

Royal Marines

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SHEET ANCHOR

Volume VII Number I

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THE SHEET ANCHOR

VOLUME VII NUMBER 1 WINTER 1981-2

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(Contributed material may not necessarily reflect official Corps policy, and whilst every effort is made by the Editor to ensure that the information contained in this publication is correct, the ultimate responsibility is that of the individual author).

Privately Published by the
ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY
and printed at Eastney

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Private Royal Marines Light Infantry circa 1865 By

Charles C Stadden



FIG 1

SHAKO The shako was made of dark blue cloth mounted on a cork basis, the cloth was ribbed (stitched) from the top to the bottom, the stitching was 5/16" apart, the common name given to this shako was the 'quilted shako'. The height of the front was 4 inches and the back which sloped forward was $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches, the flat top measured $5\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 inches. A black metal disc pierced with holes was placed high up on each side of the shako for ventilation.

Round the base a black lacquered leather band 5/8 inches wide double stitched. The peak, bound and stitched was 1.5/8 inches wide. The bottom of the shako went almost to a point at the back consequently covering the head well. The chin-strap $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide of black lacquered leather with buckle on the right side for adjustment. The brass shako, (Fig 2) an eight pointed star, the topmost point displaced by a Victorian Crown; on this a laurel wreath, within this a strap inscribed "Per Mare Per Terram"; in the centre the Globe. At the top of the wreath a 'Fouled Anchor' and at the base of the wreath, a bugle with strings. The plate measured $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide by 3.1/4 inches in depth and was struck in one piece. Dark green ball tuft measuring $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter, with brass tuft holder.



FIG 2

TUNIC Scarlet single breasted, eight brass regimental buttons down the front, the buttons having the design of the Crown and Fouled Anchor within a circle inscribed 'Royal Marines Light Infantry' with a wreath of laurel round. The collar, cuffs and shoulder straps of dark blue cloth also the cuff slashes, were piped around with white cloth. The cuff slashes had three white lace loops, in the centre of each a regimental button. The skirt slashes of scarlet cloth also had three white lace loops on each with a regimental button in the centre and was piped with white cloth around the edges (Fig 3). On each shoulder strap embroidered in white was the Globe and Laurel the strap edged with white piping. The collar was also piped along the top edge in white and down the front of the tunic. The cuff was $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, the cuff slash 6 inches long. The skirt 12 inches in height with a variation $\frac{1}{2}$ inch longer or shorter for every inch of difference in the height of the wearer. The skirt slashes were 10 inches deep.

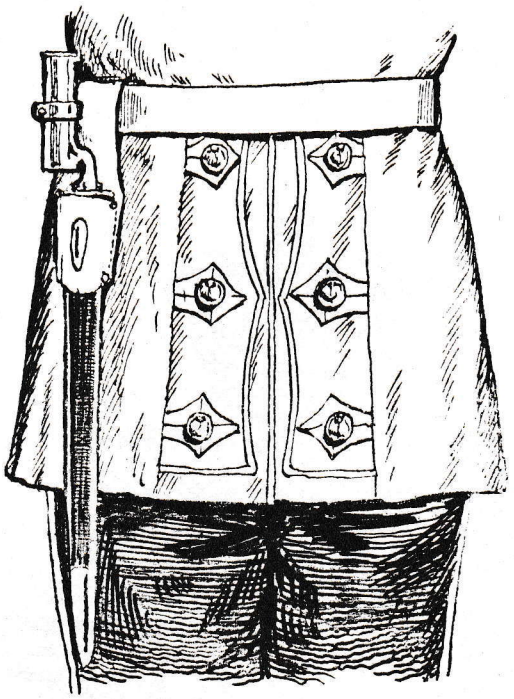


FIG 3

brass waist clasp with the design of the Royal Crest, border inscribed "Per Mare Per Terram". White canvas haversack worn over the right shoulder with brass runner for adjustment. Canvas knapsack painted black, reinforced at the corners with black leather, stiffened with wooden boards 13 inches in height, 15 inches in breadth, 3 inches in depth. Whitened buff leather straps 1.1/4 inches wide passed vertically round the knapsack, buckling underneath; the shoulder slings were fastened to the straps near the upper edge of the knapsack and secured to buckles attached to the straps on the underside. The Mess-tin in an oilskin cover was strapped to the top. Wooden Canteen painted blue/grey worn on right side with brown leather strap.

RIFLE & BAYONET Enfield Rifle, barrel 39 inches long, the bore .577 inch, the rifling 3 shallow grooves, sighting 990 yards. White buff leather sling. Bayonet, triangular socket.

TROUSERS Oxford mixture cloth with scarlet welt $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad down the outside seam. Black leather gaiters. Boots Black leather.

EQUIPMENT (Fig 4). White buff leather pouch belt $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, with small leather percussion cap pouch in centre; Black leather ammunition pouch holding 60 rounds. White buff leather waist-belt with whitened leather pouch on right side,



FIG 4

THE NAVAL CHRONICLE, 1807

BRAVERY OF A SERJEANT OF MARINES

Portsmouth, Feb. 5, 1807.

Mr Editor,

Looking over the papers of a young gentleman that formerly belonged to His Majesty's ship La Desiree, when commanded by Captain Whitby, on the Jamaica Station, I found the following anecdote of the Serjeant (sic) of Marines belonging to that ship. If you deem it worthy of inserting in your valuable work, the Naval Chronicle, you will oblige, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

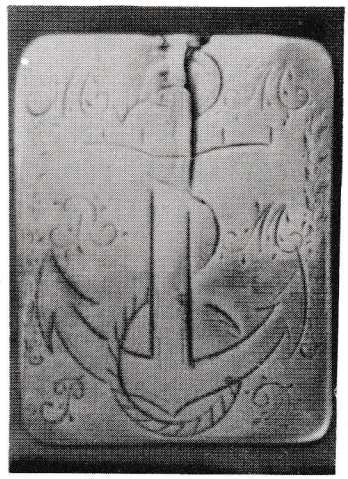
HECTOR.

-oOo-

A few days previous to an unsuccessful attack made by the boats of our ship on a French privateer schooner, concealed in Rio Cresse, or Hidden Port, in the island of Cuba, James Mulholland, Serjeant of Marines, was broke from that situation, and put into the ranks, for insolence to his superior officer. The intention of the Captain was, I believe, only to keep him in that subordinate situation until he was conscious of his error, for he was an excellent soldier, and otherwise a good man; he appeared often much dejected, and the disgrace had apparently made a deep impression on his mind. When the boats were preparing to depart on the enterprize, he came into the Midshipmen's berth, and requested he might be permitted to go with one of the young gentlemen who was to have the charge of the launch, saying, that he was perfectly assured he should never return alive again to the ship, but that he wished to show he was a brave man, and worthy the situation that a few days before was taken from him. His request granted, and he proved himself, by his conduct the whole of the time, a brave and steady fellow; but, according to his own words, he never returned, having received, just before the action terminated, eight or nine musket balls at once in his breast, while in the act of discharging the contents of his piece at the Frenchmen. His death was regretted by every one on board; and what makes the circumstances the more extraordinary, is, that he was the only man killed.

His Majesty's Ship Desiree,
23 Feb. 1804

Note: HMS Desiree was a 5th Rate (36) captured from the French on 8 July 1800 and in 1804 had a Royal Marines detachment of about 40.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM

The top photograph opposite is of a shoulder belt plate which has been presented to this Museum, of which nothing is recorded or known. The actual size is 6½cm x 5cm, standard shoulder belt plate fittings on the reverse and of silver or polished pewter metal. It was presented by the family of Private John Colbourn who served in the Royal Marines from 1801-1815 with service at Trafalgar on HMS Defiance, but there is no evidence to suggest that the plate was his or that it relates to his period of service.



