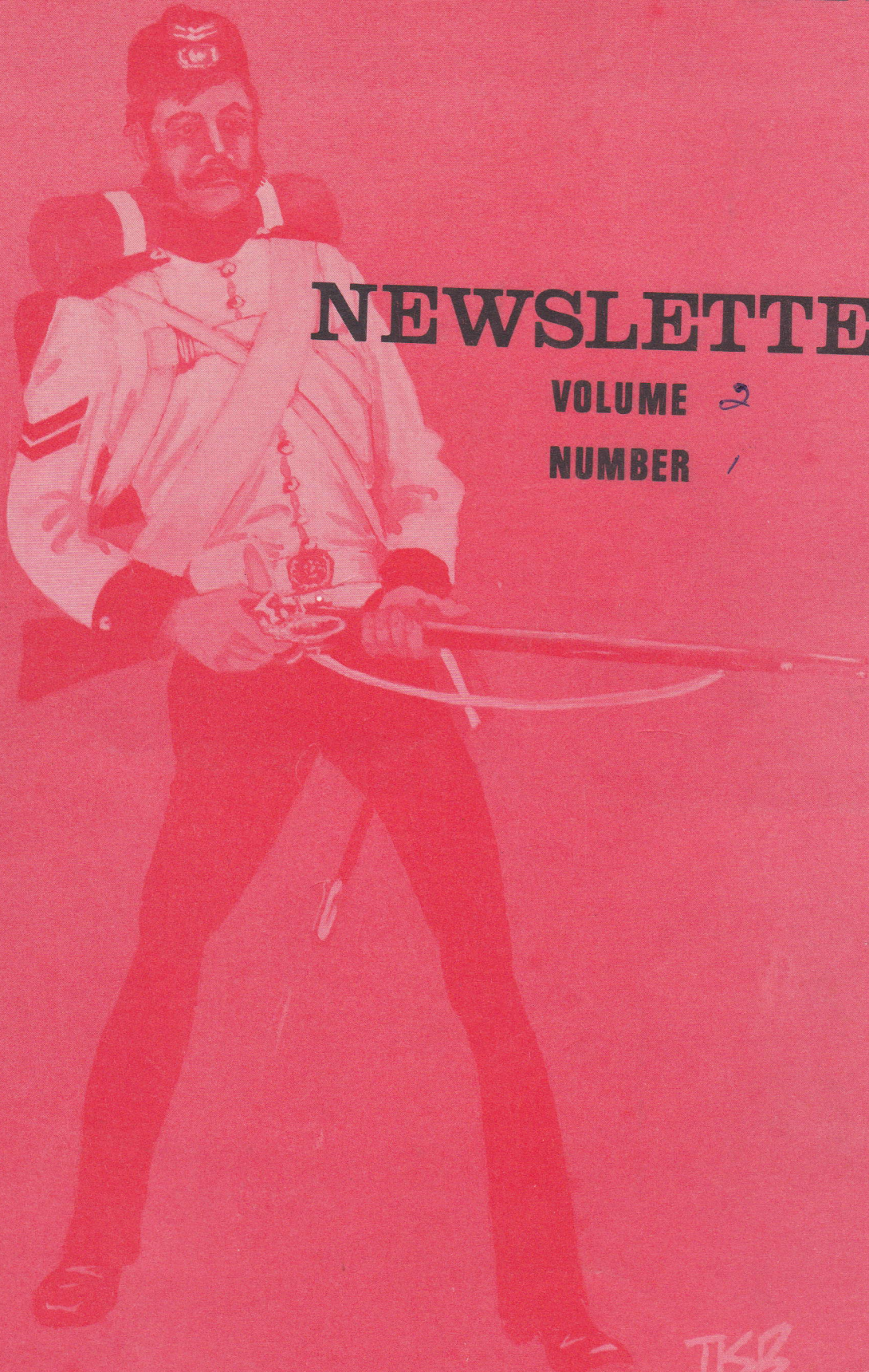


**ROYAL MARINES
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 1



TBB '67

COMMENT

Some time last year my arm was somewhat twisted to agree to undertake the task of Editor of the Association's Newsletter as Mr Russel Gamage was regrettably unable to continue in that appointment owing to pressure of work.

As I have already got the unenviable job of Editor of another Newsletter for my own Association, I felt sure that the main difficulty would be that of obtaining interesting copy, as I myself make no claims to being a historian. I was not wrong in my deductions.

This issue is my first attempt as Editor and I found myself very short of copy. It is on you, our Members, who we rely for interesting articles and snippets of information, so please do send in anything which you feel may interest other members. We now hope to be able to produce reasonable photographs in the Newsletter, so any of interest will be very welcome.

To this end, the Council have approved that a prize will be offered to the Members sending in the best and most interesting article over the year. Details of this will be published in the next Newsletter.

Having now seen the task involved in producing a Newsletter, I am sure you would all agree how much we appreciate the efforts of Russell Gamage and to thank him most sincerely for all his work in the past. I only hope that I can maintain the standard he set right from the start.

G.P. SANFORD

Editor

c/o Royal Marines Association

Central Office

RM Barracks, Eastney

Southsea, Hants.

The Mobile Naval Defence Organisation had, in some form or other, existed since 1923. At the beginning of World War II, in 1940 MNBDO(1) was raised and trained in many varied camps around the United Kingdom. The function of the Organisation was to build, rebuild or improve harbour facilities, defence works, beach roads and virtually any installations required by the Royal Navy. In brief - where-ever the Navy wanted a base, they could provide and defend it.

Early in 1941 MNBDO(1) comprising of 8000 Officers and men, was sent to the Mediterranean, arriving at the port of Alexandria in early April after a voyage around the Cape. The Organisation was in Alexandria as a stepping off place prior to going to Crete to set up a base in the Suda Bay area. In May the advance party arrived in Crete and consisted of a Transport Company, a Signal Company, part of a Searchlight Regiment and an Anti Aircraft Regiment plus a Landing Group Maintenance Party and a few provost. These were the limbs of the MNBDO(1) who were caught in Crete when the Germans invaded. They were not what would normally be called the front line fighting elements, but during the forthcoming battle they, together with the other 28,000 troops on the Island, fought with distinction.

Only about 200 of MNBDO(1) escaped from Crete and these included a small party led by Major Garrett RM. This party consisted of five Officers and 134 other ranks of which 56 were Royal Marines. The others were Australian and New Zealanders, a few Naval ratings and a small number of Special Service troops.

The party escaped in an abandoned landing craft, one of the early type Mechanised Landing Craft, an LCM(1). The craft was not in too bad a condition, or so it appears, although one of the propellers was fouled by a steel wire hawser and could not be used. Eventually the engine for the other engine was started and Major Garrett and his party set their course Southwards, North Africa being their destination.

