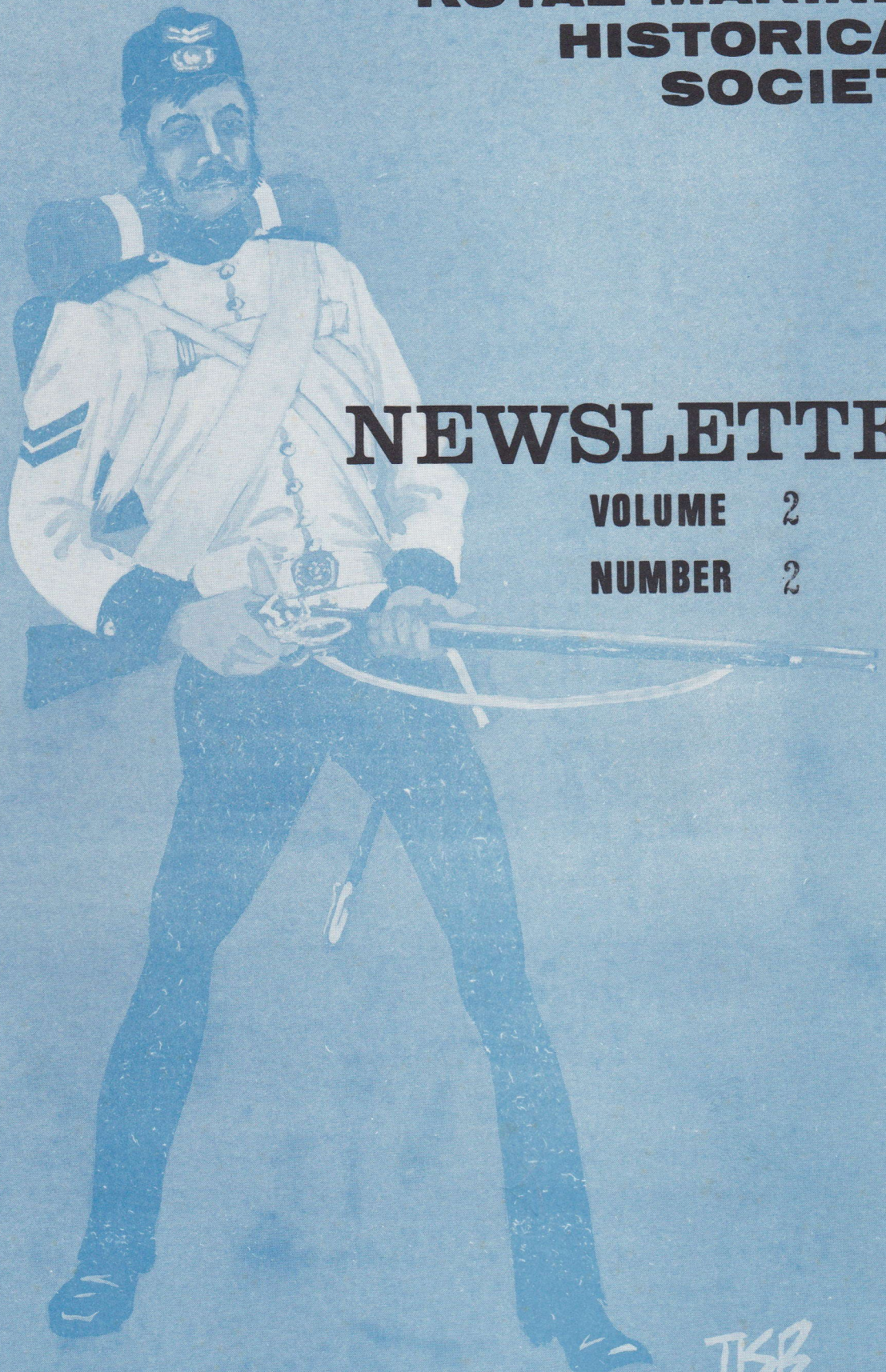


ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2

NUMBER 2



TSB '67

EDITORIAL

It appears that I am the third editor of the Newsletter in as many issues, having actually accepted the job before joining the Society.

I hope this will not lead members to believe that I have been 'press ganged' into the job of editor. In fact nothing could be further from the truth, for not only am I anxious to contribute to the Newsletter but I wish also to improve upon its presentation and widen the scope of its content.

My own interest is in the collecting of decorations and campaign medals awarded to the Corps, researching the campaigns associated with such awards and in obtaining biographical details of the recipients. To this end myself and Sydney Wood have produced a joint article giving biographical details of two officers who have been awarded the DSO and whose medals are now in our respective collections. I hope that other members will make similar contributions in the future.

As you will have seen from this edition, we are now in a position to accept photographs with copy for inclusion in the Newsletter. As a general rule I would like a negative to accompany any print forwarded to me, providing of course one is available. However, in special circumstances I am prepared to accept documents and items of militaria for photographing under service arrangements and at the Societies expense.

I believe the Globe and Laurel to be an excellent source of contemporary history particularly during the latter part of the 19th Century and the first years of this Century. It is therefore my intention to include in the Newsletter first hand accounts of minor wars and campaigns extracted from the Globe and Laurel. Hence the series of articles in this edition on the Gambia Expedition of 1894, taken from Globe & Laurels of 1894 and 1895.

I would very much like to see letters from members of the Society published in future Newsletters either adding to or criticizing articles, but above all I want plenty of suitable material for articles. Therefore I ask all members to make an earnest effort to make some contribution to our Newsletter during 1971 - even if only in letter form. The more material I receive, the more editions I will publish.

T I SCOTT-BELL
Royal Marines Museum
Royal Marines Barracks
Eastney
Southsea
Hants
PO4 9PP

Space is at present a limiting factor. However, as far as possible interesting acquisitions have been placed on display in the appropriate section. In the New Year it is intended to improve the Band Service display and to this end the RMSM have placed their old musical instruments and certain drums at our disposal, together with other interesting documents. There are still gaps in the Commando displays but the improvement of these entirely depends on the availability of Illustrators at TTWRM. However, I would like to pay tribute to the help given by TTWRM who despite a heavy work load on recruiting and other displays, have done a considerable amount of work for the Museum.

Every effort is made within our Displays to give a fair cross section of the Corps activities and I should mention here the recent correspondence in the Globe and Laurel regarding the lack of sea service representation within the Corps. I have written to the Editor pointing out that within the Museum, the sea service history of the Corps is represented and that in due course, when space becomes available, it is hoped to set up a Sea Service section.

The dockyard are currently manufacturing 6 new display cases, 6 medal cases and 2 large uniform cases which will then allow additional material to be displayed. There is still a long term need for a muniments section, open reference library and separate medal section.

COUNCIL NOTES

The Council were very pleased to learn that Colonel Mervyn Archdale, CBE., has notified his acceptance of the Presidency of the Society. Members so far in 1970 number 75, as against 69 in 1969. There were only 8 membership lapses from 1969.

Captain Sanford found that he had not sufficient time to devote to the Editorship of the Newsletter, and the Council were particularly pleased to record that Captain Scott-Bell had volunteered to take over this task. The changeover in Editors inevitably has delayed the production of this Newsletter.

Since the Annual General Meeting the Council has met twice and will be giving consideration shortly to the Historical Article Prize mentioned in the Minutes of the A.G.M.

The Council were also pleased to record a generous donation of two guineas to the Society, made by the Members of the Southbourne Womens' Institute.

A.L.B.

CORPS MUSEUM NOTES

by

THE CURATOR

During the past 6 months we have been fortunate enough to acquire, either by donation or purchase, a number of interesting exhibits. Although I do not intend to list them all, the following are worthy of mention:

- a. The original architects plan of 1860 for the requisition of property for the extension of Stonehouse Barracks from the original Barrack Street boundary to the present Durnford Street boundary.
- b. .45 pistol presented to Colonel B F Trench who as Captain RMLI was imprisoned for 4 years in the fortress at Glatz, Germany, for espionage in 1910. He was subsequently pardoned by the Kaiser in 1913.
- c. A glazed and framed print depicting the bravery of Captain Strangeways RM on board the Glatton in 1796. This was purchased and presented by a very great friend and benefactor of the Museum, Mr Peter Tilbury.
- d. A wine glass from the wardroom of HMS HOOD in 1938.
- e. A silver plated mess tin used by PO E H Hughes RN who was posted to the Hawke Battalion of the RN Division commanded by Lieutenant Colonel L Wilson RMLI. After service in Gallipoli in 1915-16 the two became life long friends resulting in PO Hughes son serving in the Corps for 19 years until he retired as a Captain in 1958. PO Hughes had the mess tin silver plated and engraved and given a place of honour in his home until his death at the age of 93.
- f. A memorandum from the Divisional Paymaster RMLI Plymouth (Major Nepean) dated 8 September 1897 to the OC 'D' Squadron 3rd KO Hussars Aldershot forwarding a money order for 6s 1d being the wages due for 7 days for a Private James Marks RMLI No Ply 5978. This was found with the money order still attached, behind a cupboard in a MPBW building at Shorncliffe which had formerly been used as the Officers' Mess of Somerset Barracks. History does not relate whether Private Marks was ever compensated for his loss of a week's pay!
- g. The original account of Hannah Snell, printed and published in 1752 from an affidavit sworn by her before the Lord Mayor of the City of London on 27 June 1750.
- h. A military drill book published in 1643. This was presented to CGRM by Admiral Sir Frank Twiss when he was Second Sea Lord.
- j. An original copy of The Auckland Times dated 18 March 1845 in which an account appears of the bravery of Captain Robertson RM and a few Marines of HMS HAZARD in defending the town against an attack by 2000 armed natives.
- k. Several gallantry medals and other medals including one of the two MMs awarded to 42 Commando for the landing at Limbang in December 1962, 2 DCMs, 2 DSMs, an OBE, three NGSS for operations between 1805 and 1840, a Greek Silver Medal Marine Caisse des Invalides (of which only 4 were awarded to Royal Marines and we now hold two), General Sir Thomas Hunton's collection (unfortunately less his KCB which cannot be found), the Reverend Arthur Price Hill's medals, the last Chaplain of the Crinoline Church at Eastney and a founder of the Trafalgar Club, and the medals of the five Ashby Brothers and the father which have formed a family display.
- l. Loan of the VC of Bombardier Wilkinson by the Officers' Mess RM Barracks Eastney.

