



ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY



1678



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NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IV
NUMBER 2 and 3

R.M.S.

ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL IV NUMBERS 2 and 3

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GENERAL SIR EDWARD NICOLLS, K.C.B.,
ROYAL MARINES.

COMMANDANT HMS ASCENSION 1823-1828
Promoted General 28 November 1854

EDITOR'S NOTES

I apologise for the long delay in the appearance of this issue of the Newsletter. Unfortunately, throughout the course of this year the calls on my time and attention have been numerous.

The greatest of these has been the series of Commemorative Postal Covers, produced in aid of the Museum Appeal. The demand for these covers by collectors has increased considerably as the year has worn on, and they are proving a most effective means of gathering money for the Appeal. However, this has all meant a lot of spare time spent in processing orders, and setting up the different forms of transport and handling of each issue. Having said which, I trust that all members are subscribers to the series! I would add that I have been bludgeoned into continuing the series next year. Any volunteers for the editorial chair?

Fortunately, I have been able to make use of the services of James Avenell, who has been temporarily attached to RM Eastney whilst unfit, in producing this edition, which has largely been put together by him. Because of the long delay in production, he has combined two Newsletters within a single cover to make this a double issue.

By now, members will have received their copies of the minutes of the AGM, in which I made the point that most of the material sent in has been in the form of biographies. Whilst being interesting reading, this does not make for the production of a well balanced Newsletter, and I would urge those who are able to contribute something different to please do so. Sidney Wood's interesting and concise article on the Naval Good Shooting Medal is an excellent example of the sort of variety we need.

The article on the RM Armoured Support Group was put together from notes on the subject submitted by two non members, together with material already held in the Corps Archives. Although, in this case, the work was done by a man on the spot, with ready access to the Archives, it is possible to supply copies of most of the material held, either free or for a minimal cost. So, if you have a subject in which you are interested, and which might make interesting reading, but for which you lack detailed information, we might well be able to assist in the provision of research matter. Similarly, if members were to write in to the Editor a little more frequently on the subjects in which they are interested, not only would our correspondence column increase, but so would contact between members. I am quite prepared to act as a sort of "exchange" to connect those who are interested in the same subject - with a view to the production of joint articles for the Newsletter.

It would seem that Herbert Heather, a recently joined member, is an avid newspaper researcher. Over the last few months Mr Heather has submitted a large number of extracts from editions of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal of the late 1700s and early 1800s. Some of these, apart from being interesting, also make amusing reading. I hope to include a number in the next few editions.

This issue sees the first instalment of a two part article on Ascension Island by James Avenell. It is an appropriate subject to include at the present time, since it coincides with the issue of a set of stamps depicting Royal Marines, made by Ascension to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the departure of the Marine garrison from the island. More about the stamps and the official first day cover can be found in the order form included with this Newsletter.

Charles Stadden's article on his painting of a soldier of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot is the first in a series on his figures painted for the Museum, as promised in Vol III No 3.

In conclusion, this society, like any other, depends entirely upon the active and enthusiastic support of its members. Since our major point of contact is the Newsletter, it follows that a well supported Newsletter makes for a healthy society, so please keep your contributions coming in. More material means more choice in what to print - and hopefully, more frequent publication.

(A.J.D.)

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1 January 1974 and should be sent to: The Hon Treasurer, RM Historical Society, c/o Royal Marines Museum, Royal Marines Eastney, Southsea, Hants, PO4 9PX. The annual subscription is £1 for UK members, £1.50 for overseas members and cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the Society.

Members in the United States and Canada

Would our North American members please note the following new arrangements for payment of their subscriptions. This is necessitated by the continuing losses to the Society's funds caused by bank negotiating charges. Members are requested to pay their annual subscriptions in future by one of the three methods as follows:

- a. By personal cheque made payable to Mr A L Brend, our North American representative whose address is:

c/o Commercial Union Assurance Company
1 Beacon Street
Boston
Mass 02108

Mr Brend will then make payment to the Society in sterling.

- b. By US Post Office International Money Order made payable in sterling in London.
- c. Where possible by sterling cheque through a London account.