The device of fouled anchor, flanked by the letter RM and side laurels certainly indicate that the plate is of RM origin but the letters MMPD engraved in the four corners cannot be identified nor do they relate to a family connection. Britain's Sea Soldiers by Field, Volume II page 78 shows a shoulder belt plate of a private with a questioned date of 1802-1823 and if this date is correct, the plate which has been presented could pre-date this period. Field also places the change of belt plate to be square with lion and crown as 1797 but this probably relates only to officers.

The lower photograph is of two badges which have recently been given to the Royal Marines Museum, and which are at present unidentified. The top badge is 4cm in diameter and could possibly be the centre piece of a buckle, but I can find no illustrations which remotely resemble this badge. The lower badge may possibly be from the slide of either a Colour belt or Drum Major's belt. It would appear to be an Army badge since the laurel is of oak leaves, but is similar to the motif worn on the slides of Royal Marines Colour/Drum Major's belts.

Have any of your readers any knowledge of these badges or the plate? If so I would very much welcome such information.

-oOo-

Acknowledgements

This edition marks the introduction of a new front cover illustration, again by kind permission of Charles C Stadden to whom we are most grateful; it depicts the Royal Marine and R M A dress of 1806 period. The Society crest was designed by our Chairman Colonel E Potts.

BADGES - LETTERS

First to answer our query posed in the last issue was Bryn Owen, The Curator of the Welsh Regiment Museum, Cardiff, who wrote:-

"With reference to your notes on 'Badges' included on Page 5 of 'Sheet Anchor', Vol VI, No 3, I would like to pass some comment on Exhibit No 2. I believe I will be correct in stating that: this Badge with its pin back and finely made in gilt, silver and blue enamel has no Royal Marines connection.

"The Badge is a Masonic item and was presented to members of the Freemasons who were Patrons and Supporters (financially) of the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls - a charitable institution, and hence the lettering RMIG. 1927 signifies the year of the presentation of the Badge and the Prince of Wales's Plumes, Coronet and Motto are indicative of the fact that the then Prince of Wales was Chief Patron.

"One will find similar items inscribed RMIB. This was the Royal Masonic Institute for Boys".

R C Whittock of Penzance provided a second opinion:-

"As a badge collector I once came across this badge, and naturally the RMIG initials thereon puzzled me, but I doubt if it has anything to do with the Corps at all.

"What I consider it to be is the establishment crest of the 'Royal Masonic Institution for Girls'. The '1927' possibly being the date of inauguration.

"From what I remember of it, it definitely did not have the 'feel' of a genuine service badge. To begin with it is of cast nickel with the embellishment of red and blue enamel on the central circlet, or as it would be in a service badge, the garter strap. It also has a brooch type fastening bearing out the theory that young ladies might have worn it. The Royal Arms surmounting the circlet has no resemblance to the service version. It is too wide and the crown is neither Victorian, Imperial or St. Edward's type.

"The outstanding thing which struck me was the 'rays' of the actual star. A good example of this is the Brunswick star in our helmet plate. Each ray ends in a distinctly pointed tip and the crown would never be superimposed over the upper rays of the star. The rays of the star in question have a 'filed level' look which would never be found in genuine service badges of this type".

-oOo-

Leicester Journal Friday 23 June, 1797

The following is an extract of a letter from an officer of the Warwickshire Militia to a friend in Birmingham.

GRAVESEND JUNE 15, 1797

"I write this from Gravesend at which place we arrived yesterday having received a route in the morning at six o'clock, to march immediately.

This place is all bustle and confusion. We have a Captain, two Subalterns and 80 Privates on board the STANDARD man of war and I expect every moment to receive orders to go on board some of the other ci-devont mutinous ships.

I believe ours is the first Militia regiment that ever acted as Marines. To the honour of the men the whole garrison turned out volunteers, and the conduct of those in the ship is most exemplory."

Zeebrugge

PART FOUR OF THE NARRATIVE

By

Maj Gen Arthur Chater CB CVO DSO OBE



Charles Staddens vivid painting of the raid.

On 8th February 1918, I was at the RM Barracks Chatham. That day orders were received from London to form the 4th Battalion Royal Marines, and put it under training forthwith. The Battalion was formed of "A" Company from Chatham, "B" Company from Portsmouth, "C" Company from Plymouth, an MG section of RMLI, and a Trench Mortar and Pom-pom section of RMA. Major B N Elliot was appointed CO, Major Cordner second in command, and myself Adjutant. Battalion Headquarters was formed from ranks of all Divisions. When the details of the operation we were to carry out were explained to me, I was thrilled by having been selected to take part in it.

Battalion Headquarters moved to Deal on 21st February, and the Battalion concentrated there during the next few days. The highly secret plan for the operation in which the Battalion was to take part was explained to officers. They were forbidden to discuss it: but at the same time a cover plan was explained. Training went ahead, whilst the CO, Second in Command and Adjutant paid a number of visits to the Vice Admiral at Dover, and to Chatham Dockyards to see the special work being done to HMS "Vindictive". The Battalion was inspected by the AGRM and by the First Sea Lord, and on 7th March, King George V visited the Depot and inspected the Battalion on the Drill Field. The shape of the Zeebrugge Mole was taped out on the Freedown (for security reasons it was referred to as a position in France) and the Battalion was exercised in assaulting its objectives in daylight, and in the dark. During Stokes Gun firing on the Freedown, a premature occurred, killing four men of the Mortar Section, and wounding five others. At that time Stokes Gun ammunition was highly unreliable. After four day Draft leave, the Battalion left Deal by train on 6th April. At Dover we embarked in the Transport "King Edward" as though for France, but at the Mouse Lightship we transhipped to the ferry steamer "Daffodil". Arriving

in the Swin in the afternoon, the Battalion transferred for accommodation to the old battleship HMS "Hindustan", with the exception of "C" Company which went straight to HMS "Vindictive". The details of the operation and the part in it that each man was to play was now explained to all ranks.

The feasibility of carrying out the operation to block the canal at Zeebrugge was closely governed by conditions of tide, wind and weather. The essential conditions of tide occurred at fortnightly periods, during which it would be possible to make the attack on any one of five nights, provided the wind and weather also served.

For the operation, the 4th Battalion was to be in "Vindictive" with the exception of "A" Company which was in "Daffodil". Tuesday 9th April was the first day of the first possible period, but the sea was too rough. On the following day, the Battalion was transferred to the operational ships, but the weather was again unsuitable, and the ships did not sail. On 11th April we transferred to "Vindictive" at 1.30 pm, and sailed at 4 pm. All that evening the great armada was on its way, with hundreds on board, keyed-up for the great moment: but at 12.45 am (12th April) when we could see the flashes of our bombs and shells bursting on Zeebrugge, the wind changed, and the Admiral decided to call off the attack. The ships were turned round, and we were back in the Swin by 1 pm. One of the lessons learned from this abortive attempt was this: prior to our arrival, and without consulting us, the Captain of the "Vindictive" had announced that before the ship reached the mole, a double tot of rum would be issued to all hands. As the operation was one in which all would need clear heads and steady hands and feet, we felt this to be a mistake: but there was no going back on it. We learnt however that the rum issue would need far closer supervision than had been given to it on 11th April.

On 13th April we again transferred to our little ships and sailed at 4 pm, but at 6 pm the operation was cancelled, and again we returned.

