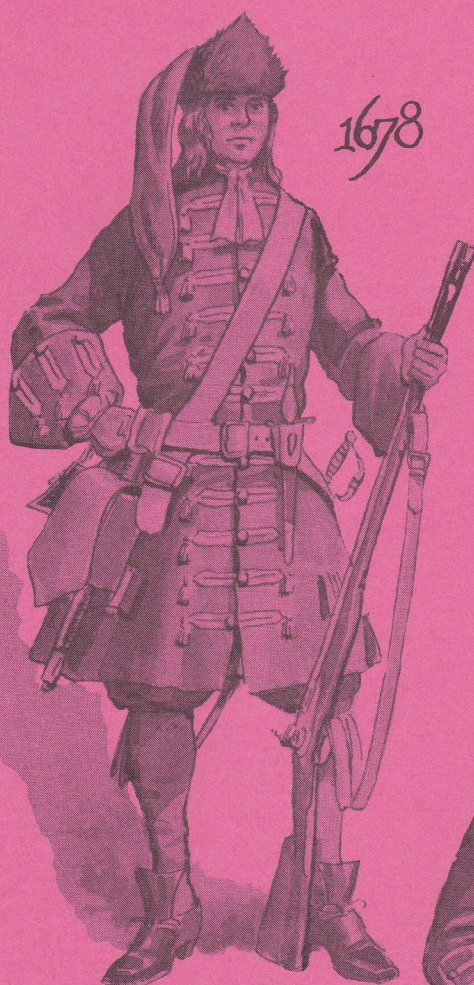




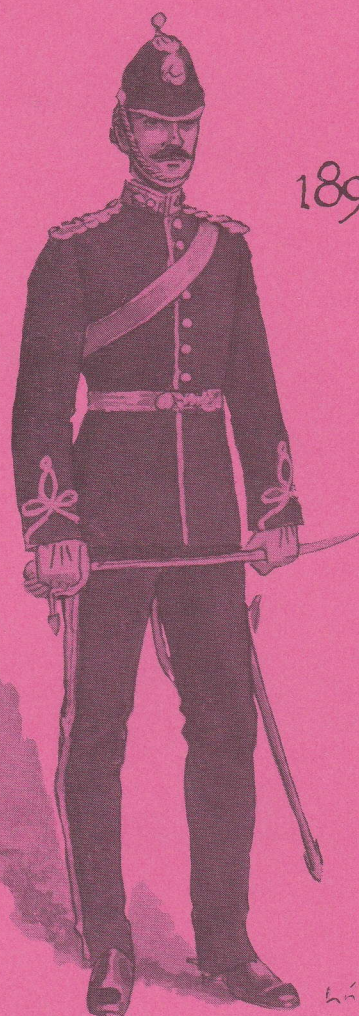
ROYAL MARINES
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



1678



1755



1890

SHEET ANCHOR

Volume V number 3

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(Formerly the Royal Marines Historical Society Newsletter)

"In obtaining for them the distinction of "Royal" I but inefficiently did my duty. I never knew an appeal made to them for honour, courage, or loyalty, that they did not more than realize my highest expectations. If ever the hour of real danger should come to England, they will be found the country's SHEET ANCHOR."

VOLUME V NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 1978

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(Whilst every effort is made by the Editorial Committee to ensure that the information contained in this publication is correct, the ultimate responsibility must lie with the individual author.)

DRESS AND EQUIPMENT

BY

CHARLES C STADDEN



FIG 1

Since 1664 the Marines had been in existence for 84 years, raised disbanded, raised again in various guises, but it was not until 1755 that the Marines became under the Admiralty direct. It was Admiral Lord Anson after his voyage realised

that a force of a regular body of Marines should be permanently under the control of the Admiralty, and subsequently on the 5th April 1755 an Order in Council allowed the formation of 50 Companies of Marines, and an Act of Parliament was passed "For the Regulation of Marine Forces while on shore". The new Corps was organised in three "Grand Divisions" and based at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

The illustration depicts an Officer in his regimentals at this time. The uniform followed the practice in vogue in the Army as regards cut and general appearance. The headdress was the tricorne bound in gold lace, black silk bow on left side, fastened with a gold cord. Hair of the officers was powdered and tied with black silk having a long false pigtail. Scarlet coat faced white bound with gold lace, Gold aigulette on right shoulder, White waistcoat bound also in gold lace, white kersey breeches and black soft leather boots. Buff leather

FIG 1

100%

CCS



FIG 2



FIG 3

gloves and gilt gorget. White leather waistbelt and cartouche pouch. Sword, gilt hilt with gold and crimson sword knot, Black scabbard with gilt mounts. Crimson sash worn over the right shoulder and tied on left hip. Fusil with whitened leather sling. FIG 2 shows the back view.

By all accounts the Marines were equipped as Fusiliers of the time. The rank and file wearing the Fusilier Cap and armed with the Fusil. The Fusilier Cap was similar to the Grenadier Cap, but was smaller and did not carry the embroidered grenade on the turn-up at the back. FIG 3 shows the type of cap worn by the Marines. Officers of Fusilier Regiments wore the tricorne hat. Fusilier Regiments all had a Grenadier Company and only the Officers of these wore the Grenadier Cap.

EXTRACT FROM "THE NAVAL CHRONICLE", 1806

FIRE AT WOOLWICH

About one o'clock in the morning of the 20th August, a fire was discovered on board the Dover, a ship fitted up for temporary Marine Barracks, and lying alongside the dockyard wharf, at Woolwich. In half an hour she was in one complete blaze, and by three o'clock was burnt to the water's edge. His Majesty's Ship Dover, of 44 guns, had been prepared as a floating barrack for the new Division of Marines, called the Woolwich Division, and was placed alongside the upper end of that town, near to the mast house, close to the quay. From the quay to the ship was a platform, which made the vessel quite easy of access, and in every sense as commodious as land barracks. On board of this vessel were generally from three to four hundred of the Woolwich Division of Marines, with a proportionate number of officers. About half past twelve o'clock on Wednesday morning, the sentinel on the poop of the ship gave the alarm of fire, which was passed to the dockyard. The fire-bell was rung, and immediate relief and assistance were afforded to those on board, who were in number about 120 men, 50 women, and half as many children. About two o'clock the Dover was in flames from stem to stern, but before this almost the whole of those on board had effected their escape. Such a scene of distress has been seldom witnessed; men were seen dragging their wives out of the port holes, while mothers were heard screaming for their children; others, half burnt, were seen leaping from the ship to the shore, a Sergeant's wife threw her infant out of a port-hole, and jumped after it herself into the mud, it being low water, and both are saved. Only one man suffered, who had been seen out of the ship, and is supposed to have returned to save something.

