Ting Hai - Chusan.

Wet of 8 original watercolours of RM uniforms by Charles Stadden.

Uniforms

Uniforms of the late General Sir Alan Bourne KCB DSO MVO.

Uniforms of the late General E C Weston CB.

Uniforms of the late Major General R F Cornwall CB CBE.

Miscellaneous

Last Union Flag flown in Aden under British occupation.

Royal Marine Artillery side drum 1923.

Sergeant H P Playford

AN INTERESTING HISTORY OF A PISTOL

BY

SERGEANT H P PLAYFORD

In November 1945, His Excellency Colonel The Rt Hon Leslie Wilson GCSI GCMG GCIE DSO Royal Marines, Governor of Queensland, wrote to the President of the Officers' Mess, Eastney Barracks, to inform him that a Mr M G C Pasco, a descendant of Rear Admiral John Pasco, Flag Lieutenant onboard HMS VICTORY at Trafalgar, wished to present to the Royal Marines a pocket pistol which he inherited, having been originally the property of Captain Adair Royal Marines, killed onboard HMS VICTORY at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The pistol had been found in 1846 between the beams of the Marine Officer's cabin onboard HMS VICTORY by Lieutenant Elliot Royal Marines, who was at that time occupying the cabin. The stock crumbled to dust, so a new stock was made from HMS VICTORY oak and an inscribed plate of copper sheathing from HMS VICTORY was also added.

The pistol arrived at Eastney in 1946 and in his letter to the President of the Officers' Mess, Mr Pasco said that the pistol came to him from his late father, Commander Crawford A D Pasco. The idea of offering this relic in his old age had been prompted by the well-known interests in the famous Corps by the retiring Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson Royal Marines.

An extract from the Nautical Standard of October 1847, reporting the farewell dinner to Rear Admiral Pasco on relinquishing command of HMS VICTORY, states that the President presented Admiral Pasco with the pistol as a gift from Mr Elliot, the Lieutenant of Marines. Admiral Pasco immediately recognised the pistol as having belonged to his late shipmate, Captain Adair RM.

The pistol, in a glass fronted case, was displayed in the Hall of the Officers' Mess at Eastney, below a painting of the Earl of Sandwich, with two other interesting relics, a letter from Nelson giving instructions for Artillery Officers on the Bomb Ships to keep watch in the same manner as Naval Officers at sea and in harbour, and another letter dated 23 April 1802 from the Admiralty to the Major General Royal Marines Portsmouth, giving authority for the Royal Marines to occupy Fort Cumberland.

Later, a table was placed against the wall below the painting of the Earl of Sandwich obscuring these; they only came to light in 1965 when, in order to prepare a suitable place to hang the portrait of HM The Queen, purchased by the officers of the Corps to commemorate the Corps Tercentenary, the table and the painting of the Earl were removed.

Being considered of great historical value, the pistol and the framed letters mentioned above were transferred to the Corps Museum where they are still exhibited.

NOTE: Captain Charles Adair, killed at Trafalgar, was one of six members of the Adair family who for generations gave the Corps such distinguished and gallant service.

A CRY FROM THE HEART

BY

W E DAVEY

When the writer joined the Royal Marine Artillery during the First World War, he underwent the usual talks to develop esprit de corps. The first lecture was given by a Bombardier, a recalled pensioner of, apparently, great age, who for his sins had to look after a mixed bag of recruits until the next squad formed.

His talk went something like this:

"Right. Now we're going to talk about the history of the Corps. Pay attention and make some notes. Head the paper "Designation and motto of the Corps". Then miss a line and put "Royal Marine Artillery - Royal Marines Light Infantry". Up a bit, and now put down the motto of the Corps. That is "Gibraltar, Per Mare Per Terram", and if you can't spell it look on the board.

Right. Now the badge. The badge of the Royal Marines is the Globe surrounded by a laurel wreath, but we don't wear it because we are Artillery, and artillery regiments wear a flaming grenade. It also had other names, which you will pick up as you go along.

Now, as you may know, all regiments have battle honours which they wear on their Colours. We in the RMA don't have Colours - the Colours of Artillery are their guns. But the RMLI have them and they bear the badge of the regiment, but only one battle honour by name - Gibraltar - specially selected because the Corps defended the Rock against all attacks for a long time after we captured it in 1704.

In 1761 the Marines distinguished themselves at the battle of Belleisle, and for that we were awarded the laurel wreath.

King George the Fourth approved new Colours for the Corps in 1827 and said that the Globe had been selected as the most suitable badge because the Marines served wherever there was trouble, and anyway had far more battle honours than would fit on any flag. And so on ..."

In fairness it must be said that in due course we received a great deal more information, but still in the same stilted style and concerning important military events and milestones. In fact, just a lesson to be learned like any other, and quite devoid of human interest to make us realise that our predecessors were ordinary beings laughing, swearing and acting generally much like ourselves. By failure to bring the past to life in our minds, we entirely missed the fact that we ourselves were part of a continuing story, actually at that moment creating more history for our own successors.

Fortunately for us, historians such as Colonel Field have been more perceptive and, by delving deeply into odd corners, have assembled for us in everyday phrases and highly entertaining form in "Britain's Sea Soldiers", anecdotes of small incidents which, interspersed amongst the heavy stuff of history, bring the whole work to life in a graphic picture of the daily life of our predecessors in the Corps.

Conclusions can be drawn.

In these days of change, the possibilities of the future are brought to notice of the rank and file more by articles such as "Rethink" in the June 1968 Globe and Laurel than by any number of official pronouncements. The future of the Corps will, however, finally rely as much as it always did upon the performance of its members, once the Directing Staff has set the course, and their enthusiastic participation must of necessity be enhanced by the knowledge that their predecessors have always, through the centuries, been running into snags and coping in their stride. Realisation that they are themselves the current actors in the continuing story of the Corps must surely foster a determination to perform as well as, or better than, those earlier generations and a desire not to let the side down.

And so we come back to my theory - the real "Royal Marines Saga", the story that promotes a sense of belonging, that tells of problems and events, well understood by every member of the Corps from Marine to General, that makes the reader feel that he is right in there with them - in fact, the unbeatable esprit de corps - is not the story of great events, though these must have their place, but the story of the everyday.

Again the Globe and Laurel steps in. Included from time to time, as for instance in June 1968, page 140, are low-level history items well calculated to bring the past to life and even possibly to expand Colonel Field's conception. But to achieve full effectiveness, all the scattered bits and pieces and highlights and the everyday about the Corps since the end of General Blumberg's third volume of "Britain's Sea Soldiers" in 1919 must be assembled, sifted and collated into a fourth or even fifth volume.

Not an easy task this, to sift and integrate the writings of fifty years including another World War, but the longer it waits the harder it gets. The writer has made certain proposals to the Council of the Royal Marines Historical Society as to the possibility of those members of the Society who are able and willing to do so taking on the task of collecting and collating anecdotes, items of interest and general information about one particular unit of the Corps or aspect of Corps life, to be available later as a basis for further volumes of "Britain's Sea Soldiers".

Obviously when that stage has been reached there will be financial problems, but three volumes have already been produced and who would dare to admit that the genius of our predecessors in that age-old Marines pastime called "Getting Blood out of a Stone" was greater than ours?

Adverting to the initial task of collecting and sorting information, some advantage would naturally accrue if the member undertaking a particular field of research is already familiar with it, and on that basis the writer is attempting to compile the story of that much neglected branch of the Corps, the Royal Marine Police, from its inception after the First World War, to its demise after the Second, and would be grateful if any member, or for that matter anyone else, having any material of interest concerning the RM Police would send it to me at

24 Felix Road
GOSPORT
Hants PO12 4QZ

WOOLWICH'S OLD MARINES BARRACKS TO BE DEMOLISHED

BY

G H HENNESSY

Although all Royal Marines regard the 28th October 1664 as the birthday of the Corps, since this was the date on which the Admiral's Regiment, the first Marine Corps, was formed, the Corps as it exists today was not in fact raised until 1755. Then, fifty independent companies were recruited and quartered at the Naval ports of Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.

There were no barracks for the Marines, who were billeted in inns and houses in the towns. But in 1764, the Admiralty ordered that the Marines were to take over the responsibility of guarding the Naval Dockyards and it was from about this time that it was decided to provide permanent accommodation for the officers and men.

Portsmouth Division occupied Clarence Barracks in 1765 and moved to Forton Barracks in Gosport in 1848. Chatham Division started to occupy their Barracks in 1779 and the Plymouth Marines moved into their new Barracks in 1783. Both Clarence Barracks and Chatham Barracks have been demolished. Forton Barracks has been a Royal Navy training establishment since the Marines left it in 1923, and it is now likely to be closed as a result of the latest reductions in the Forces. Plymouth Barracks has recently been renovated and will perhaps remain for a good number of years yet.

There is another old Marine Barracks still standing at the time of writing but due to be demolished at any moment. This is the old Woolwich Barracks which was the best accommodation built for the Marines until Eastney Barracks was built for the Royal Marine Artillery in 1862.

In 1805 the Admiralty decided to establish the Woolwich or Fourth Division "not only for supplying promptly Detachments for HM Ships and vessels fitting in the River Thames, but also for affording security to HM Dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford".

At first, the Marines had a floating barracks, the Dover, but the ship was burned in 1806 and the Division was next housed in Whitby's Brewery. Additional buildings were erected in the vicinity but in 1846 most of the old Brewery was pulled down and a splendid new barracks built on the site.

In the Illustrated London News of 22nd January 1848 appeared an impressive picture of the new Barracks and an article which included the following:

"This extensive pile of buildings has been designed by Mr J T Crew, in conjunction with Sir W Denisen, now Governor of Van Dieman's Land. These new barracks have cost £100,000, they will accommodate 1150 men (officers included), with every convenience for cleanliness and comfort. A novel feature in the plan is that a kitchen or mess is appropriated for every 40 men, apart from their sleeping rooms, an advantage which is not possessed by any other barracks in the Kingdom."

The contractors were Messrs Rigby of Westminster and they included in the construction a novel form of ducted warm-air heating. Running the whole length of the building was a tunnel 25 feet in sectional area into which warm air was forced, after passing through metal chambers, heated by hot water. From the tunnel a flue led into each room and there was an exit flue for the "foul" air near the ceiling.

Woolwich Division was known in the Corps as the "Court Division", as it was so close to London, and no doubt the officers spent a lot of time in town. On return to Woolwich they could relax in the Turkish Bath which Mr Crew had thoughtfully included in his designs.



*From an old print published
in 1846*

In 1869 the Admiralty ordered a reduction of the Corps and it was announced that the Woolwich Division was to be abolished. The way in which the barracks was closed caused a considerable amount of resentment among all ranks. Men were dismissed by being marched out of the gates and left to find another job. Several hundreds in uniform paraded in front of the Admiralty in London, with sandwich-boards, drawing attention to their plight. Surplus officers were placed on half-pay.

The Marine Barracks was sold to the Army and became known as Cambridge Barracks. It was occupied first by the infantry but eventually became one of the several Royal Artillery establishments in Woolwich.