COLONELS OF MARINES

BY

GERALD HAMILTON-EDWARDS

A List of the Officers of His Majesty's Royal Marine Forces on Full and Half-Pay, with an index, 1833, presented to the Royal Marines Museum, Eastney, by Lieut-Colonel C L Edwards RM (Retd), reveals the extent to which the senior ranks of the Corps were at this period held by distinguished naval rather than marine officers.

The General was the Right Hon James, Lord de Saumarez GCB, Admiral of the Red, the Lieutenant-General, Sir William Sidney Smith KCB, Admiral of the White, and the Major-General, the Right Hon Sir George Cockburn GCB, Vice-Admiral of the Red.

Lord de Saumarez, who was born at St Peter Port, Guernsey, in 1757, was a lieutenant in the VICTORY when it was Channel flagship from 1779 to 1781, and was then posted to the FORTITUDE, in which ship he took part in the action on the Dogger Bank in August, 1781. In 1793, when commanding the CRESCENT, 36-gun frigate, he fought and captured the French frigate REUNION, 36-guns, off Cherbourg on 20 October that year, and was rewarded for his success by presentation to the King, who knighted him, and was also presented with a handsome piece of plate by the merchants of London.

He was later present at the battles of St Vincent in 1797 and the Nile the



following year. He was promoted to rear-admiral and was created a baronet in 1801, the year in which he was also made a knight of the Bath, after defeating French and Spanish ships in the Mediterranean. He commanded the Guernsey station from 1803 to 1807, and thus missed being present at Trafalgar. After being made vice-admiral in the latter year, he commanded a squadron in the Baltic, becoming a full admiral in 1814. In 1821 he was appointed Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom, and was from 1824 to 1827 Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth. He was raised to the peerage in 1831, the year before his appointment as general in the Royal Marines. He died in 1836.

1. Admiral Sir James Saumarez, Lord De Saumarez, BART KB DCL Vice Admiral of Great Britain.



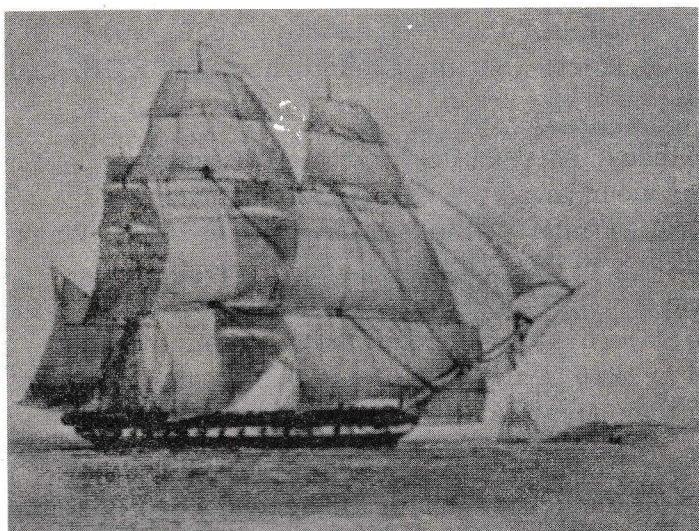
2. Admiral, Sir William Sidney Smith, GCB. (Executed in 1800, when Sir William was a Captain).

Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, the lieutenant-general, was a flamboyant, histrionic, extrovert character, anti-establishment and consequently an irritation to the higher authorities, but forgiven his failings because of his venturesome courage and enterprising zeal. He entered the Navy in 1777 and fought at the Battle of St Vincent. In 1796 he was captured off Havre when in charge of a cutting-out expedition from the DIAMOND, frigate, and suffered imprisonment for two years in the Temple prison in Paris. Escaping, however, in 1798, he commanded the TIGRE in the Levant in the defence of Saint Jean d'Acre. In that defence, Major Thomas Oldfield of the Royal Marines died of wounds in French hands, after gallantly leading a sortie on one of the French mine works. Marshal Louis Alexandre Berthier, the first of Napoleon's marshals, praised highly this gallant Marine major, who earlier, while serving with the Marine battalion at Bunker Hill had been twice wounded without allowing his wounds to deter him from continuing in action. Admiral Smith later praised both Oldfield, and the French in the way they treated him, "I must do them justice, which such gallant foes are justly entitled to: they buried him with all the honours of war". Napoleon himself referred with admiration to Oldfield's gallantry, on being introduced on board the BELLEROPHON to Captain Beatty of the Royal Marines, who had served under Oldfield at the Nile and at Acre.