About twenty miles from Crete is a tiny island called Gavdopula and this was their first stopping place and here they managed to free the troublesome wire from the propeller. They set off South again and this time covered about eighty miles before their craft ran out of fuel. They did in fact have a very small amount of petrol left but not enough to run the engines. This meagre amount was, however, used to good advantage later on. To maintain their progress they improvised sails out of blankets using boot laces to secure them in place. Sailing such an unwieldy craft with jury rigged sails was no easy matter and the steering was most difficult. To help keep on course, steering parties were organised by C/Sgt Colwill RM. These consisted of men swimming alongside the craft pushing it in the required direction.

Food and water supplies soon became short and rationing was introduced. The distribution of rations became the responsibility of another Royal Marine, C/Sgt Dean. The rations consisted of one third of a pint of water, half a biscuit and a cube of corned beef per man per day. Water was the main problem and this was greatly helped by two marines in the party improvising a distillation plant using the remaining fuel. By this they managed to successfully produce four and a half gallons of water in two days.

On the eighth day two of the party died, but on the morning of the ninth day at 0130 the craft touched down on the beach near Sidi Barani. Here again the luck and initiative of the men came to the fore. Two of the Maoris with the New Zealanders discovered water near the place they had beached. Sgt Bowes RM then made a night recce over five miles of sandy desert to get help.

At this same period of time another party of sixty men, again led by a Royal Marine Officer and also in another landing craft were making their way to North Africa and they as well ended up near Sidi Barani. The name of this Officer is not known.

Out of the 2,200 that went to Crete from the MNBDO, only 200 got away, the remainder either being killed or taken prisoner. The remainder of the organisation numbering some 5,800 were sent to many different places in smaller groups to do varying tasks in the way of improving Base defences in the Indian Ocean, such as Addu Atoll in the Maldiv Islands. Others went to Bombay, Ceylon, the Seychelle Islands, Diego Garcia and other out of the way places in the Indian Ocean.

When Burma was threatened a party was sent to patrol the gulf of Mataban, these being the part of MNBDO(1) who had been based in the Addu Atoll area and the operation was nicknamed "Short Cut". Their orders whilst in the Mataban area were to prevent the Japanese from landing behind our lines. Their arrival on the

11th February 1942 was, in fact, too late for them to carry out their task. The 106 Officers and other ranks were therefore ordered to form a Flotilla for other duties.

These members of MNBDO, commanded by Major D Johnson with Captain Alexander as his second in command, were to become known as "Force Viper". They trained on a thirty foot craft named the Alguada under Lieut. Penman of the Burma RNVR who was attached to them. Eventually, aided by the guile of Lt. Penman, they managed to obtain more craft and these were fitted with machine guns and other small arms weapons. As a self contained unit, this Force did many varied tasks operating under the White Ensign. They were so successful in making their presence felt, that the Japanese Radio broadcast threats that if any of the Marines were captured they would be roasted and cut up into little pieces. They continued to operate most successfully until 14th May 1942 when the Force started to withdraw to India. It burnt its boats and went overland in two parties. One party, under Captain Alexander arrived in Calcutta on the 25th May and the other under Major Johnston on the 26th May.

Out of the original 106, only 48 remained.

Another part of the MNBDO(1), now the 11th Bn. RM, was also active at this time by raiding the Cretean coast at Kuphonesi on the 15th April. They followed up this raid with a raid on the coast at Tobruk on the 14th September but unfortunately this was unsuccessful.

In the later part of 1942, MNBDO(11) was formed under Major General Lambert and in January 1943 it was sent to fill the gap left by MNBDO(1). MNBDO(11) were in Operation "Huskey" at Salerno and also did administrative duties with the 8th Army.

To meet the large requirements for Landing Craft crews and Landing Craft gun crews, two MNBDOs were recalled and broken up in the Autumn of 1943. Part became the 5th RM AA Brigade, another portion appeared as an Armoured Support Group. Seven RM Commandos were formed, five of which were used on D Day. Their parts became Landing Craft crews.

On the 6th June 1944, 10,000 marines went to Europe, two thirds of the landing craft were manned by Royal Marines, a large proportion coming from the original MNBDOs. After the landings large numbers of the crews were required to fight ashore and they were re-equipped and fought as the 116th Infantry Bde. Another Bde, the 117th, was also formed but they were not ready in time, though part of it went through to take over the surrender of German ports.

The MNBDO(1) though now gone, paved a way for much of the Corps as it is known today. There is hardly a single task done today which the Defence Organisation did not do at some time or other in its time.

Sgt. W.G. EVANS.

ROYAL MARINES UNIFORMS ON CIGARETTE CARDS

Now that coupons have replaced illustrated cards in cigarette packets, the sets of old cards have now virtually become collectors items. In fact some of these cards are of great interest including some quite rare pictures and prints. Royal Marines have been featured on a number of these cards and the following article received from Sgt G A Henderson describes some of the cards which have been produced over the years.

Grouped together and placed in a picture frame these cards make an attractive display. The detail is good considering the size of the cards. All but one have a short note on the history of the Corps or uniform details printed on the reverse side.

The following cigarette manufacturers produced sets of cards which included Royal Marines.

Players.

Produced two sets, each of fifty cards, entitled "Regimental Uniforms", numbers 1 to 50 and 51 to 100. Set two, shows Royal Marines Uniforms on cards 67 to 71 inclusive. The set was issued in 1914.

Card 67 (Fig.1). A painting of a Marine in a Buff coat and red leggings as worn when the first Regiment of Marines was raised in 1664.

Card 68 (Fig.11). A Marine in the uniform of 1742 wearing a Grenadier hat, red coat with yellow facing and buttoned leggings.

Card 69 (Fig.111). A Royal Marine in the uniform as worn at the battle of Trafalgar. The figure is shown firing his firearm from the shoulder.

Card 70 (Fig.1V). A Sergeant of Royal Marines in the uniform of 1837 (full dress).

Card 71 (Fig.V). An Officer of the Royal Marines Light Infantry in the full dress of 1914.

Gallagher.

Produced a set of uniform cards entitled "Types of the British Army". One card depicts the Royal Marines, Card No. 30.

Card No. 30 (Fig. VI). A splendid painting of a Drum Major, Royal Marines Light Infantry. No period is given but I believe it to be 1880 to 1900. This is a very rare card and difficult to obtain.

Carreras.

Produced a set of cards in 1937 entitled "History of Naval Uniforms". Four cards are devoted to Royal Marines.