The Admiralty now became apprehensive that some news of all our comings and goings must have reached the enemy. Surprise was absolutely essential to success, and surprise now seemed to be highly improbable. Their Lordships wished to call off the whole operation on the preparation of which so much time and material had been expended. The Admiral came to ascertain the feeling amongst officers and men. The First Lord (Eric Geddes) came to visit the ships. All those who spoke said they were keen to go on, and one more try was agreed to.

The first day of the second suitable period was Monday 22nd April. The order to carry out the operation was received at 10.45 am, and at 11.40, we again left the "Hindustan". At 1.10 pm the Force sailed, and on a perfect spring afternoon and evening we approached the enemy coast. Towards dusk Wing Commander Brock was transferred by whaler from one of the destroyers to "Vindictive". He was the pyrotechnics expert, and brought with him a box labelled "Explosives - Handle with great care". This was hoisted on board and handled very gingerly. It was taken down to the Wardroom, and found to contain several bottles of excellent vintage port, which were consumed with relish. Brock landed on the Mole, and was never seen again.

At 11 pm the Battalion went to action stations. As the result of experience on 11th April, very careful precautions were taken to see that no man got more than his own ration of rum. In spite of this, one old soldier must have borrowed someone else's tot, for when I went round the mess decks with the Sergeant Major as the men were closing-up, he shouted at us "We are just going over the top. We are all equal now". I remember catching sight of the same man some three hours later, and thinking what a changed and sober man he looked.

On the way up to my station beside the Battalion Commander on the bridge, I met Major Cordner, the Second in Command. We stopped and talked for a minute or two on the built-up deck. Although I cannot remember the matter having been previously discussed, I had always assumed that Major Cordner's station would be somewhere near the after end of the built-up deck. At the end of our talk I remarked, "And now you are going aft?" to my surprise he replied, "No, I must be with the CO until the ship is alongside and then I will go aft". Since then I have often regretted that I did not put more forcibly my point that the CO and Second in Command should not have been together. We went up to the bridge and joined the CO. The three of us stood together on the port side of the bridge. The remainder of Battalion Headquarters were below us on the lower bridge. I hung my fleece-lined Burberry on the chart house door, where I later found it badly torn by shell splinters.

As the ship approached the harbour we heard the sound of shell fire ahead. Star shells started coming over us and we realised how well we were being concealed by our smoke. Then the wind changed, and the smoke suddenly drifted away and on the port bow, we saw the Mole, about which, for the past two months and more, we had thought so much. A moment later there was a burst of shell fire and shells came whistling around us.

Breast-high splinter-proof mattresses had been placed around the bridge. Although only twenty two years old, I probably had a far more intimate experience of shell fire than either the CO or the Second in Command. At Antwerp in 1914 I had quite unnecessarily put my head up over the parapet of a trench and been wounded for my stupidity. At Gallipoli I had been hit in the back by a shrapnel ball. We were still some distance from the Mole and now instinct told me to keep my head down. I suggested that my two seniors should do the same, but they either did not hear me or they did not agree with me. Anyway they took no notice. A moment later, a shell appeared to hit the front part of the lower bridge beneath us. My two seniors dropped to the deck on either side of me. I grasped hold of them and spoke to them in turn, but neither of them answered me. I then made my way across the bridge and down the starboard ladder to the starboard waist, and called out for Major Weller Commander of "C" Company and the next senior officer in the Battalion.



Chatham Company of 4th RM Battalion on their return to barracks after the Zeebrugge raid.

By the time I had found Major Weller and told him that the Battalion Commander and Second in Command were casualties, the ship was alongside the Mole and the seamen storming party was landing.

"B" Company, stationed in the port waist, had to some extent been protected from the shell fire whilst the ship was approaching the Mole - by the built-up deck. "C" Company, in the starboard waist, had little protection and suffered considerable casualties before the ship was placed alongside. The plan was for No. 10 and 11 Platoons of "C" Company to land first, but when the moment for this arrived, both platoon officers and most of the men were already casualties, and the platoons as such, appeared no longer to exist. Standing on the built-up deck, I therefore called down to Lieutenant Cooke, Commanding No. 5 platoon of "B" Company, to bring his platoon up the port bridge ladder, which, although narrow, was a much shorter route than the wide ramps which led from the starboard side to the built-up deck. No. 5 platoon rushed up the ladder, over the three remaining serviceable brows, and turning to the right advanced along the pathway on top of the sea wall.

I accompanied Lieutenant Cooke's platoon ashore to investigate the height of the sea wall, of which conflicting reports had been received, and the best means of getting down on to the Mole, and up again. I found that there were no steps near to where the ship had been berthed, and that the height was too great to jump down. Returning on board, I gave instructions for hook ropes to be taken ashore to enable the men to get down on to the Mole, and I made Sergeant-Major Thatcher, personally responsible that, after the men had landed, scaling ladders were taken ashore and placed and maintained in position. Without these ladders, no man who got down on to the Mole would have been able to get back on to the ship. Having given these orders, I returned to the sea wall, slid down a hook rope, and crossed over to No.3 shed on the far side of the Mole. My impression is that the sea wall abreast of the ship was not under rifle or MG fire at this time, but that the defenders were shelling the Mole and their shells were striking the sea wall and the sheds. Only the funnels and foretop of "Vindictive" were visible over the sea wall. The pom-pom in the foretop was firing over our heads, and this gave great encouragement. It was later found that Lieutenant Rigby and the whole guns crew in the foretop had been killed with the exception of Sergeant Finch, and he although badly wounded, was firing the gun. For this action, he was subsequently voted by the Battalion to receive a representative Victoria Cross.

A number of men collected by No.3 shed. Some units passed round the inshore end of the shed to attack craft lying alongside the Mole. Other units started preparing the sheds for demolition, but it was soon realised that the defenders were doing more damage with their own shell-fire than we were likely to be able to do. I met Captain Bamford, "B" Company Commander, whose totally-unperturbed manner had the most reassuring effect on all who came in contact with him that night. Together we discussed the situation. Our Battalion plan had been based on the assumption that "Vindictive" would be put alongside abreast the fortified zone at the end of the Mole, which was our first objective. Actually, the ship had come alongside some four hundred yards from the end of the Mole. All those men who belonged to units which were to have attacked the fortified zone, therefore, now found themselves at No. 3 shed. No attack on the fortified zone had yet been made. As this was our principle objective, we decided to organize an attack on the fortified zone along the Mole. This entailed attacking a prepared position across some two hundred yards of flat pavement devoid of any form of cover. Led by Captain Bamford, the units started to move forward. They were well out in the open, when the ship's siren was heard making what was taken to be the emergency recall signal. Captain Bamford, therefore, gave the order to withdraw.

The signal arranged for the emergency recall was the sounding of the morse letter "K" on the ship's siren. Although the siren was blowing, it was not making this signal. We had expected to be ashore for one and a quarter hours, but we had been ashore only forty five minutes. As I was not convinced that the recall was intended, I returned to the ship and went to the conning tower, where I found Captain Carpenter, and asked him if we were to withdraw. Having been told that the recall was ordered, I returned to the sea wall and passed the order to all those whom I could reach by voice or signal. Units returned steadily to the ship, bringing wounded men with them. Several men who passed me thought I was wounded and wanted to carry me on board. The enemy were still shelling the sea wall, and those who had to cross the Mole and climb the ladders had the most hazardous time. Fortunately, some of the ladders remained intact until the end. When I could see no more men approaching, I returned on board and reported to that effect. A few moments later the ship left the Mole.

As the ship withdrew, we expected to be heavily shelled. Clouds of smoke were released aft, which, although almost asphyxiating to those of us who were on deck, hid us from the enemy, and to our surprise we were not hit.