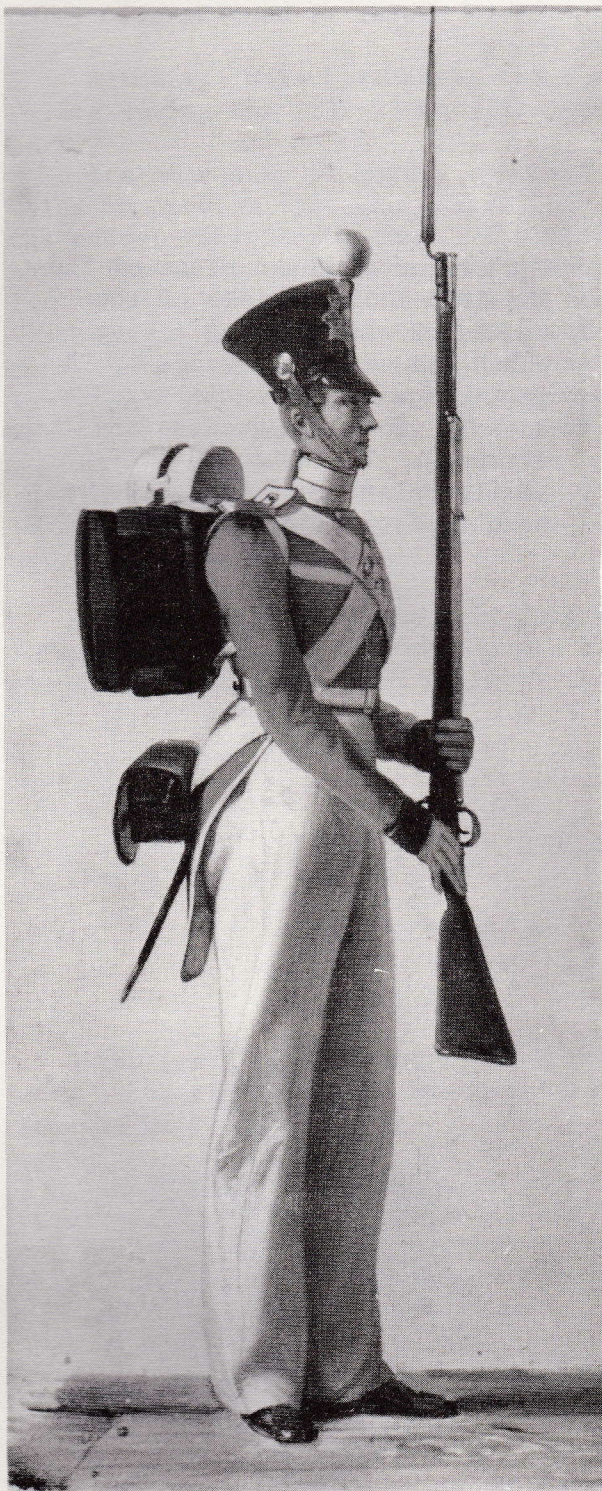
DRESS OF THE ROYAL MARINES 1832-34

BY

RUSSELL CAMMAGE



Captain G E Balchild RM c 1832
from the painting by A J DUBOIS-DRAHONET (1791-1834)



*Private Clements c 1832
from the painting by
A J Dubois Drahonet
(1791-1834)*

OFFICER

SHAKO Black, gilt badge and chin scales. White plume.

COATEE Scarlet, dark blue cuffs, and just showing between lace on collar. White turnbacks. Gold lace on collar, slash on cuffs, epaulettes, skirt pockets, and embroidered globe and laurel motif on the turn-back join. Gilt buttons.

SASH Crimsom and tied over sword shoulder belt.

SWORD Steel, gilt back piece and bow with gold wire on black fish skin grip. Scabbard brass or gilt. Sword knot gold cord. White buckskin shoulder belt with gilt breast plate.

TROUSERS White, black boots and white gloves were worn.

PRIVATE

The shako was similar to the officer's with brass instead of gilt and a cotton tuft instead of a plume.

The coatee a red or scarlet with blue cuffs but no slash. The lace was white cotton. The bayonet and cartouche box were carried on white crossbelts, and the valise with canteen by white straps over the shoulder and a connecting strap across the chest. The trousers white.

I should be extremely grateful if any member could fill in the gaps in the description of the uniform of this period. Also when were white trousers worn?

What were the shoulder scales for the private and sergeant made of?

What motif did the officer's breast plate bear?

THE SHAKO PLATE THAT NEVER WAS

BY

A E BOWELL



The star type shako plate of the RMA 1855-1861 consists of the crown and star forming a base to which the separate pieces of the garter and motto, laurel wreath, anchor, globe and grenade are attached. The RMLI had a similar plate, but with a bugle horn replacing the grenade.

This plate is said to have been introduced about this time also, but about this little is known. The design differs in being much simplified, having a bugle horn in place of the globe and omitting the laurel wreath. May it have been a proposed design which was never worn? I would welcome any information helping to clarify this plate.



ENIGMA VARIATIONS

BY

THE EDITOR

Recently I was talking to a psychologist about the number of people today who seem to have what appear to be insurmountable problems and who, faced with these, give in, or do something completely out of character, in order to escape the need to attempt to deal with them. The great increase in people suffering from breakdowns or who commit suicide are typical of those who give up in the face of problems which they find themselves unable to cope with. While the large number of nervous disorders, causing a disruption of their personality traits, exemplify the escape through character reversal.

The psychologist's answer was simple; he averred that all problems that caused worry could be dealt with, and if they could not be remedied then it was not worth worrying, as no amount of worry would improve the situation. He put it like this: Every problem can be divided into four questions

1. What is the problem?
2. What is causing it?
3. What can I do about it?
4. Will my intervention improve the overall situation?

As Editor I have a problem; as I see it, the problem is that I have not enough copy to make up a Newsletter. So the problem is as follows

1. Not enough copy to make up Newsletter.
2. This is caused by members not writing copy about things they know about or are interested in.
3. All I can do to change this is to bring it to your notice and hope it will encourage everyone to write something. It need not be long, just something in which you are interested; if you find it interesting there will be others also who will find it interesting. Subjects can be things you have yourself experienced, things you know about. For instance, several thousand marines were left as a rearguard on Crete, let us hear from some of those men. There are hundreds of other incidents, let us have some factual accounts. Or if you are interested in uniforms, buttons, badges or equipment, in bands, famous leaders or famous marines, there are a host of things to be written about, and there is only you to write them.
4. Whether the overall situation will be improved if I receive a mass of correspondence on all matters relating to Royal Marines I do not know. But my job as Editor will be possible instead of, as at present, when I have to write long blurbs like this in order to fill space.

A CORPS PERSONALITY - GENERAL SIR EDWARD NICOLLS KCB

BY

PETER TILBURY

Edward Nicolls, otherwise known as "Fighting" Nicolls, could with good reason have claimed to be the most distinguished officer ever to have served in the Corps. He entered the Marine Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant on 24 March 1795 and was promoted General on full pay on 28 November 1854, having been on the active list for the greater part of his service. General Nicolls, or 1st Lieutenant as he then was, incurred the expense of changing his uniform facings from white to blue on the occasion of the Corps becoming the Royal Marines in 1802. He also observed the introduction of artillery companies to the Corps, 1804, and at least four major changes of uniform pattern during his service, together with numerous changes in weapons, training, establishments, conditions of service and rates of pay. The General's record of promotion up to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel is considered rapid and took place during a period when promotion, especially in the Corps, was notoriously slow. He was promoted as follows: 1st Lieutenant 21.1.1797, Captain 25.7.1805, Major 8.8.1810, Lieutenant Colonel 12.8.1819, Colonel 10.1.1837, Major General 9.11.1846, Lieutenant General 20.6.1854 and General 28.11.1854.

General Nicolls served during the reigns of four British monarchs and his duties took him to many parts of the globe. He served in many capacities and in many types of vessel, and observed the transition from sail to steam propulsion in ships of the Royal Navy. He was present in well over 100 actions, most of these taking place during the Napoleonic period, and was awarded presentation swords on two occasions by Lloyd's Patriotic Fund. In December 1815 he was awarded a pension of £250 for all his wounds although still on the active list. Retirement on full pay came on 15 May 1835 and he was awarded a Good Service pension of £150 per annum on 30 June 1842. He was made a KCB in 1855.

It is acknowledged that General Nicolls combatant services constitute a record, not only in the Royal Marines but in the British service generally, having been in action on no less than 107 occasions. He had during his service his left leg broken, his right leg severely sounded, was shot through the body and right arm, was sabred in the head, bayoneted in the chest and during his 107th engagement lost the sight of an eye.

"Fighting" Nicolls principal entitlements to this soubriquet are as follows. In 1803 he captured two vessels of an enemy convoy being allowed the use of a ship's boat and 12 men for this purpose. In the same year he was awarded his first presentation sword for cutting out the French vessel "Albion" from under the guns of Monte Christi. He was present at the storming of Fort Piscadero at the siege of Curacoa in 1804. At the forcing of the Dardanelles by Duckworth's squadron in 1807 he personally captured the Turkish Commodore's flag, stormed a redoubt and spiked the guns of a battery at Point Pesquies. In 1808 he was responsible for the capture of the Italian gunboat "Volpe", using a single boat's crew. In 1809 he took part in the blockade of Corfu, capturing two gunboats off the island, and in the same year he was in the expedition to Egypt. In 1809 he commanded the Royal Marine Forces that captured the island of Anholt from the Danes and was subsequently made governor of the island. He was for a time ADC to Prince Bernadotte of Sweden. In the American War of 1812 he served with the 3rd Battalion in America and also raised and commanded a large force of American Indians. At the head of these irregulars he was three times wounded at

the bombardment of Fort Bowyer in 1815. He remained with his Indians for a considerable time, causing a great deal of disruption to the enemy's lines of communication. He was also present at the operations before New Orleans in 1815. It was in this year that he was awarded his second presentation sword, principally for his Dardanelles and Corfu exploits.

In spite of his exceptional record of service it cannot be said that "Fighting" Nicolls received other than very moderate rewards for his services and this at a time when prize money, parliamentary pensions and the like often made rich men of Navy and Army officers alike. Even the award of his KCB appears to be the result of long-established precedent, rather than individual recognition of his most gallant and distinguished services to his country.



*"Fighting" Nicolls boarding
the ALBION*

General Nicolls was the son of Jonathan Nicolls, Surveyor of Excise at Coleraine, and was born at Coleraine in 1779. He was educated at the local Grammar School and at the Royal Park Academy Greenwich.

He was the eldest of six brothers, all of whom died in the public service, as also did two of the General's own sons. After his retirement from the Corps the General was Governor of Ascension Island for five years and then took command of the new settlement on the island of Fernando Po where he did much to suppress the slave trade.

General Nicolls lived to see his Corps become the Royal Marines Light Infantry (1862), he died in February 1865 aged 85 at Blackheath.

MINIATURE MARINES

BY

J B CORRIGAN AND G S GREENLAND

The Royal Marines sergeant held the longboat tiller firmly, his eyes searching hard through the mist for the beach. The red-coated marines rowed firmly and silently. They could see the great wooden ship they had left, its now naked masts disappearing like grey spectres into the mist. On either side of them they could hear the oars of the other boats gently breaking the water. It was unnervingly quiet, but that feeling of tense exhilaration before a battle was running high among the men as they neared the French coast.

There was no sound from the other party that had landed a mile back up the coast. The beach suddenly appeared about 25 yards away. "Easy men", the sergeant whispered, "nearly there".

All the boats must have beached together for no sooner had the sergeant and his men grabbed their muskets and left the boat than they were joined by the other marines. The mist was still heavy and with a bit of luck it would hold out for another hour. If everything went smoothly they would be able to destroy the signal tower and be back onboard without being seen. Crouching low, they made their way up the beach to where the road should be. The sergeant froze and his men dropped to their knees in the sand.

Horses! Only cavalry made that much noise. The French must have a patrol out on the road. The marines knew that they had to reach the signal tower before the alarm was raised and reinforcements could be sent. At that moment the sound of musket fire came through the mist. The other landing party must have run into trouble.

What should they do?

This problem facing a party of 1805 Royal Marines happened only a few weeks ago in a community hall on Hayling Island. An exact replica of the coastal scene was laid out on a table and, using model soldiers, the theory and practice of this kind of raid was carried out. This is wargaming, a kind of sophisticated game of chess that has gained new impetus in this country, but although wargaming itself is immensely absorbing, it is the model soldiers that capture the interest of the military historian.