Card 47 (Fig. VII). A Marine of 1664, similar to the one depicted in the Player's set but the figure is in a different pose.

Card 48 (Fig. VIII). A Marine of 1775 in the act of throwing a grenade. This is a fine action picture and shows the uniform worn by the Corps when it was put on a permanent footing.

Card 49 (Fig. IX). Royal Marine in the uniform of 1803. Similar to the card in the Player's set.

Card 50 (Fig. X). An Officer of the Royal Marines Light Infantry of the 1885 period. There is a description of the RMLI badge on the reverse of the card.

As will be seen from the above list the Royal Marines were a very popular subject and to the best of my knowledge no other Regiment or Corps has featured as often on cigarette cards. All the above illustrations are in colour.



I



II



III



IV



V



VI



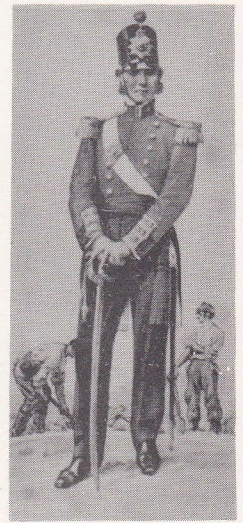
VII



VIII



IX



X

I will be pleased to hear from any member who is interested in collecting cards or who may wish to purchase the cards I have described. My address is:-

Sgt. G.A. Henderson
24 Lethe Grove
Berechurch Hall Road
Colchester, Essex.

G.A. HENDERSON.

The Corps Historian has sent the following list of cigarette cards which are held in the Corps Museum. These are in addition to the ones mentioned in Sgt. Henderson's article.

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Set</u>	<u>Card No</u>	<u>Title</u>
1. <u>Senior Service</u>	The Navy	42	"Telling the Marines"
2. <u>Churchman</u>	The Navy at Work	47	"RMs at 6" Gun."
		46	"Musician Royal Marines."
		48	"C/Sgt, Royal Marines."
3. <u>Peter Jackson</u>	Life in the Navy	11	"Sponging out the Guns." (Black and White)
4. <u>Park Drive Gallagher</u>	The Navy	33	"Sponging out the Guns." (in colour)
		19	"Sounding an Order."
5. <u>Godfrey Phillips</u>	Soldiers of the King	36	"Royal Marines."
6. <u>Lambert & Butler</u>	Interesting Customs & Traditions of the Army, Navy & Air Force	4	"The Ship's Bell." ✓
<i>Also</i>		12	"Issue of Daily Grog."
<i>✓</i>		17	"The Royal Marines."
		18	"Muffled Drums at a Funeral."
		9	"Saluting the Quarter Deck".
7. <u>Ardath</u>	Life in the Services	1	"Recruiting."
8. <u>Wills</u>	Life in the Royal Navy	5	"Marines Signalling with Searchlight."
		6	"Hoisting the Ensign."
		7	"Marine Guard of Honour."

*✓ Also. No. 3. Hoisting the Ensign.
No. 8. Saluting the Sp. blue Nelson Jan.
No. 7. Hoisting the ensign on Trafalgar Day.*

ENGLISH HARBOUR - ANTIGUA

"What a brilliant prospect for every lad of spirit who is inclined to try his fortune in that renowned Corps the ROYAL MARINES who with far superior advantages has the added benefit of liberal pay and plenty of the best provisions with the good ship under him, the pride and glory of Old England. On arrival at the Headquarters you will be comfortably and genteely clothed and receive a bounty of Sixteen Guineas.

The daily allowance for the Marine when embarked is One pound of beef or pork, one pound of bread, flour, raisins, butter and cheese etc., and a pint of the best wine, or half a pint of the best rum or brandy. They likewise have in warm countries a plentiful allowance of the choicest fruit and what can be more handsome than the Royal Marines proportion of PRIZE MONEY!

The single young man on his return to port finds himself enabled to cut a dash on shore with his girl and his glass that might be envied by a nobleman.

Take courage then, seize the fortune that awaits you and repair to the Royal Marine Rendezvous where in a flowing bowl of Punch you shall drink "Long live the King, and success to his Royal Marines".

Apply to Sergeant Fulcher at the 'EIGHT BELLS' (Plymouth) where the bringer of recruits will receive Three Guineas."

Before there is a general exodus of potential recruits to the West Country let me hastily point out that you will be about 160 years too late, for this was a call to arms at the time of the war with America in the reign of George the Third. Even condensed as it is from the original, who could fail to be attracted by such enthralling promises (certainly it makes the recruiting posters of today exceedingly dull by comparison) and surely the Eight Bells Tavern was packed to overflowing!

I was reminded of this recently when touring another of the old West Indies bases at Antigua (you may recall my previous coverage of Port Royal, Jamaica in June last year) and formed a similar comparison between these tropical island paradises and the somewhat dubious pleasures of Aden, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Falkland Islands (Singapore excluded) that have been the unhappy lot of Royal Marines in recent times. Certainly at face value it would appear that the Royal Marines who were recruited at the Eight Bells, and subsequently found themselves based on the West Indies station for the war against America, had a swinging time compared to their modern counterparts.

But we now know of course that despite Sergeant Fulcher's glowing promises, conditions on board ship at that period were foul to say the least. So it was too, with the current tourist havens of the Caribbean and Nelson's Dockyard at English Harbour, Antigua, is no exception.

Although referred to now as Nelson's Dockyard, he actually spent only three years based on English Harbour, and Admirals Hood and Rodney could equally put a claim to it. It is one of the most ideal natural land-locked harbours in the world, and one of the most picturesque; but because of the relative smallness of its anchorage area, and the narrow entrance, plus lack of tides, it developed into a remarkable resemblance to a cess-pit when up to ten men-of-war at a time finished ditching all their gash overboard! Diseases were naturally in abundance and a report to England in 1735 mentions the numbers of garrison troops who, on guard at the dockyard, became victims of a malady which went under the delightful name of 'Black Vomit' and proved fatal within three to four hours after the first attack. This same report expresses the distress of the sentries under these conditions on a daily allowance of ninepence - when it cost sixpence a pint for rum! Apart from dysentery, malaria and yellow fever also took their toll, and with the added problems of hurricanes and earthquakes, (the worst one in 1843 destroyed most of the forts) the troops possibly had some cause to regret their posting, which needless to say, was for the majority 'unaccompanied' and rather longer than eighteen months!