As the danger from the enemy diminished I began to realise that my right knee was very painful. What had hit it I never knew, but it probably happened when the CO and Second in Command were killed.

I discussed the operation with Bamford. We had failed to gain any of the objectives which had been laid down in our orders. We felt that our part of the operation had been a complete failure. We had lost many good men with what seemed to us no result. We felt extremely despondent. We did not then know that, although our part of the operation had not gone according to plan, the attack on the Mole had created the necessary diversion to enable the block ships to enter the Canal.

"Vindictive" reached Dover at 8.0 am, and went alongside the Admiralty Pier. On landing, I met Admiral Keyes. He told me that aeroplanes had been over Zeebrugge that morning, and had reported the Canal entrance blocked. He said that the operation had been a great success. I told him how we felt, and asked him to tell the men. The Battalion was falling in on the Pier to entrain for Deal. Before we commenced to entrain, the Admiral came and told us his good news.

I then rang up the Brigade Major at Deal and said we were back: but both the CO and the Second in Command had been killed. I think he did not believe me. The remains of the Battalion returned to Deal by train, and marched to the Depot. The task of licking our wounds and accounting for the killed, wounded and missing then began. Of a strength of about seven hundred and thirty, the Battalion had suffered three hundred and sixty six casualties, including seventeen officers, of whom ten were killed. Next day we were rung up by the Admiral's office at Dover, and told that the Battalion was to elect one representative to receive a Victoria Cross for the Battalion, and that the Admiral wished to come over and announce the name of the person elected before the Battalion dispersed on 27th April. A message was received from the King and several other very complimentary messages were also received.

On the afternoon of the 26th, the Battalion paraded in the Drill Field. I explained what was to be done, slips of paper were issued, the troops were then told to break off for a few minutes to consult each other before writing a name on their paper and handing it in.

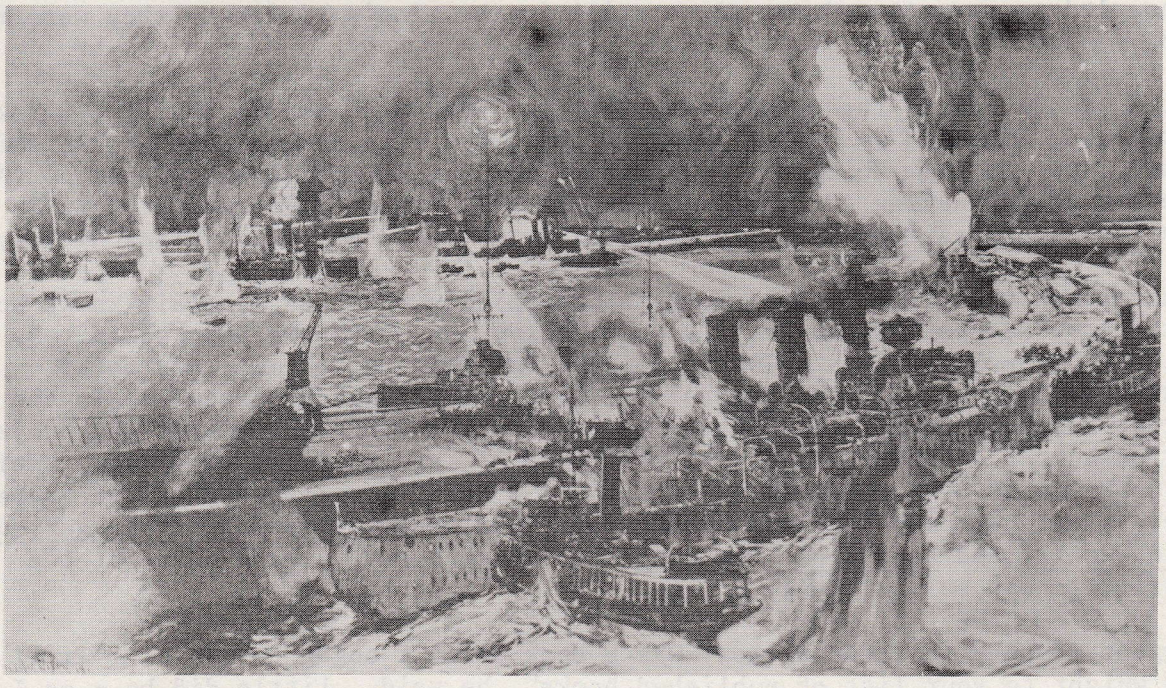
While this was being done, the CO and I went back to the office to complete the report, leaving Captain Bamford in charge to collect the voting slips and add

up the result. Half an hour later he arrived at the office looking rather sheepish. He handed to the CO a list showing himself as having received the greatest number of votes. Second on the list was Sergeant Finch. We reported Bamford's name to Dover.

Next morning, the Battalion paraded on the North Barracks parade. When Admiral Keyes arrived, the CO and I met him at the side of the parade ground. He told us that the Battalion was to receive not one, but two Victoria Crosses, and asked who was to receive the second one. After a moment's consultation with me, the CO said Sergeant Finch. This means of selection, although quite irregular, proved to be very acceptable to all concerned.

After the Admiral had addressed the Battalion, and announced the names, the Companies marched to the railway station and entrained for their respective Divisions. It was announced that to preserve the connection of the 4th Battalion with the raid on Zeebrugge, no future Battalion would be named 4th Battalion Royal Marines.

The Chatham Company returned to Chatham, where it was given a great reception as it marched from the station to Barracks. I arrived by the same train, and walked quietly to the Barracks by myself, and was given ten days leave. I was recalled from leave to command a Royal Guard of Honour for the King and Queen, who came to Chatham to visit the wounded in the RN Hospital. RN and RM Guards of Honour were mounted at the railway station. After inspecting my Guard the King presented me to the Queen mentioning that I had been at Zeebrugge. Queen Mary extended her hand. As I was holding a drawn sword, I felt embarassed, and she withdrew her hand. I afterwards found out that I should have changed my sword to my left hand, thereby leaving my right hand free; but no one had taught me this.



HMS VINDICTIVE held by HMS DAFFODIL alongside the Zeebrugge Mole. In the first hour of St. George's day 1918.

COMPILING CORPS HISTORY

By James Ladd

Guest speaker at the 1981 AGM was society member and professional author James Ladd. He revealed some interesting anecdotes whilst involved writing his epic "History of the Royal Marines".

Researching details of RM Commandos in World War II, brought me back to Eastney in 1975. The last time I had been in these barracks was almost 30 years earlier on being "demobbed" from the Portsmouth Division. This fact, however, I kept to myself in 1975, being a cautious body in approaching people for interviews, an old journalistic trick. Therefore there was no "ex-Royal served in World War II" bit. "Bit", by the way, like "yomping" and "hack it", "part of ship that's not mine", the "ulu" and "45th of Foot" are phrases of the 1970's, picked up around the barracks and occasionally in the bar. Those doubters who felt that as the telephone extension I use is 6139, I must therefore always be in the bar, should remember this is also the duty steward's phone. Although I admit many a useful note was made on an S1828 bar chit.

Having made an appointment with the Corps Historian - could I be as old as him? - he kindly invited me to lunch. Those who remember the old married quarters at Deal, will understand the Corps Historian's surprise during lunch, when his visitor described in some detail: how to black-lead a cooking range in those quarters. (Used, I hasten to add, as barracks in the 1940's, as they had been condemned since 1923).

"Ah!", my host said, "you must have been a Royal Marine, then". I was proud to admit it. After lunch we looked up the old squad photograph. In this were several chums in their pink youth, instantly recognised by me but not by my host. For Major Alastair Donald RM, knew several of these gentlemen, now after 32 years as gnarled as we are, and yet to me still in the mind's vision as they were in 1943.