GIBRALTAR OF THE WEST BERMUDA

Sometimes referred to as the 'Gibraltar of the West' it is perhaps only fitting that the Royal Marines should feature prominently in the history of Bermuda. It assumed this title in the mid-nineteenth century when Britain suspected the U.S.A. of acquiring ideas of Imperialistic grandeur similar to her own and thus built thirteen massive forts at strategic points throughout the islands. There had been other forts of course during the preceding two hundred years, such as Gates and the old Saint Catherine's, but nothing comparable to these new monsters.

I don't think that they ever served the purpose for which they were intended because by the time they were completed the two countries had become quite sociable, but it could be claimed that indirectly the forts did capture the Americans to a certain degree though not as originally planned. To staff these fortifications some two thousand troops were stationed at Prospect Camp near the new capital of Hamilton, and according to local legend some enterprising merchants spread word to New York that British Army Officers and men attended social functions in Hamilton in their colourful uniforms, and lo and behold by the end of that century the first tourist ship had docked alongside Front Street and since then Bermuda (and her economy!) have never looked back!

Prior to this Bermuda (after Juan de Bermudez, the Spaniard who discovered it) had had a rather chequered history since it was first settled, by accident, on the 28th July 1609 when Admiral Sir George Somers Flag ship 'Sea Venture' foundered on it's shores in a terrible storm. From unsuccessful tobacco attempts there followed periods of slave dumping, privateering (the polite name for piracy!) and professional shipwrecking. With the outbreak of the American War of Independence Bermuda was placed in a very awkward situation, for having become part of the colony of Virginia and thus dependent on the mainland for nearly all her supplies she was now suddenly forbidden by Britain to trade with these rebel colonies. A secret plot, however, was established between some Americans and Bermudians so that one night in 1775 the gunpowder magazine in a cavern near St. George (the first capital) was broken into and one hundred barrels 'misappropriated' ! They were taken down to Tobacco Bay and loaded on to a waiting American ship which repaid them in food and other supplies.

But it is not in the forts that we look for Corps history, because with the possible exception of old Fort Scaur overlooking the Naval Dockyard these were staffed by a succession of Army regiments, and apart from visiting ships the Royal Navy did not get a look in until 1797 when a base was set up on Ireland Island at the extreme west point of this chain of islands.

Where 'Jack' came, 'Royal' of course was not far behind, and so when the Dockyard as we see it today came under construction in 1810, no fewer than four hundred Marines were deployed to guard the 9094 convicts imported from England as builders. Living under appalling conditions in a fleet of prison hulks moored alongside, some 2041 of these men perished during a period of forty years, but their handiwork still stands although it was officially abandoned by the Royal Navy in 1951. (The British Army moved out in 1957).

Strangely enough although the Royal Marines maintained a strength of over one hundred men throughout the second half of the nineteenth century there is no mention of them in the 'Corps Bible' ("Britain's Sea Soldiers"), and so it is to the first editions of the 'Globe and Laurel' that we owe much of our information. More details came to light from two original diaries of R.M. Officers stationed there and which are now in the archives of the Corps Historian, whose abounding knowledge and help I am greatly indebted to.

The earliest Marine Guard Quarters were wooden constructions at Spar-yard Bay which were badly ventilated and unbearable in hot weather, so in 1817 new stone buildings were erected on the hill where the now empty Naval Club stands;

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and the following year the old Marine Infirmary was replaced by the Naval Hospital at Watford Island, comprising of four wards with 20 beds in each. This was also convict built, and although still standing is now in a very derelict state. The old hulks mentioned earlier which housed either convicts or stores were the following ships 'Antelope', 'Dromedary', 'Coromandel', 'Weymouth', 'Tenedos', 'Thames' and 'Medway'. (The latter was used later in 1861 to receive a battalion of Marines returning from Mexico).

On average 20% of all yellow fever victims died, but compared with the 27% in 1818 when 105 deaths were recorded, the worst year was actually a drop to 11% although the numbers were greater of 1047 fever victims in hospital, 114 died. On the other hand Dysentery took on average only 20 persons per year, which considering the conditions at that time was quite remarkable.

Between the dockyard and the hospital the R.N./R.M. cemetery came into being during the year 1812, in an almost picturesque wooded gully, and although at first it was shared by the convicts it was later found necessary to remove these to another site on Watford Island because of the large numbers involved. The blue lagoon which cuts into one corner of the Naval Cemetery covers the low lying area where the first yellow fever victims were buried, and some hygienic-conscious officer thought it would be a good idea to breach the sea wall and flood the site. It might have proved satisfactory if only they hadn't closed up the wall again when the road was built between dockyard and hospital (the west coast road is relatively new) for then the stagnant pool became a vile smelling cess-pit, and a report to the C-in-C diagnoses the cause to 'percolation from the graves' !! So it was opened up once again by means of a bridge, and I am happy to report that all 'percolation' has long since ceased!

In 1863 those convicts surviving were shipped out, either to England or Australia, leaving an acute labour shortage in the dockyard. To fill this vacuum an order circulated to the effect that old soldiers ending their engagements could volunteer for labouring or trade jobs in place of the convicts, at 1/3d. per day additional to regular pay.

The 'Globe and Laurel' in 1862 reports that on October 25th. at 4 a.m. a twentysix strong detachment of RMLI (OCRM Captain F.W. Thomas) paraded at Chatham Barracks to embark by mail train to London and thence to Portsmouth for H.M.S. 'Galatea', bound for Bermuda under this new scheme.

I mentioned diaries earlier and the first of these was in the hands of 1st Lieutenant James J. Willes who lists the detachment at Ireland Island in 1814 as 1 Major, 1 Paymaster, 1 Adjutant, 2 Lieutenants, 1 Staff Sergeant, 4 Sergeants, 9 Corporals, 1 Drummer and 21 Privates augmented by over 400 Colonial Marines.

He quotes directives from Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane for various undertakings of the 3rd. Battalion of Royal Marines under Major George Lewis R.M. in their many raids along the American coast which culminated in the burning of Washington (on which point the U.S.M.C. frequently hand out reminders!) If any excuse is sought on this score, it might be found in the entry for July 20th (quote)!. ventured to the River Norminy. Poison found in some spirits, therefore orders given by Admiral Cochrane to destroy by fire every house on the river going back'. (The men of course relied on captured food and other supplies for their survival one wonders however whether the spirits concerned really were poisoned by the retreating Americans or could it have been a form of local 'moonshine brew' to which their stomachs were unaccustomed?!)

Nevertheless the destruction of Washington on the 24th was not attributable to the Corps alone, other Regiments were involved.

'Britain's Sea Soldiers' (Vol. One.) which covers this episode from an anonymous diary also gives details of the 3rd Battalion.

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'..... with other detachments who had been doing similar duty in Holland, they were formed into a battalion consisting of ten companies of 100 men each under Major Lewis, to which was attached a Company of R.M.A. under Captain James Harrison. The Battalion sailed for Bermuda on 7th April in the troopships 'Regulus', 'Meloomone' and 'Brune' (R.M.A. on board convoy ship 'Tonnant'). After spending some weeks at Bermuda in drills and other exercises, the Battalion sailed for the Chesapeake on the 30th June

The second diary which I now mention belonged to Lieut. Henry Richard Talbot Lloyd of the R.M.L.I. who, at the age of 23 years, arrived at Bermuda on March 14th 1895 and hated every day of his stay until departing again on April 25th 1898.

Even then he was thwarted and left a very disappointed man. The normal route by ship to England then was via Halifax (Nova Scotia), but Lieut. Lloyd dearly wished to see New York and offered to pay the difference in fare to go that way.

His relief, Lieut. Goerge F. Muller, unfortunately was late in arriving and so he missed the sailing of the New York bound ship and returned the way he had come out. A year later he gained promotion to Captain and the following year he lay dead, aged 28 years, killed in the attack of Tiensen, during the 'Boxer Rebellion' in China.

Despite the gloom and despondency his diary purports it is at least always witty and lively for example 'X called to see how I was - obviously looking for a drink! '

..... 'Miss Quincey, an American spinster of 35, and a camp follower, arrives regularly each year and rents a house as near to the dockyard as possible. She has been on the look-out for a young officer since time immemorial' !!! (and finally) Lieut. Custance R.M. of H.M.S. Talbot (an unhappy ship) called, looked me up and down in unfeigned astonishment when I told him I had been here three years. He obviously expected to see a gibbering idiot! '

Lieut. Lloyd was obviously very bored and lonely, spending much of his time riding around on a cycle and ferry boats, moaning about the incessant rain (definitely not mentioned in travel agents brochures!) and the dull social rut of endless tennis, cricket and tea parties with overbearing ladies.

The only work he appears to have done in the four months covered by the diary was to take visiting ships detachments in arms drill, and attend punishment parades and funerals! *1. (See footnote). He does eventually condescend, however, to suggest that it is not such a bad place after all if you have plenty of money, (which he obviously lacked!).

Lieut. Lloyd R.M. was on the staff of the H.Q. Commissioners House in the dockyard, which had the Naval Prison attached to it, with a Captain of Marines as Governor, and a Colour Sergeant as Chief Warder. There was a permanent detachment of 110 officers and men under Captain Charles Curtoys when he arrived on the island, and later the OCRM handed over to Captain Herbert St. Leger Curties R.M.L.I. who obviously did not long survive, for his was one of the many graves that I came across of Royal Marines. (Died 19th September 1900 the same year as Lieut. Lloyd). Others mentioned in the diary also lie buried in the Naval Cemetery, including a few of the wives and daughters of his fellow officers who had so 'plagued' his leisure hours!

Prince George (later King George V.) served at Bermuda for a year in 1890 in command of a gunboat 'Thrush', his stay cut short by the sudden death of his elder brother, Prince Victor Albert, making it necessary for him to go home for training in his new role as 'heir apparent'.

Nothing outstanding seems to have happened between then and the First World War, and then not until it was nearly over in 1917 did Bermuda and the West Indies have attention focussed on them, as German submarines were going further afield into

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the Atlantic.