Nelson, who some years earlier had been nursed back to health by an old Jamaican woman Couba Cornwallis after a severe attack of malaria in Port Royal, and very nearly brought about a premature death, probably had his share of 'Antigua Dog' and the like, but it was for personal reasons that he came to hate the place. Arriving there in July of 1784 on board HMS Boreas as senior Captain of the Leeward Islands Squadron (aged twenty-six), he had his first brush with Sir Richard Hughes, the civilian Commissioner of the Dockyard, over command of the harbour. He won his case through Admiralty support. Next he upset the Military Governor, Colonel Sir Thomas Shirley, who had been responsible for the growth of most of the fortresses, and finally lost favour with the local populace by enforcing a ban on all trading with American ships - a ban which Shirley had allowed to relax. This hit the local economy badly but although an attempt was made to sue Captain Nelson for the traders' losses, the Admiralty once again stood by him.

However it is not surprising that a year later he wrote to the widow, Mrs Nisbet, whom he had just met on an 'extended weekend' to the nearby island of Nevis, complaining of exceeding loneliness in Antigua! This mood was to pass in December of the next year (1786) with the arrival of an old shipmate and friend, the twenty-two year old Duke of Clarence (later King William the Fourth) in command of HMS Pegasus, and when Horatio Nelson dashed across to Nevis again on Sunday the 11th March 1787, to marry Mrs Nisbet, Prince William insisted on being Best Man.

Marriage didn't bring an end to his problems at English Harbour however, for only two months later Nelson upset no less a person than the King himself when presiding at a Court Martial on board his ship on the 9th April. Able Seaman William Clark of HMS Rattler had been sent ashore in June of the previous year to collect one repaired ship's boat from the yard and was next seen in a drunken stupor in a gutter of St Johns, the capital, at the opposite end of the island. The sentence of death for desertion was reprieved at the last minute by Nelson at the personal request of Prince William, but not only did he pardon the man, but allowed his discharge from the Navy. As a result of this, a rather pained letter arrived from the Admiralty informing Nelson that he had indulged in a privilege only enjoyed by Their Lordships and His Majesty.

It was probably with the profound relief of all concerned that HMS Boreas set sail for England in the middle of the year, a voyage that took two months. When Admiral Nelson returned to Antigua eight years later to disembark 2,000 troops before pursuing the French fleet to Trafalgar, he did not even step ashore.

Antigua was discovered by Columbus in 1493. It was taken over by the British in 1632 and apart from French occupation for only one year in 1666, remained so ever since. Antigua's earliest natives, the peaceful Arawaks, were driven out, or devoured, by the cannibalistic Carib tribes who swept up the chain of Islands from South America. If we are to believe local legend, the real gourmets amongst the nomadic tribes found Frenchmen the most succulent, English the second best, the Dutch apparently lacking in flavour and the Spanish were totally indigestible! So it seems that the earliest Marines on the Island had more than just plague to worry about! Despite their shortcomings however, the Caribs will always be noted in the annals of the Naval history as the original inventors of the Hammock which the Jacks and Royals of that period were quick to adapt for use on board ship from the model which was slung between trees.

Used by ships as early as 1670 this perfectly concealed harbour was first known as St Helena when the beginnings of a dockyard were started in 1725, but when, a few years later, the new site was chosen on the opposite bank, it became English Harbour. As the dockyard grew in size and importance so it became necessary to increase the garrison to defend it and the next fifty years saw forts springing up like mushrooms atop of every hill surrounding the area. Commencing with the Suffolk Regiment (12th) and Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (27th) in 1701 the garrison was held in succession by numerous Regiments of Foot, but never by the Duke of Albany's, for which, no doubt, the Sea Soldiers were eternally grateful. To this day the Suffolk Regiment wear a piece of sack cloth behind their cap badge as a grim reminder of the 60 years their Regiment virtually rotted away in Antigua and their uniforms were patched up with sack cloth.

If you have visited the beautifully sited but terribly remote forts such as Monks, Shirley Heights, Blockhouse Hill and Brimstone Hill etc., you will realise

that the Marines who came ashore into barracks in the dockyard whilst their ships underwent long refits, were in comparative civilisation with the village just outside the main gate. Unlike Jolly Jack, of whom a vast percentage were pressed men, seldom paid or allowed shore leave, the all volunteer Royals enjoyed both privileges and could therefore sample all the home comforts that local civilians lavish on gallant fighting lads at a price!

It seems most probable that the Marines, apart from the usual dockyard sentry duties, also manned the nearby Fort Berkeley built on a narrow strip at the harbour entrance which is barely ten minutes walking distance away. (I, perhaps, should have said march time, but at the slow pace they drilled at in those days it would take twice as long) Badges of George the Third period Marines have, in fact, been found in the vicinity of the fort.

Also included in their duties would be the provision of orderlies and guards for Clarence House, a residence built on the other side of the harbour for Prince William, as well as the Admiral's house in the Dockyard. The one which guides now tell tourists was that in which Nelson dwelt was not built, in fact, until fifty years after his death, but the house he did have is now thought to have been on a site by the Officers' Quarters.

This was a turbulent period of the Napoleonic Wars, and these islands of the Caribbean were constantly under threat from the French, Spanish and Dutch ships. Then there was the American War of Independence in 1755 and another war with them in 1812, so in all, Royal Marines were not exactly idle.

Their main advantage over their land-based cousins was that being accustomed to unhealthy conditions on board ship and the salted provisions, they were a hardier breed than the garrison troops and were therefore more able to withstand the rigours of the disease-ridden port. Proof of this is borne out by the fact that whilst soldiers were dying like flies, there was not one death by sickness on board Nelson's ship in the three years she was at English Harbour.

Marines were involved in another controversy over command of the dockyard in January 1798 when the question of seniority was fought between Lord Camelford (HMS Favourite) and Lieutenant Peterson (HMS Perdrix). Although junior in rank to the Lord, and formerly his 1st Lieutenant in the Favourite, Peterson held a regular commission, whereas his opponent was only temporary (H.O.). Since the arrival of both ships in harbour each Captain issued orders to which neither obeyed. Matters finally came to a head when both officers wished to attend a Ball and gave instructions for the other to remain on duty. When Lt Peterson refused, a party of Marines was sent over by Lord Camelford to place him under arrest. What the outcome would have been if the Captain of the Perdrix had called upon his own Marines to defend him must be left to speculation, because the situation was forestalled by the arrival on the scene of Lord Camelford himself, and being a man of a few words, he drew his pistol and shot the unfortunate Lieutenant dead!

At the subsequent Court Martial, Lord Camelford's seniority was established by the Admiralty and the deceased was found to have died as a result of an act of mutiny. Sometime later, however, he was back in Court again accused of having Mr Kitto, the Dockyard Superintendent, flogged for refusing to carry out minor repairs to his ship, for which he had to pay £5,000 for his guilt. Lord Camelford's tempestuous career ended abruptly in London during a dual with a certain Captain Best!