Yes, I was as old as the Corps Historian, for he had joined in the same intake that April, although we had not met. Discovering this led to some gentle swinging of the lamp - a term which has not changed in over 100 years one suspects. After a week's visit, having not fallen off my bar stool nor irritated my hosts in other ways, I was propositioned "Would you be interested in writing a Corps History?"

Looking back over five years, there is a suspicion that had Alastair known how cantankerous an author can be, the question would never have been asked. Be that as it may, the publishers - Jane's, a leading publisher of military books - expressed an interest. CG, General Sir Peter Whiteley, encouraged me in the venture and pointed out that others had also begun but not finished the project. Full of author's optimism I determined to do so, and do it in two years. Well! The book was to be 120,000 words or one and a half times as long as the average novel. There was money in the bank from royalties on Commandos and Rangers of World War II; and Essential Economics - in which I have a half share of the copyright - was selling well.

My agent thought that the history was a book which I ought to write. "It'll give some weight to your list of published books", he said. Little did he - or I - realise then that the final publication would weigh 1.48kg, but such is the variety of the English language, that "weight" in the sense of quality can easily be confused with weight in kilograms. Which reminds me that Imperial measures in the original typescript were occasionally given Metric equivalents in parentheses, it was the book editor who inserted them at every point. But this is a

later part of the story and there would be several years to pass before there was a typescript to edit.

Research begins.

Letters were sent to all the newspapers, some overseas dailies and a few local journals, the project was mentioned in the Globe and Laurel. Replies came back in gratifying quantities and there would be some 700 people with whom letters would be exchanged. My letter to the Times produced about as many replies as the letter in the Sun. I am grateful to all the "dailies" and Sunday papers, who without exception published my letter - my "advert" as one correspondent called it.

To find what we have in the archives took three months of turning over the papers in every file relating to the sixty years, noting its content and extracting precis from some items. And the letters kept coming in. Some were curt: "please return my papers, as you obviously are not going to use them" needing a tactful reply after three months with only a card of acknowledgement. Gradually people realised that I was on my tod, my part-time staff did wonders but Jim-the-Author was the only person who could reply in detail to letters. Having been around the Museum by this time for some months, the Security staff, groundsmen, indeed all and sundry had come to call me Jim-the-Author. As nice a compliment as any one could wish for in my line of business, for which you need friends who will talk freely.

There were books to be read and notes extracted, maybe a couple of hundred from which about fifty were studied in detail. There was a month of research in the Public Record Office, it should have been six months but "time is money" as they say. And the letters kept coming in. Some American Royalties from other books also appeared about this time to ease the funds, pay for a "wet" or two and some travel. Not - as one friend suggested - for a holiday in the West Indies, but to get around and meet folk. Again, there is more time I would have liked to have spent visiting the many people, who generously offered to give me their time and reminiscences, but fares are so expensive, that even if there was the time the cost of many visits were beyond the budget.

Budgets are a writer's nightmare for his job is 90 per cent worry about "cash flows" and ten per cent inspiration (and the latter does not always "do" for the bank manager, what the author feels some great ideas should produce). For writing history, as one famous historian has explained, brings less reward for greater efforts than in almost any other branch of letters.

Discussing the project with Sir Campbell Hardy, he suggested I should bring the story up to date. Not stop in 1946, as originally planned, and as the days of 1939-1945 are "as old as Waterloo" to most of the serving Corps, Sir Campbell's advice was most sound.

Interviews.

But who should look for reward for what he enjoys doing? Sitting in a delightful yacht club, being given lunch by the late General Leech-Porter can hardly be called work. There were many other interviews, many meals and drinks provided but above all a great deal of information was produced. Stories these people do not normally relate, the inside-track on operations, what they felt like at the time and no gloss. Perhaps not every member realises the extent of research one must do before going to an interview. Dates, times, directions of attack, all will need feeding into the conversation. Otherwise you come back with only half a story; and there is no way in 1981 - never mind in 1942 - by which a unit on

a battlefield can get from point "A" twenty-five miles to point "B" in three minutes. The time must be wrong or the unit split into sub-units at "A" and "B", your interviewee will know the answer, but the interviewer must first have defined the question.

Help in research

There was no way in which all the interviews needed in the research could be carried out by Jim. If it had not been for Bridget, Tony, Les, Peter, Allan, Sidney, Edward, Harry (see also Picture Research) and many others in the RM Historical Society, the book would be a lot less detailed. They saw people, dug out facts, and - more important - provided useful notes on their findings.

Others freely allowed me to use their published works, Wilf's books were invaluable, and saved hours of detailed research for me. John's work on the bands, Marjorie's files and a host of other records provided by members of the Society, must represent tens of thousands of hours, all of which contributed to the final text. There was also help in other ways, it is said - although I cannot vouch for it - that before a newcomer was allowed to sign a chit in the Eastney Officers Mess bar, during 1977-8, he was discreetly asked by the staff if he had any points for the history. Whether this is true or not, it was similar help from everyone involved in the Corps, which brought in a great deal of information. And letters continued to come in.

Occasionally over enthusiasm guilded - "horrified" might be a better word - a picture. Mud became metres deep, the dining hall ten miles from the camp lines and the parade ground a swamp. Then the comment, "can't have been as bad as in 1943" sharpened up the interviewee - "you must have been a Royal Marine!" So far as I can tell, operational stories were not guilded, the reverse in fact. For the matter of fact way brave men tell their stories is always humbling for the listener.

The staff

I cannot speak too highly of the patience of my staff. Cousin Bet helped out by doing the unit chronologies, Rosemary handled some 4,000 letters, Tina did some typing at the "rush" and more in steady time, Sheila typed many hundred pages of the final text. And those who are paid, bless'em, waited for their money until I received the balance of my royalties' advance.

They, no doubt, could tell a hundred funny stories about Jim. He cannot spell. He likes you to type what he meant to say not what he put in the draft of a letter, and his economy in rough typing texts with a red ribbon caused - or so she claims - one of the part-time secretaries to have to buy new glasses.

The writing

You can judge for yourselves how this came off, sufficient to say that some 1,000,000 or more words were drafted in manuscript, since much of the text was drafted three times at least. The final manuscript draft was then typed, this typed-draft hacked about with alterations in manuscript. Changes in sequence were made and source note reference numbers inserted before drafts went for final typing. It sounds so easy now, one wonders why Jim took so long.

All letters, archive references and notes were cross-referenced to topic cards. So that in preparing, say, the paragraphs on the Comacchio battle, Jim had before him all those documents and letters which research had shown could throw some light on the subject. It is at this primary stage of writing that errors

creep in, the mis-spelt name in one source, the incorrect unit in another and simple errors of mis-reading any source.

The Editors

Michael, the senior editor, is a personal friend despite my shouting down the phone at him on occasions. He is a gentle, kind man with that touch of flint which makes authors do as he says. From his long experience of books and authors, the text benefited. He shaped the outline and later advised and counselled me on what was good and what bad in the text, the bad being rewritten to his satisfaction.

His book editor, Frank, had the daunting task of shaping the detail, getting the equivalent of the "Staff Duties" aspect right. We did not always see eye-to-eye on such things as the method of referencing source notes, but with the finished book I can see he was right.

Picture research and illustrations

At the risk of making this article something of an ego trip, I mention that I was once dubbed "The picture King" for I used so many illustrations with various articles, that 1,500 words of mine could be spread over three pages of a magazine - not the usual 1,500 words on an A4 page. Therefore, I was keen to have pictures and lots of them in the book. Jane's and I originally planned on 200 but inflation blew away 93 of this number as we have 107.