Ten N.C.O's and forty men under Major J.R.H. Homfray R.M.A. sailed from Liverpool in the 'Olympic' on May 12th taking six 4.7 inch guns and mountings with them. Four more guns were despatched on another ship which was sunk, but replacements soon followed. During passage the detachment manned the ships 6 inch defensive guns, and on arrival at Halifax they transferred to H.M.S. 'Drake' which on May 22nd delivered the men at Bermuda the guns following by Royal Mail!!

After considerable debate the guns were eventually distributed as follows:- 2 at Trinidad - 2 Barbados - and one each at Grenada, Antigua, Dominica, St. Kitts, Nassau and St. Vincent. (Bermuda obviously had enough of her own!). Between October and November they were all in position and thus they waited and waited!

If the guns remained idle the men it seems did not, for instances are reported of them training the local militia to a very high standard, and combining the art of camouflage with experimental market gardening. The latter venture not entirely successful as in one instance where at the first practice firing the air was rent in a shower of squashed melons and tomatoes!

The 'Royals' made themselves very popular with the locals, with the possible exception of Barbados where they burst the towns water mains whilst manouvering the guns through Bridgetown's Trafalgar Square!

Three months after the Armistice they all filtered back to Bermuda trailing their guns behind them! All was not lost however, for at last they caught sight of the enemy on the troopship from St. Johns, New Brunswick, when they were called upon to quieten down the one hundred P.O.W's in the ship.

This must surely rank as one of the strangest draft chits in the annals of the Corps, and I wonder if by chance there are amongst our readers any still with us who took part in this 'action' ?

During World War Two the importance of Bermuda of course was greatly increased with U-boats and other German ships lurking all around to terrorise our convoys, so it became a prime base for British, Canadian and American Forces. Whilst the dockyard flourished as never before, many Marines will no doubt recall life at Warwick Camp which I think I am correct in saying came into existence at this time (can any reader verify this ?), and which in more recent years as the home of the Bermuda Regiment has given 'sanctuary' to visiting ships detachments.

When civil disturbances threatened the island in July of 1969 the Royal Marines were again called upon to send out a force to keep law and order, so maintaining the link for a little longer at least, but as decay overtakes the Naval Hospital, and new industries threaten to engulf the Dockyard, those grey stone slabs in the well kept cemetery may soon be the only outward visible reminder that once ' Royal was here' !

A. J. PERRETT.

- *1. Private O. Lay, R.M.L.I. is one mentioned whose grave can be seen still, and mention is made of the sale of his kit raising the sum of £8. 13. 3d. for his family.

The following extracts from the Bermuda Gazette (April 1816 and September 1824) will be of interest to members.

was
left,
the
ON.

BILLS on Norfolk, Baltimore, Philadelphia or New York, at twenty days sight, for sale by

JAMES & THOMAS TUCKER.

Hamilton, April 25, 1816.

ng,

WHEREAS the late Sutler of the Marine Battalion Mefs, at Ireland Island, has received Goods, to a very considerable amount, from different Merchants in the Bermudas, for which I have become accountable; and the whole of which Goods having been disposed of, by him, for ready money, with considerable profits thereon: no part of which has yet been produced for the payment of the said debts; And whereas suspicions have arisen that the said Monies have been secreted or made away with by him with a fraudulent intention. I do hereby request all Persons who may have had any transactions with the said Sutler to come forward and give notice thereof immediately to me. And I do further offer, as a reward to any Person or Persons who will give such information as will lead to a discovery of the said monies, ONE HUNDRED POUNDS currency.

THOS. CARTER, Capt. R. M.

Ireland Island, Bermuda, April 25, 1816.

some

STONE WANTED,

5000 9 Inch,

5000 7 ditto,

BERMUDA GAZETTE.

HAMILTON, SEPTEMBER 11, 1824.

Arrived at St. George's, on Sunday last, Transports *Sovereign*, Captain Wells, and *Loyal Briton*, Captain Mitcalf, with 319 Royal Marines, (officers and men,) under the command of Lieut. Col. Lewis. They landed on Tuesday morning, and proceeded to the Barracks of the above Town, where they are to be garrisoned. On application to Major English, we were politely favoured with the names of the following Officers according to their rank:—

Lieut.-Colonel Lewis; Majors English and Gray; Captain Hornbrook; Lieuts. Morgan, (adjutant;) Moore, Layton, Evans, Cookson, and Baker; Messrs. Duke, (surgeon;) and McTear, (assistant.)

Number of Women, 31—Children, 24.

The *Sovereign* passed Plymouth on the 27th July; the *Loyal Briton* sailed on the 25th.—Agent for the former Transport—Lieut. Kelsall; and for the latter—Lieut.

In St. George's, daughter of Samuel A. I

At Heron Bay, daughter of Capt.

CU

Sept. 3 Brig Rover

CUS

Sept. 6 Sloop Eliza

Sept. 4 Brig Highl

8 Schr. Jame

LETTERS

COLOUR SERGEANTS OF THE ROYAL MARINE

ARTILLERY.

By W.E. Davey, MBE, BEM, Royal Marines
Historical Society.

A question has been posed as to why there should have been Colour Sergeants in the Royal Marine Artillery, a title not commonly applied to three stripes and a crown in an artillery formation, maybe because artillery do not carry colours. (The theory that the colours of artillery are their guns is appreciated, but is not relevant to this particular problem).

There was also a further question as to when the rank came into use.

There must be an answer buried somewhere, but within my limited fields of research I can't find it! But I have enough circumstantial information to set up a theory, based on "Britain's Sea Soldiers" and "The Royal Marine Artillery", and some enquiries of my own, and I'll be only too glad to see it bowled over if anyone has the true answer.

My theory starts from the premise that in its initial conception the Royal Marine Artillery was not a separate Division, indeed its earliest members seem to have been much after the style of specialist marines, like clerks, signallers and the like, developing into a formation within a formation, separate as far as its gunnery activities were concerned, but nevertheless an integral part of the Corps coming within the ambit of the Division's general administrative arrangements. Autonomy was a gradual process culminating in the formation of a separate Division, but until that happened, the RMA participated in and conformed with the general arrangements of the Corps in so far as they did not interfere with special artillery activities.

This is no doubt an over simplification, but I hope it is sufficiently near the mark for the purposes of this problem.

The RMA was not, at any time during its existence, permanently organised around its own guns as is, for instance, a battery of field artillery, but was in fact a body of men organised as infantry, having special qualifications enabling it to take over and operate guns at the drop of a hat. There was never, in the artillery field of the RMA, any requirement specifically reserved for a man wearing three stripes and a crown, so, for the purpose of examining the Colour Sergeant rank we can forget the Artillery specialisation - it came to the RMA when it came to the rest of the Corps.

So we come to the question of the development of the rank of Colour Sergeant in the Royal Marines.

The Early complements recorded in such books as "Britain's Sea Soldiers" and "The Royal Marine Artillery" go into considerable detail - for instance, in 1862 ("RMA" Vol II, page 513) the composition of companies was -

Rank	RMA (24 companies)	RMLI (116 companies)
Captain	1	1
Subaltern	2	2
Sergeant	8	6
Corporal	6	6
Bombardier	5	0
Drummer or Bugler	2	3
Gunner	107	0
Private	0	109
TOTALS ..	131	127

Plenty of detail here, but no Colour Sergeants; the inference is that, while there must obviously have been a senior sergeant in each company, the post had no special significance for either substantive rank or pay - indeed, much like the Sergeant Major in a ship, who can be anybody, and whose title is properly the Senior NCO.

In 1867 there was a further re-organisation of the RMA companies (RMA Vol II page 520) from 24 Companies each of 131 men to 18 Companies each containing 168 men, composed of -

Captain	1
Second Captain	1
Lieutenants	3
Sergeants	9
Corporals	7
Bombardiers	7
Buglers	5
Gunners	135
TOTAL	168

There were still no Colour Sergeants, although, as will appear later, a special allowance had been granted to the senior sergeant, together with a special badge - the beginnings of the senior NCO of a company, as long ago as 1814. Neither was there any post of Colour Sergeant in the Divisional Headquarters Staff, which, together with the companies, completed the whole picture of the strength of the Corps. The deduction must be that if they appeared in neither Company nor Divisional HQ strengths, then there just weren't any, at least as a substantive rank. The Divisional HQ staff of 1867 is shewn in "RMA" Vol II page 520 as follows -

Colonel Commandant	1	First Drill Sergeant	1
Colonel 2nd Commandant	1	Provost Sergeant	1
Lieut. Colonels	4	Barrack Sergeant	1
Paymaster	1	Adjutant's 1st Clerk	1
Barrackmaster	1	Paymaster's 1st Clerk	1
Surgeon	1	Hospital Sergeant	1
Assistant Surgeons	2	Gunnery Instructors	3
% Captain Gunnery Instructor ...	3	Musketry Sgt. Instructor ..	1
% Captain Musketry Instructor ..	1	Armourer Sergeant	1
% Staff Captain	1	Master Tailor	1
% Second Captain & Adjutant	2	Bandmaster	1
Quartermasters	3	Drum Major	1
Sergeant Majors	2	Bugle Major	1
Quartermaster Sergeants	3	Officers Mess Sergeant ...	1
X Superintending Schoolmaster ..	1	Pay Sergeants	8
Schoolmasters	3		
		TOTAL	54

% 3/6 per diem extra duty pay.
X 7/- per day.

Again, plenty of detail here, but still no Colour Sergeants! However, against this we have the fact that, according to "Britain's Sea Soldiers" Vol II Page 24, Company Sergeants (presumably the senior Sergeant in each company) were granted a special badge and 6d per diem in 1814, and about that time we have the first mention in these books of a Colour Sergeant (BSS Vol I page 296 line 15). In 1825 (page 75 line 18) and 1829 (page 76 line 16) we have another complication - the first mention of Staff Sergeants in these books. It seems that in those times, as indeed in my own time and right up to the Second World War, Staff Sergeants were included in Divisional Staffs only, with the sole exception of properly formed Battalions sent out from Divisions. In those early days, Staff Sergeants were divided into two classes, the First Class being those on QMS level, the Second those who were appointed to a particular job from which they could return on completion to their normal position as a Sergeant or Colour Sergeant.