Not far outside the dockyard gate lies the ruins of the Naval Hospital, formerly Stanley's Taverns, and from there it was but a short drive for the unlucky ones to the graveyard at the Naval and Military Church at St Pauls, Falmouth. The graveyard is now a complete shambles due to earthquakes and hurricanes, and the Church itself is the haunt of bats - not restricted in the belfry!

In the mid-nineteenth century, Britain apparently was going through an early balance of payments problem and Defence costs, so in 1855 the garrison moved out to Barbados to join the Savannah Garrison there, leaving just a handful of Royal Artillery and the 67th Regt. of Foot to soldier on.

The coming of steam ships made navigation through the narrow winding entrance of English Harbour difficult, therefore in 1899 it was abandoned. Disuse, tropical decay and the odd hurricane all helped to destroy the buildings until in 1950 a Society was formed to raise funds to restore the entire dockyard - though the forts continue to disintegrate. With the practical help from some ships visiting Antigua, they have now almost managed to complete the scene, some of the stonework being brought by sea from the West Country in England just as it was for the original construction.

In varying stages of decay there are over twenty forts around Antigua, the majority at English Harbour area, a forlorn reminder of the great historic era, but perhaps to the visiting twentieth century Royal Marine there is only one of importance now, and that is the one on Rat Island in the harbour of St Johns it has been converted into a rum distillery!

A J PERRETT

MUSIC FOR TOASTS

A dinner was given by the Officers of the Portsmouth Division RM and RMA to celebrate the presentation of Colours in 1827. As was customary in those days there were many toasts and these were all accompanied by appropriate music on the band.

To the toast of "HRH the Duke of Clarence, our illustrious benefactor" was played 'Rule Brittannia' and the 'Brunswick March' for the toast of the "Royal Family". 'Britons Strike Home' was played for the toast of the "Army and Navy" and 'Heart of Oak' on proposing the "Port Admiral and the Fleet under his Command".

(Extract from the Gloke & Laurel 1908)

ROYAL MARINES FORMATION SIGNS AND TITLES

WORN DURING AND SINCE WORLD WAR II

Shortly after joining the Royal Marines Historical Society, Captain Hennesay asked, as I was already a member of the Military Heraldry Society, if I would act as a liaison between the two Societies. This I agreed to undertake and a notice to this effect was placed in the Military Heraldry Society bulletin "Formation Sign".

Captain Hennesay also suggested that an article on signs and titles worn by Royal Marines would be of great interest for the Newsletter, and I therefore produced the following information for the interest of our members.

The majority of the signs and titles sketched and described are from my own collection. To avoid incorrect information being given, I requested Major Donald, the Corps Historian, to check my rough draft, and I am most grateful to him for his assistance and, where necessary, the additional information he supplied.

Some members may be aware of other signs and titles worn by Royal Marines formations, which are not mentioned in this article. If so, both Major Donald and myself will be most grateful to learn of any additional insignia which may have been worn officially or unofficially. Any correspondence will be acknowledged.

Description of signs and titles illustrated.

- Figure 1. Title. Silk embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Manufactured by CASH's. Issued for wear on B/D.
2. Title. Embroidered on felt. Red letters on D. Blue. Purchased privately - not worn officially. (The Corps Museum possesses a specimen with Blue letters on Red - doubtless a maker's error).
 3. Title. Embroidered on felt. Red on D. Blue. Issued for wear on B/D.
 4. Title. COMMANDO. Silk embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Made by CASH's. Issued for wear on B/D and worn, when applicable, below Figure 1 Title.
 5. Sign. RM Cdo. Red dagger on D. Blue segment. Embroidered on felt.
 6. Numerals. RM Cdo. Silk embroidered. Red on Blue. Made by CASH's. Worn above Royal Marines Title (Fig. 1). Similar designs for 41, 45, 47.
 7. Numeral. No 46. Embroidered on felt arc. Red on Blue. Similar design for No. 45.
 8. Sign. Combined Operations. Printed Red on Blue.
 9. Sign. Combined Operations. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue.
- NB. The shape of figures 8 and 9 varied from circular to square with rounded top background. The signs were worn in pairs (with SMG facing forward) on B/D and, in World War II, on No 1 dress.
10. Sign. Royal Marine Division (later 116 Independent Infantry Brigade). Yellow trident on Red segment.
 11. Sign. Permanent Staff 104 RM Training Brigade (later Royal Marine Training Groups (Wales) & (Devon)). Yellow seahorse embroidered on Blue circle on Red segment.
The sign was known within the Corps as 'The Pregnant Prawn'.
 12. Sign. 117 RM Infantry Brigade. Yellow fouled anchor on Red circle, on Yellow star on Khaki square. (Two versions - one embroidered, one printed). Not generally issued and then only after VE Day. In general use as a vehicle marking, painted on mudguards.
 13. Numeral. 31 Bn. (of 117 RM Inf. Bde.). Red figures woven on small khaki square. Worn over Royal Marines title (Fig. 1). Of similar design there was also 32 and 33.
Issued and worn in the Keil area (Germany) after VE Day.