These authentic little models (they used to be called toy soldiers) are cast in a mixture of tin and lead and can be bought plain or painted. Most wargamers and collectors prefer to paint their own, paying much less for an unpainted model and following the adequate painting instructions that come with them.

The value of these models to historians becomes clear when one thinks in terms of dioramas or displays. Actual situations of the past spring to life, positions and movements can be studied in detail with far greater perception and understanding. Not only can the collector gain much pride from his models, there is also scope for considerable financial rewards. The recent auction of toy soldiers at Sothebys in London will testify to this.

There are several firms that cast these models and produce excellent catalogues too. Among them are

Hinton Hunt Figures
Rowsley
River Road
TAPLOW
Bucks

Rose Model Soldiers
Russel Gamage MSIA
45 Sundorne Road
Charlton
LONDON SE7

Norman Newton
PO Box 4QA
49 Hertford Street
LONDON W1

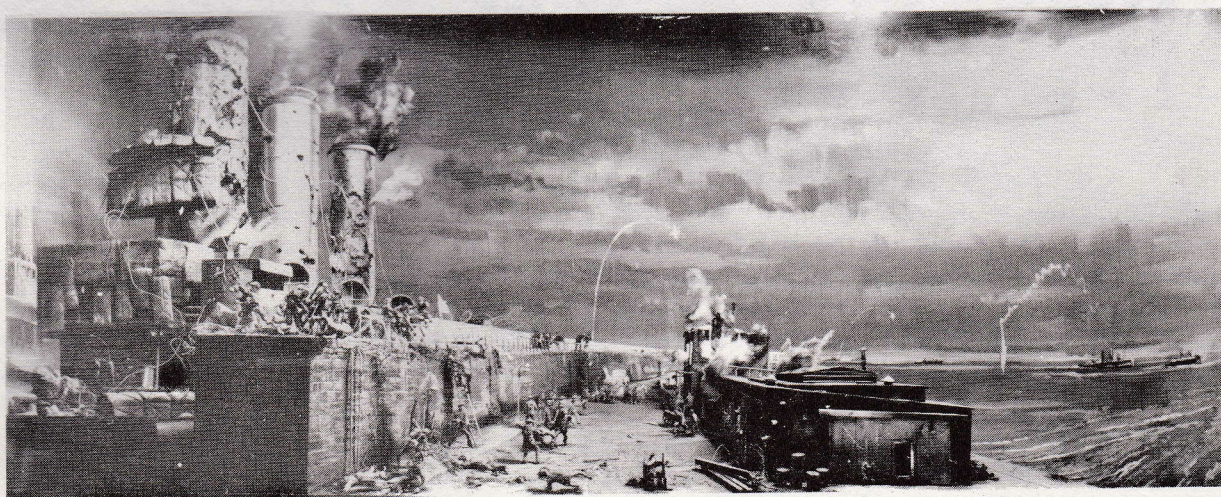
These three firms can supply a variety of models from any period in military history.

Normally wargamers use one inch (20 mm) tall men, but most firms cast models up to two and a half inches (54 mm) tall. The price increases with size, of course. A 20 mm figure on foot will usually cost around 1/10d each and a mounted figure 3/6d. The 30 mm range cost about 2/6d and 7/6d respectively. The 54 mm, 13/- and 30/-. A good approximation of the cost for painted models is to treble these basic costs.

As any hobbyist can tell you, the deeper his interest in the subject the more knowledgeable he becomes. Collecting and painting these miniature military pieces is no exception to the rule. Just by thumbing through books of uniforms in search of the colour of a particular tunic or plume, the collector can acquire a vast store of information, invaluable to him as a military historian.

Painting model soldiers takes far more patience and care than it does money. Paints are relatively cheap. Reeves supply a first class "Polymer Series" at three shillings a tube that will last, literally, for years. A set of half-a-dozen good sable paintbrushes between size 000 and 3 is an essential investment if pleasing results are wanted. It only requires an ordinary matt white undercoat to complete the kit, all of which should be obtainable at any good art shop.

When you have enough models for a diorama or demonstration, be it a section attack or the battle of Waterloo, the next step is to build the scenery. If this article draws enough interest (John Corrigan, 25 Laburnum Grove, Hayling Island, Hants, Tel 4697, will be pleased to talk or write to anybody who is interested) a more detailed and informative article will be published in the near future.



The "Zeebrugge" diorama in the Museum

ROYAL MARINES IN THE BOXER REBELLION

BY

R F A NIGHTINGALE

An extract from the "Cambridge Daily News" of Tuesday 4 March 1952 recalling the Boxer Rebellion which said:

"My note last week about the thinning ranks of the Boer War veterans has aroused memories of a concurrent event which had world-wide repercussions - the Boxer Rebellion.

Writing from 118 Tenison Road, ex-RSM Challess, employing penmanship which belies his 82 years, asks if anyone else living in Cambridge took part in this operation. "At that time", he says, "I was serving on the battleship Barfleur, second flagship, our commander being the late Admiral of the Fleet Lord Beatty who was specially promoted for his services during the Dongola Expedition and thereby was the youngest of that rank in the Navy.



*Royal Marines marching through Tientsin
1900*

I was acting Sergeant Major of the battalion of Royal Marines, formed from the Fleet, and landed with other naval ratings via Peiho river, as the railway was torn up. With the magnificent help of 1,800 Russians, we held the European quarter and station of Tientsin for some two months, being eventually relieved by huge forces of Japanese, Americans, Germans, Russians, etc.



A 12 pdr Naval gun at Tientsin

Our first operation then was to relieve Admiral Seymour's column, who were driven back in their attempt to reach Pekin previously, and 20 days afterwards the very large force of all nationalities commenced the advance for the relief of Pekin, which was eventually accomplished. The crux of the whole war was undoubtedly at Tientsin, as the fall of this place would have stopped all relief efforts for Pekin, also the capture of the walled-in native quarter of Tientsin, 1,000,000 inhabitants, had to be effected before the advance there.

The hospital ship Maine and HMS TERRIBLE (Captain Percy Scott) had to be sent in the Tientsin relief from South Africa, bringing the famous 4.7 naval guns from Graspan. I think the Royal Marines engaged were the first of our forces to wear Khaki. We were to a large extent a deplorable looking battalion and had to beg or borrow 800 suits of American khaki which arrived in our relief from the Philippines; also in the relief were about 15,000 Indian troops including the famous Bengal Lancers."

The Most Valued Medal

Captain Longley was quoted last week as saying that the medal of which he is proudest is the DCM. Mr Challess does not agree. "The medal I most value", he declares, "is the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal." In the case of the Navy it has a financial value of 2d per day added to the pension for life, so it counts something, as I am also in my 82 year. All who get this medal can consider themselves lucky and I think Captain Longley will agree with me that few recipients really deserve it.

NEW PAINTINGS ACQUIRED BY THE CORPS

A number of valuable oil paintings have been purchased by, or presented to, the Corps in recent months. A brief description of those which may be of interest to members is given below.



Painting by David Shepherd of "Dhala Patrol" 45 Commando in Aden.

Painting of Lying in State of Sir Winston Churchill in Westminster Hall 1965, depicts Royal Marine officers on duty around the catafalque. This painting was hung in the Royal Academy exhibition of 1965 and was presented to the Corps by Mrs Mary Young of north London.

Painting by Walter Goldsmith of the Massed Bands of the Royal Marines on Horse Guards Parade for the birthday of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. Presented to the Depot RM by Lieutenant Colonel Sir F Vivian Dunn KCVO RM.

Painting of the Assault on Limbang by 'L' Company of 42 Commando RM during the Brunei Rebellion 12 December 1962, painted for the Corps by Terence Cuneo.

Painting of 40 Commando RM Trooping the Colour at the opening of Dieppe Barracks, Singapore, 1967, by John Caines.

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CORPS MUSEUM MEDAL COLLECTION

In addition to the set of medals of the late Captain J E Preston already mentioned, the Museum has acquired a number of valuable and interesting medals, a selection of which is given below:

Set of medals including the OBE and MC bequeathed to the Museum in the will of the late Lieutenant Colonel M Collett RM.

Insignia of Commander of the Bath)
St Jean D'Acre Silver Medal 1840) General John Tatton Browne
Naval General Service Medal 1848)

Set of medals of the late General Sir Alan Bourne including the KCB, DSO, MVO, Order of St Maurice and St Lazarus (Italy) and Silver Medal for Military Valour (Italy).

DSM and World War II medals of Sergeant A C Williams RM.

China Medal 1842 awarded to Colour Sergeant J A Smith RM Artillery.

CB and Greek Military Cross 1st Class of the late Major General E G Weston.

The Curator would appreciate any assistance members of the Society can give in acquiring medals for the Museum Collection, information relating to medals awarded to members of the Corps which become available, particularly those of a unique nature would be welcomed. Prompt notification is important in order that an early bid may be made for such medals.

BAND OF THE CHATHAM DIVISION RM

COMPILED FROM RECORDS IN THE CORPS MUSEUM

BY

H P PLAYFORD

The earliest record of the Band of the Chatham Division was in 1693 when a Warrant authorising its inception was made

"To Presse or cause to be impressed from time to time such numbers of Drums, Fifes and Hautboys as shall be necessary for His Majesty's Service, either by land or sea ... Whereby Captain William Prince, of their Majesty's First Maren Regiment ... to impress two Drummers and Hautboys for the service of his company in the aforesaid Regiment."

Mention is made of the Band in Divisional Orders in 1772 when Thomas Howard was appointed to act "with the authority of a Sergeant over the Band of Musick". The Band was in 1773 sent onboard the ORPHEUS at Sheerness, in order to be carried to Spithead, "there being occasion for it when the King reviews His Fleet assembled there". The Band at that time was under the care of Acting Sergeant Major Clements.

The complement was in 1815 laid down to be: one Band Sergeant and one Band Corporal, twenty Drummers. The Master of the Band to be borne and payed as a Sergeant, a second clarionet as a Corporal and the remainder as drummers, and the whole of these employed in the Band are to be included in the twenty-two.



This complement was revised in 1830 and in 1842 the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty directed that the Officers were to annually contribute one day's pay towards the upkeep of their Band.

In 1901 the Band was selected to accompany HRH The Duke and Duchess of York on their tour in the OPHIR. After their tour they were given the distinction of wearing the York Rose on their headdress.

The Band spent six weeks with the Royal Naval Division in France in 1916.

THE HORSE MARINES

Who, or what, are Horse Marines?

The Observer of Sunday 30 October 1953 produced an assortment of letters and readers' views on this subject and the replies were both instructive and amusing.

One correspondent wrote: "Up to forty years ago, the Horse Marines were a familiar sight and sound, clop-clopping along through the streets in the early mornings from their stables to the wharves with clinking drinking buckets and sack of fodder".

A gentleman from Sussex wrote: "The Horse Marines have existed from time immemorial in the capacity of Honorary Horsed Militia attached to the Cinque Ports Defence Units based on Hastings, and were embarked periodically in times of emergency. They have never been disbanded and must now be attached to the 5th Cinque Ports Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment".

From Norwich came this historical fact: "The 17th Lancers were known as the Horse Marines on account of their service onboard HMS HERMIONE in the West Indies".

On the other hand, the folk of Devon say: "In the days of my youth I used to hear the term 'Horse Marine' applied to a big, mannish type of woman, "a reg'lar gurt Horse Marine 'er be" was the usual phrase".

A better, though less likely, report came from an old seaman: "During 1910-1912 I was shipmates with a Horse Marine in a battleship. On one occasion I saw his kit laid out for inspection and it contained spurs, bit, and all kinds of leather gear for a horse's equipment".