ANTECEDENTS OF RM COMMANDOS

40 Commando RM

Formed in February 1942 at Deal as the RM Commando. Redesignated RM "A" Commando and then 40 RM Commando in October 1942, absorbed 43 RM Commando in September 1945 and disbanded 1946. Reformed in March when 44 RM Commando was redesignated 40 Commando RM.

41 Commando RM

Formed in January 1942 at Dalditch Camp, near Exmouth as 8th RM Battalion. Reorganised in October 1942 and became firstly RM "B" Commando and then redesignated 41 RM Commando. Disbanded February 1946. Reformed at Bickleigh in August 1950 as 41 Independent Commando RM. Disbanded at Bickleigh in 1952. Reformed at Plymouth as 41 Commando RM in March 1960, reduced to a Company Group in Malta in April 1977 and reformed at Deal in October 1977.

42 Commando RM

Formed in 1940 as 1st RM Battalion, converted at Sway to 42 RM Commando in 1943, and redesignated to present title in December 1945.

43 Commando RM

Formed in 1940 as 2nd RM Battalion and converted at Hursley to 43 RM Commando in 1943. Absorbed into 40 RM Commando in September 1945. Reformed at Plymouth as 43 Commando RM in September 1961 and dispersed again at Portsmouth in September 1968.

44 Commando RM

Formed in 1940 as 3rd RM Battalion and converted at Ashurst to 44 RM Commando in August 1943. Redesignated 44 Commando RM in Hong Kong in March 1947.

45 Commando RM

Formed in May 1940 as 5th RM Battalion and converted at Burley to 45 RM Commando in August 1943. Redesignated to present title in December 1945.

46 RM Commando

Formed in January 1942 at Dalditch Camp as 9th RM Battalion. Converted at Dorchester to 46 RM Commando in August 1943. Disbanded at Haywards Heath in December 1945.

47 RM Commando

Formed in April 1941 at Crookston, Glasgow as 10th RM Battalion. Converted at Dorchester to 47 RM Commando in August 1943. Disbanded at Haywards Heath in January 1946.

48 RM Commando

Formed at Exton in September 1940 as 7th RM Battalion. Converted at Deal to 48 RM Commando in March 1944. Disbanded near Horsham in January 1946.

THE RAMBLING ROYAL

Submitted By

ALASTAIR DONALD

Members will remember my submission of "Joe the Marine" in the last issue and may not be surprised to know that I am continuing to keep my eye out for songs about the Corps.

I recently purchased a remaindered copy of a paper backed book, published in 1972 by Wolfe Publishing Ltd of 10 Earlam Street, London WC2, entitled "The Cruel Wars. 100 Soldiers' Songs from Agincourt to Ulster" Compiled by Karl Dallas.

I was pleased to find that the Royal Marines have not been forgotten and am grateful to the publishers for permission to reproduce the music and verses for the interest of the Society.

In a note at the end of the song Karl Dallas mentions that it was collected by A L Lloyd from a Liverpool seaman called Frank Jefferies in 1938.

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words hyphenated across measures. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

I am a ram-bling Roy - al from
Liv - er - pool I come, And to my sad mis-
for - tune I en - list - ed in the Ma-
rines, Be - ing drunk when I en-
list - ed and not know - ing what I'd
done, Un - til my so - ber
sen - ses re - turned to me a - gain.

- 2 I had a girl in Birkenhead, a true friend as it seems,
It grieved her heart and made her smart to see me in the
Marines.
She said, If you desert, my boy, then quickly let me know,
And I'll hide you in my own room if you should choose to go.
- 3 It was at Chatham depot, boys, the officer gave command
That me and my loyal comrades that night on guard should
stand.
The night being wet and dark and cold with did not agree,
So I knocked out the guard-room corporal and I ran for
liberty.
- 4 I rambled all that livelong night until I lost my way.
I crept into a farmer's barn to sleep upon the hay.
And when I awoke, it was no joke, for there all at my head,
The sergeant and the corporal and four bloody swaddies
stood.
- 5 We had a murderous fight of it and I damn nigh beat 'em all
I made my cowardly comrades in agony to bawl.
But they took me to the guardhouse my sorrows to deplore.
They'd six men at the window and another six at the door.
- 6 It was early the very next morning I paced my cell around,
I leapt out of the window and dashed four of 'em to the
ground.
The provost and his bullies they were quickly after me,
But I made my way to Birkenhead and I gained my liberty.
- 7 I am a rambling Royal and James Cronin is my name,
I can fight as many corporals as you'll find in the Marines,
I can fight as many Orangemen as ever banged a drum,
And I'd make 'em fly before me like a bullet from a gun.

-oOo-

FROM THE CHURCH PENNANT APRIL 1909

HMS Hermes, Cape Station,
Feb 21st 1909

Dear Sir,

I would like to state that the first publication of marriage banns on board a ship of this station (and in all probability the first on board ship in the Royal Navy) was made at Divine Service this morning, immediately after the second lesson. The contracting parties are Ernest Henry Mathewson, Private RMLI, and Ellen Ball, Observatory, Capetown.

Yours faithfully,
E J Hogan (Chaplain).



MAJOR RICHARD JOHNS RM
(1805-51)

BY

NEALE DAWE

Richard Johns, the subject of this article, was born 5th October 1805, the son of William Johns of Helston, in the county of Cornwall, and Charlotte his wife. The family was well established there in the 18th century.

In 1722 a Richard Johns was Mayor of Helston and Collector of HM Customs of the port of Gweek, some three miles distant. Another member of the family Tremenhurs Johns was lost in the 'Gloreux' man o' war, coming from the West Indies in 1781, at the age of 21, but in what capacity he sailed is not known.

John was commissioned into the Royal Marines 1st October 1825. His subsequent career until his early death in the RN Hospital, Stonehouse in 1851, was rather uneventful, falling between the long war with the French Republic and Empire and the Crimean War, which though of short duration saw some fierce engagements and horrific campaigning.

In 1828, while in the River Tagus (Portugal) probably in HMS Queen (80), his detachment was part of a force of British Troops landed at Fort St Julian in support of Maria da Gloria, the young daughter of Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, whose throne had been usurped by her uncle Miguel the Regent. From papers in possession of the family we find he had a long period of service with the garrison on Asencion Island from 31st December 1831 to 25th January 1836; RM records merely record his arrival back from Asencion in the troopship 'Romney', February 1836.

Johns was promoted Captain 7th July 1843 and Brevet Major 14th October 1849.

Two portraits, very interesting as regards the uniforms worn, are in the possession of a descendant, and photographs have kindly been given to the Museum. The full-length portrait done in water-colour would no doubt have been painted before he embarked in his first ship HMS Glasgow on 15th July 1826. He is depicted in the very elaborate coatee worn 1823-28; here the coatee is buttoned right across the chest showing just plain red, but when buttoned back this would disclose the blue heavily laced lapels with five pairs of loops. Colonel Field in his 'SEA SOLDIERS' has a version of this uniform, but the Dutch artist Huen only showed four pairs of loops because he evidently used the portrait of Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Stanshaw for his drawing, and there the lowest pair are covered by the crimson silk sash.