So, amid all this confusion, it seems that up to 1867 and possibly later, neither RMA nor RMLI had Colour Sergeants as a substantive rank with a definite authorised complement, although this does not of course rule out the reasonable possibility of there having been some "status symbol" given to senior Sergeants in certain posts. This may even have been a "Colour Sergeant" as an honorary distinction!

In support of this last possibility, we have an unnamed Colour Sergeant mentioned in "Britain's Sea Soldiers" as early as 1814 (Vol. I, page 296, line 15), when, according to the authorised complements printed above, the rank did not exist! This particular Colour Sergeant was at the time serving in the 2nd Bn, RM, in Canada, which had been sent out as a formed unit from England, probably taking the Portsmouth Division Colours with it. The incident giving rise to the mention of this Colour Sergeant is worth recording, since it contains the implication, or at least possibility, that he occupied a post of which there was only one in any given formation of men. The occasion was the capture of Fort Oswego from the Americans. Lieut. Laurie RM led the first party to enter the fort, climbed the flagstaff under fire, tore down the colours nailed to it and replaced them with the British flag. On descending, severely wounded, he was about to be shot by an American when his Colour Sergeant bayoneted the American. The emphasis is on the words "his Colour Sergeant" implying that there was only one of that rank - quite possibly the Company Sergeant. Unfortunately I have been unable to find out his name.

In 1814, also, as we noted earlier, Company Sergeants were granted a special badge and sixpence per diem, but there is no mention of this being a promotion, and it was in all probability non-substantive pay during employment in the post, terminable on ceasing this special duty. But it seems to suggest the roots of the rank of Colour Sergeant, and would be applicable equally to RM and RMA since, before they attained their own Division, the RMA usually formed the leading companies of the Division to which they were attached, each company being commanded by its own RMA Officers, RMA Company Sergeants and Non-Commissioned Officers generally.

Dated 1854 we have an engraving, published in the Illustrated London News at the time, of a Colour Sergeant, RMA, wearing the Colour Sergeants Arm Badge of the time, a single Union Flag flying, with a large Globe and Laurel over a Foul Anchor superimposed on the flag, the whole surmounted by a Crown, and supported by a pair of crossed swords over a single chevron. In addition this badge, when worn by a RMA rank, had between the crossed swords and the chevron an eight-pointed grenade in gold; altogether a gorgeous badge, about seven inches long, in gold and silver wire and lace, with crimson velvet in the Union Flag. The RM badge is stated in "Britain's Sea Soldiers" (Vol. II page 78) to have come into use in 1854, but the RMA version has been stated to have been in use as early as about 1835.

In 1864, we are told by Sergeant Major J. Wilson, the first Sergeant Major of the Royal Marine Artillery, in his recollections (quoted in RMA Vol. II page 516), that in the newly developing Eastney Barracks, at that time being occupied piecemeal as each part was finished, Colour Sergeants were grouped with Second Class Staff Sergeants for Married Accommodation, with a definite standing of their own, despite the fact that the rank does not appear in complements of the time. Incidentally, this ties in very well with the recollections of Colour Sergeant Bethell, now aged 97, about whom I wrote recently, and who recollects the rank of Company Colour Sergeant very well. It did not, in fact, end until the beginning of the First World War.

I do not seem to have got very far with my enquiries into the beginnings of Colour Sergeants, but I suppose I have got somewhere, even if I'm not quite sure where! I realise that the rank of Colour Sergeant is not solely a Marine rank, many formations have it, but as far as the Corps is concerned my present suggestion is that the position of Colour Sergeant was initially given to Company Sergeants in 1814 (even if Company Sergeant was still its official designation) and that it

was later extended to include other "Senior Sergeant" posts, with the name of Colour Sergeant. From that point it gradually developed from "Special Duty Pay" to a separate rank.

But I know I haven't really found the answer. So can anyone help?



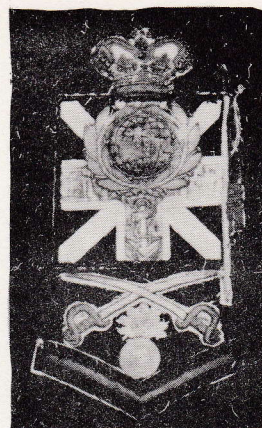
A Colour Sergeant Royal Marine Artillery 1870. This badge was introduced in 1868 and was similar to the RMLI Badge shown at figure 4 in the family tree. The Chevron was removed in 1881 in parallel with the RMLI. The subject of this portrait is wearing the Crimean Medal with two clasps and the Turkish Crimean and Baltic Medals.



2



1



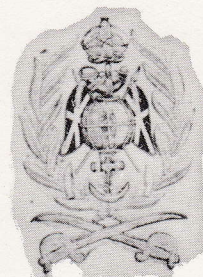
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4



8



6



5



9



7

1. First distinguishing badge for Colour Sergeant, Royal Marines, introduced 20th August 1814. (Scarlet Cloth).
2. New badge for RM introduced about 1830. (Scarlet Cloth).
3. Similar as 2 but for RMA Companies. (Blue Cloth).
4. New badge for RMLI introduced 1868. (Scarlet Cloth).
5. Similar to 4 but for RMA. (Blue Cloth).
The badge was worn on the right arm, and three chevrons were worn on the left arm. In 1881 the single chevron was removed, and thereafter the badge was worn above three chevrons on the right arm.
6. New badge with Tudor Crown introduced in 1902. (Scarlet Cloth).
7. Similar to 6 but for RMA. (Blue Cloth).
8. New badge for RM introduced in 1925. Worn until full dress abolished in 1939. (Blue Cloth).
9. Present badge for Colour Sergeants RM introduced in 1957. (Blue Cloth).

Editor's Note.

Mr. Davey has undoubtedly come to the correct solution that the rank of Colour Sergeant was introduced into the Corps in 1814, one year after the army! The content of the original letter dated 27 July 1813 from the Secretary of State for War to all Officers in Command of Regiments of Foot is set out below:

"Sir, I have the honour to acquaint you, that in consideration of the meritorious services of non-commissioned officers of the army and with the view to extending encouragements and advantages to those ranks of the Infantry, corresponding to those benefits which the appointment of troop Sergeant Majors Officers in the cavalry; his Royal Highness the Prince Regent has been most graciously pleased, in the name and on behalf of his Majesty, to order that from the 25 June 1813, inclusive pay of the Sergeant Major in every regiment of Infantry not subject to a limitation of service as to place, shall be increased to three shillings per diem".

"His Royal Highness has also been pleased to order, that from the same date one Sergeant of the establishment in each company of the said regiments shall be designated 'Colour Sergeant' and that his pay shall be raised to two shillings and four pence per diem".

"The Colour Sergeants are to be distinguished by an honourable badge, of which, however, and the advantages attending it, they will in the case of misconduct, be liable to be deprived at the discretion of the Colonel or Commanding Officer of the regiment or by the sentence of a court martial. It is also intended that the duty of attending the colours in the field shall at all times be performed by the Colour Sergeants, but that these distinctions shall not be permitted to interfere with the regular performance of their regimental and company duties. I have the honour to be Sir etc. PALMERSTON".

The family tree of Colour Sergeants Badges will be of interest to members of the Society, even though the 1830 RMA Colour Sergeant badge was covered by Ernie Bowell in an article Vol I number 3 of the Newsletter.

A further RMA Colour Sergeants Badge is illustrated in the portrait. This badge incorporates the chevron, which was removed in the 1868 badge. The subject of the portrait is wearing medals for the Crimean and Baltic Campaigns, so was probably dated in the early 1860's.

Incidentally, I notice in 'The Society for Army Historical Research' special publication (1949) entitled 'Badges of Warrant and Non-Commissioned Rank in the British Army' the following statement:

"Colour Sergeants were probably introduced into the Royal Artillery at about the same time as in the Infantry".

ROYAL MARINES AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO 18TH JUNE 1815

There were two former officers of the Royal Marines at Waterloo, Lieutenant Robert Preston Campbell (Artillery) and Lieutenant Orlando Felix (Infantry).

Lieutenant Campbell obtained Admiralty leave to transfer to the Army in 1814 and joined the 7th Royal Fusiliers as a subaltern. He was A.D.C. to Major General Frederick Adam at Waterloo and after the rout of Napoleon's Old Guard was advancing with the foremost British troops when he came upon a French 9-pounder gun which had been abandoned, he dismounted and turned it on the retreating enemy. This is believed to have been the last gun fired at Waterloo. He was placed on half-pay February 25th 1816 and on 27th March 1823 given a company in the Ceylon Rifles. He died in Ceylon about 1825. His Waterloo Medal engraved Lieut. R.P. Campbell 7th Royal Fusiliers was sold in the Elson sale at Glendinning's on 27th February 1963 and realised £200.

Lieutenant Orlando Felix served in the Mediterranean with the Royal Marines in 1813. He joined the 27th Inniskilling Fusiliers in August of that year as an ensign and served with the Regiment in the Peninsular. He transferred to the 95th, the Rifle Brigade and was wounded at Quatre Bras 16th June 1815, two days later he fought at Waterloo. Placed on half pay 31st October 1826. He became an Egyptologist of repute and was the first to decipher the names and titles of the Pharaohs. Died 1860 with the rank of Major General. I have not been able to trace his Waterloo or Military General Service medals so if any member can assist would they please let me know.

SIDNEY WOOD.

EDITORS NOTE

The following letter by Captain Portlock-Dadson appeared in the Globe and Laurel (December 1910), and gives further details of these two officers careers in the Corps:

"The following record of an old comrade may be of interest - Robert Preston Campbell was appointed 2nd Lieutenant 124 Company 8 July 1804; 1st Lieutenant (en second) 15 August 1805; 1st Lieutenant 4th Coy 18 November 1807. Resigned his commission 2 June 1814. Appointed Lieutenant, without purchase 7th Royal Fusiliers 26 May 1814, placed on half pay at the reduction 25 February 1816. Lieutenant 61st Regiment, 2 January 1823, Captain Ceylon Rifles 27 March 1823. Died at Kandy, Ceylon 18 January 1825.