Well, to satisfy curiosity on this point, the opportunity was taken to find out what Colonel Field wrote in Britain's Sea Soldiers on the subject, and we discovered that he had written quite a lot.

The Horse Marines were not, as many people think, a mythical or fictitious body of troops, for in the reign of Charles II the Life Guards supplied a detachment of two hundred for duties afloat. The 17th Lancers, as our friend from Norwich noted, were embarked on HMS HERMIONE in 1795 and known at that period as Horse Marines.

There are many instances of marines serving in a mounted capacity. During the conquest of Java in 1811 a force of one hundred and fifty marines and fifty seamen made a forced march to Karang Sabang and a relay of horses was prepared for them half way.

Old records say of the Crimean War of 1854 "the only marines landed for duty ashore were landed at Eupatoria and placed under the command of Captain Brock who converted the said marines into Horse Marines for the purpose of decoying the Cossacks under his guns".

In the early sixties a detachment of marines from HMS CHALLENGER was landed at St Vincent in the West Indies. It was said of them that "these Horse Marines proved themselves a very efficient and useful force".

Other references to "Horse Marines" in the pages of Britain's Sea Soldiers are legion. We find them referred to in the Egyptian War of 1882, at Suakin two years later, and even as recently as 1913 in British Honduras.

In the London Gazette of 15 March 1831 we find the following unusual notation: "15th King's Hussars. 2/Lieutenant Dennis Browne from half pay Royal Marines to be Riding Master and Cornet".

Many Royal Marine Officers have served during their lives in mounted units, most notably Major General Townshend, well known in 1895 as the Defender of Chitral.

Before closing we must not forget the dark skinned Senussi warriors who, cantering around their desert homelands, wore on their saddles and bridles the badge of the "Globe and Laurel". Here is the subject matter for yet another discussion: how did the Senussi come by the Corps crest as an ornament for their riding equipment?

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GATHERING INFORMATION

BY

W E DAVEY

Readers of "A cry from the heart" in the first issue of this Newsletter may remember the writer is trying to gather information from the scattered remnants of a long defunct part of the Corps, the RM Police. It is early days, up to 1939, that are so difficult to reconstruct, as anyone who served in the Force as far back as 1925 will now be at least 83 years old there will no doubt be problems! Such a little time ago to some of us, yet the irreplaceable "eye witness" stories have already gone almost beyond recall. How very true are the Chairman's remarks in his opening Newsletter article. One wonders if there is any way in which we could encourage members of the serving Corps to send in more news - no doubt the reports of activities from HM ships in the Globe and Laurel will contain a wealth of information for future researchers who are able to have access to them, but even so, there are still many gaps.

This thought leads to a point well worth looking at. The Society has close contact with the Museum and the Corps Archivist is himself a member. Would not this mutual co-operation be still further strengthened by offering ex-officio membership of the Society to the Editor of the Globe and Laurel? His reaction is not known of course - probably he has more than enough to do already - but it is a sure thing that the Society would gain and what a mine of information would be available in the combined resources of all these organisations!

However, back to the drawing board. A letter is being sent to as many stalwarts of the early RM Police as can be traced seeking their help, and the results will be reported if and when there are any.

The value of the Newsletter as a distributor of information has already become clear - G H Hennessy in paragraph 2 of his article in No 1 Newsletter refers to the Marines and the Dockyards in 1764. This was something the writer did not know and has promptly been appropriated for the RM Police story.

THE SEPOY MARINE BATTALION

COMPILED BY

H P PLAYFORD

The 21st Bombay Native Infantry, the old Marine Battalion, are accorded the earliest official birthday of the Bombay Army dating from January 1777. It was at this time that the Marine Battalion was raised for "Marine Duties" in the East India Company's Navy. Within two years of its formation, detachments were landed at Tellicherry and fought against Sardar Khan.

Before the close of the eighteenth century detachments were employed in the suppression of piracy in the Persian Gulf, being specially commended for their services. What the Battalion did during the last century to assist in keeping order in the Gulf its records tell in clear and distinct terms.

It was in 1818 that the Marine Battalion became a regular regiment of the Bombay Army. In 1839 it shared in the capture of Aden, and in 1843 was in Sind repelling the attack on the Hyderabad Residency and afterwards taking part in the battle of Hyderabad. In 1853-54 the Battalion was well represented in the Second Burmese War and in 1857, under Sir James Outram, detachments were present at the taking of Mohammerah. The operations in Kathiawar were the last of any importance in which the Battalion took part, but one company was in Abyssinia with Sir Robert Napier in 1867-68.



A company was at Zeila in 1885, while two companies were despatched to Chahbar and Jask in 1898 to protect the telegraph. Of the Abyssinian campaign the records state "In that campaign, the Marine Battalion, with other native troops, invariably performed, under trying conditions of heat, cold, and occasional privation, their onerous duties with a cheerfulness and alacrity which won them the confidence and official recognition of their distinguished commander". In 1904, after 127 years, the Marine Battalion ceased to exist and became the 121st Pioneers. In its new aspect it became liable for general service and left Bombay for Poona.

In 1922 it again became a Bombay Regiment, the 10th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers (Marine Battalion) when regiments were renumbered.

The 21st Native Infantry had as a badge an anchor and laurel wreath with the motto signifying in Hindustani "Per Mare Per Terram", their uniform was red with emerald green facings. It is known that the 10th Battalion wore this badge up to November 1928 when regiments were again renumbered.

What may well be an interesting relic from the Sepoy Marine Battalion came to light in 1958 when a retired Royal Marines officer, in a letter to the Editor



*21st Bombay Native Infantry
1900*

of the "Globe and Laurel" from the west country, described a silver cup which he had seen in the church at Bathpool, in the parish of West Monkton, which was being used as a sacramental wine vessel, the interesting part of the story being that the cup bears the inscription "Per Mare Per Terram" and had been given to the church by a Miss Beadon.

The Beadons were a very old west country family with no known Corps connections, but Colonel G W M Grover OBE Retd stated that the Beadons, though not a Corps family, were very much an Indian Army one and suggested that the "Per Mare Per Terram" refers not to ourselves but to the Sepoy Marine Battalion of the Indian Army, and quoted Rudyard Kipling by saying "Some people will tell you that if there were but a single loaf of bread in all India, it would be divided equally between The Plowdens, The Trevors, The Beadons, and Rivett-Carnacs".

(Sources - The Globe and Laurel of October 1904, September 1949, December 1958)

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OBITUARY

COLONEL G W M GROVER OBE RETD

Members of the Society will be sorry to learn of the death of Colonel Grover which occurred on 28 February 1969 at the age of 73.

Colonel Grover was first commissioned in the Royal Marine Artillery in September 1914 and retired in June 1947. In recent years he was best known for his "Short History of the Royal Marines" which was first published in 1948 and ran to a second edition in 1959.

The sad loss is particularly felt by your Council, as they had unanimously agreed to seek your approval at the AGM for Colonel Grover to be asked whether he would accept the post of our first President.

LOOKING BACK

Discipline in the Old Days

In any old order books of corps of regiments possessing such records, there are to be found quite a number of unusual orders. In many cases they present us with a fairly good idea of the difference of the education and behaviour of our predecessors from those of the present time.

Here are some extracts from Chatham Division Orders 1756-1783 held in the Corps Museum:

In order that the Marine Musical Band may not be looked upon in the light of common fiddlers, and permitted at the desire of indifferent persons to play in that capacity at ordinary and common Balls and Concerts, it is directed that in future, the Band of any part of them shall not have liberty to play anywhere out of the barracks, but where the Divisional business calls upon them, or where government may take any concern.

Several applications having been made to the Earl of Sandwich for Second Lieutenancies in the Marines, for persons of an improper age, the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty are pleased to direct it to be publicly known at this Division, that no gentleman under the age of fifteen nor above twentyone years can by the rules laid down by their Lordships have a commission to serve in the Marine Corps as Second Lieutenants.

When any Recruit is brought to Quarters, and is rejected for being under size, but allowed to pass or be received into the Division as a Drummer, if such Drummer in the space of six months thereafter should grow to the then Divisional size or standard of a Marine soldier, the officer who recruited him is then to be allowed credit for the whole levy money given by the public at the time of such Drummers enlistment, deducting from the said levy money, the sum of his first Divisional expenses, when accepted of as a Drummer.

When any women employed on Divisional Service in the Marine Barracks, or any other building thereabouts belonging, becomes with child, she is not on any account or pretence whatsoever to be permitted to lodge or inhabit in any of the aforementioned places, after the fourth month of the pregnancy; The Quartermaster and Barrackmaster, are in their weekly visitations to be attentive as possible to the due execution of this order, to prevent the very great inconvenience that the neglect thereof may occasion.

The Commanding Officer cannot help being greatly surprised that the order of the 3rd inst. relative to the officers appearing always in Spatterdashes when the soldiers wear them should by some be so soon forgot; However those gentlemen who thus dally with orders may assume the name of officers, but they cannot be soldiers that do not obey all legal orders; and no other are ever issued, therefore the gentlemen may assure themselves that whoever for the future does not comply with what directions may be given relative to carrying the public service into execution will nominally be reprehended in public orders, the consequence of which stigma, must be of the most alarming nature to anyone who takes upon himself the profession of Arms.

It is with the utmost regret that the Commanding Officer too, too, often sees Marine Officers who are not immediately doing duty at Quarters, so far forgets the Military attachment as to appear on the public parade, and even on public occasions without being dressed as officers according to the Kings Order; It is therefore earnestly requested that in future for the decent observation of His Majesty's Order and

Directions, as for public example to unknowingly young officers, that no Marine Officer of whatsoever rank or degree shall appear on the Marine parade, or publickly in the Barracks without being dressed as an officer belonging to the Corps. And it is fervently desired and expected that by a due alteration of this so just and military request, every gentleman that is a Soldier will prevent the necessity at any time, for anything further being said or repeated on this subject.

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NEWS FROM THE CORPS MUSEUM

The new exhibition room on the ground floor of the Museum building is now open to the public. The room, originally used by the RM Cadets, has been completely renovated, a Library and Uniform Room has been completed at the north end. The exhibition room will eventually display all items dating from 1939 to the present time. Fluorescent lighting has been installed throughout the Museum building giving better illumination and eliminating shadow.

The Museum has recently been presented with the medals of the late Captain J E Preston who, as Sergeant Preston, was awarded the CGM on 14 July 1900 for capturing a Chinese banner during the defence of the Pekin Legation. The medals were kindly donated by his sons, Lieutenant Colonel A J (Jumbo) Preston of Royal Tournament fame and E C Preston Esq.

Colonel Field's original typescript copy of "Britain's Sea Soldiers" (bound in four volumes) together with another book of sketches dealing with the history of the submarine have been presented to the Museum by the RUSI.

The service of the Royal Marines in Siberia in 1918/19 is recalled by the presentation to the Museum of a Russian officer's sword, and the bell of the gunboat KENT by Major General T H Jameson CBE DSO. In addition General Jameson presented a narrative of "The Expedition to Siberia" which is shortly to be published in the "Naval Review", and a number of photographs taken during the operations.

Closely associated with the operations in Siberia for which he was awarded the DSM was the late Colour Sergeant J P Cridland DSM MSM, whose relatives have presented to the Museum a German Imperial Flag surrendered to Sergeant Cridland by the German Forces in West Africa during the 1914-18 war. Sergeant Cridland subsequently served in HMS SUFFOLK at Vladivostock in 1918 and was one of the crew of the Armoured Train employed on the Volga front. The guns from the Armoured Train were eventually mounted on two Russian ships which were named KENT and SUFFOLK, the Naval Force being commanded by Captain T H Jameson RMLI as General Jameson then was.

DRESS OF THE ROYAL MARINES 1832-34

BY

RUSSELL GAMMAGE

Thanks to Mr W A Inorburn, Keeper of the SUSM Edinburgh we now have the complete uniform details for this period.