3. Commemorative Medal of Captain Sir W S Smith's Defence of Acre, 1799.



Sir George Cockburn, the major-general, was the second son of Sir James Cockburn, seventh Baronet of Eyemouth, Berwickshire, and entered the Navy in 1781, as a captain's servant on the books of the *RESOURCE*, frigate, but did not go to sea until 1786. Appointed lieutenant in 1793, he was one of the lieutenants of the *VICTORY* when she was Lord Hood's flagship off Toulon. For twelve months from 1795, he was in the *MELEAGER*, frigate, under the immediate orders of Nelson, whose friendship Cockburn won through his zeal during a difficult period of service. Later, he served in the *MINERVE*, a large frigate captured from the French, with Nelson himself, when he hoisted his broad pennant in December, 1796. The ship was present at the battle of Cape St Vincent, though taking no active part in it. Later, under Cockburn's command, the *MINERVE* continued in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, assisting in the capture of enemy privateers and small ships.



4. A British Frigate under all sail.

Promoted rear-admiral in August, 1812, he commanded a squadron off Cadiz, but on the outbreak that November of the American war, he was sent with a small squadron to attack the enemy in Chesapeake bay. He took part in the battle of Bladensburg in August, 1814, and with his friend, Major-General Ross, entered the city of Washington, virtually without resistance.

In August, 1815, after Napoleon had surrendered to the British, he was deputed to convey the emperor to St Helena, and to remain there in charge of him as governor and commander-in-chief, until relieved in the summer of 1816 by Sir Hudson Lowe and Sir Pulteney Malcome. He received the GCB in 1818, the year in which he became a vice-admiral. He was appointed major-general in the Royal Marines three years later. His last sea command was as commander-in-chief of the North American and West Indian station, which he held from December, 1832 until 1836. He was advanced to full admiral in 1837 and to admiral of the fleet in July, 1851.

He was a member of Parliament in 1818 for Portsmouth, in 1820 for Weobly, in 1828 for Plymouth, and in 1841 for Rippon. He was for a time a junior lord of the Admiralty and later first Naval Lord, and was made a Privy Councillor in 1827.

His elder brother, Sir James Cockburn, Baronet, is shown in this list as the Inspector-General of the Royal Marines, a position corresponding roughly to the Commandant General today.

On his brother's death in February, 1852 Sir George succeeded to the baronetcy and died himself on the 19 August, 1853.

The four colonelcies of the Royal Marines at this period were also, by custom, filled from the Royal Navy, a tradition not particularly appreciated by the officers of the Corps, but used by the Admiralty as a way of rewarding distinguished naval officers. A colonelcy in the Royal Marines was considered a great honour by the recipient. When Nelson, as a Captain, arrived in Genoa on 18 July, 1795 and received the news from home that he had been gazetted Colonel of the Chatham Division of the Royal Marines, he received this news with grateful appreciation. Nor was it merely an honour, for it brought with it the additional pay of a colonel in the Corps, and such was a welcome addition to the emoluments of a naval captain.

The four colonels in this list of 1833, all appointed 22 July, 1830, were William Skipsey, the Hon Frederick Paul Irby CB, Sir Christopher Cole KCB, and the Hon Duncombe Pleydell Bouverie.