As Aide-de-Camp to Major General Adams he was present and fired the last gun at Waterloo. (Vide Waterloo Roll Call, p26; Silborne's Waterloo Vol II p 234 and Historical Records 52nd Regiment p 266).

During his service in the Corps he was at the Siege of Cadiz in 1810 and as Senior Officer RMA officially reported to Major Minto, then in command of the RMA Chatham, the deaths of Lieutenants Worth and Buckland, who were killed by the same shot in the attack on and destruction of, shipping at Port Mary on 23 November. He was at the siege during 1811 and 1812 served under Colonel William Robinson CB RMA with the Sicilian Flotilla of gun vessel co-operating with the Army. The despatch of 22 July the attack on, and destruction of, eleven large armed vessels at Pictra Nera, on the coast of Calabria, when Congreve rockets were used with great effect against a force of about 1,200 men including cavalry. In this affair the RMA had two men killed and seven wounded. On 15 February 1813, he was with the flotilla at the attack on the batteries which had been thrown up at Pictra Nera, in co-operation with four companies of the 75th Regiment, when fifty Sail of armed vessels, chiefly Neapolitan gun boats, were destroyed.

Return of killed, wounded, missing and prisoners of the British Division of the Army, serving on the eastern coast of Spain, commanded by the Right Honourable, Lieutenant General Lord William Bentinck KB in action with the French Army under Marshall Suchet (at Ordal) on the 12 and 13 September 1812 - Royal Marine Artillery - Lieutenant Campbell, Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, severely, not dangerously.

He, like so many other subalterns, despairing of promotion or recognition of service in his own Corps, went into the line for service in the Peninsular Campaign. 2nd Lieutenant Orlando Felix who served at Cassio in 1813, and afterwards with the 27th Regiment at Ordal, was thus mentioned in the military despatch: 'I feel it justice to mention the good conduct of Lieutenant Felix of the Royal Marines, attached to the Battalion'. He was appointed Ensign 27th Regiment 26 August 1813, served at Waterloo, and died as a Major General in 1860. Lieutenant General Thomas Wearing RM arrived on the field of Waterloo on the evening of 18 June, with despatches for the Duke of Wellington. I had this from his granddaughter's husband, Colonel McInnis CMG. After being Aide-de-Camp to the Queen (Victoria) and a Commandant, he died on the active service list of General Officers on 19 May 1863. My old friend, General Clavell, told me that in his first detachment in the Syria Campaign of 1840, one of his sergeants wore the Waterloo Medal, having re-enlisted from in the Corps after his line regiment was reduced at the peace.

W. PORTLOCK-DADSON "

I have examined the medal roll for Syria 1840 and note that 2nd Lieutenant Clavell was serving on HMS GANGES at the time. The only sergeant I can find from that ship, who claimed the Naval General Service Medal for Syria was Samuel Smith. As there must have been several hundred Samuel Smiths' present at Waterloo, I don't think it is worthwhile for any member rushing to the nearest Waterloo roll to try and confirm Captain Portlock-Dadson's statement.

General Wearing of course was not actually present during the course of the Battle and therefore was not able to claim the medal. Had he received it, it would have been an unique case of the medals for Waterloo and Trafalgar being awarded to an individual. Wearing served on board the 'Conqueror' at Trafalgar.

TWO DSO GROUPS AWARDED TO
THE ROYAL MARINES
BY
SIDNEY WOOD AND IAN SCOTT-BELL

Both DSO groups discussed in this article are interesting for widely different reasons. The White group includes campaign medals for three major wars (Egypt, South Africa and the Great War) and a DSO for the epic defence of Ladybrand. Nothing appealed more to the Victorians than a good defence in some far distant part of the empire, except perhaps for a 'forlorn-hope'. The Legations at Peking and Chitral under Colonel Townsend (Ex RMLI) immediately spring to mind.

Members of the Society who are interested in collecting medals to the Corps will note that the White Group includes the King's South Africa Medal. In Major Gordon's book on Campaign Medals, widely accepted as a standard book of reference, it is stated that only 7 King's South Africa Medals were awarded to the Naval Service (including the Corps). This is simply not true, although we agree that the medal is rarely seen and therefore must be considered a choice collectors piece, an examination of the Naval roll for this medal shows 24 members of the Corps received it. There can be no doubt that others attached to Army Units, as in White's case, appear in the Army Medal Roll.

The White DSO and a DCM to Colour Sergeant Carter RMA (attached Royal Artillery) were the only gallantry awards to members of the Corps for the South African War, except those given to Royal Marines serving in the Naval Brigade.

On the other hand there is nothing particularly remarkable about the Sketchley Group. The interest here lies in the citation and the fact that he was a divisional staff officer at the time. One can understand the reason for his presence in the reserve trenches, presumably to report the progress of the attack back to Divisional HQ, via his runner Lance Corporal Way*. To stop men who are falling back in disorder / and in the circumstances implied in the citation, was a considerable achievement in itself. To then lead them forward not once but thrice, shows that Sketchley possessed truly remarkable powers of leadership, an iron will and courage that must be the envy of lesser mortals.

Had Sketchley survived the Great War there can be little doubt that his obvious ability and outstanding personal qualities would have taken him to the highest offices of the Corps.

* Lance Corporal Way RMLI was awarded the CGM for his part in the action.

/ When Sketchley's citation appeared in the Globe and Laurel in 1916, the editor hastily pointed out (as we do now), that the formation concerned was not in any way connected with either the Corps or the RN Division. We have in fact identified the formation, but do not feel that any useful purpose would be served in mentioning it in our article.

COLONEL FREDERICK WHITE, D.S.O., R.M.L.I.

Frederick White was born on 14th October, 1861, the son of Major George White, R.M.L.I. He joined the Royal Marine Light Infantry 1st February, 1879, and served with the Egyptian Expedition of 1882-84, taking part in the bombardment of Alexandria, occupation of the lines of the town, and occupation of Port Said (medal with clasp and Khedive's Star, Lieut. HMS. TEMERAIRE).

He again saw active service in the Sudan in 1884, was present at the battles of El-Teb and Tamaii and relief of Tokar (2 clasps and Order of the Medjidie). The following is from Colonel Tuson's despatch - "Lieutenant White was personally ordered by the Major General Commanding to charge the left redoubt of the enemy's position at Teb with his Company. He rushed to the front, when two of the enemy sprang on him, one on each side. He cut one man down twice with his sword, when Private Birtwhistle rushed to his assistance and forced his bayonet right through the black, breaking it short off. The black then severely wounded Birtwhistle, who clubbed his musket and brained him. The other black was stopped attacking Lieutenant White by Private F. Yerbury, who caught the man by the hair of his head, spinning him round and round so that he could not use his assegai, when Sergeant Major Hirst rushed to the front and despatched him. Those four were also in a dangerous position in front of the attack at the time, as the fire from the side of the square was still continued on each side of them".

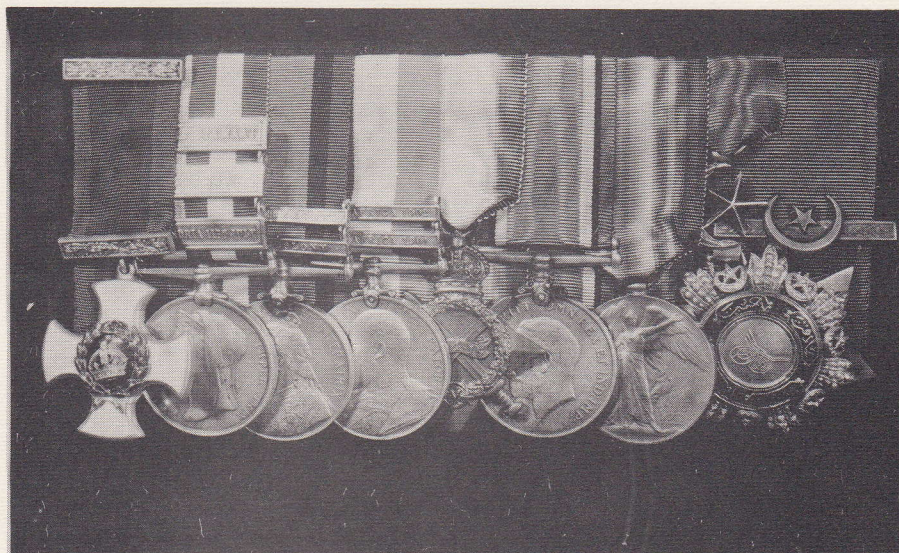
White was promoted Captain 26th August, 1888, to Major 6th September, 1896 was on the Staff, Royal Marines 29th June, 1896 to 12th February, 1899. He served in the South African War, 3rd February, 1900 to 13th April 1902, as Special Service Officer including service as D.A.A.G. H.Q. Cape Town. Railway Staff Officer, Sierkstroon. Commandant, Bethulie Bridges and District command under the Military Governor, Orange River Colony. He was present at operations in the Orange River Colony, including action at Wittebergen. Mentioned in despatches (L.G. 10th September, 1901) received the Queen's Medal with two clasps and the King's Medal with two clasps and for the defence of Ladybrand was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (L.G. 27th September, 1901) "Frederick White, Major Royal Marine Light Infantry. In recognition of services in South Africa". Major White's defence of Ladybrand is described in Sir A. Conan Doyle's "Great Boer War" (pages 377 and 388). "On September 2nd another Command of Free State Boers under Fourie emerged from the mountain country on the Basuto border, and fell upon Ladybrand, which was held by a feeble garrison consisting of one company of the Worcester Regt. and 43 men of the Wiltshire Yeomanry. The Boers, who had several guns with them, appear to have been the same force which had been repulsed at Wimburg. Major White, a gallant Marine, whose fighting qualities do not seem to have deteriorated with his distance from salt water, had arranged his defences upon a hill, after the Wepener model, and held his own most stoutly. So great was the disparity of forces that for days acute anxiety was felt lest another of those humiliating surrenders should interrupt the record of victories, and encourage the Boers to further resistance. The point was distant and it was some time before relief could reach them. But the dusky chiefs, who from their native mountains looked down on the military drama which was played so close to their frontier, were again, as on the Jammersberg, to see the Boer attack beaten back by the constancy of the British defence. The thin line of soldiers, 150 of them covering $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of ground, endured a heavy shell and rifle fire with unshaken resolution, repulsed every attempt of the burghers, and held the flag flying until relieved by the forces of White and Bruce Hamilton".