- Figure 14. Sign. 34 Royal Marine Amphibious Support Regiment. Embroidered Yellow fouled anchor, on Red segment with Yellow border on Blue shield.
15. Sign. Royal Marines Engineers. Printed. Made by CALICO Co. Ltd., ACCRINGTON, LANCS. Yellow grenade, Green rope fouled on Red anchor, on Blue shield.
 16. Sign. Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation. Polar bear embroidered on Blue, Yellow, Green, Red and Blue diagonal striped circle. This sign may have been spurious or have been worn unofficially. From conversation with former MNBDO personnel, I am unable to confirm a sign ever having been worn. There has been some mention of a vehicle marking of a similar design.
 17. Arm of Service strip. 37 Signal Company, Royal Marines. White and Blue felt, 2" x ". Until recently I was under the impression that a white and blue strip was only worn in World War II, by the Royal Corps of Signals (now the Royal Signals). The strip as illustrated, was worn in NW Europe by a former Marine in 37 Sig. Coy. RM, who presented it to my collection.
 18. Epaulet - Slip on. Orange braid. Worn by Officers seconded to the RM during World War II, from the Union of South Africa Defence Force.
 19. Epaulet - slip on. Title. Red letters on Blue. Worn on tropical shirts.
 20. Sign. Royal Marine Seige Regiment. Red grenade woven on khaki.
 21. Epaulet - slip on. Dark Blue (not navy) braid. Worn by probationary Cadets RM at the RM Pre-OCTU, Deal and Browdown.
 22. Title. Red letters embroidered on Blue arc and bar. The 1st pattern title worn by the Royal Marine Forces Volunteer Reserve in 1948. Replaced later by figures 23 and 24.
 23. Title. VR. Embroidered. Red letters on Blue. Made by CASH's. The 2nd pattern title of RMFVR and worn below ROYAL MARINES title (Fig. 1).
 24. Title. VR. Embroidered on felt. Red letters on Blue. Worn beneath ROYAL MARINES COMMANDO title (Fig. 3) by all ranks of the RMFVR who completed the Basic Commando Course.
 25. Title. R. Embroidered on felt. Red letter on Blue. Replaced figures 23 and 24 on the change of title of the RMFVR to RMR in 1966.
 26. Title. 44 RM Cdo. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue (all in one piece).
 27. Title. 46 RM Cdo. Embroidered on felt. Red on Blue (all in one piece).
 28. Title. Royal Yacht. Gold wire letters and border surmounted by St. Edward's Crown, on Blue. Of similar design there is also Red on Blue and Gold on Green. Worn by the Band of the Portsmouth Division RM, Portsmouth Group RM and Royal Marines Detachment in the Royal Yacht. The Tudor Crown type was only issued in Gold on Blue and Red on Blue.
 29. Red Diamond. Red cloth/felt. Awarded to signify Recruit Section Commanders at the Depot or during final training at the ITCRM. In the days of larger squads usually the 6 best all-round recruits were awarded the Diamond. Nowadays, with smaller squads, only 3 or 4 are awarded.
 30. The King's Badge. (Instituted in 1918 by HM King George V). Awarded to the best all-round recruit in the senior recruit squad (King's Squad) by selection by King's Badge Board. Worn at the point of the left shoulder, on all dress (with the exception of shirt sleeve order and working dress) throughout recipient's entire career. Issued in Gold on Blue, Red on Blue, Khaki woven on Khaki, Khaki on K/D, Gold on Red (for Mess Kit) and Gold on Green. The Royal Monogram (centre) is always G.V.R.

Since publishing the notice in the Military Heraldry Society bulletin, I have received several questions from their members regarding RM formations and signs worn, some of which I have been unable to answer. I have listed some of them below in the hope that readers of the Newsletter may be able to supply me with the answers. Any answers forthcoming will be gratefully received and I will notify the original enquirers.

1. "Did the Sea Reconnaissance Units (RN/RM) have a special sign or badge?".
2. "Did the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPP) have a special insignia other than the Combined Operations Badge?".
3. "Did the RM Boom Patrol Detachments wear a special insignia?".
4. "What was the formation sign or badge (if any) of the following:
 - Advanced A Force.
 - No 1. Special Force.
 - M.O.4.
 - G. (R).
 - GSI. (Z).
 - Special Force 136.
 - No. 50 Commando.
 - No. 52 Commando.
 - Small Raiding Force (sometimes known as 62 Cdo).
5. "Did No. 30 Assault Unit RM (SEAC) have a special insignia?".
6. "Did 29 Bn. RM have a special insignia?".
7. "Did the Landing Craft Obstacle Clearance Units (LCOCU) have any special insignia?".
8. "Did Detachment 385 (specialist canoeists and swimmers) have any special insignia?".

JOHN BAILEY.

ROYAL MARINES

Figure 1

ROYAL MARINES

Figure 2



Figure 3

COMMANDO

Figure 4

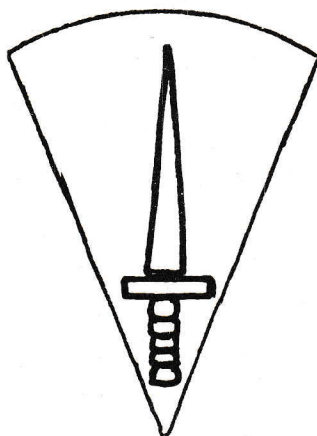


Figure 5

40 42 44

Figure 6

Nº 46

Figure 7

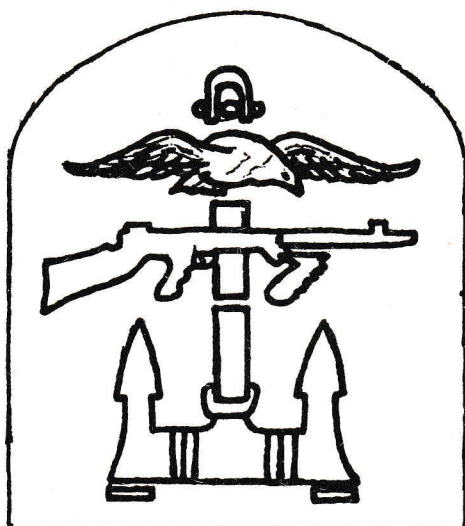


Figure 8

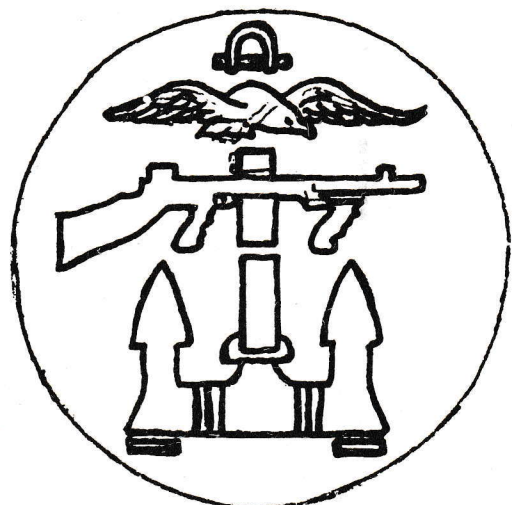


Figure 9

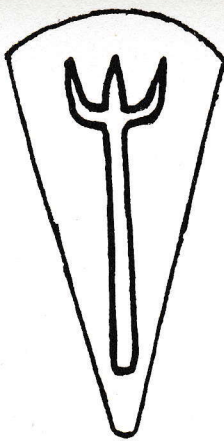


Figure 10

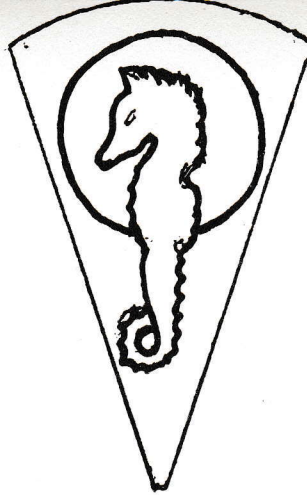


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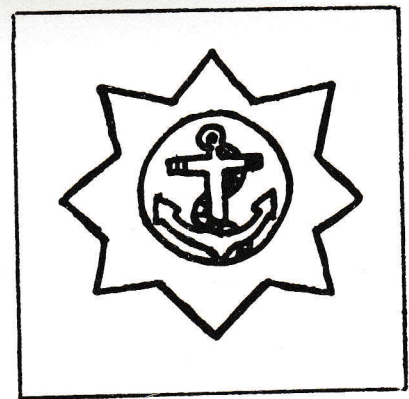