It will be noticed that the newly commissioned officer is wearing his gorget, normally worn only on duty....this last relic of armour was abolished in 1830. The pattern of the shoulder belt plate is the Royal Crest of Lion and Crown within a wreath of oak leaves, with rose and thistle motif interwoven at the base; examples of this pattern are very rare in collections and it was probably only in existence for a comparatively short time, and it had certainly been replaced by 1829. His sword is the 'gothic' hilt pattern made regulation in the Army in 1822. This type had the Royal Cypher surmounted by a crown inserted in the guard, which is not apparent here, but according to Captain H Bosanquet's book 'THE NAVAL OFFICER'S SWORD' it was the same for RM Officers. Until 1828 officers below field rank wore only one epaulette. It is particularly fortunate that John decided to be painted in his boat cloak. The shako plate would have been a hand-worked one for officers; it is possible to see the silver anchor on the gold thread background.

The delightfully informal portrait taken at sea in the 1840's is a life-sized painting in oils. The coatee is blue and the band round the cap is red.

Major Johns was a friend of Charles Dickens, and there exists a very amusing invitation to the novelist to lunch onboard HMS Ganges lying off Sheerness, written in doggerel verse with precise instructions as to how to proceed there, including the lines:

"Where before two o'clock he'll be certain to meet
A detachment of one Marine sent from the Fleet.
In a boat manned by sailors remarkably steady
Who'll tell him to come when the luncheon is ready."

Dicken's reply is headed 'A NEW SONG' - air: 'Let us haste to Kelvin Grove' and is addressed to Brigadier Johns!

-oOo-

Letter from: R J Noyce

I am sure we all admire the extremely high standard of musical and technical ability contained in recordings by Bands of the Royal Marines, in fact, a degree of perfection due in some measure to years of experience. However, until recently I, for one, did not realise just how much "experience" was involved, and I was more than a little surprised to learn that they apparently started in the recording business some 84 years ago, in 1893.

The following extract from the "Globe and Laurel", No 17 Vol I, dated 1 September 1893, reports on some of the earliest, probably the first, of recording sessions by a Band of the Royal Marines:

"About ten of the most accomplished performers of the band of the Chatham Division are now carrying out a novel engagement. They are attending the establishment of Mr Edison in London at stated times and give forth a number of martial airs, the tunes of which are received in phonographs. These instruments thus charged are sent to various parts of the world. The other day two of them were transmitted to the Pope, whilst others have been transmitted to the reigning Princes of India, and to the different crowned heads of Europe, who thus have an opportunity of listening to lively marches &c., originally played by instrumentalists hundreds of miles away".

It is interesting to note the exclusive "fan club". I wonder if any of those recordings still exist.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF ROYAL MARINES GENERALS IN 1914

BY

MAJOR DONALD F BITTNER, PhD, USMCR

Military Historian
Command and Staff College Quantico

Upon the outbreak of World War I the Royal Marines had a total of 13 general officers on the active list: four generals (two each in the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the Royal Marine Artillery), three lieutenant generals (two Royal Marine Light Infantry and one Royal Marine Artillery), and six major generals (five Royal Marine Light Infantry and one Royal Marine Artillery).¹ However, officers who achieved these high ranks had an illusionary position, a mirage of senior rank, for amongst the general officers only the Deputy Adjutant General was employed. In essence general officers terminated their careers upon the completion of their tours as a colonel commandant. Promotion to general officer ultimately was based upon vacancy and seniority, ie survivability. Because of this, two US Marine officers in December 1914 reported to Washington that a Royal Marine officer's "promotion from commandant is practically retirement from active duty".² Or as the ARMY AND NAVY GAZETTE so succinctly commented on 4 April, advancement to major general or higher rank "has therefore been for them rather an empty honour".³

Such a condition could not remain unnoticed both within and outside the Corps. Prior to the war it was extensively studied, often in conjunction with the promotion problems of this era since these unemployed general officers prevented the advancement of younger officers. As one Admiralty official commented on 25th November 1911, "a general officer of Marines can only be retired for age at 65, and this notwithstanding the fact that, except for the solitary appointment of the Deputy Adjutant General, there is no employment for him".⁴ Thus, in response to one report linking the two subjects, Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, commented on 23rd April 1912:

"The mere multiplication year after year of general officers who have never held and never will hold any command corresponding to their rank cannot be tolerated, and should be brought to a stop.... The system appears to be equally unfair to the superior officer and to the public."⁵

Despite this, the Deputy Adjutant General, Lieutenant General and later General Sir William Nicholls, KCB, defended the system. On 23rd May 1914 he acknowledged that "the number of general officers on the establishment is difficult to defend from the point of military necessity alone". But for Nicholls, two other factors were more important: career inducements and recruitment. He appeared to see no inconsistency in promoting officers to general rank who never served, writing that the system existed with the aim of "offering to the juniors the reasonable prospect of a career and the possibility of attaining superior rank". Officer procurement was of equal importance for Nicholls, for he also wrote that "parents seeing no prospect of promotion to the higher ranks would not be inclined to send their sons into the Corps".

Thus, as the Deputy Adjutant General noted, the employment of general officers was simply "a matter of policy".⁶ Hence, rather than reduce their numbers or force them into early retirement, why not find employment for them? In holding these views, Nicholls had the firm support of Churchill, who thought suitable appointments within the War or Colonial Offices might be found.

Hence in the two years prior to World War I Nicholls sought to secure for Royal Marine generals postings whereby their talents could be utilized. After extensive negotiations with the War Office, in February 1914 he accomplished his objective. The War Office agreed to consider Royal Marine major generals along with Army officers of the same grade for colonial and coast defence appointments. Upon a Marine officer advancing to that rank, he would be placed on a list with his Army contemporaries and be considered for whatever vacancies occurred. However, no position would be offered unless it appeared that the selected officer would hold the command for three years. If, by chance, promotion to lieutenant general occurred during his tenure, he would have to vacate the position within three months of his advancement.⁷

By late 1913 it became apparent that the position of General Officer Commanding, Sierre Leone, would have to be filled in 1914. Nicholls, knowing that Marine major generals would soon be considered for it, in November quickly informed the five light infantry major generals about the possibility of future employment. However, if he expected a major surge of interest in this position, he was sadly disappointed. Of the five major generals, four quickly reported their disinterest in Sierre Leone. Thus, Major General Edwin Loftus McCausland wrote on 29th November 1913 that "I am not a candidate for the appointment of General Officer Commanding, Sierre Leone".⁸ Likewise, Major General Francis Gibson Cotter declined to be considered, for one day later he sent to Nicholls the following:

"In reply to your letter of 27th last, after due consideration I have decided not to be a candidate for the appointment of Sierre Leone. It is a great concession to have the claim of a general, Royal Marines, considered for such an appointment, and I greatly hope that one of our major generals are selected."⁹

Two days later, on 2nd December, Major General Herbert Cecil Money replied: "Many thanks for the information about the billet of GOC, Sierre Leone, which I just received as we were leaving Paris. I am afraid it would not be for me, but I hope one of our own may get it".¹⁰ Finally, on 1st December, Major General James Robert Johnstone also declined interest, but he also lamented about a potential opportunity that had come too late: "It is very kind of you to remember me and had such a chance come my way 18 months ago, I should have jumped at it. As it is, I do not wish to be considered a candidate".¹¹

Thus Major General, later Sir John Frederic, Daniell by default became the only Marine desirous of the Sierre Leone appointment. Unlike his contemporaries, however, Daniell's time of unemployment soon ended for he received the Sierre Leone posting, serving from 3rd June 1914 to 3rd April 1917. His command was a success and he received appropriate commendations. On 1st March 1916 the despatch of the Commander, Allied Forces, Cameroons, was published:

"I cannot conclude this despatch without placing on record my great obligation to the Governor General, Nigeria, the Governors of the Gold Coast, Sierre Leone, and the Gambia, as well as Major General J F Daniell, commanding troops, West Africa. My demands have been numerous..., but all have been met without hesitation and in a hearty spirit of co-operation. The West Africa colonies have been denuded both in personnel and material, and their resources have been considerably strained to fulfill my requirements."¹²

In recognition of his services in Sierre Leone, and later in the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, Daniell was made a CMG in 1916 and a KCMG in 1919.

World War I temporarily postponed further study and resolution of the problems of unemployed generals and the promotion crisis of the Corps. But in 1923, with the promulgation of new retirement regulations, one of the contributing factors to the problem was removed. Major generals would be retired three years from their last date of service, or if unemployed from the date of their promotion. The same rule applied to lieutenant generals and generals, but with the proviso that no officer would be retired before completing one full year from the date of his last promotion.



MAJOR GENERAL J F DANNIELL

However, although the new regulations ended the prolonged stagnation in the upper ranks of the Corps, the problem of unemployed generals remained. An echo from the past and a comment on the contemporary situation occurred in 1928.

On 7th June the ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE GAZETTE reported that colonel commandants of the divisions and Deal would receive the temporary rank of brigadier, thus reviving a policy in existence between 1913 and 1920. The GAZETTE noted that "the change now made is further reminder of the anomaly that no provision is made for the employment of general officers of Marines". Finally, in further analyzing the problem, it again repeated that only the Adjutant General of the Corps was employed and concluded, like its article of 14 years earlier, "that for the great majority promotion is an empty honour".¹³

FOOTNOTES

- 1 THE NAVY LIST FOR AUGUST, 1914, pp 241 and 248 (correct to 18 July 1914); THE MONTHLY ARMY LIST, AUGUST 1914, pp 2241 and 2248 (correct to July 1914). No Royal Marine officers left or joined the Corps between the last pre-war monthly list and the entry of Britain into World War 1.
- 2 US National Archives. RG 38/98/734. Office of Naval Intelligence Reports. Lieutenant Colonel R H Lane, USMC, and Major T C Treadwell, UVMC, Report of 5 December 1914.
- 3 ARMY AND NAVY GAZETTE, 4 April 1914.
- 4 ADM 116/1375. Promotion in the Royal Marines, comment dated 25 November 1911.
- 5 ADM 116/1375. Churchill Comment of 23 April 1912 on Report on Promotion in the Royal Marines, January 1912.

- 6 ADM 116/1375. Deputy Adjutant General Nicholls Comment of 3 May 1912 on Report on Promotion in the Royal Marines, January 1912.
- 7 ADM 1/8366/14. Admiralty/War Office Conference on Employment of Royal Marine Generals, 15 July 1913, with Subsequent Comments; War Office and Admiralty Correspondence of 3 December 1913 and 10 January 1914; Admiralty Weekly Order of 6 February 1914.
- 8 ADM 196/61, pp 205 and 240.
- 9 ADM 196/61, p 213.
- 10 ADM 196/61, p 209.
- 11 ADM 196/61, pp 199 and 221.
- 12 ADM 196/61, p 239.
- 13 ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE GAZETTE, 7 June 1928.

-oOo-

EXTRACT FROM THE GLOBE AND LAUREL, MAY 1909

OUR ANCESTORS

The Society of Arts voted their honorary silver medal to Captain Thomas Maxwell Bagnold, on half-pay of the Royal Marines, for his invention of a gun and carriage for the purpose of dislodging marksmen from the enemy's tops in close action, and repelling boarders. He died 24th October 1848, aged 68.

"A musket lock cover has been invented by Captain John Bartleman, of the Royal Marines, which affords a complete preservation of the priming for many hours under the heaviest rain, and possesses other advantages superior to anything of the kind hitherto adopted. It has met with the approbation of Lord Wellesley and all the officers who have seen it tried, and forty thousand are now preparing to be sent out to Portugal for the use of the Light Troops of the Army.".....1811.

-oOo-

EXTRACT FROM THE GLOBE AND LAUREL, JUNE 1909

In the churchyard of Berwick-on-Helmet, on a Marine officer:

"Here lies retired from busy scenes,
A First Lieutenant of Marines
Who lately lived in gay content
On board the good ship Diligent
Now stripped of all his warlike show
and laid in box of Elm below,
Confined in Earth in narrow borders,
He rises not till further orders.

MAJOR AYLMER CHARLES PEARSON RMLI

BY

SIDNEY G WOOD

Aylmer Charles Pearson was born at Upton, near Gloucester, on 2nd August 1849, the son of Mr Thomas Aylmer Pearson. He was commissioned as Lieutenant in the Woolwich Division, RMLI, 24th June 1868, and transferred to Portsmouth on the abolition of the Woolwich Division in the following year. As a subaltern he served in the Mediterranean in 1873-77, and again in 1878-82.

He was promoted to Captain, 1st July 1881. In May 1884, he left the UK with the RM Battalion joining the Expeditionary Force in the Sudan. He was with this battalion until the following October. On 16th October 1884, with a detachment of 4 other officers and approximately 50 NCOs and men of the RMLI, he joined the Guards Camel Regiment, then forming for service with the Nile Relief Force. He remained in this detachment until its return to England in July 1885. He was present at the actions of Abu Klea, Gubat, Metammeh and the attack on the convoy of 13th February 1885. He Commanded the RM detachment of the Guards Camel Regiment after 22nd January 1885, when the Commanding Officer was severely wounded.