The Officers' breastplate was rectangular with a crown surmounted by a lion in the centre, a scroll bearing "GIBRALTAR" above and a scroll bearing "PER MARE PER TERRAM" beneath.

The ORs' breastplate was of similar design but smaller and of lower relief.

The shoulder scales of Sergeants were of brass, while the men's were of blue cloth straps with white tape and a brass crescent.

The Royal Marines wore white trousers for summer, ie 1st May until the 30th September for home service and also for tropical wear until 1857 and probably after that. For winter, Oxford mixture trousers were worn.



*Officer's shoulder belt
plate*



*Officer's shako
plate*

THANK YOU AND ADIEU

The thank you is for the really splendid efforts of all who wrote the many articles which have appeared in this Newsletter and some which will be in hand for the next.

If only this trend continues, then the Editor will have no grounds for complaint on that score.

The farewell is as Editor of the Newsletter. I have enjoyed the work and found it interesting. Unfortunately, with the increasing demands of my business, I now find I cannot spend the time to do it justice. For this reason I have reluctantly informed the Committee that this will have to be my last issue as Editor.

We now need a new Editor! If you consider that you could take over the Editorship of the Newsletter, and are orientated so that you can attend committee meetings at the Old Admiralty Building in Whitehall, then please write to the Secretary

Mr G H Hennessy
1 Winchester Close
Kingston Hill
KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES
Surrey

who will be pleased to hear from you.

-oOo-

In making his final editorial short and to the point, our retiring Honorary Editor has provided opportunity for the Council to slip in a footnote to this opening page during the making up of the Newsletter.

It was with regret that the Council received Russell Gammage's resignation but the other more pressing calls on his time are well known. Nevertheless, the Council were, as will all members be, pleased to hear that he will still be available for consultation and advice in the future. For his contribution to the formative period of the Society and particularly for his work in preparing the first three Newsletters the Council record their thanks to him.

As it may be a few weeks before an aspiring scribe can take over the editorial duties, we have been fortunate in obtaining the assistance of Captain Peter Sandford RM Rtd on a short-term basis. He is the Secretary of the Royal Marines Association and his office is at RM Barracks Eastney. Whilst he is willing to help out at this stage he is anxious that his gesture should not dissuade any others from offering their services for this post.

CRETE 1941

BY

F B HUGHES

The following notes on the RM rearguard action at Crete, in May 1941, are a record of my father's part in the action. QMSI G Hughes - ex Chatham Division - served from 1908 and 1929. He was a GI and on call-up in 1939 was eventually transferred to MNBDO I as Battery Sergeant Major of 'S' Searchlight Battery. He was taken prisoner on Crete and was subsequently repatriated over two years later. There was an interesting incident at Gothenburg, Sweden, when Princess Louise (sister of Lord Louis Mountbatten) - then Crown Princess of Sweden - came to welcome the British repatriates. My father was the only RM member of the party when they were asked by a Staff Officer if any of them had served with Lord Louis. He caused some consternation by replying in the negative but adding that he had served under his father, Prince Louis. This had been aboard the latter's flagship - HMS AFRICA - just prior to the 1st World War. Princess Louise was visibly affected by this reference to her father who was well liked and respected in the Navy. Strangely enough I spotted the photograph of the Princess chatting to QMSI Hughes in an overseas edition of "The Daily Mail" in Madras (1943) where I was still serving with MNBDO I.

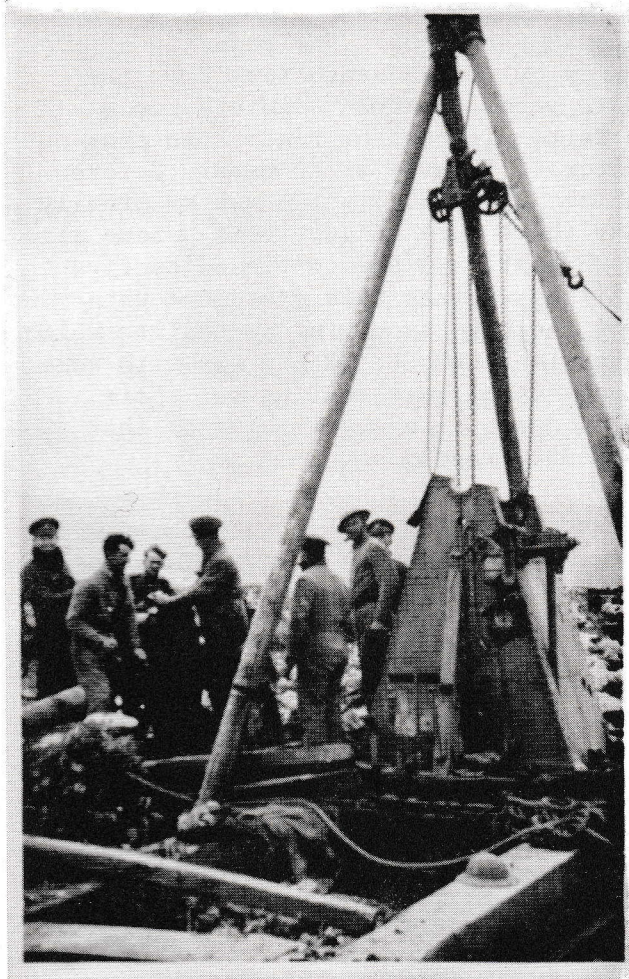
He made these notes shortly after his return to UK and handed them over to me some years ago. He is now living in retirement at Folkestone.

'S' Battery embarked from Alexandria on a Dutch ship, "The New Zealand", and arrived in Suda Bay, Crete, early in May 1941. We survived a strong Stuka attack just before we entered the bay and managed to "bag" one, much to the delight of the Dutch captain. (This was achieved by Bren gunners on the upper deck.) We disembarked in the early dawn.



SUDA BAY
Looking north to Akrotiri Peninsula

There were about 28,000 troops in Crete, most of whom had been brought back from Greece. Major General Weston RM took command of Suda Area when



*MNBD01 mounting guns
in Crete*

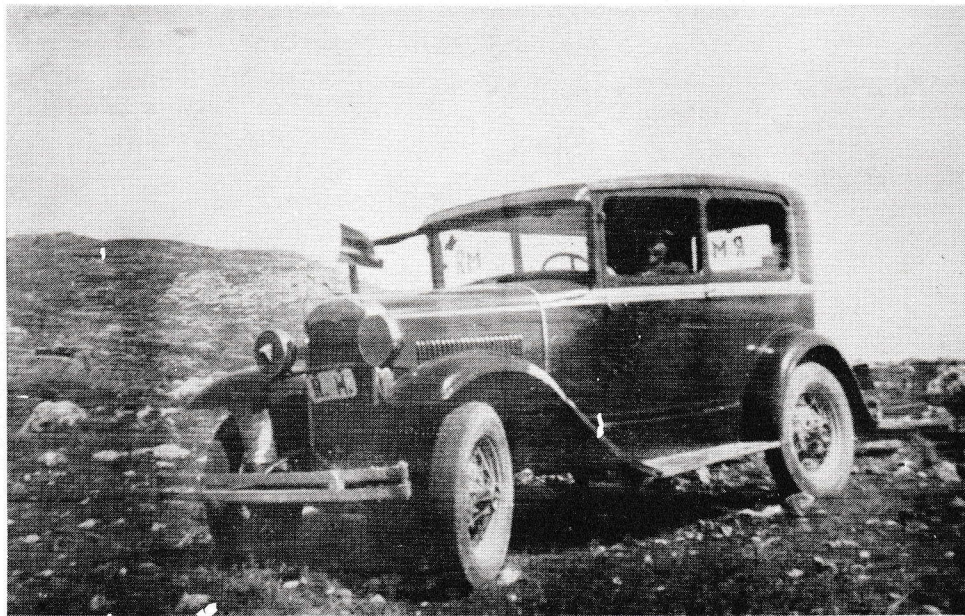
Major General Sir Bernard Freyberg VC was appointed C-in-C of all forces on the island. The area for accommodating troops was very limited: there was no camp equipment, water points were few. Transport was almost unobtainable. All arrangements had to be improvised in the face of the imminent invasion of the whole island. Australian and NZ troops formed the main body in Suda Area which included Maleme airfield and Canea - a town of some 1,600 people with a good harbour. The Naval Base and my own Battery HQ was at Suda Bay. Shortly before the invasion Major General Freyberg moved his HQ from Canea and the garrison was placed under the command of an RM officer. This was a composite force consisting of 4 officers and 300 men including Royal Marines, Australians and New Zealanders, the Staffordshire Regiment, RAOC, Corps of Military Police, survivors of Gun Crews from merchant ships and about 20 men serving detention.

The first German attack was on the harbour at Suda where several oil tankers and store ships were destroyed. The loss of one of the latter caused great

distress as amongst its provisions was a large cargo of bottled beer. We had a grandstand view of this bombing attack from our HQ situated on a height above the bay. HMS YORK, which had been abandoned following an attack from an Italian explosive motor boat, was still riding bravely with masts, rigging and guns all square. It was remarkable the number of bombs dropped around her. Jerry did not like to get too close. He was probably under the impression that she was still in commission and, consequently, his bomb aiming was rather erratic. The oil tankers blazed furiously for many days and nights.

In the meantime our Bofors had not been idle. At the most we had about 20 and they did excellent work. One young HO Marine - B V Jones - shot down a German aircraft by firing a Bren Gun from his shoulder. Later, the same lad made a lone bayonet charge against 7 Jerries armed with sub-machine guns who had landed close to his gun position. He was subsequently awarded the DCM.

The enemy were expected to attack from the south with airborne troops, then to land seaborne troops in the harbour. This appreciation of the situation proved correct. Units of the Mediterranean Fleet present did a wonderful job of work and practically annihilated the whole seaborne force. The majority of the latter were in barges which were skittled away by the accurate fire from our ships. So far as is known the only survivors were 14 German soldiers and a medical officer who reached the shore on a raft. It must be remembered that our ships were being continually attacked by aircraft in wave after wave. Before leaving this subject I must mention the gallant GLOUCESTER which was eventually sunk by aircraft. Out of 800 ship's company there were 85 survivors. Some time before she was sunk she had fired the last HE shell and she continued to fire all her smoke shells and practice. (You will appreciate this statement when you commission your first seagoing ship and note the huge supply of ammunition which is carried in the various magazines.) The gallant GLOUCESTER - I was with some of her survivors when we lived under very unpleasant surroundings but their yarns made one feel proud of the RN. She had done, like other ships of that Fleet, marvellous work in all parts of the Mediterranean.



*An MNBD0 "Staff Car"
in Crete*

So much for the seaborne attack - the first contact the Canea garrison had with the enemy was at 0830 hours on 20 May 1941 when a troop-carrying glider crash-landed on some rough ground outside the town. The garrison troops held their fire until the Germans climbed out then let them have it at short range killing the entire party of 9. Three more were found dead inside the glider - killed on impact. Salvaged from the latter were 11 Tommy guns, 1,000 rounds of ammo, 60 hand grenades, 2 wireless sets and some cameras. They were very

reckless with the gliders and appeared to disregard the suitability of the ground. The garrison dealt very successfully with survivors of the "bad" landings and only on three occasions did any penetrate into the town - the largest of these parties being only 3 strong. No - definitely - his gliders were a failure. They were more successful with the paratroops and give credit where it is due, the operation was nicely timed. What happened was that wave after wave of low-flying Stukas attacked with bombs and machine guns. By this time a good number of our Bofors had been knocked out after giving a good account of themselves. Following the Stukas came large troop-carrying aircraft which dropped the paratroops just where the strafing had been most active. The first bunch did not have a very happy landing but afterwards, in his usual ungentlemanly way, Jerry concentrated on the large General Hospital and, in spite of the Geneva Red Cross, it was bombed and machine-gunned. Paratroops were then dropped around the hospital. They managed to effect an entry, forcing the patients outside and then using them as a cover as they advanced. Luckily this little scheme soon came unstuck when they were suddenly ambushed by a few New Zealanders. Our lads dropped down (they included 2 of my Battery) and the dozen or so paratroopers retreated rapidly but were soon wiped out.