He became Lieut.-Colonel 11th April, 1906, and retired with the rank of Colonel on 11th April, 1909. Colonel White was Draft Conducting Officer from 1915-1919. He died at his home, St. John's Park, Blackheath, on the 8th December, 1924.



[Photo by Russell, Southsea.]

MAJOR F. WHITE, R.M.L.I.



1. Distinguished Service Order.
2. Egyptian Medal 1882 3 clasps Alexandria 11th July; Suakin 1884; El-Teb-Tamaai.
3. Queen's South Africa 2 clasps Cape Colony; Wittebergen.
4. King's South Africa 2 clasps South Africa 1901; South Africa 1902.
5. 1914-15 Star.
6. British War Medal.
7. Victory Medal.
8. Order of the Medjidie 5th class.
9. Khedive's Star 1882.

MAJOR FREDERICK ERNEST POWYS SKETCHLEY DSO RMLI

Major Sketchley was born on 6 August 1881, at West Kensington W1, son of the Reverend E. Powys Sketchley of Ballater, Bromley, Kent, Assistant Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Mrs. Powys Sketchley.

He was educated at Dulwich College and joined the RMLI as a 2nd Lieutenant on 1 January 1900. After successfully completing his initial courses at RN College, Greenwich and in the Plymouth Division, he was posted to HMS ABOUKIR on 3 April 1902. He served on board HMS ABOUKIR for the next three years, mainly on the Mediterranean station, returning to England for a short period of leave in April 1905, prior to taking up an appointment as Aide-de-Camp and Secretary to the Governor General of Western Australia, His Excellency Sir F G D Bedford GCB. He took passage to Australia on 12 May 1905 in the ss SUEVIC.

In May 1908 Sketchley returned to England and the Plymouth Division where he remained until 26 January 1910. During this period he successfully passed a short Electricity and W/T Course at HMS VERNON (January 1909), the Adjutants Course (May 1909) and Equitation and Musketry Courses (August 1909). Shortly after this in January 1910 he was appointed to FORTON Barracks, Portsmouth Division RMLI as Adjutant, where he remained until the outbreak of the First World War. He was promoted to Captain 1 January 1911 and to Temporary Major 29 September 1914 on taking up appointment as GS02, Headquarters, Royal Naval Division. Sketchley served with the Division at Ostend and Antwerp and subsequently in Gallipoli (1915) and France where he was killed outright on 12 October 1916, whilst inspecting an empty trench with General Paris (Division Commander). It appears that the one and only shell of the afternoon burst right in Sketchley's face killing him and severely wounding General Paris. A brother officer wrote of him at the time:

"I am very grieved indeed about Sketchley, I knew him better than most for he was my Subaltern for two years (HMS ABOUKIR) and I had seen him almost daily since August 1914. He was a most gallant fellow who knew no fear. He did exceptionally good work all the time he was GS02. His work during the particularly trying time of the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsular was quite first class and I have seen letters written to him by two Corps Commanders offering to recommend him for higher staff jobs, but he remained loyal to his own General and stayed on as a GS02 when he might have been a GS01 elsewhere. He will be much missed at FORTON where he worked so hard for the general good of the Division first as QIM and then as Adjutant. Both at work and in play, and it was largely due to his encouragement that the tug of war team did so well in the years before the war".

Sketchley was awarded the DSO in 1915 and mentioned in despatches three times.

He was married to Phyllis, daughter of J F Campbell Esqre, Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, Western Australia, and had one daughter born on 17 June 1909.

Sketchley's citation which appears in the London Gazette for 13 September 1915 reads as follows:

Captain (Temporary Major) Ernest Frederick Powys
Sketchley RMLI Royal Naval Division

For services in the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the 13th July (1915), during operations south of Accra Baba a retreat began and rapidly developed, which might have had very serious consequences.

Major Sketchley who was with the supports, assisted by L/Cpl J G Way, prevented some of these men from retiring further. He then gathered together about 40 of them, re-organised them and leading them forward, re-occupied some of the trenches.

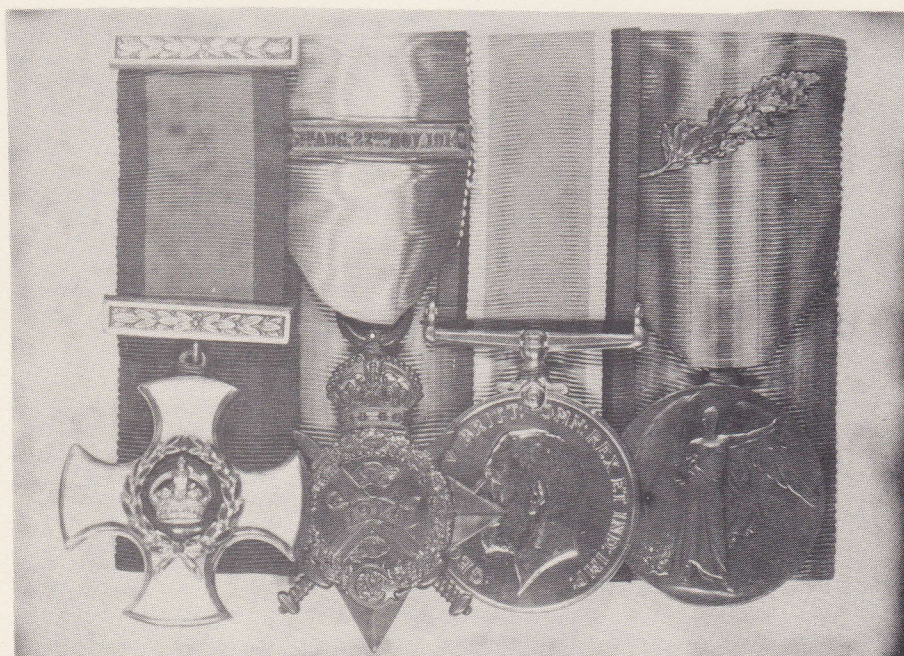
Major Sketchley and L/Cpl Way returned twice to gather more men, and, collecting in all about 100, re-took further trenches, captured some 40 prisoners and secured position. Both of them exhibited great courage, presence of mind and powers of personal leadership in a moment of crisis.

TISB

(21)



MAJOR F E P SKETCHLEY DSO RMLI
Photographed in 1913 with the
Buglers of Portsmouth Division
RMLI at FORTON Barracks



1. D S O
2. 1914 Star Bar '5th Aug. 22nd Nov. 1914'
3. British War Medal.
4. Victory Medal with M.I.D.

(27)

THE GAMBIA EXPEDITION

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1894

The aim of this expedition was somewhat vague, but it can generally be accepted as the pacification of the dissident Chief Fodi Silah. The expedition was divided into two columns. No 1 Column under command of Colonel Corbett RMLI and No 2 Column under command of Captain Gamble RN (HMS RALEIGH).

Both columns included Marines from the RALEIGH detachment, although No 2 Column (the larger) also had men from the detachments of ALECTO, FORTE, MAGPIE and SATELLITE.

This article concentrates on the successful progress of Corbett's Column, although mention is made of the ill-fated No 2 Column at the ambush at Medina Creek.

I include with this article a photograph of the Campaign Medal awarded to Ply 7087 Private Alfred Batchelor RMLI of HMS RALEIGH for this expedition. He received a subsequent clasp for Benin 1897, where he was mentioned in Captain Egerton's despatches. Batchelor was born in East Grinstead, Sussex on 19 March 1871 and enlisted in the Corps 19 March 1889. He served his full time for pension being discharged 23 March 1910, having received the LS & GC Medal (not in my collection unfortunately) and five good conduct badges. He was recalled to the colours in 1914 serving on board ALBION (1914-16) and at Stonehouse Barracks, being discharged finally 8 March 1919. He apparently did not bother to claim his First World War Medals. It appears from Batchelor's service documents that he was employed as a Billiard Marker in the Officers Mess, Stonehouse from 1899-1910! He died on 27 December 1961. - Editor.



East and West Africa Medal 1887-1900

This Medal was awarded to the forces which took part in the many expeditions in East and West Africa during this period.

The Medal shown is that awarded to Pte Batchelor RMLI, and displays the clasps for Gambia 1894 and Benin 1897. The ribbon is yellow with black edges and two thin black lines towards the centre.

Medal rolls for all the clasps with Royal Marine recipients are held in the RM Museum.

COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A D CORBET, CB, RMLI
IN THE GAMBIA EXPEDITION, 1894

(By One who was There)

Our Column, composed of fifty men of the Raleigh's Royal Marine detachment, with a 7-pounder field gun (land service), and a Company of about fifty strong of the 1st Battalion WI Regiment, under Captain Westmoreland, Lieuts Cowie and Carre-Smith, left Bathurst early on the morning of the 22 February 1894. Surgeon Bowden, RN, was in medical charge, and some forty carriers were in attendance - a nondescript lot of all sorts and sizes, but wonderful hands at carrying loads up to eighty pounds, though about sixty pounds is the usual amount.

All being ready, the men carrying a blanket roll with towel, soap and shirt inside, and sixty rounds of ammunition in their pouches, a start was made for Sukutta, a village situated just outside British territory, and about twelve miles distant from Bathurst. This village we were to disarm, and, if resistance were offered, burn. A couple of miles outside Sukutta, we were met by the Headman of the place, who expressed a desire to comply with all our demands, and pushing on, we found the inhabitants engaged in pulling down the stockade. A demand for their arms and powder produced some guns but no powder, so Colonel Corbet, taking with him an interpreter and his orderly, Corporal Hunt, proceeded into the town to the central square, where the inevitable palavers are held, and informed the Headmen that unless more arms were forthcoming and the powder magazine pointed out, he should be under the painful necessity of burning down their town. This produced more arms and the key of the magazine, a mud-built structure, with the walls of considerable thickness. About forty or fifty small bags of powder were found in the magazine and destroyed, and a search party discovered some more guns, making a total of about a hundred, which were all broken up. It may be said here that the guns used by the Madingoes are of the usual "trade gun" description, long barrelled muskets sometimes with flint but usually with percussion locks, and as a rule, in the French district, of French make. The usual charge is a handful of coarse powder, two or three spherical bullets, and a dozen or two jagged bits of iron for use at close quarters. The town being disarmed, the Administrator and Admiral Bedford, who had accompanied the Column this far, entered escorted by the whole party, had a palaver with the Headmen and informed them they were now British subjects. Corporal Hunt then produced a Union Jack from the breast of his serge tunic, lashed it on to a bamboo pole, stuck it into the roof of the Headman's hut, the troops saluted, and the British Empire was so much the bigger. After making a bonfire of the remains of the stockade, the troops returned a couple of miles to a friendly village called Bakotti, and bivouacked there.