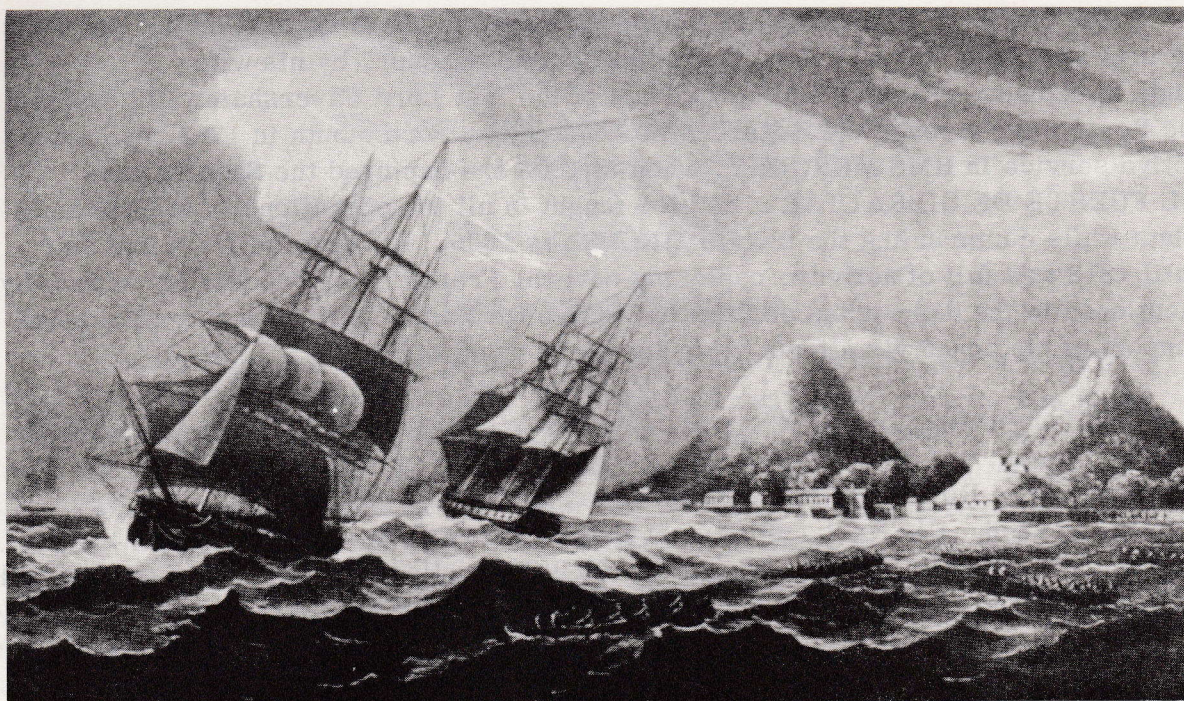
The first of these, William Skipsey, entered the Navy in 1769 and saw considerable active service. He was wounded in the engagement between Admiral Sir Hyde Parker and Admiral Zutman off the Dogger Bank in 1781. When in command of the *TERMAGENT*, sloop, in the Mediterranean, he captured a French ship, *LA CAPRICIEUSE*, and the *GENERAL HOLTZ*, a privateer. In 1797, he was appointed Commodore at the Cape of Good Hope station. Promoted Rear-Admiral of the Red in 1837, he died in 1846 at Brighton in his 90th year, at which time he had been longer in the Navy than any other living officer, having been on active service for over 30 years.

The Hon Frederick Paul Irby was the second son of the second Lord Boston. His younger brother, Charles Leonard, also served in the Royal Navy, dying as a post captain in 1845.

Frederick Paul Irby, born 1779, entered the navy in 1791. As a midshipman he was present in the *MONTAGUE* at the battle of the First of June, 1794. Promoted lieutenant in the *CIRCE*, frigate, he was present in her at the battle of Camperdown, and later in the *APOLLO* he was wrecked near the Texel.

He became a captain in 1802. While in command of the *AMELIA*, a 38-gun frigate, he was in the squadron which on 24 February, 1809 drove ashore and destroyed three large enemy frigates near Sables d'Olonne, on which occasion Irby's gallantry and the good conduct of the men under him received the special approval of the Admiralty.

On the 7 February, 1813 Captain Irby, still commanding the *AMELIA*, fought what has been described as one of the most equal and gallant actions of the war with the French 40-gun frigate, *ARETHUSE*. They fought four hours, and both ships received such injuries that they could not continue, and each separated to repair damage. Neither wanted to renew the combat, and Irby felt justified for the sake of his many wounded in leaving the coast, being certain the *ARETHUSE* would be compelled to return to France. This was his last active service. He was made a CB in 1831 and became a rear-admiral in 1837. He died in April, 1844.