When paratroopers had secured a footing in a gun position, Captain L A Laxton RM made a determined attempt to get within grenade range but was wounded in the head, legs and back. Nevertheless he remained in observation and signalled back the number and position of the enemy, thereby enabling the gun position to be completely cleared. The RM Signal Coy, which was bivouacing in an olive grove outside Canea, also rendered valuable service by wiring for the AA Bty working by night.



*German Paratroops landing at Suda Bay
20th May 1941*

One of the duties of the Canea garrison was to keep open the road between Suda and Maleme - our only supply line. By day this road was subject to intense air attack and had to be constantly cleared of debris and unexploded bombs. At dusk the garrison reported on the condition of the road, met the supply convoy from Suda and escorted it to its destination. The enemy was very clever at infiltration and there was usually a machine gun post with fixed lines of fire along the road. To counter this a section of our troops went forward in two trucks to discover the enemy's position by drawing his fire so that others could work round and attack him from the flank. More and more paratroops continued to be dropped.

When we witnessed the first paras being dropped in the Maleme area (about 8 miles away) BHQ and one section were immediately despatched there in battle order. By now our other sections were dispersed on various jobs all over the Island. Within two hours we were at Maleme and succeeded in wiping up several of the enemy and in the evening rounding up several more who had been in hiding. These paratroopers were big, husky fellows. They wore a kind of overall suit with numerous pockets secured by zip-fasteners. They were armed with a tommy gun and a murderous-looking knife quickly opened by a spring catch. They carried concentrated food tablets, plenty of ammo and a very clear map of the Island with the spot marked where they were dropped. There was also a signed photograph of Hitler and Goering and the equivalent of £1 in Greek currency. From now on things began to get very lively. More Stukas appeared from the south. What a different story it might have been if we had had air support. A few squadrons of Spitfires would have made all the difference.

I should like to mention one of my own adventures. When we left our HQ hurriedly on the 20th in battle order it was decided later that we should get our packs. I was detailed to commandeer transport and fetch them. Soon we were heading back along the Suda-Maleme road. We were under fire for some time but were not unduly worried about this when, on nearing the harbour, a large object came floating through the air with the greatest of ease. It just missed the leading truck in which I was, demolished a small cottage on the right of the road and showered the second truck with bricks. There were no casualties and we discovered later that it was a huge watertight door from an ammunition ship which had blown up in the harbour. We obtained our packs but found that all our personal gear had been stolen. About the 25th the civilian population were sent away from Canea to take refuge in the hills. Although very helpful, the natives did make things a bit sticky, ie shortly after arrival in the Maleme area we passed several glider crews who had crashed and were dead. In the fierce heat the bodies had decomposed rapidly but this did not prevent the locals from stripping them of their clothes and, in some cases, slitting their throats to make sure. At first the British troops were blamed for this kind of atrocity and reprisals were threatened until an officer convinced them that we did not resort to such practices.

On 27 May Canea was heavily bombed. Our HQ was continually being moved. All our Bofors were now knocked out and we were ordered not to engage Stukas with rifle fire. The aircraft came lower and lower and we were fortunate to have the cover of the numerous olive groves. Rationing became very difficult - eventually it was impossible to find food and water. Jerry ran a continuous shuttle service from Greece during the daylight hours. We soon learned how to stand perfectly still with heads down trying to disguise ourselves as trees. A slight movement brought on machine gun fire. A word here about the New Zealand troops and Maoris. At this time they were practically holding the front line. They did splendid work inflicting far more damage and casualties than they received. The Maoris are magnificent troops - there is no colour bar in New Zealand. I lived with them afterwards in a POW camp which brings out the best or the worst in a man. It was always the best with the New Zealanders who were always willing to help a comrade.

When the order came for withdrawal to the south of Crete, Major R Garret RM formed the AA and Searchlight Batteries of MNBDO I into a rifle battalion. Major Madoc, my Battery Comm, was second in command. This force acted as a rearguard during the later stages of the evacuation. We numbered about 500 and please remember that most of these lads had specialised in AA or Searchlight training. My own lads had not even fired a proper course of musketry and we were armed with P XIV rifles with an awkward fitting magazine. My Battery QMS and I commandeered all the MG 'sand ammo we could get hold of. The old service saying states that your rifle is your best friend but you can take it from me there is another item equally as important - I refer to your water-bottle. Whilst supervising the weapons my water-bottle was taken from my equipment and it was this loss which was responsible for my being a POW for 2½ years.



*Arrival in Egypt after
evacuation*

Our rearguard action enabled 17,000 troops to reach Sphakia and embark for Egypt. Owing to the winding roads we were able to get some very good positions but were driven back by the inevitable Stukas. German machine gun and mortar fire was exceptionally accurate. Our orders were to fight until 1 June, which we did. The general opinion is that we could have held out longer in spite of lack of food and water (I had to beg mine). I reflected on our famous battle honour "The Glorious First of June" - it was most inglorious for us when we reached Sphakia and found that there were no more ships. Although our losses were fairly severe the cover undoubtedly saved much heavier casualties.

Major Garret commissioned an abandoned landing craft and managed to get to the North African coast near Sidi Barrani. But for the missing water-bottle I should have accompanied his party as he quite rightly insisted that every man should have one. Our CO had informed us that we were surrounded and had completed our task. After destroying arms, etc, it was every man for himself. With a few comrades I made my way to the next village still dodging Stukas. We fell asleep in a partially demolished house. The next thing I remembered was being rudely awakened by a German under officer and then our troubles really began.

NB. My father paid great tribute to the Red Cross for their good work towards POWs and after repatriation he spoke on behalf of this fine organisation at a meeting in a West End theatre.

It is interesting to note in retrospect that the severe losses suffered by the Germans in their airborne attack on Crete deterred them from using such troops again. In the words of General Student "Crete was the grave of the German Paratroops".

THOSE ELUSIVE BADGES

BY

W E DAVEY

Newsletter No 1 contained some enquiries about early badges and trimmings and a mysterious shako plate of 1855-61 about which we know little. It seems that in all our efforts to bring life to the past, we meet the same wall of silence and insufficient records, and, even though no doubt there is a clue somewhere, we can rarely find it.

No doubt small happenings seem at the time not worth writing about and on that basis I have one or two oddments likely to become interesting a few decades hence.

The Last Royal Marine Artillery Cap Badge

Whilst serving in a mixed detachment in the Mediterranean Fleet in 1923, the RMA grenade cap badges were withdrawn or replaced by a Globe and Laurel surmounted by a grenade. This short-lived badge vanished almost at once on the amalgamation of the RMA and the RMLI. But, although I have failed to trace one to date, I know photographs were taken which, some time in the future, may take their place in the queue of unsolved mysteries. At the time uniforms of the post-amalgamation pattern percolated to the fleet in bits and pieces and for a short time I for one was wearing one of these last RMA cap badges in a broderick with the RMA piping removed, Globe and Laurel collar badges in a serve tunic with RMA buttons, finished off with a pair of RMLI trousers.

The Portsmouth Band Cap Badge

Usually a controversy starts from an old drawing or photograph and sometimes from the re-discovery of an actual article. But I doubt very much is a specimen of the actual badge will ever turn up in this instance. This is an example of the kind of "gaff" which should never happen but sometimes does; it would set a pretty problem if a photograph turned up in the distant future. It might even then rank with that elusive shako plate!

This happened in 1936, just after HM King George VI has acceded the throne.

The Royal Cypher GRV in silver, awarded to the RM Artillery Band for its services to that monarch on his visit to India in 1911 and inherited by the Portsmouth Divisional Band, was supplied as a separate item, a dainty filigree affair about the size of a sixpenny piece, for fixing to the helmet plate. There was, in 1946, much overhauling and furbishing in readiness for the forthcoming Coronation celebrations and as usual the stock of some items quickly vanished; among these was the GRV in silver.

Further supplies were ordered urgently and arrived almost at zero hour. A few were quickly rushed to those musicians in urgent need and all was again well. The band, every man wearing his distinctive Royal Cypher, was all set to go when someone took another look at the tiny new GRV Cyphers - and could hardly believe his eyes. For there it was - GRVI in silver!

The matter was hastily rectified and I doubt if any of the offending Cypers got away, but there may well have been photographs.

Here was a case of someone with insufficient knowledge hurriedly trying to amend existing specifications for badges and buttons and just "bringing up to date" everything in sight. Lucky he didn't have to handly a contract for new colours!

The RM Police Buttonhole Badge

On a number of occasions I have been shown a small nickel silver Globe and Laurel, about the size of a halfpenny piece, with an oblong label below bearing the letters RMP, the whole mounted on a stud on the reverse for wear in a buttonhole. Its purpose is rarely known.

Actually, this buttonhole badge was issued to members of the Royal Marine Police during the 1939-45 war for wear in plain clothes.

Its necessity is hardly apparent since it could obviously have no special value in proving that the wearer was a police officer - his warrant card would be the proper vehicle for that. The need may have been based at the time on the fact that, during that war, there were many official civilian groups in existence - air raid wardens, first aid and rescue parties, fire watchers and the like, even in its infancy the Home Guard itself which had no regular uniform or means of identity other than some sort of label. There could no doubt be the need to establish the wearer's right to go about his business during an air raid when all non-essential civilians were expected to take cover.

The badge may have served some other purpose - for instance, trainees and others not yet kitted up for whom no doubt it would be of value, since they would not have warrant cards.

It must also be remembered that the RM Police Force was part of the Armed Forces of the Crown, for whom plain clothes were not normally permissible during the war. The badge would indicate the bona fide of the wearer.

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MORE ELUSIVE BADGES

BY

A J DONALD

The article submitted by Mr W E Davey "Those Elusive Badges" has reminded me of a further "Unofficial amendment to the specification" for the Portsmouth Group Band badge.

Shortly after HM The Queen came to the throne a further stock of badges was required. When these were delivered it was noticed that the crown over the "GVR" had been changed to a St Edwards crown. Luckily no badges were issued, although we do have an example of this error in the Museum.

-oOo-

NEWS FROM THE CORPS MUSEUM

A coloured print of the painting by Terence Cuneo of the Assault on Limbang by 'L' Company of 42 Commando RM during the Brunei Rebellion of 1962 has now been produced and is available for sale from the Museum. Price (unframed) three guineas.

A gramophone record of regimental music played by the Band of Portsmouth Group Royal Marines is expected to be available for sale from the Corps Museum in the near future.

H P Playford

THE DUKE OF YORK AND ALBANY'S MARITIME REGIMENT OF FOOT

BY

CRAIG EADIE

(RESEARCH BY CHARLES ACKROYD)

The regiment was formed on Friday 28 October 1664 by order of Charles II during a meeting of the Privy Council at which the King, his brother the Duke of York and Albany (later James II), the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer and 13 other members were present.

An extract from the report of the Council's proceedings runs:

"His Majesty was pleased to order and direct among other things, that twelve hundred land soldiers be forthwith raised to be in readiness to be distributed in his Majesty's fleets prepared for sea service."

The regiment, which later became known as "The Admiral's Regiment", "The Lord High Admiral's Regiment", or "The Duke's Regiment", was to consist of: one Colonel, one Lieutenant Colonel, one Sergeant Major, plus a complement of Junior Officers and NCOs. This force was to be divided into six companies each consisting of 200 men. The regiment was placed under the command of Colonel Sir William Killigrew and was to be administered by the Duke of Albemarle who was the General of His Majesty's Forces.