The programme for the next day was to march south into hostile territory, take the villages Jundum and Bassambulla, and return for the night to Aboka, a village some miles east of Bakotti, and near Lamir Creek on the Gambia River, where boats were to meet us and convey us back to the ship. But something was to happen which was to overturn these arrangements and keep us on shore fifteen days longer. Soon after daybreak next morning we started, leaving behind Lieut Carre-Smith ill with the fever which so few escape, and which ultimately, after our return on board, prostrated a large proportion of our party, in spite of the daily dose of quinine swallowed religiously by all hands. Whether it is a true malarial fever or due to exposure to the sun seems doubtful, but it is probably the latter.

Led by two guides, one of them son of the "King" of Bakotti, a picturesque looking person whom we dubbed the Heir Apparent, our force passed through a thickly-wooded country for some miles, crossing two streams, to ford which it was necessary to make a considerable detour, and meeting here and there patches of open cultivated ground of some extent.

When within about three miles of Jundum we entered upon bush of the densest character, the narrowest bush path compelling us to march in single file, while

the advance guard fired volleys at frequent intervals as a precautionary measure into the bush in front and on either flank. About noon Jundum was reached, an open village, the Headmen of which met us with a white flag flying, but, cutting short their insatiable desire for palaver, we searched the village, found a few arms and some powder, which we destroyed, informed the Headmen their village was now in British territory, and moved on through, if possible, thicker bush than we had yet encountered. After dragging the seven-pounder with much difficulty and many capsize through two miles of this, we reached the edge of the bush, and came in sight of Bussumballa, and bringing the gun to the front, we entered the clearing in the centre of which stood the village.

Hardly had we appeared before fire was opened from the stockade, and simultaneously from a body of skirmishers lying in the grass, and reaching from the stockade to the thick bush at the edge of the clearing on our left front. In half a minute a common shell rattled through the stockade, followed by a shrapnel which burst over the centre of the village and set it on fire, the thatched roofs being soon in a blaze. The village being now in the words of the London Fire Brigade reports, "well alight", and the garrison given notice to quit, we turned our attention to the men in the open.

As we advanced in skirmishing order, the Field gun in the centre, the Heir Apparent, who was armed with a musket of enormous length, apparently inflamed with ardour at the sight of his hereditary foe, bounded forward in front of the Field gun, (which had just been loaded with shrapnel), squatted on his haunches, and elevated his piece at an angle of forty-five degrees in the direction of the clouds floating overhead. A fearful explosion followed, and HRH nearly measured his length on the ground. Advancing rapidly, we closed somewhat on the enemy, who retired, firing heavily but ineffectively, while we return their fire with section volleys, and an occasional shell, though rarely getting nearer than 150 yards. With the exception of an attempt to turn our left flank, which was soon disposed of, the enemy made no stand, and it became evident their design was to draw us away from the village and into the thick bush, to lure us in fact down to Medina Creek, a few miles distant, where, as we were shortly to learn, our Naval Brigade, a few hours earlier in the day, had been forced to take their boats, after suffering terrible losses.

Taking steps to prevent being surprised, we desisted from pursuit, and set to work to destroy the portion of the village stockade which the flames of the burning huts had not reached. The easiest way to destroy an old stockade, is by fire, but this was a comparatively new one, so, having provided a length of rope before leaving the ship for the purpose, we pulled it down in lengths of ten or twelve feet at a time, employing fifty men on the job. It was now four o'clock, and within two hours of sundown, so by way of a parting shot, Sergeant Milton placed a charge of gun-cotton under the main gateway of the stockade, and up it went. Bussumballa unlike the other stockaded towns we saw, which were usually an irregular oval, was a perfect square and of recent construction. There were two stockades, the outer of split bamboo, forming a screen of great toughness, while allowing the garrison to see what was going on outside, the inner being constructed of the trunks of small trees, about a foot in diameter at the base, standing three deep and some fifteen feet in height, well embedded in the ground. A ditch, about two feet deep was dug inside, and the earth was thrown up in front. A distance of about twelve feet separated the two stockades, while in the centre of the inner side of each was a zig-zag entrance, flanked at each turn, the stockade at that point being of extra strength. A bush or a piece of light matting concealed the entrance from the view of anyone at a distance. It may seem strange that with a stockade of such strength, a better stand was not made, but the Mandingo, in common with most savage or semi-savage tribes, has a wholesome dread of being surrounded and caught in a trap, and his first and overmastering thought is how to make sure of his retreat. Threaten his flanks or rear, and he feels it is time to be off.

The march to Aboka took us four hours, the last two in the dark, and glad we were to reach our bivouac, where we found shelters of matting had been run up for us, for the night winds were cold with a heavy dew. These shelters are very useful, and we got quite adepts in a short time at running them up, the

supply of matting being practically unlimited, as it is used for hut building, fencing, and a variety of purposes. The "modus operandi" is to take a suitable piece of matting, bend it into a circular form, leaving a doorway, lash it to poles driven into the ground, take a long bamboo for a centre pole, lash some slighter ones with split bamboo to its upper end, and to the poles supporting the walls, so as to form the framework of the roof, thatch it with palm leaves, and the house is complete. 25

Fires were then lighted, the seven-pounder was divested of sundry bunches of fowls, thoughtfully left behind by our Bussumballa friends, which had made it on the return journey present somewhat the appearance of a poulterer's shop at Christmas time, and stewed chicken was the order of the day.

The carriers, squatting round their own fires, jabbered away far into the night, but we, hunger being satisfied, were soon ready for a good sleep after our twenty mile march.

In the middle of the night, Colonel Corbet was aroused by a messenger, bringing a note from the Admiral, acquainting him with the disastrous affair at Medina Creek, the day before, in which some sixty Officers and men of the Naval Brigade, out of two hundred, had been killed and wounded, and requesting him to move with all speed to Fort St Mary, about seven miles distant, to protect the district in case the enemy, emboldened by success, should make an incursion into British territory.

Next morning, soon after daylight, we were off, none of us feeling very bright after the exertions of the previous day, and with the terrible news of the reverse experienced by the Naval Brigade, fresh in our minds.

A pony, picked up somehow, was utilized to give any men unable to march an occasional lift, and at nine o'clock we reached the Fort, which is situated on the sea shore, and must have been in its day of considerable strength.

Hardly had we settled down, when orders arrived for us to leave the next day, on being relieved, and take up a position near Sabagee, five miles further to the front, so as to protect our territory from attack, and the friendly villages in rear from pillage. Next afternoon (25 February) on relief arriving, we marched out, having to send into Bathurst two of our party, unable to proceed further, and arrived at our destination at 4 p.m, with only two hours of daylight left in which to strengthen our position. Intrenching tools, though sent for, had not arrived, so it was resolved to utilize the time in clearing away the bush by burning, and otherwise obtain a good field of fire, and trust to discipline and straight shooting to do the rest. Our position sloped gently to the front, and was fairly clear of bush except on the flanks, where it approached to within about 100 yards. This we burnt and cut down with what tools we could improvise as much as possible. Having filled every available vessel with water, for the nearest well was some distance off in the bush, and we knew not when we might be cut off from access to it, we placed the stores and ammunition in the centre, the men were fallen in a circle, according to their sections, the Marines taking the right half, the West India Regiment the left half of the Sections, the seven-pounder being in front with a shell fused ready to insert. Sections were commanded by Corporals Wetherall, RMA, Tilley, Chaplin and Morris, RMLI, but when the Field gun was being worked, Corporal Wetherall and four gunners took charge, and Lce-Corpl Healy commanded the remainder of the section. Sergt Milton, RMA, was the only Sergeant present with the detachment. It must be understood that at this time, we were the only organized body capable of taking the field. Five miles in rear was Fort St Mary, held by a small party of blue-jackets, and in front was an unknown number of Mandingoes, estimated according to some accounts, at as many as two thousand, flushed with their repulse of the Naval Brigade. About 5.30 next morning, a sentry on the right gave the alarm, and we could just make out in the dim light, two parties of men, each numbering about a hundred, rushing towards our right flank, having plainly been attempting to steal round our rear, for we found their tracks afterwards in the long grass. They appeared to have been marching about six deep.