Figure 12



Figure 13

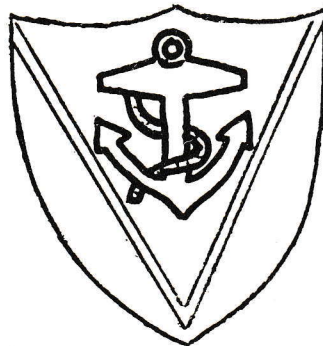


Figure 14

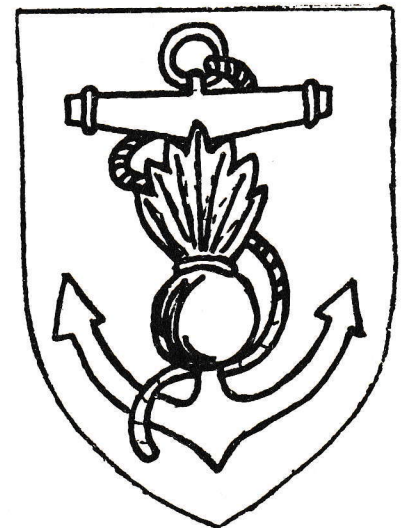


Figure 15

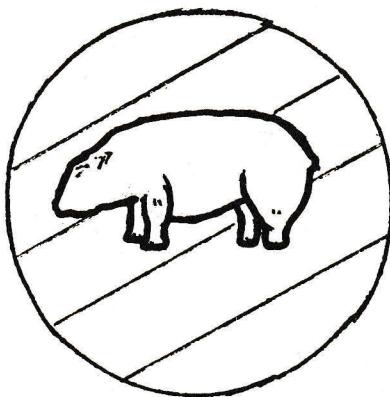


Figure 16



Figure 17

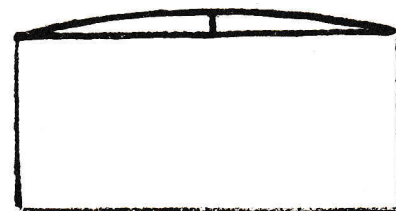


Figure 18

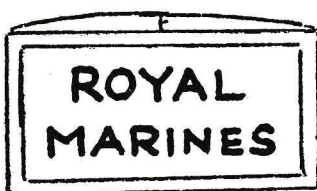


Figure 19

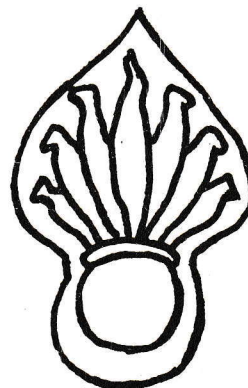


Figure 20

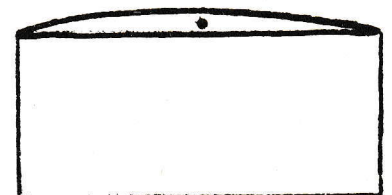


Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28

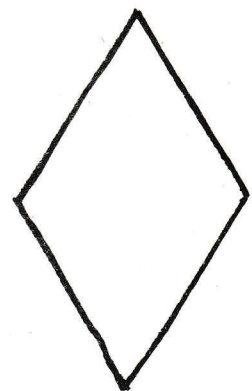


Figure 29



Figure 30

CAPTURE OF MAHDIST FLAG AT TOFREK

There are many interesting passages in the book "The Battle of Tofrek" by William Galloway about the Royal Marines and they refer to their display of steadiness and good discipline, and the excellent quality of their Officers.

An account is given of how one Officer, a Captain Thos. F. Dunscomb Bridge who was Adjutant of the Royal Marine Light Infantry Battalion, captured the Mahdist Flag in March 1885. The details are as follows:

"After the repulse of a main attack the Captain's attention was directed to a Sheik who was about fifty yards or so away with two men lying down beside him. He was waving a flag and gesticulating in a vain effort to induce his followers to advance.

The Officer mounted a horse and called on some Marines to follow. Three men responded. But the cry being raised that the enemy were again advancing, two of them fell back; the third, a Private Bayley, kept with his Officer who was riding forward, and with a well aimed shot from his revolver, sent the Arab rolling in the dust. He then asked the Marine to hand up the flag, and when he was satisfied that the man had got back safely to the battalion lines, he himself returned with the flag."

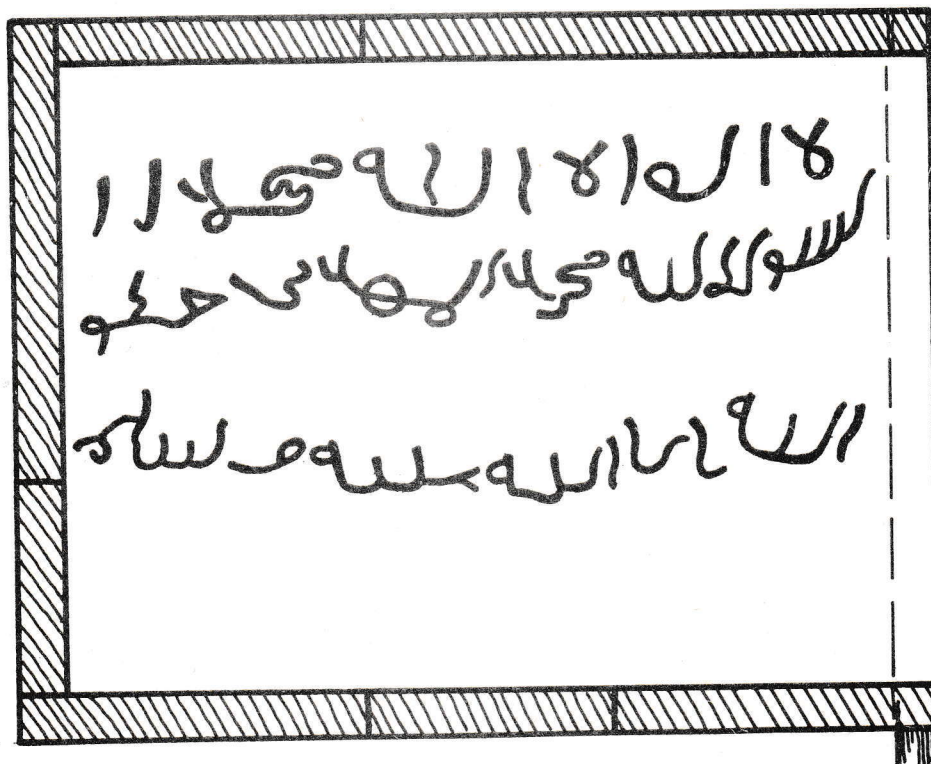
The flag is shown in the sketch below. It measures about four foot, nine inches by three foot, nine inches. The material is of unbleached cotton, with a red worsted border around three sides, 3" in width and firmly sewn together in short lengths. On the fourth side, both the cotton and worsted borders are folded over and sewn, closed at the top to form a long pocket for the pole to be inserted.