Commissions for the officers were issued on 5 November and on the 11 November for the remainder. A warrant for recruiting was issued on 9 November. A licence was granted by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Lawrence, for recruiting to be done in the City by drum. They came mainly from the Trained Bands of the City which was a volunteer militia. Training was organised at the old Artillery Ground, now Spitalfields Market. There they were taught how to use the firelock, the sword and the pike.

By 16 November recruiting was completed and training began in earnest. Two hundred and fifty were sent to sea on the larger ships while the remainder were quartered temporarily in various towns and seaports because at that time there were no barracks.

The regiment first distinguished itself in 1665 when the second Dutch war broke out. They took part in the naval battles of Lowestoft in the same year. The Four Days Battle, the Battle of St James' Day in 1666 and Holme's Bonfire when a Dutch fleet was totally destroyed by fire owing to the daring of Admiral Holmes. On land they successfully defended Landguard Fort near Harwich when 2,000 corps Marines had been landed by Admiral De Ruyter to capture it. The Peace of Breda ended hostilities in 1667.

In June 1666 the strength of the regiment had risen to 2,100, 900 of which were at sea. In July 1665 Sir William Killigrew had died owing to a life-long illness; he was succeeded as Colonel in Command by Sir Chichester Wrey, his immediate subordinate.

In the same year the order of precedence of regiments was laid down; the Admiral's regiment ranked third, after the Foot Guards and the General's regiment. The Holland Regiment followed fourth. In 1672 war broke out again; the regiment took part in many land battles and all the sea conflicts, in which heavy casualties were sustained. During this war two troops of the King's Regiment of Foot Guards (the Grenadier Guards) and two of the Lord General's Regiment (the Coldstream Guards) were employed as sea soldiers. In 1674 peace was established which lasted for 16 years.

A company was sent to Virginia in 1676 under the command of Captain Charles Middleton with an army battalion to keep order. Before this in 1673 the Duke of York had resigned his post as Lord High Admiral but he still kept his regiment which was restyled "The Duke of York's Regiment". In 1680 several detachments served in Tangiers against the Moors with the 1st and 2nd Guards, the Royal Scots and the Queen's Regiment.

In 1785 the Duke of York became James II and so his brother-in-law, Prince George of Denmark, took command of the regiment which was known as "Prince George of Denmark's Maritime Regiment of Foot". Their uniform was changed to red coats with yellow facings, dark grey breeches and white stockings. The regiment was disbanded for the first time in 1689.

The uniform of the regiment from 1664 to 1685

Officers: A yellow coat with red cuffs, the edges of the coat and cuffs were lined with silk of the same colour. A breast-plate was worn over the coat. The breeches and stockings were red and a sash covered the waist. The hat was wide brimmed and black with a gold braid rim; a large white plume covered the top of the hat. The sword was carried at the waist from a frog. A white necktie covered the throat and white gauntlets were worn on the hands.

Other ranks: This was fundamentally the same except for a few minor details. The coat was not quite as elaborate as that of the officers. The hat did not have a plume and the cuffs had three silver buttons on them. Two bandoliers, each slung from the shoulders, carried the sword from one and the powder and shot from the other.

The reason why yellow was worn was because it was the livery colour of the Duke of York. Yellow uniforms were also worn by the Duke of York's horse and later by the Duchess of York's Regiment of Foot. Because of the colour of the regiment it was soon nicknamed "the Canaries" by the sailors.

-oOo-

MUSEUM MEDAL COLLECTION

COMPILED BY

H P PLAYFORD

The Conspicuous Gallantry Medal awarded to Gunner Hamilton of the Royal Marine Artillery during the Egyptian Campaign of 1882 has recently been purchased for the Museum.

Many other medals have been added to the collection in recent months, they include:

CB, CBE and war medals of the late Major General Newman

CBE and war medals of the late Major General W F Lukis

DSM, MSM and war medals of Colour Sergeant Harry Wright who served with the 4th RM Battalion at Zeebrugge.

DSM and World War I and II medals awarded to Lieutenant Colonel R D Hale RM.

THE ROYAL MARINES AND THE DOCKYARDS

BY

W E DAVEY

The Corps of Royal Marines not only maintains the formations permanently assigned to it - Commandos and the like - but also functions as an invaluable pool of trained officers and men from amongst whom can be provided, almost at the drop of a hat, suitable personnel to form a unit adequate to deal with such special situations as arise from time to time.

This speciality of the Corps has been exploited on numberless occasions and the tasks most frequently arising seem to call for some form of "police action", either military or civil.

Research into the story of the RM Police has made it clear that the task of policing the Royal Dockyards has, since 1764, been undertaken by Royal Marines, so frequently as to be regarded as commonplace.

Indeed, in the days before the existence of the modern professional police, one finds quite a number of occasions when the Corps functioned in support of the civil power as a matter of course - for instance "Lloyds Evening Post" of 17 January 1763 tells us that, because of the increase of robbing every night, two additional guards were mounted by the Marines at Portsmouth, one on the common and one at Point. Their employment on security duties in the Dockyards would follow as a matter of course and they first appear in that role in 1764.

King John established a dock at Portsmouth and no doubt there were a number of huts and stores for spare gear. That there was need to exclude uninvited guests is clear from the fact that in 1212 AD John ordered a wall to be built round the area.

No doubt there were watchmen even then; we hear of them from time to time as, for example, in the reign of Charles II who ordered the watch force of HM Dockyard Portsmouth to consist of 14 men at 1/- per night. Just after that the Secretary of the Admiralty issued detailed orders for the Dockyard Watch. The Secretary was Samuel Pepys.

That the watch system was not completely satisfactory is clear from the fact that in 1764 the Marines were ordered to provide the Dockyard guards. Intermittently other arrangements were necessary when the Marines were withdrawn for active services elsewhere.

The first modern style professional police force in this country was launched by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 and it was so great an improvement on the old watch system that the Admiralty started a "private" police force for the Dockyards in 1833. This small force was not a great success and the Metropolitan Police were given authority by the Metropolitan Police Act 1860 to police all our Dockyards throughout the country.

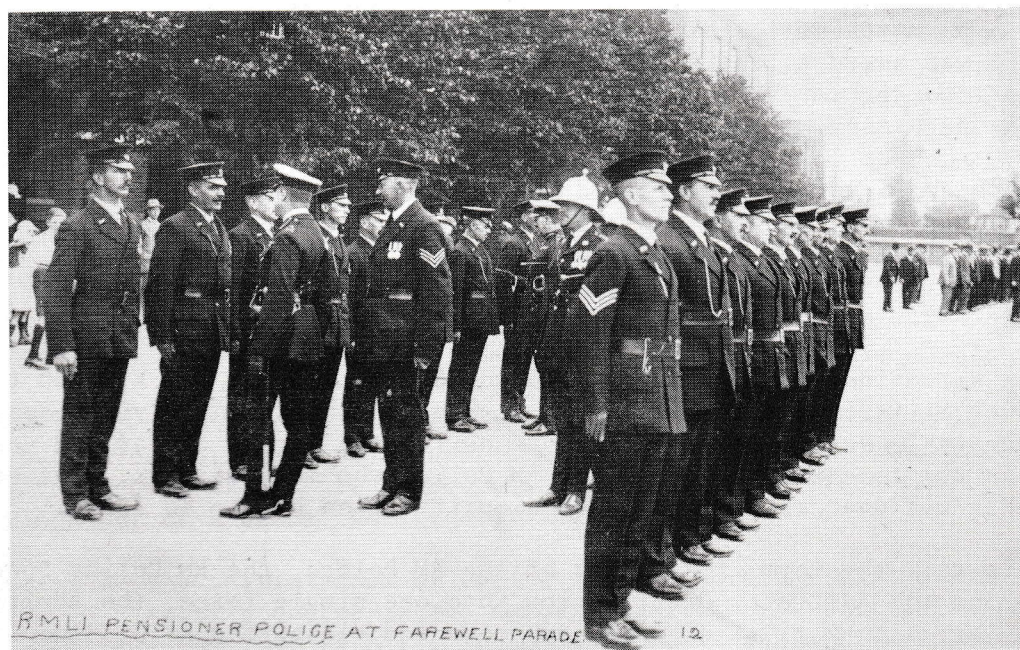
After the First World War, as a result of the need for retrenchment and because they were required in London, the Metropolitan Police were gradually withdrawn from the Yards and the Special Constables Act 1923 authorised certain government departments, including the Admiralty, to raise and train their own police.

The duty of raising the Admiralty force was deputed to the Adjutant General Royal Marines and the Royal Marine Police came into being.

The constitution of this force was most unusual. Initially all members were retired Royal Marine officers and Royal Marine pensioners, re-enlisted into the Corps and serving under Military Law (including, if necessary, trial by Court Martial), but at the same time sworn before a magistrate to act as police officers. This apparent anomaly was resolved by an arrangement whereby, when on duty at their station, members acted only as police whilst when not so engaged they remained soldiers.

In the early days of the force the highest rank was Chief Inspector, a post to which retired RM officers were appointed with equivalent rank of Captain RM, the remaining ranks being Inspectors (equivalent to QMS RM, but an officer entitled to a salute in the police), sergeants and constables.

The higher administration was initially carried out by a serving Field Officer of the Corps in addition to his Corps duties (the FOGD at the nearest RM Barracks) within the frame of the serving Corps. This was possible as members of the Force were also soldiers under the Arm Act. But, though possible, it was not practical and soon retired RM officers were appointed as Superintendents (equivalent rank Major RM) to take over the majority at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth.



*A detachment of Royal Marine Police
at Forton Barracks, 1923*

In 1932 the command structure of the RM Police was completed by the appointment of Colonel W S Poe, a retired RM officer, as Chief Constable, RM Police, the Army Act basis of the Force being continued on the General Staff of the Corps under AGRM (CGRM), not the simplest of organisations, one would think, but it worked!

Entry into the Force was later expanded to include pensioners, RN who were enlisted into the Corps to bring them under the Army Act, and retired RN officers were included in the field of selection to the commissioned ranks (Chief Inspector and above) including the post of Chief Constable.

In the early days of the Second World War, Colonel W S Poe relinquished his post as Chief Constable on return to Corps duty, his place being taken by Captain Brooke Royal Navy who was appointed Chief Constable with the equivalent rank of Colonel on the staff of CGRM.

The RM Police, having completed the relief of the Metropolitan Police by 1934, had by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 been built up to a strength of about 900 officers and men who were "frozen" in their police appointments throughout the war.

But as pensioners RN and RM were retained in the service during hostilities they were no longer available for the police, and this at a time when the RM Police were expanding rapidly to meet the needs of the war. The deficiency in numbers was made up by the formation of a civilian body, the RM Police Special Reserve, a force of men trained as police officers to act with the RM Police regulars, with whom they were integrated, but not serving under Military Law! Administratively quite a problem for the Chief Constable.

Again, during the Second World War, establishments were opened in many remote spots, particularly in Scotland and Northern Ireland where there was insufficient accommodation for RM Police to be drafted in, and small bodies of locally resident police were formed under the control of Heads of Establishments concerned.

With no means of training such separate bodies locally, the Chief Constable RM Police was asked to assist and he provided a Superintendent as adviser assisted by one or two regular sergeants RM Police to travel the country and visit and advise as necessary.

These small locally controlled bodies were eventually co-ordinated by the Admiralty under yet another code of discipline as the Admiralty Civil Police, and satisfactory control of this body was achieved only when they were placed under the full control of the Chief Constable with the title and authority of Chief Constable Royal Marine and Admiralty Civil Police.