Pearson was mentioned in despatches and promoted Brevet Major for his services with the Nile Relief Force. He exchanged to the Chatham Division, RMLI, in 1887 and served in the Mediterranean again from 1887 to 1890. In August 1891, he was placed on the Retired List, "having attained the age of 42 years and not having passed the examination for promotion". As a retired officer he served as the Recruiting Staff Officer at Cambridge, 1895-96. Major Pearson died on 4th February 1938, aged 88.

-oOo-





The above photograph appeared in the EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS for 27 January 1978 with the following detail.

"Ted Maconochie won a top Scottish award this week. Mr Maconochie (77) took the HUGH HARPER MEMORIAL TROPHY for his pictorial display at the SCOTTISH MILITARY SOCIETY EXHIBITION at Glasgow. Mr Maconochie has been collecting badges, buttons and other mementoes of the Royal Marines since WW1 when he served in the RMLI. A retired railway clerk, he had previous successes with his collection. In 1975 he was runner-up in the NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM of London's competition for the best badge collection of the Royal Marines."

One photograph from his display (opposite) shows the original PIPE BAND OF 42 CDO RM at Gun Club Hill Barracks, Kowloon, HONG KONG, taken in December 1945, with his nephew Mne John Gilchrist (rear rank - extreme right). Others in the group are:

Rear Row (Drummers): Mne Towell, Cpl Dalley, Mnes Stewart, Dinnell, Fraser, Hamblin, Lakin and Gray.

Centre Row: Mnes Hunter, Wilson McKenzie, Bain, Cpl Wright, Mnes Armour, Marshall, Wyllie and Kyle.

Sitting: RSM Davies, Lt Potts (Band Officer), Lt Col Hellings (CO) and C/Sgt Perrett (Drum Major).

THE OCCUPATION OF ICELAND - MAY 1940

BY

COLONEL F B PYM

The following article is based on a lecture given to the officers of the Royal Marines Brigade by Lieutenant-Colonel A N Williams RM, (Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion Royal Marines) after the Battalion had returned to UK. The operation was described by Captain D Bittner, USMCR, in the June 1972 issue of the Globe and Laurel; the following is intended to be a complementary account including some details considered to be of interest.

It is necessary to recall that the Battalion was one of four Battalions comprising the RM Brigade. These had been formed only four weeks beforehand, and most of the men were "Hostilities Only" recruits with only about three weeks training prior to that.

There was a serious shortage of rifles and other small arms weapons in the country at that time, and it was due to this that little or no weapon training or tactical handling had been carried out. At the time of the Iceland operation at least fifty men had only just drawn their rifles and as yet had not fired them. Tactical training of sub units was in its very early stage, and the Battalion had not exercised as a complete unit in the field.

The Brigade was at BISLEY under canvas.

Such was the state of affairs when at 1930 on 3rd May, the Battalion was placed at 2 hours notice to move to an unknown destination.



ROYAL MARINES IN ICELAND, 1940

At 2020 the CO was ordered to report to the Adjutant General (CGRM) in London. He was not told the destination of the Battalion but was given to understand it was North. A special Establishment of stores was drawn up - (he insisted on having a million rounds of .303 ammunition, and after much argument, got them!) and the next day the stores started to arrive in the camp from all parts of the country. Bren guns, Anti-Gas equipment, 2" Mortars, A/Tank rifles, pistols and ammunition galore - in fact the complete equipment of an Infantry Battalion. But of course there was no opportunity to zero the weapons and it could only be hoped that there would be an opportunity to carry out firing tests at sea.

The CO was originally told that the Force would consist solely of the 2nd RM Battalion. On 5th May, however, he was informed that there would be some artillery units attached. These consisted of two 3.7" Howitzers on wheels for inland defence manned by 2 Naval Officers and 30 ratings. Also there were two 4" Coast Defence guns and four 2 pounder pom poms for A/A purposes, manned by 3 RM Officers and 80 Royal Marines. These units had no signal equipment, no Directors and the personnel had never fired the guns.

Further, that the Force would be commanded by Colonel R G Sturges RM with a small staff including a Brigade Major and a Staff Captain.

On Monday 6th May, the Battalion left BISLEY. One Company left by train at 0900 with all the Battalion stores. The remainder of the Battalion left at 1630. In spite of this difference of 7½ hours between the times of departure of the two trains the railway officials apparently made a slight error of judgement as both trains drew into GREENOCK station at precisely 0730 the next morning.

The Battalion was met by representatives from HM Ships "Glasgow" and "Berwick". The CO was told that two of his Companies were to be embarked in "Glasgow" and the other two in "Berwick", and that there would be considerable congestion as the artillery units were already onboard. It can be appreciated that these ships' representatives registered considerable dismay when the CO explained that with his HQ Company his Battalion consisted of five Companies and that he had, in addition over 150 tons of stores.

Without any knowledge of where the Force was going in ICELAND, with no map, and not knowing how the Force was going to be put ashore, the CO had to make an important tactical decision. He planned that the covering force should go ashore from "Berwick". He therefore put Battalion HQ, the HQ Company and one Rifle Company in "Berwick", and sent the remaining three companies to "Glasgow". The stores had to be divided between the two ships, not knowing in some instances what the packing cases contained; but the weapons and ammunition were divided proportionally.

The troops and stores were embarked, and the remainder of the day was spent in getting out Operation orders. The Force had now acquired one map of ICELAND, one map of the REYKJAVIK area and one rough diagram of REYKJAVIK town drawn from memory by an interpreter attached to the Force. These maps were copied during the day to enable Company Commanders to get some idea of the country.

The passage North was rough, with a full gale blowing. A high proportion of the officers and men were very sea sick and, although unavoidable, extremely uncomfortable. Somehow or other all the stores were unpacked, all weapons were tested by firing, and preparations were made for the dispersion of stores and provisions over a wide area ashore to prevent destruction by bombing. In this connection, it was found later that there was a deficiency of Vitamin 'C' in the

rations. Some days after landing, several ranks began complaining of sore gums which the Medical Officer said was the forerunner of scurvy. There were no fruit or vegetables obtainable in ICELAND.

The information received about the "Enemy" was as follows:

ICELAND had no Navy or Army. She claimed to be a neutral country. She had an armed police force - 70 of whom were known to be in the REYKJAVIK area. She had two Fishery Protection gunboats. It was also known that there were some 200 Germans composed mainly of seamen who were understood to have an arms store available. These men, under the German Consul General were ready to carry out a sort of QUISLING rising when required. Also, information was received that German troop carrying aircraft and paratroops were likely to arrive after Germany had heard of the occupation, and that a Force of Germans was waterborne on the river ELBE ready to move - possibly to ICELAND.