In gathering them, Harry, over some four years, noted those which he thought would be interesting and this saved me hours of research, for not only are there pictures in files, but many are in albums. Some of the latter are along side pin-ups, others among holiday snap shots. A few were the one interesting picture for my purpose, in whole albums of long dead heroes posing before studio photographers around the world.

Keith worked on the drawings and maps, and how he worked. There was a publisher's panic in December 1979 and Keith worked through that Christmas. Each map is hand "printed" using Lettraset which has brought a clarity to them that is very rare in books priced at under £30. He did the work in his own time, for the love not the money, so to speak, as he spent many hundreds of hours to achieve results which have brought accolades in reviews.

Spare time

What do authors do in their spare time between bouts of rewriting manuscript drafts and taking notes in research? The answer is that there was not much time to spare - scoring for the Eastney cricket team, one game of football, and that was "me" lot. But many friends in the barracks made sure I did not spend all my working hours in the office. Any temptation for me to feel sorry for myself was smartly put to rights with a kindly direction to "stop dripping James". Or the pointed reminder that perhaps I couldn't "hack it", because the book was too much.

This last nudge brought a 72 hour reposte, with only 10 hours sleep. Hurrah for the chums who know how to get one through a depressing patch. Their names are not in the source notes with any reference to these most helpful gestures, although this help was greatly appreciated.

Proof readers

By October 1979 there was a typed draft. Alastair and Dan read it, so did two

serving officers, Ian and John. All their comments were practical and brought out many points, especially for items occurring during the last thirty years, for which - quite rightly - I could not see the official files.

My next step would have been to make the final cuts taking out about half what was written. A usual "drill" which ensures that a book has pace, but those who had read it felt that there was so much of interest to the Corps, that the book should be left as it was. This meant that there would be 250,000 + words, equivalent to over three novels. The publishers agreed to this on the understanding that the Corps would take a special edition. The size of this edition was never formally agreed but the quantity the publishers and I had in mind was almost halved in the Corps' order of the following May. This scared Jane's for what was the book like if the Corps could now only take half the number we had been talking about? Be that as it may, Jim had over 250,000 words to cross-check, index (a 5-week job), sort out source notes and generally put to bed.

Friends again came to the rescue, Major Tony sorted out the uniform appendix, Chris drummed up such support for the book that the Corps edition was brought back almost to the original quantity. Andy fought the battles in Whitehall, over what could and could not be left in the text, with the doubts mainly in political aspects of recent history. Derek read the galleys but if he had carried his bat in every other cricket match that Summer, not just in three, we would still be waiting for publication.

Over a dozen retired senior officers and others read those parts of the text which related to operations with which they were familiar. Not all their corrections could be made in the first edition, but such errors as there are - a 1% error allows him over 2,500 mistakes! - Jim's and Jim's alone. (If you see any, please let him know, for a record of them is being kept for alteration in any future editions).

Was it worth it?

Members can judge for themselves but the number of kind remarks readers have made, the pleasure they say the book has given them, have made it all worthwhile. Of the brickbats, only one heavy one has been thrown and that by someone who did not know I was standing behind him. It bounced off, for an author metaphorically needs a hide as tough as any rhinoceros or he would never put pen to paper, and certainly not spend nearly 14,000 hours in putting one book together.

Jim-the-Author

-oOo-

Extract from Notes of The Ellis's of England, Scotland and Ireland (1866)

1811. Obit on board HMS REPULSE oct 24. Mr William Ellis Lieutenant of Marines, Son of Mr John E Ellis of Birmingham 1759. Stephen Ellis Gent, appointed 1st Lieutenant in the Marines.

Copy of letter from the Adjutant General, Admiralty, dated 9 Sep 1871, to Colonel Penrose, Commanding Royal Marines, Plymouth.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have been pleased to notify that Thomas McGarrihy, Private, 80th Co, Royal Marine Light Infantry, serving in HMS "Indus", was tried by Court Martial on the 4th instant for striking two of his superior officers, and sentenced to 18 months hard labour in Lewes Naval Prison.

Division Letter Book, Plymouth No 3.

"CHANCE"

by

Alan E Marsh

It would be interesting to know just how much of the recorded history of the Corps, and how many acquisitions by the Museum, have resulted from following up chance remarks and unexpected scraps of information.

Perhaps the most satisfying one so far as the writer is concerned was the result of a passing remark made to him that the son-in-law of Group Captain 'Wings' Day had asked for information about various bankers orders etc which had been in force when 'Wings' died. It was sheer chance that I had kept in touch with 'Wings' for some time before he died and was also aware that he held the only George Cross ever awarded to a Royal Marine. It was also fortunate that I had only just completed his dossier for inclusion in the history of Flying Marines. This made it relatively easy to approach his family and raise the question of where his decorations should be displayed. My excitement when I collected these medals and brought them into Eastney on 16th May 1978 can be understood. The real pleasure, however, came when they were officially presented to the Museum by 'Wing's' daughter, Mrs June Bowerman, on 27th July 1978 and were put on display. But for a chance remark his George Cross would probably have gone to the Royal Air Force.

More recently a chance remark made over a coffee started me on another satisfying trail which led me to the descendants of a drummer who had enlisted in the RMA on 24th October 1874. As a result the medal collection acquired the Egypt Medal 1882 and Khedive's Star awarded to Colour Sergeant W G T Young RMA when he was a young bugler serving in HMS Superb. His original drum sticks and fife are also now on display in the band section. Apart from these, a carefully written diary covering the commission of HMS Superb from 4th October 1880 to 7th January 1884 was also presented. As James Ladd pointed out as we were looking at this diary, we were looking at something written 100 years ago.

It is fascinating to read of the life aboard in those days during a commission which lasted $3\frac{1}{4}$ years. The diary is full of such daily detail as "Down top gallant yard and mast", "Sail and spar drill", "Brace to the wind", "Loose and furl sail", "Prepare for action aloft", "Make plain sail", "Shorten sail and furl top sails", and so on. This is interspersed with other routines such as "Coal ship" more common to later times, but in those days the Navy obviously made full use of the wind to assist their engines. They obviously had their awkward moments when you read "While swigging up the fore top gallant the mast stops gave way and the mast fell over on to the other mast breaking both". Apart from these mishaps there are also several incidents of sailors falling from the yards and being killed.

On 11th June 1882, Bugler Young describes how Superb and other ships off Alexandria loaded guns with common shell and full charge and steamed along a line of forts from Fort Pharos. On the signal "Attack enemy's batteries" they bombarded these for about three hours, one RMA Gunner in HMS Superb being killed by return fire. On 13th June the Marines of the Fleet landed and received the Khedive at his palace, and then carried out anti-looting and street clearing duties in Alexandria until 29th June. The Marines landed again on 1st August to occupy Fort Mex and Bugler Young describes how they had a "skirmish with the enemy" on 5th August and again on 13th August when they took on the enemy cavalry and destroyed their ammunition (guncotton) and other equipment.

One very interesting thing about this diary and others I have read is that they are invariably written in careful copper plate writing and in good grammar despite the fact that the writers often left school at the age of twelve years or so. In this respect modern education does not seem to have made much progress.

A E Marsh

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LETTERS

Dear Editor,

THE COLONEL BOGEY SAGA

"Reading through some back numbers of the journal I see that in her article in Vol 5 No 1, Marjorie Green mentions that she knows of a dozen versions of how Major Ricketts wrote "Colonel Bogey", all incorrect. A further two versions appear in Vol 5 No 2. The version I know is similar to that of the so called "anonymous writer" in that issue, and with the version given by Major Buckley in his tribute to Major Ricketts when he retired on 1st June 1944.