The situation thus presented of a police force of at times 3,000 to 4,000 men, some under Military discipline and some under two different civil codes, may have been acceptable as an emergency measure during the stress of war and very great credit is due to the officers of the RM Police who made it work. But as a permanent feature it was unacceptable and some simplification had to be found.

This took the form of a merger of the RM Police, the RM Police Special Reserve and the Admiralty Civil Police into one single force, the Admiralty Constabulary with a civil disciplinary code and classified as Non-Industrial Civil Servants, thus acquiring at once all the administrative facilities and entitlements of that body, including the right to establishment and a pension.

Upon the completion of these arrangements the Royal Marine Police ceased to exist as a separate body forming an integral part of the Corps in October 1949, continuing thereafter as a major part of the new force carrying their "Esprit de Corps" with them!

The derivation of the new force - the Admiralty Constabulary - from the Royal Marines is commemorated by the inclusion of the Laurel Wreath of the Corps in the cap badge of its successor.

ROYAL MARINE ARTILLERY

COLOUR SERGEANT'S BADGE OF RANK

BY

A E BOWELL



Colour Details

The whole embroidered on half sleeve of Navy blue.

Queen Victoria's Crown in gold and silver wire and red velvet.

Globe and Laurel and Anchor in gold wire superimposed on the Union Flag flying right to left. St George's Cross of Union Flag in red velvet.

Crossed swords, blades silver wire, hilts in gold, also grenade.

Chevron gold and silver wire, silver on gold.

Flagstaff, tassels and cords gold colour silk and wire.

THE ROYAL MARINE ARTILLERY 1804-1923

BY

C MONTIN

"They were probably the most magnificent body of men the services ever produced."
(From an article in the "Globe and Laurel" June 1968.)

Who were these men to be held in such high esteem? Royal Marines. Naturally. One could very easily assume that it referred to the Corps of Royal Marines from 1664 up until the present day. But this particular compliment was paid to a branch of the Corps no longer in existence. The Royal Marine Artillery. Very little seems to have been written about the Royal Marine Artillery. Certainly not in general accounts of the history of the Royal Marines. Though no doubt their history will be thoroughly dealt with in the volumes of "Britain's Sea Soldiers". These volumes are, I believe, the finest recorded account of the early history and traditions of the Royal Marines. Fortunate indeed is the person who has been able to obtain and read the three volumes of "Britain's Sea Soldiers". For they now appear to be very rare.

The Royal Marine Artillery were born exactly one hundred and forty years after the formation of the Corps. In the late Colonel G W M Grover's "Short History of the Royal Marines" one reads: "In 1804 an Artillery company was added to each division and in 1805 the Royal Marine Artillery constituted a separate part of the RM Forces. This strengthened the striking power of Marines in combined operations." Thus was born this unique body of men who, one hundred and nineteen years later, were to suffer the same fate many army regiments today are bitterly complaining against, disbandment and amalgamation. It is recorded that they served with great distinction with three Royal Marines Battalions in the American War of 1812-1815. Of their bearing, Sir Charles Napier wrote: "Never in my life have I seen soldiers like that Marine Artillery. We suffered much fatigue and hardship, but never was seen anything not admirable in these glorious Soldiers. Should my life extend to antediluvian years their conduct at Little Hampton will not be forgotten by me. All honour to the memory of these brave men." Just a mere eleven years after their formation and their reputation was starting to grow. The praise and appreciation expressed by Sir Charles Napier concerning the conduct of the Royal Marine Artillery is, I think, even more significant when one remembers that about the same period of time the Duke of Wellington was referring to his troops as "The scum of the earth", or words to that effect. I have never been able to decide if the Duke of Wellington was, when he passed that remark, referring to the social and class background from which the hardcore of his army came, or was also referring to his men's bearing and discipline. But it is also interesting to find recorded that in 1810 when a Battalion of Royal Marines was sent to Wellington's Army, Sir William Napier described it as "A superb body of Marines sent from England".

In 1832 HMS EXCELLENT was established as the Royal Navy's Gunnery School and it was laid down that - "As in the Establishment of the Officers and crew of The Excellent, a Lieutenant, three non-commissioned officers and two privates of the Royal Marine Artillery are included in her complement of Marines, it is intended that the theoretical instruction required for the Officers and seamen Gunners should be furnished by them ..." In 1963 HMS EXCELLENT said goodbye to the last Royal Marine GI. An association which started that day in 1832 when the Royal Marine Artillery Officers and men first instructed there.

One can find brief mention of the Royal Marine Artillery at Hernani 1837, the Cimea, Graspan, Enslin, but very little detail other than the name of the action or campaign.



From a painting by R Simkin

Moving from warlike to more peaceful pursuits, it seems that the Royal Marine Artillery were just as outstanding. The Physical Drill competition at the Royal Tournament was ended in 1900 after a long series of victories by the Royal Marine Artillery.

On the 29 April 1966 the Royal Marine Artillery held a reunion at Eastney Barracks. When addressing the gathering of old Blue Marines, General Bourne said: "... It shows", he continued, "that we still have the spirit which made us without compare in ceremonial." General Bourne continued "I shall never forget the Guard of Honour of King Edward VII's funeral. It had to march from Picadilly Circus along the funeral route to get to its position at Paddington Station and this Guard of six footers, marching in a rigid block on the crown of the road, looked so magnificent that they were clapped by the dense crowd all the way." General Bourne also remarked upon the fact that they swept the board in their last two years at the Royal Tournament. Competing in an winning the Bayonet Combat Team event, Heavy-weight Tug-of-War and the Light-weight Tug-of-War.

In 1914 the Royal Marine Artillery had to turn their skill and prowess to more urgent and serious matters.

In the 1914-18 war they were the first anti-aircraft Batteries to land in France. They also fought with 15 inch Howitzers.

In Major F W Lumsden VC DSO and three bars, they had the most decorated officer in the First World War. Apart from action in France, Gallipoli, Zeebrugge and with the Grand Fleet they also fought in the Cameroons against the Germans. So from the very little one can read of them it is clear to see that the reputation and high esteem enjoyed by the Royal Marine Artillery was earned by their deeds and actions in both peace and war.

I have a painting by R Simkin depicting officers and men of the Royal Marine Artillery in various uniforms of that period.

Printed on the top right side of my copy of the painting is the wording "Supplement to the ARMY & NAVY GAZETTE Saturday, April 3rd, 1897". Looking at the painting one sees how closely the No 1 ceremonial dress of the Royal Marines, as now practically only worn by the Royal Marines Bands, resembles that worn by the Royal Marine Artillery. The "Blue Uniform". As has been worn by the Corps since the amalgamation in 1923. Some people think that as the Corps is the Navy's soldiers, hence the blue uniform.

I think I am correct in stating that the Blue uniform worn by the Royal Marine Artillery had no connection Naval wise. Blue was always the colour for British Artillery. After all, the rest of the Corps had worn red since the 1700s. Also on the No 1 Ceremonial dress you have the "red collar with the yellow piping". The ball on the white pith helmets. Did the Royal Marine Artillery ever wear the white helmet?

The frogging on the Drum Major's coat is also from the Royal Marine Artillery Drum Majors. And of course the broad red stripe as worn by the band service.

In writing these few lines I most probably will not have told anything that the majority of our members do not already know. Nor have I attempted to do so, for my knowledge is insufficient. But my whole object of writing about the Royal Marine Artillery is because I have always been struck by the fact that in reading about the Corps, there is very little detail to be found concerning them.

Yet the little pieces one does read give one the impression that these were truly an elite body of men. There must be one member among us who can enlarge upon what I have written. For instance, is there any among us who can tell why the "Soldiers Chorus" (from Gounods "Faust") was adopted as the Regimental March of the Royal Marine Artillery? Why had they not an official band of their own until 1874? Just how excellent was their ceremonial? We all know the very high standard of drill and precision in the Corps ever since that day on the 26 June 1919 when the Kings Squad, Royal Marines Light Infantry, marched into the arena at the Royal Tournament and gave what was recorded as "an incomparable drill exhibition". Did the standard of drill and precision in the Royal Marine Artillery compare with what has always been expected from the Corps?

Or were the Royal Marine Artillery and Royal Marines Light Infantry building up the fine reputation the Corps have enjoyed in regards to ceremonial, many, many years before that day in 1919 only never received the acclaim due to them.

To come back to the present day. I wonder what were the thoughts of ex-Royal Marine Artillery men when 46 years after their disbandment and amalgamation the powers that be thought fit to have a commando trained Battery of Royal Artillery Gunners to support the Royal Marines Commandos. If there are any old Blue Marines among our members perhaps this will encourage them to put pen to paper. I am sure many will be more than just interested in what they would have to say.

LOOKING BACK

Discipline in the old days

Extracts from Orders of the Chatham Division, Royal Marines, held in the Corps Historical Reference Library of the Corps Museum:

5th September 1768: Corporal Collier, having showed a very great contrition for the crime that occasioned his reduction, and promising on the word of a soldier never to be guilty of a like offence is, on his promise and at the earnest request of his officer, restored to his former rank.

17th March 1769: No military compliments to be paid by the Marine Guards or Centinels when on duty to any officer of the Land Forces or Marines unless such officers are dressed in scarlet with swords.

23rd March 1770: John Bradwell, Private Marine in the 28th Coy having on the evening of the 27th inst. when Centinel on the Anchor Wharf secured Thomas Bryan, a sailor, who attempted to seduce him to steal rope from His Majesty's Stores. The Commanding Officer publicly thanks the Marine for his upright conduct and rewards him with one crown.

RELICS OF EARLY MARINE OCCUPATION

FOUND IN PORTSMOUTH

A number of interesting relics probably dating from circa 1760 have been unearthed in the area of the Guildhall at Portsmouth as a result of excavations prior to rebuilding. They include a bronze cartridge pouch ornament with the scroll "PER MARE ET TERRAM", a similar ornament now in the Corps Museum was dug up on Kingsdown Rifle Range at Deal in 1910 and presented in 1921 to Plymouth Division by Colonel F W Bridges RMLI.

These relics are in the possession of Mr J Bridges of 13 Cranleigh Road, Portsmouth, a mechanical excavator driver employed on the site. Unfortunately most of the items found are in a poor condition having been either damaged during the excavations or from remaining buried for a long period.

Records show that officers and Marines were billeted in the town of Portsmouth from 1755 until the occupation of the old Clarence Barracks on 20 May 1765.

<u>Page</u>		<u>Number</u>
Cover	A watercolour of a Royal Marine of 1805 (Specially painted for this Edition) by Charles Stadden	
9	RM Historical Photograph Library	13/3/7(6)
10, 11	RM Historical Photograph Library (Original paintings at Windsor Castle)	13/2/9(14) and (15)
12	RM Historical Photograph Library	12/5/2(21) and (27)
15	Britain's Sea Soldiers Vol I	Page 238
17	RM Historical Photograph Library	19/2/8(1)
18, 19	RM Historical Photograph Library (Origin - Major A McK Annand)	7/14/4(11) and (13)
20	RM Historical Photograph Library	13/2/13(7)
21	RM Historical Photograph Library (Original painting by J S Scarf in the British Museum)	13/3/23(27)
24	RM Historical Photograph Library (An item in the Maconochie Collection)	12/5/3(6)
25	From a painting by A C Lovett	
28	RM Historical Photograph Library (Shako plate in the Bryn Owen Collection)	12/5/4(8) 12/5/2(22)
30, 31 32, 33	RM Historical Photograph Library (Photographs on pages 30 and 33 were developed from a film in the camera of a German paratrooper captured in Crete in 1941)	7/19/7(1), (18), (32), (3)
35	Imperial War Museum	E 3299
41	RM Historical Photograph Library	2/1/6(1)
43	A copy by Paul Fauset of an original drawing by A E Bowell	
45	RM Archives (A postcard printed by Goodinge & Wilson)	