It is not intended to repeat the Landing Plan carried out on 10th May, and the subsequent dispositions which were most ably described by Captain Bittner. There was some delay in transferring the troops to the Destroyer "Fearless" to land them as the brows kept slipping from their positions, and also many men were still in a very 'dicky' state as a result of the three days sea-sickness. There was a blinding snowstorm at the time, and the harbour, about a mile distant was barely visible.

A large amount of civilian transport was requisitioned, and sub units were sent out to their pre-arranged tactical points. One place was not marked on the map and the Platoon Commander had no idea where to go. However, the 14 year old son of the Norwegian Consul kindly volunteered to act as a guide and all was well.

By 1800 on 10th May the Battalion was deployed on a front of 75 miles, and by the end of the fifth day it was stretched to a frontage of 200 miles. It is remarkable that the Company Commanders with only free hand sketch maps to guide them went off "into the blue" with their men over difficult country, and all reached their destinations.

A total of 61 German prisoners were rounded up on the first day and were sent to "Glasgow". These included the German Consul General and his wife and the whole of the German Consular Staff. Owing to the forethought of Major S G Cutler RM (OC "A" Company) in taking ashore some Foamite fire extinguishers from "Berwick", some valuable cyphers together with some cyphered and decyphered messages were saved from destruction. The Consul General and his staff were actually in the act of attempting to burn these when the troops walked in on them.

During the day the Force Commander had been dealing with Civil problems; and he had interviews with the Icelandic Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Police.

Before landing, the following was read out to all ranks:

STURGES MEMORANDUM No 1

Before disembarkation is essential all ranks are impressed with the fact that the Force is the uninvited guest of the ICELANDIC Government. In order to ensure the success of the operation, the subsequent well being and freedom from hostile acts and sabotage, it is essential that the local inhabitants should be treated with the greatest courtesy and patience. A degree of cordial relations and trust must be established at the earliest possible

moment. Force is only to be resorted to when the object cannot be achieved by any other means. When used, it must be restricted to the absolute minimum compatible with the safety of our own Troops. This order is to be brought to the notice of all ranks taking part in the operation before disembarkation.

R G STURGES Colonel.

Hundreds of leaflets printed in Icelandic had been taken ashore for circulation among the inhabitants, and read as follows:

NOTICE

A British Force arrived early today and is now in occupation of the town. This step has been taken with the sole object of forestalling the Germans by occupying as quickly as possible certain points. We English do not intend to interfere with the ICELANDIC Government or people, but we want to save ICELAND from the fate of DENMARK and NORWAY.

Therefore we ask you to give us a good reception and help us. While we are dealing with Germans settled in REYKJAVIK or elsewhere in ICELAND, it is temporarily forbidden

(i) To broadcast, telegraph or telephone.

(ii) To leave or enter the town for a few hours.

We regret the inconvenience caused and trust that it will not last long.

R G STURGES OFFICER COMMANDING

The attitude of the people was, of course one of great shock, but generally speaking they were friendly. There was obviously a large pro-Nazi element.

The Force Commander brought Passive Air Defence restrictions into force in REYKJAVIK. This was not popular with the inhabitants as it made them feel that the Occupation had brought war to their country.

After a few days it was reported that the Icelandic newspapers were saying that the British Force was decadent, that a high proportion suffered from Venereal Disease, and that any Icelandic girl seen in company with a British soldier would be regarded as a prostitute, and any man as a traitor. The Force Commander at once went to the British Minister and called for an explanation, as not one single personal injury had been caused and not a single case of Venereal Disease existed in the Force. It was then found that the report had appeared in a Communist newspaper.

After this, very high tributes were paid in the Icelandic Press and in broadcasts, to the exemplary behaviour of the men. There is no doubt that when the Force left ICELAND very friendly relations had been established.

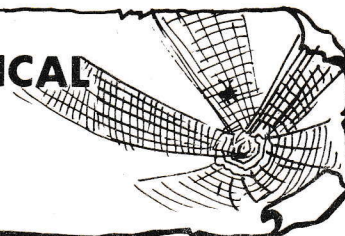
On 16th May information was received that the Force was to be relieved by an Army Brigade. This Brigade arrived the next day.

By 20th May Force STURGES had been relieved and had embarked with all stores onboard the Transport "Lancastria" which sailed for UK the next day.

So ended Operation FORK. Not a shot had been fired - not even by accident.

THE PLEASURES OF RESEARCH - PRACTICAL

By
TONY PERRETT



In Vol V No 1 Marjorie Green wrote about the "Pleasures of Research" from the largely "paper-work" angle, which prompted me to extend a few comments on the "practical" side of research.

Not for one minute do I imagine that every member will find it an ideal way to spend a visit to a new country by submerging oneself inside some dingy archives library, and fewer still would relish a holiday spent ferreting around old abandoned forts and cemeteries. Some will find the latter pursuit positively morbid in fact; never-the-less a great deal of interest and satisfaction can be derived from this seemingly boring occupation.

I am sure, for instance, that I might have raised the value of a solitary house in a secluded bay at Bermuda when the owner, working on a boat on the beach, curious as to why I should want to photograph the area, was enlightened by the fact that his property stood on the site of the original Royal Marines encampment when in 1810 some 400 came as guards for the convicts sent out from England to build the nearby Dockyard! I also felt some measure of satisfaction after finding the grave of an RMLI officer (1885) in Japan, that the Corps Archivist was able to trace a living descendant in this country who was most interested in learning how, where and when he died.

Unlike those of the current century, earlier gravestones were much more informative, and from those still legible it is often possible to trace not only the movements of ships and regiments but their actions, disasters and epidemics also. Some even give potted histories of the person, or battle/accident in which they were involved ... and occasionally there are humorous epitaphs.

Alas, unlike recent military cemeteries under the constant immaculate care of the War Graves Commission, earlier ones are often found either hopelessly derelict, overgrown, wrecked by earthquakes - or vanished completely without trace. A very few have been carefully maintained by local authorities as tourist attractions or gardens of remembrance.

Only twice have I been beaten by undergrowth; at Botany Bay, Australia, and Tobago, the most fought-over island in the Caribbean, where our Marines featured not only in the original capture and several "re-takes", but also in quelling what became known as the Belmanna Riots of 1876, caused by the introduction of a "Dog Tax"!

Acting on information that there were military graves near the tiny village of Plymouth, and assuming that at some time Marines probably occupied the nearby Fort James that guarded the Fleet anchorage in this bay, I went to explore, but without success, due to the general decay and prolific tangled creepers.

In such remote spots as these it may not only be a tomb-stone you come face to face with as you hack your way through the undergrowth, but a native whose friendliness is questionable - and you wonder which of you looks the more startled!