In 1937 I served for a time at the Plymouth Division as a young subaltern awaiting an appointment to sea. Major Ricketts lived in Quarters at the time and I had tea with him after he returned from the St. Andrews Hall where the new Hammond Electronic organ was being demonstrated. He was so enchanted with it's possibilities I remember him saying "just imagine, over fifty thousand tone colours". He then treated me to a rare discourse on music which even to an ignoramous I found totally absorbing. The story of Colonel Bogey somehow came in to our conversation and I remember this quite well.

Ricketts was with his Regiment, the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, at Fort George, Invernessshire at the time and the inspiration came whilst crossing the golf course nearby. His own Commanding Officer was about to drive off as Ricketts walked across the fairway. His shout of "Fore" had no effect so he whistled the two notes "C" and "A" to which Ricketts immediately reacted by waving. Later that day, the Colonel recounted the story in the club house to the effect that the shout of "fore" had no effect on his bandmaster but his whistle drew an immediate response. Ricketts joined in the leg-pull and sat down at the piano and embellished the story. On return home he repeated this to his wife and they both realised that he had hit on a fine marching tune and he composed the work that evening. The name was obviously derived from the fact that it was his own Colonel who was driving off at the time, whilst "bogey" is an obvious reference to golf.

With all due deference to others, this version came straight from the great man himself, and is the same as that given by Major A H R Buckley who was Adjutant at Plymouth Division at the time Major Ricketts retired, and had served with him for five years.

Perhaps it is time to consign all the other versions to their rightful place - the wastepaper basket".

A E Marsh

117 Infantry Brigade RM

(OFFICIAL HISTORIES)

Part 1 - Headquarters

The HQ of 117 Bde commenced to form at Deal on 15 Jan 1945 with the arrival there of Bde Command and DAA and QMG. All remaining Officers, with the exception of Bde IO joined in the course of the next few days, and Army ORs also arrived as intended with the exception of the RASC clerk. These latter were NOT in accordance with the WE and the absence of a proper clerical staff handicapped work in the early stages.

Early in February the Bde HQ moved to BIRCHINGTON and occupied there a series of requisitioned properties. Work at this stage consisted of getting the HQ to function and also to assist units in preparing to receive their draft personnel and A.F. G1098 equipment. Embarkation leave was given during this period and all personnel prepared to move overseas.

In the middle of March the Bde moved to ULVERSTON, all vehicles proceeding by road either independently or in convoy; remaining personnel and stores by rail. On arrival at ULVERSTON they were accommodated in STONECROSS HOUSE and a series of smaller properties. This location was about five miles from the nearest unit.

Training of Bde HQ commenced at ULVERSTON and excercises to practise the movement of Bde HQ took place. A series of excercises were also arranged to practice the functions of the Bde in the field, culminating in an excercise in which Bns took part to paint a realistic picture. Training at this stage was handicapped by the loss of the BM (Major AA Duncan WG), who was posted to Europe, and three officers were posted in turn before a final relief was obtained.

In early May, orders were received for the Bde to prepare to move overseas. 33 RM left in advance and 31 and 32 RM with Bde left a week later, arriving KIEL area between 16 and 18 May. Temporary Bde HQ was set up at 33 RMs location, but later moved into HQ vacated by 46 Bde. The exact role of the formation was not clear at this time, but it was decided that one battalion (31 RM) was to be reserved to meet commitments of FOIC KIEL, one Bn (32 RM) to supply guards for naval stores with NOIC KIEL, and the third Bn (33 RM) to supply guards for merchant ships sailing to the UK on instructions of NOIC KIEL.

It was learned however at the end of May that the Bde was likely to return to UK within a few weeks, which necessitated the role of 33 RM to be amended, whereby the guards were relieved at BRUNSBUTTEL and returned to KIEL. GOCRM visited 117 Bde and inspected various detachments on a tour lasting three days from 4th to 6th of June.

The men throughout the Bde are obviously disappointed that they could not be used in an operational role, and the fact that they are to return so quickly is a further disappointment. Investigations show however that the men of Bde HQ appreciated the remarks made in GOCRMs talk which helped them to realise the need for the formations disbandment.

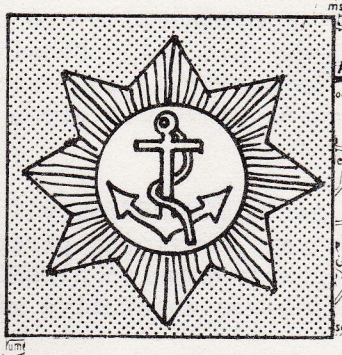
Part 2 - Signals Section

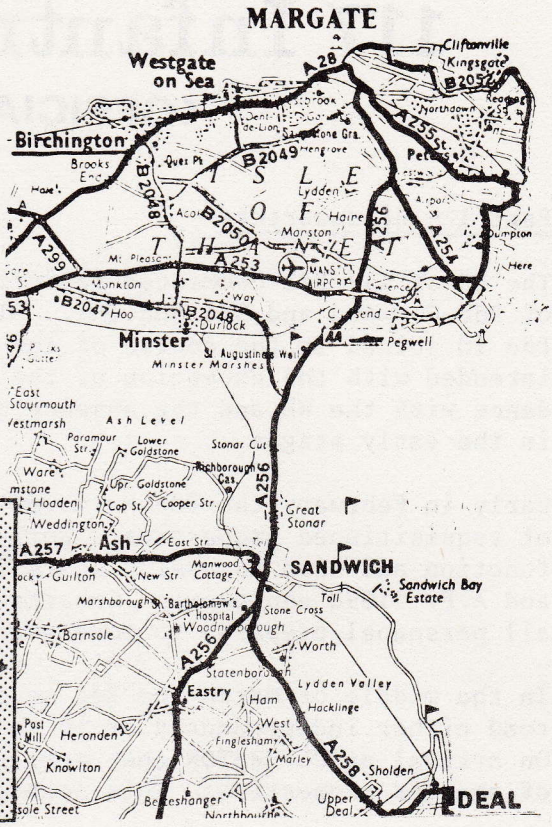
The personnel of HQ 117 Inf Bde were drawn from RM Beach Bde Signals Company. Prior to joining with Bde HQ the Sig Sec had two weeks at RM Signal Holding Company, TRECWN (near FISHGUARD, Pembrokeshire) in which to complete kits, and reform in the new organisation. On 5 February the Bde Sig Sec complete reported

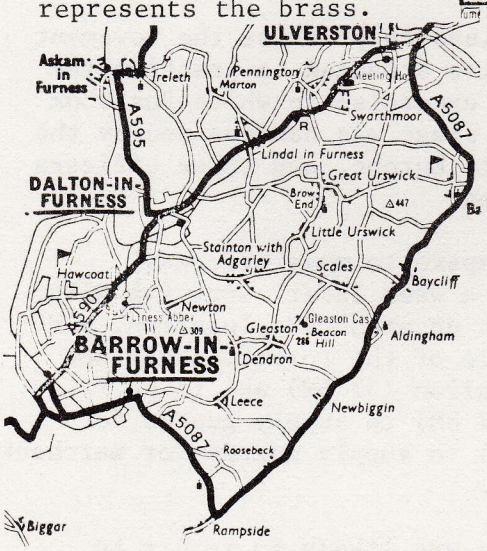
ABBREVIATIONS

ORs	Other Ranks
WE	War Establishment
NOIC	Naval Officer in Charge
SDS	Special Despatch Service
SDO	Special Despatch Office
WS	Wireless Sigs (?)
DRs	Despatch Riders
Sp Coy	Support Company

EMBLEM - Yellow Naval fouled anchor inside a red circle, set within a yellow eight pointed star, on a khaki background. Based on the Marine cap badge (c 1770-75). Red is the traditional colour of the Infantry, and yellow represents the brass.