In a few seconds every man was in his place, and our right section poured in a volley which made them disappear into the bushes, while still some two hundred yards away from us. Almost immediately a heavy fire broke out in front and on our left flank, and the bushes seemed alive with men. Lying down, we fired volleys by sections, into the bush wherever the flashes of their guns appeared thickest. For more than half an hour the fire was very heavy, slugs were flying about too thick to be quite pleasant, and the unmistakeable whiz of Martini bullets was to be heard just overhead, telling us that some of the rifles lost by the Naval Brigade, were being used against us. Corporal Chaplin, Privates Farmer and Budd of the RMLI, and a private of the WI Regiment, were wounded by slugs, but after having their wounds dressed, returned to the fighting line. After a time, our volleys began to tell, and the enemy drew further back into the bushes. As soon as it became light enough, Lieut Cowie was sent with a party of the WI Regiment, to clear the bush on the left and on their return, a party of Marines to drive the enemy back on our right. An attempt was then made to draw the enemy, if possible, into the open, by sending a section well out to the front, and suddenly recalling it at the double. As the section reached us, we fired a volley, and all bolted to the rear as if panic-stricken, hiding behind some mat shelters, that had been run up. Somewhat emboldened, the enemy advanced to the edge of the bush, but not a man showed himself in the open. However, our fire, when resumed, seemed somewhat more effective. Soon after, the head of a strong column of the enemy, led by mounted men, came in sight, 1100 or 1200 yards off on our left front. We at once opened fire on them with the seven-pounder, and poured in some long range volleys, as they moved across our front, and disappeared behind a wood, some 1500 yards to our right front, in the direction of their own territory. They numbered apparently about 900 or 1000, and marched in order, five or six deep. While part of our force were engaging them, the remainder kept those of the enemy in our immediate neighbourhood, occupied. This force, we learnt afterwards, had burnt one or two small hamlets in British territory, before encountering us. Disheartened, apparently, by the failure of the main body to come to their assistance, the fire of the enemy slackened, and at half-past seven, we advanced and drove them across the border, nor did they ever again venture into British territory. No bodies were found on the field, for the Mandingoes at all hazards remove their dead, and some blood-stained guns were all they left behind. It was said that at Medina Creek, where the Mandingoes ventured into the open, whenever one of them fell, he was at once seized by his comrades and bumped over the ground to the rear, in a way warranted to extinguish the vital spark, in a very short time, if not already extinct. Native reports put the loss of the enemy at two hundred killed and wounded, including three head-men killed by a shell, while leading the main body past us. A number of empty Martini cartridge cases were found on the field, showing that several of the rifles, lost at Medina Creek, were used against us, but the Mandingoes luckily did not know how to use them, and fired too high. The rest of the day we spent in still further clearing the bush around, and in constructing a zareba with the aid of a few tools picked up in a neighbouring village. The following day, 27 February, in accordance with orders, we moved back some three miles, as our being so far to the front, made the work of sending out supplies rather heavy, and a position was selected at the junction of the four chief "roads" of the district, with good water close at hand, where, entrenching tools having arrived, we threw up a redoubt of sufficient strength, which received the name of Fort Britannia. Though in Bathurst a panic seems to have existed, the days passed quietly enough, and our patrols discovered no sign of the enemy. Fodi Silah, however, the rebel chief, occasionally sent a letter, threatening to burn us out, and breakfast with us as he put it. Possibly he found the early breakfast we provided for him at Sabagee, rather indigestible.

On March 1, 1st Battalion West India Regiment arrived, and, leaving again with our Company of the Regiment, on the following day they retook Bussumballa which had been re-occupied and partially rebuilt.

On the 6 March we were withdrawn, and, picking up some twenty or thirty scouts at Bathurst Barracks, embarked on board the Alecto, a paddle gun vessel of light draught for river service where we were reinforced by thirty men from different ships.

town of Gungur is situated about twenty miles south of Bathurst, and was Fodi Silah's last stronghold as well as one of his oldest towns, and contained a mosque of great sanctity. An obstinate resistance was therefore likely, though, as the W India Regiment was approaching from the North, it was thought that the fear of being taken between the two fires would be too much for the Mandingoes, and such proved to be the case. The Satellite, Magpie and Widgeou anchored as close to the shore as their draught of water would permit, and there we remained at anchor for three days, the town being bombarded for an hour each morning, the fire being directed by men stationed in the tops, and the bush in the rear of the landing place, which was full of men, being occasionally shelled and swept by volleys of musketry from a picked party of Marines, all marksmen, stationed on the Alecto's hurricane deck. A heavy fire was kept up in return, and boats sent in to reconnoitre the landing place, or, as was sometimes the case, merely to draw the enemy's fire, were received with a tremendous fusillade, but though the boats were occasionally struck by slugs, and the ships by Martini bullets, there were no casualties. On the morning of the 9th, information having been received that the WI Regiment was nearing Gungur, the beach was shelled for half-an-hour, some beautiful practice being made, and a force of 150 bluejackets and 80 Marines was landed simultaneously, some on large native canoes towed round from Bathurst for the purpose and some in ships' boats. There was a considerable surf running, but all got ashore without mishap, though not without a wetting. The beach was rushed with fixed bayonets, but though the crest immediately in rear of the bushes on the top, was found to be honeycombed with rifle pits for a considerable distance, the birds had flown. Column of route was then formed with thirty Marines as a rear guard, and the remaining fifty in advance. The road led through fairly thick bush, but we were unmolested, and arrived at Gungur only to find the WI Regiment in possession and the town in flames, no resistance having been met with. The meeting with our dusky friends was very cordial, as the Marines marched into their lines with Bugler Coles as their head sounding the general salute with might and main to acquaint them with our approach. Our valiant native "scouts", who had hitherto remained in rear, contrary to the usual accepted doctrine as to the duties of scouts, now rushed to the front, and in the twinkling of an eye each man had captured and tied by a cord half-a-dozen stray goats, and appeared hung over like a Christmas tree with a selection of iron cooking pots, looted out of the still burning town. Very picturesque they looked, if not exactly warlike. Poor fellows, they had to return to Bathurst, and were looted in their turn, arriving home after all goat-less, if not pot-less. A couple of hours were spent in completing the destruction of the stockade and town, the former being single, and about ten feet high with various entrances, closed with wooden doors about four inches thick, and only admitting one person at a time. Fragments of shell strewn around, showed the fire of the ships to have been well directed. We were all on board our ships before dark, and that night left for Bathurst, rejoining our own ships next morning. The WI Regiment marched back to Bathurst, burning a couple of small towns on their way, while Fodi Silah fled into French territory, and gave himself up with a couple of hundred of his fighting men to the authorities. Our last sad duty was to collect the remains of those who had been left on the field at Medina Creek, and bury them with all honour in Bathurst cemetery, and there they lie - Officer and man, Bluejacket and Marine, and who would wish to lie in better company?

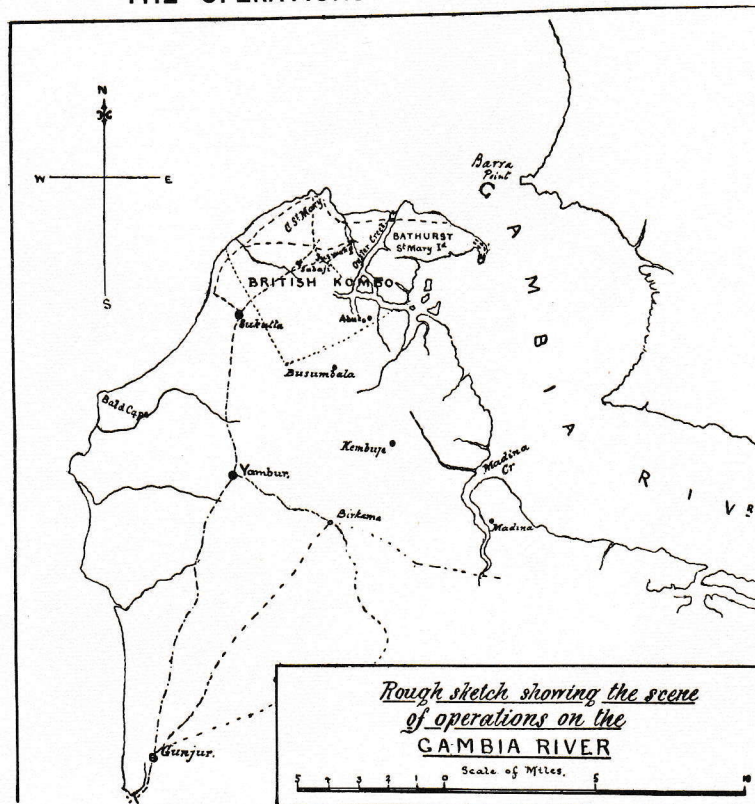
ARRIVAL OF WOUNDED MEN AT PLYMOUTH

The Elder Dempster steamer Teneriffe arrived at Plymouth on Sunday from Bathurst, having specially called at Plymouth to land men wounded in the recent operations on the Gambia against Fodi Silah. Those who arrived were Lieut Saville, bullet wound left thigh, doing well; Sergt Bensely, RMLI, fracture of skull from gunshot behind the ear; Edward Fenton, AB, bullet wound left foot; Pte Hughes, RMLI, bullet wound left ankle; PO second-class Thomas Huddy, bullet wounds right arm and left leg; Pte Frank W Howarth, RMLI, bullet wound in back;

Lieut-Corporal John Cobb, RMLI, compound fracture of left arm from gunshot; J A Mills, AB, shot in neck, bullet lodging in the left shoulder; Sergt Dunn, RMLI, wounded right leg and left arm; M Laughton, AB, wounded right arm; E Haynes, AB, wounded left lower jaw; and Stoker B Gough, bullet wound left foot. Soon after the tender arrived in the docks the men were conveyed in cabs and ambulances to the Naval Hospital, where they were received by Inspector-General Lloyd. Immediately on the arrival of the Teneriffe the Commander-in-Chief (Admiral Sir Algernon McLennan Lyons, KCB) directed Surgeon F Woore, two sick berth stewards, and a party of seamen to assist in conveying the invalids ashore. These proceeded in a steam launch to the ship, where they rendered assistance, and subsequently at the docks.

(Extracted from Globe and Laurel 1894).

THE OPERATIONS ON THE GAMBIA.



HARD TIMES

Jack T Andrews was a private in the Marines, and served in one of the recent West African Wars.

His parents died when he was three leaving him to pick up a living as best he could. When aged eighteen he became mixed up in a burglary and was imprisoned. He married at twenty-one. Then poverty drove him to enlist in the Marines, and he was sent to the Gold Coast. In a jungle war there he caught enteric fever, and one or two minor diseases in succession, and was laid up so as to miss the glory of the main expedition.

He was wounded during a trying march to join the victorious column, and lost an arm in a trivial skirmish.

A stray bullet the same day rendered his left leg permanently useless, and on board the gun boat that took him home the remaining arm became paralysed. His wife who came to meet him at Southampton with the news that their only child was dead, fell off the quay and was drowned before his arrival.

On arriving at his home two days later, he found the brokers arrived to sell up the dwelling, which his wife had kept going during his absence. Some kindhearted people came to the rescue with money, but too late. The unfortunate Marine was run over in the street the next day and killed. People said it was the one piece of luck in his life.

An example of Victorian humour extracted
from the Globe and Laurel, December 1900.

EDITOR