On these occasions I usually dress to look as least affluent as possible, hiding my camera in a bag until the moment is right to take a photograph of the cleared stonework with the minimum of fuss, because even if you don't actually see anyone there is sometimes the feeling of an awareness that eyes are peering at you from the jungle, and you hope that they haven't lighted on this passport to untold wealth!

Strangely enough, I seldom manage to persuade any of my friends to join me on my journeys; it's very odd, but then there's no accounting for tastes!

Ironically, the only two actual tense moments came in the midst of so-called "civilisation"; at New York where British troops inconveniently chose the centre of Harlem for their HQ during the War of Independence, a local gentleman selected me as suitable bait for his "trained killer" Alsatian dog. Fortunately for me the dog failed it's course and I went on to qualify for "The Sprinter of the Year" award! The other instance occurred much nearer home in one of our Midland cities noted for it's high recruiting potential. I was "arrested" in a grossly overgrown cemetery which contained some military stones, and only "released" on giving an assurance to the council representative and policeman that I would not publish any photographs of what was obviously an embarrassment to them! (Soon to be redeveloped.)

Grave spotting may be morbid - but never dull!

-oOo-

FROM THE LEICESTER JOURNAL JUNE 28 1793 (Submitted by Herbert Heather)

WAR
IN DEFENCE OF
THE KING ... the CONSTITU
TION, ... and TRUE LIBERTY
WITH THE REWARD of
French PRIZE MONEY

All young and able bodied Men, are here invited to inlist in the First Division of the ROYAL CORPS OF MARINES at Chatham, commanded by John Tupper, Esq. Colonel.

Every Man Inlisting will receive THREE GUINEAS and a Crown to drink his King's Health.

The many advantages which flow on the Marine Corps are well known and attested, the Pay of every Soldier is raised to 8^d per Day, he has the benefit when embarked of receiving his Provisions GRATIS. While his pay is accumulating, by which means he receives a considerable sum at one Time, which will enable him at the end of the War, to retire Comfortably, if he is so disposed. Should his wishes induce him to remain in the Corps, he will have the advantage when old or infirm, of retiring to Greenwich Hospital where he will be maintained in Ease, Comfort, and Tranquillity, the remainder of his Days. These are facts, for the truth of which there needs no neccessity to urge more than their own Proof.

Any spirited young Fellow that will come forward and shew the Nobleness of his mind in defence of the best of Kings, and the most precious constitution by which every thing that is dear and valuable to Man is preserved his own true liberty and Happiness let him repair to Captain CHARLES GREEN, of the Marines at Mr Eames in the Market Place, or to the SERJEANT OF MARINES recruiting in the Town of Leicester, where he will meet with that Encouragement and reward due to his Spirit, Loyalty and true virtue.

DEPOT BAND 1890-1930

BY

MARJORIE GREEN

Col N F Sampson-Way, CB, who commanded the Depot 1899/92 and his 2nd in Command, Lt Col E W G Byam were anxious to raise a band at The Depot, and the Mercury of February 1st 1890, contained the following notice: "The long cherished idea of a Military Band at Walmer is, we understand, shortly to be realised the Lords of the Admiralty having received the official concurrence of the Treasury in sanctioning the proposal."

An Order in Council of 21st March 1890, gave authority for 17 musicians in lieu of 17 privates RMLI, stating that the establishment of a band would "tend to discipline and good health among recruits." (All recruits, both RMA and RMLI passed through The Depot at that time.)

No doubt the band also had its NCOs, with 6 buglers and 4 privates attached, the same as a Headquarters band. In 1900 the musicians were increased to 25, thus being placed on the same footing as HQ bands.

A grant of £100 per annum was also made by the Government, and it is understood that The Depot band also received a share of the Officers band subscriptions.

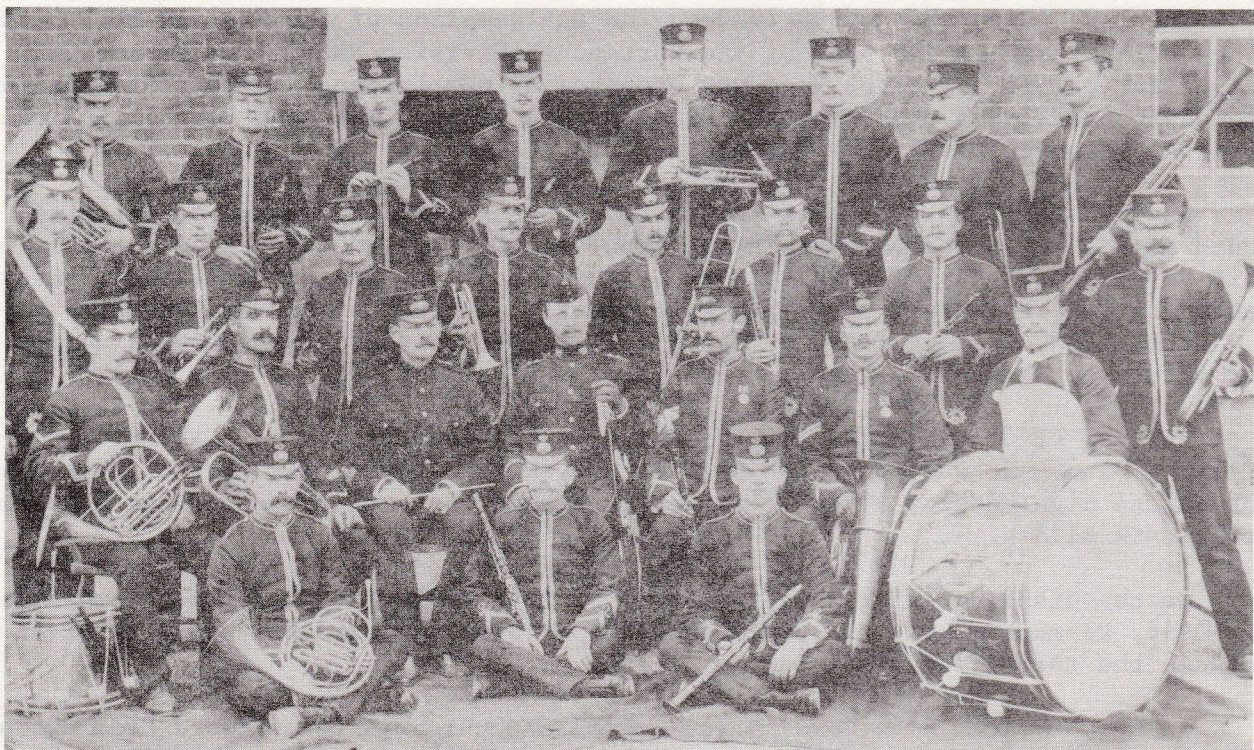
A Sergeant, RMLI, was allowed as Bandmaster, (it was not until 1897 that a Warrant Officer was allowed), and Band Sgt Batson was selected. He had already served for 26 years with the Band of the Portsmouth Division RMLI, and had acted as Band Sgt under Major Miller.