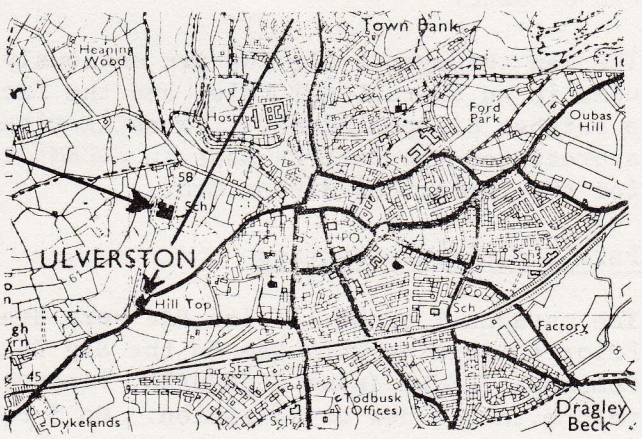








Stone Cross House and Lodge (Main Gate). (arrowed on map below)



to Bde HQ at BIRCHINGTON (near MARGATE, Kent). The succeeding month was spent in administration arrangements and organising and receiving G.1098 equipment. No signal training was carried out but the Bde HQ SDO and SDS were staffed.

On 16 March 1945 we moved to ULVERSTON (Lake District) to commence signals training. The first two weeks was spent in familiarising all signalmen with all possible instruments they would be likely to encounter. At this stage no effort was made to select men for specialist tasks within the section. Daily reads in VS, Semaphore and Wireless Transmissions were carried out.

Having completed the preliminary training the section was organised to function in its operational role, and ranks were selected for their specialist tasks. Signalling exercises within the section were carried out and flexibility and mobility were stressed under all conditions. All officers were taught RT procedure and the use of SLIDEX and MAPLAY. Three Bn signal excercises helped a great deal in smoothing out troubles over the link up from Bde Signals to Bn Sig Platoon. A four day Bde exercise based on battalion relief in the line, fully deployed the Bde Sig Sec and provided valuable information with regard to staff requirements of signals at the Bde HQ. During this training period the HQ SDS and SDO were manned continually.

On arrival in the British Liberation Area the requirement for a mobile Signal Section had ceased. The KIEL auto telephone system was in operation and all line maintainance carried out by German POWs. The KIEL Bde area Signals Office and SDS were entirely staffed by personnel of 117 Inf Bde RM Sig Sec, and the amount of traffic handled necessitated a considerable increase in Sig Office staff. All WS in Naval Patrol Craft were manned by Signalmen from the Bde Sec, and for this requirement one corporal and 15 Other Ranks were detached under NOIC KIEL. The remaining signals personnel were employed in miscellaneous commitments from day to day, but which seldom fully extended them.

Reinforcements were initially trained separately at RM Sig Holding Coy, and joined the main body just before leaving BIRCHINGTON. While with the section their training was devoted to learning as much as possible about every duty within the section, so that in case of reinforcements being required each man could fill any vacancy.

The personnel of Sig Sec are obviously disappointed at not being employed in the active role for which they have been trained, with the exception of the Sig Office ranks and DRs who have been fully extended throughout. It is felt however that valuable experience has been gained and that the ranks of the Section have had a sound signal training for any future role for which they may be required.

Part 3 - 31 Battalion RM

The unit began to form at DEAL on 21 January 1945 with a small cadre of officers and NCOs. Early in February the Battalion moved to BIRCHINGTON, and during the month sufficient officers and Other Ranks arrived to complete to WE plus 1st reinforcements.

The officers came largely from Landing Craft, though a few were formerly in Naval Port Parties. A fair proportion served in the RM Division before being transferred to Landing Craft in 1945. The 2 IC and the Adjutant were the only two CS officers appointed.

The ORs were almost without exception from Landing Craft. They were transferred as individuals, and not by flotillas. Reaction was in general not favourable to the transfer; apart from the breaking up of units, many NCOs had lost acting ranks, and all other ranks had lost Combined Ops pay and customs privileges. The average age was very young, about 24 years, and a large number of men had not served in RM units other than Landing Craft. Mobilisation of the Battalion, less Sp Coy, was completed on 20 Feb 1945.

A certain amount of individual training was carried out at BIRCHINGTON, but extensive training began with the move of the Battalion to BARROW-IN-FURNACE in the middle of March. The men had been impressed with the importance and urgency of the task and with the need for them to co-operate fully in their training in order to produce an efficient infantry unit. The response exceeded all expectations and with good training facilities and weather progress was rapid.

A number of officers and NCOs were sent on courses at various Army Schools. Some men of Sp Coy were given specialist training in Northern Ireland, the Sp Coy itself completing mobilisation in the middle of April. Course results were generally good.

By the beginning of May training was well advanced, but it was becoming obvious that the fighting in Europe was coming to an end. On 7 May, the day before VE Day, orders arrived for the move of the battalion overseas. Disappointment that the unit had had no opportunity of going into action was genuine. Most of the VE holiday was spent in working hard to prepare for the move, but morale was maintained. There were no absentees during this period.

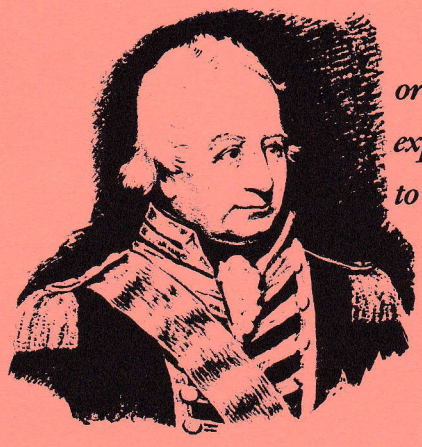
The battalion landed at OSTEND on 13 May, and arrived at KIEL on 18 May, after a tiring road journey. Two companies were deployed on various tasks the following day. There had been little incident worthy of particular notice, but the whole battalion has been fully employed on a variety of duties of a Naval character, providing guards for important areas and buildings, boarding parties to disarm and collect POWs and search shipping, and escorts on German ships for local trips. "C" Coy on the boom patrol for the first four days were kept particularly busy, and had the pleasure of handling a number of truculent SS troops in addition to preventing a large ocean going U-Boat from being scuttled.

The battalion is now widely scattered, companies being located at FLENSBURG and TRAVEMUNDE, some hundred miles apart. Officers and NCOs in charge of detached sub-units have a considerable measure of responsibility to shoulder, and have generally acquitted themselves well. A high standard of discipline and bearing has been aimed at and the men have realised the neccessity for this, though the conditions are sometimes trying, especially at KIEL.

It is obvious that the continual employment on routine guard duties and the absence of facilities for the men to enjoy the normal off duty amusements impose a severe strain. Never-the-less morale has been maintained at a high level, and although the unit would have preferred to have arrived in time to take part in operations, it is evident that the opportunity of doing something in GERMANY has been welcome.

(Reference: ADM 202/124 -
Public Records Office
at Kew).

Histories of 32 and 33 Battalions will appear in the next issue.



"I never knew an appeal to them for honour, courage or loyalty, that they did not more than realise my highest expectations. If ever the hour of real danger should come to England, they will be found the Country's sheet anchor."

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
EARL ST. VINCENT, G.C.B.