The Arabic inscription runs in three irregularly spaced lines, on the upper half of the flag, the letters being approx. 4" to 5" high, formed by narrow pieces of red cotton cloth. The inscription appears only on one side and the following translation is given:-

"There is no God but the Lord and Mohammed is his prophet
Mohammed al Mahdy (the guide)
The Lord bless and give him peace".

A.E. BOWELL.

THE MAHDIST FLAG



10

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN COOK RN

from a report by Lt. Molesworth Philips RM

Captain Cook landed at the town situated within the N.W. point with his pinnace and launch, leaving the small cutter off the point to prevent the escape of any canoes that might be disposed to get off. At his landing, he ordered nine Marines, which he had in the boats, and myself on shore to attend him, and he immediately marched into the town, where he enquired for Terre'aboo and the two boys (his sons, who had lived principally with Captain Cook on board the Resolution since Terre'aboo's first arrival amongst us).

Messengers were immediately dispatched, and the two boys soon came, and conducted us to their father's house. After waiting some time on the outside, Captain Cook doubted the old gentleman being there, and sent me in that I might inform him. I found our old acquaintance just awoke from sleep; when, upon my acquainting him that Captain Cook was at the door he very readily went with me to him. Captain Cook, after some little conversation, observed that Terre'aboo was quite innocent of what had happened, and proposed to the old gentleman to go on board with him, which he readily agreed to, and we accordingly proceeded towards the boats, but having advanced to the water side, an elderly woman, whose name was Kar'na'cub'ra, one of his wives, came to him, and with many tears and entreaties, begged he would not go on board. At the same time, two chiefs laid hold on him, and insisting that he should not, made him sit down: the old man now appeared dejected and frightened.

It was at this period we first began to suspect that they were not very well disposed towards us, and the Marines being huddled together in the midst of an immense mob, composed of at least two or three thousand people, I proposed to Captain Cook that they might be arranged in order along the rocks by the water side, which he approving of, the crowd readily made way for them, and they were drawn accordingly. We now clearly saw that they were collecting their spears etc. : but an awful rascal of a priest was singing and making a ceremonious offering to the Captain and Terre'aboo, to divert their attention from the manoeuvres of the surrounding multitude.

Captain Cook now gave up all thoughts of taking Terre'aboo on board, with the following observations to me "We can never think of compelling him to go on board without killing a number of these people", and I believe was just going to give orders to embark, when he was interrupted by a fellow armed with a long iron spike, which they call a pah'hoo'ah, and a stone. This man made a flourish with his pah'hoo'ah, and threatened to throw his stone, upon which Captain Cook discharged a load of small shot at him; but he having his mat on the small shot did not penetrate it, and had no effect than to further provoke and encourage them. I could not observe the least fright it occasioned.

Immediately upon this, an aroe, armed with a pah'hoo'ah, attempted to stab me, but I foiled his attempt by giving him a severe blow with the butt end of my musket. Just at this time they began to throw stones, and one of the Marines was knocked down. The Captain then fired a ball and killed a man. They now made a general attack, and the Captain gave orders to the Marines to fire, and afterwards called out - "Take to the boats". I fired just after the Captain, and loaded again whilst the Marines fired. Almost immediately upon my repeating the orders to take to the boats, I was knocked down by a stone, and in rising received a stab with a pah'hoo'ah in the shoulder: my antagonist was on the point of seconding his blow, when I shot him dead. The business was now a most miserable scene of confusion. The shouts and yells of the Indians far exceeded all the noise I ever came in the way of. These fellows, instead of retiring upon being fired at, as Captain Cook and I believe most people concluded they would, acted very contrary a part, that they never gave the soldiers time to reload their pieces, but immediately broke in upon and would have killed every man of them, had not the boats by a smart fire kept them a little off, and picked up those who were not too much wounded to reach them. After being knocked down I saw no more of Captain Cook.

All my people I observed were totally vanquished, and endeavouring to save their lives by getting into the boats. I therefore scrambled as well as I could into the water, and made for the pinnacle, which I fortunately got hold of, but not before I received another blow from a stone just above the temple, which, had not the pinnacle been very near, would have sent me to the bottom.

(According to Captain Clerke RN, Lt Phillips had not been many minutes in the boat when he saw one of his Marines, who was a bad swimmer and now disabled by wounds just upon the point of sinking. He immediately jumped overboard again, caught the man by his hair and brought him to the boat.)

A.C. GREEN.

EXTRACTS FROM THE 'SYDNEY GAZETTE'

(Mitchell Library, Sydney)

Sat. 26th March 1803

" Orders dated Aug. 20th 1789 to the effect
1st Detachment of Marines will be allowed to settle or return to England. They will be given 100 acres (NCOs) or 50 acres (Privates) over and above the entitlement per released convict, free of all rent and taxes for a period of ten years. After which time they will be liable to an annual 'quit rent' of one shilling per every 50 acres."

(This is a condensed extract from the original, there being a long list of qualifications etc. normal farm size per male convict was 30 acres, but an additional 20 if married and a further 10 per each child.)

The article concludes with the following notice:-

"The TAP-TOO to be beat off at 8 o'clock until further orders."

Sat. 30th Jan. 1813.

"The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in ordering home the detachments of R.Ms doing duty at the Derwent for some years, having granted permission to such of them as were so inclined to remain in the country and become settlers, and 28 of them having availed themselves of this option, HE the Governor and C in C directs that they shall be disbanded at Hobart Town on the 6th March next and struck off all military duties from that date, receiving one month's pay in advance in considering their long and faithful service and highly meritorious conduct for nine years past in this country.

As soon as the Marines are disbanded, and having received pay, they are to be permitted to go and reside on farms located for them at the Derwent, and then to receive from Government the same indulgencies as were formerly granted to the men of this distinguished Corps who were permitted to become settlers in Governor Phillips Government

(Signed) H.C. ANTILL. Major of Brigade. "

A.C. GREEN.