The first public appearance of the Band in The Depot seems to have been at a smoking concert in connection with the RM Cycle Corps, which owed its origin to the keenness of Major Edye RMLI, then serving at The Depot. The concert took place on 22nd May 1890, and it is recorded that "at every instrument the execution was admirable". At the end of the performance the members of the new band were loudly cheered, and Colonel, Officers, NCOs and men alike, appeared to be highly delighted with the prospect of the new and promising departure, producing a first class instrumental band for The Walmer Depot.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining suitable musicians, and there are many quaint legends as to their recruitment. One relates that a cornet player was obtained from a painless dentistry caravan, where his job was to play his high notes at the critical moment.

At The Depot Sports the new band played alternately with the band of the Chatham Division, RMLI, and the first public appearance in Deal was at the Regatta in September 1890, when the band played on the Parade. It also gave performances in the Marine Terrace Gardens, as the Rink in South Street was then termed, in connection with assaults-at-arms by the gymnastic instructors of The Depot, and on a portable bandstand on Deal sea-front. These open air performances were a feature of Deal's season, and attracted huge crowds. It took part in its first torchlight tattoo in 1900.

The band went to France in January 1917 and served there for three months, during which time it gave one hundred concerts and played the 1st Battalion RMLI back to billets at Engelbelmer on 22nd March 1917, after the battle of Miraumont, having met them at Martinsart.



THE DEPOT BAND, 1898

In 1918 the band played in the Albert Hall at a special boxing match, which HRH The Prince of Wales attended. Two days later it proceeded to Belgium to entertain various divisions, and also gave concerts in aid of war widows and orphans, at which it was accorded very enthusiastic receptions.

The Burgomaster of La Bouverie said at one of these concerts: "The committee who organised this fete beg me to thank you very deeply for the generous audience you kindly brought to this patriotic fete. In our country, where musical art is extensively patronised, your performance today was highly appreciated. We love your land, your King and your Army that brought us deliverance, and here, where military and civil men are together, we are always very glad to tie again the friendly and grateful chains that bind us to your compatriots".

"I congratulate your talented Bandmaster and his very good musicians. I beg him to accept this recollection of our fete: it is the usual lamp that guides the brave miner into the depths of the gloomy coal mine. Moreover, it is the characteristic emblem of our country, where coal-mining is the most important industry. Bravo to the famous band of the Royal Marines. Bravo to its talented Master. Hurrah to England, its King, its Navy and Army and thank you again."

Lord Charles Beresford engaged the band to play at a Rose Show in Trafalgar Square in 1920, and it was subsequently engaged to play at a dinner in Greenwich, which was attended by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York.

In 1922, with the Band of the Portsmouth Division, RMLI, it attended the funeral of Prince Louis of Battenburg (the first Marquis of Milford Haven, father of Lord Mountbatten). The band played from St James' Palace to Westminster.

The Band was disbanded in 1923 on the amalgamation of the RMA and RMLI, its place being taken by the band of the Portsmouth Division RMLI, from Forton. In actual fact, this new Depot Band was composed of nearly equal numbers of musicians from both bands, and was under the Directorship of Lt E Walton O'Donnell, of the former Portsmouth Division RMLI band.

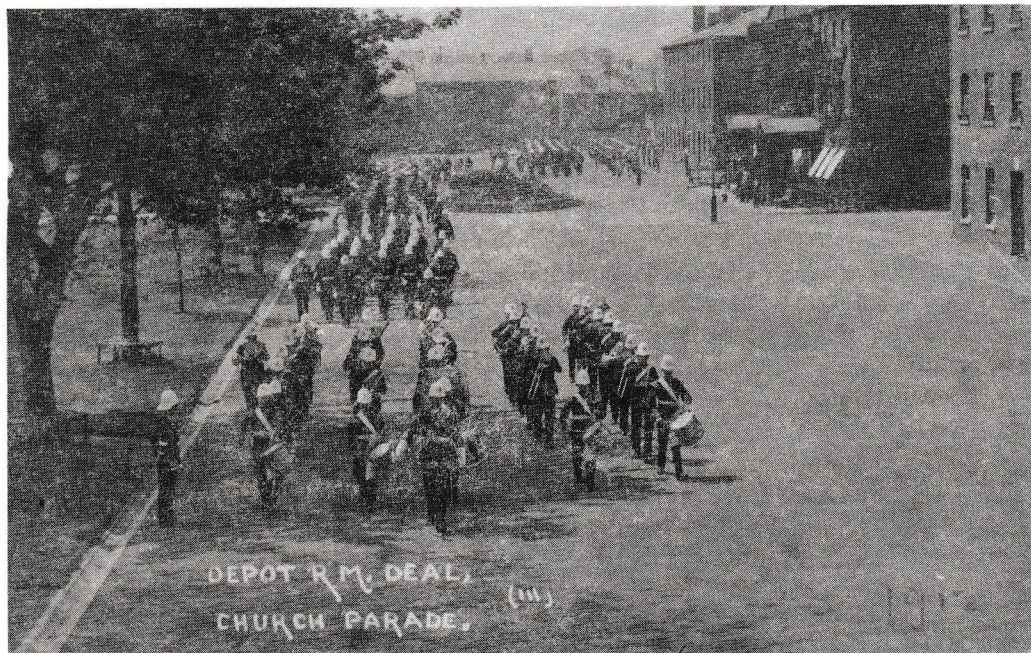
In 1925 The Depot Band was chosen to accompany HRH The Prince of Wales to South Africa and South America in HMS Repulse. During the absence of the band on this Royal Tour, a Royal Naval School of Music band was sent from Eastney, under Bandmaster H J P Taylor. He became ill shortly afterwards, and WO Bandmaster A C Green LRAM, was appointed in his place and served there for 7 months until the return of The Depot Band.

In 1927 Lt O'Donnell retired to take over the conductorship of the BBC Military Band. He was succeeded by Lt F J Ricketts, Bandmaster of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, already famous for his marches written under the pen name of Kenneth Alford.

On the disbandment of the band on 1st October 1930, Lt Ricketts became Director of Music, Plymouth Division, and the musicians were approximately equally divided between the three Divisional Bands.

In October 1930, the Royal Naval School of Music was transferred from Eastney Barracks to Deal, so it was not necessary to maintain a separate Staff Band.

On arrival at Deal, the Royal Naval School of Music was welcomed at the station by the Drum and Fife Band of The Depot under Drum Major Small.



CHURCH PARADE, SOUTH BARRACKS, c 1910