5. The Capture of Banda Neira, 9 August 1810

Sir Christopher Cole was born at Marazion in Cornwall in 1770, of a well known family of that name there. He entered the Navy in 1780, as a midshipman in the ROYAL OAK, in which his elder brother, John (later rector of Exeter College, Oxford) was chaplain. Becoming a lieutenant in 1794, he distinguished himself in 1800 through his activity in pursuing enemy privateers, and also in the care he took of his men's health. His admiral, Lord Hugh Seymour, made this the subject of an official recommendation to the Admiralty.

When in command of HMS CAROLINE, 36-guns, in 1810, his capture of Neira, the chief of the Banda Islands, with less than 100 officers and men, the Dutch garrison being nearly 700 regular troops, besides militia, was an epic of outstanding daring and skill. Spencer Perceval, then Prime Minister, described it in the House of Commons as, "an exploit to be classed with the boldest darings in the days of chivalry".

In 1812, when the CAROLINE paid off on 29 May, Cole was knighted, and presented with a sword by his crew. On the following 10 June, he received the honorary degree of DCL at Oxford, at a time when his brother was rector of Exeter College and Vice-Chancellor of the University. Subsequently, Sir Christopher was presented with a piece of plate, valued at 300 guineas, by the East India Company.

The Hon Duncombe Pleydell Bouverie, fourth and last colonel on the list, was born in 1780, the second son of the second Earl of Radnor, by his wife Anne Duncombe, daughter and co-heiress of the last Lord Faversham. He entered the Royal Navy through the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth in 1783, and saw active service in HMS MERCURY, when in 1805 she captured the Spanish ship EL FUERTE DE GIBRALTAR. He also fought in all the operations in the Rio de la Plata while commanding the frigate MEDUSA in 1806. His service from that year until 1812 was full of activity, capturing several French ships, and being repeatedly mentioned in the despatches of Captain Sir George Ralph Collier for his efficacious support of his country's efforts along the north coast of Spain.

He commanded from 1828 until 1831, the WINDSOR CASTLE, 76-guns, in the Mediterranean, and it was during this command that he received his appointment as a colonel of the Royal Marines. He became a rear-admiral in 1837, and vice-admiral in 1846. His final appointment was as Admiral Superintendent at Portsmouth, when he flew his flag in the VICTORY. He was several times returned to Parliament for constituencies in Wiltshire. He died in 1850.

The generals and colonels of the Royal Marines of this time, particularly as it was a period not too remote from the French wars, were if not officers of the Royal Marines, at least officers of considerable distinction and merit.

The illustrations for this article have been obtained from:

THE ROYAL NAVY A HISTORY BY SIR W LAIRD CLOWES

Extract from the "Leicester and Nottingham Journal"

6 September 1783

"Sir George Rooke, before he was made Admiral had served as a Captain of Marines upon their first establishment and being quartered upon the coast of Essex, the ague made great havoc among his men, the Minister of the village where he lay was so harassed with his duty that he refused to bury any more of them without being paid his accustomed fee.

The Captain made no words, but the next that died he ordered to be carried to the Minister's house and laid upon his table in the great hall, this greatly embarrassed the poor clergyman who in the fullness of his heart sent the Captain word "that if he would cause the dead man to be carried away he would never dispute it with him, but would readily bury him and his whole company for nothing."

Submitted by: H Heather

FROM NORTH AFRICA TO ANZIO - PART III

BY

HARRY PLAYFORD

(Continued from page 32 of Vol III No 3)

Operation "Avalanche"

It was apparent during the last week of August that another large scale Allied landing was imminent. Large numbers of troops were moving into the port area, every available jetty being utilised for the loading of stores and equipment. During the night of 2 September, 1943 troops embarked in the landing ships, and the following morning the harbour was the scene of much activity as these craft moved out of the port. By mid morning, with the remainder of the squadron, we had taken up our station in the convoy assembling off-shore. Soon afterwards the Captain cleared lower deck and informed us that we were to form part of the Northern attack force, under the command of Commodore G.N. Oliver RN, in support of the landing of the British 'X' Corps at Salerno Bay, south of Naples.

'D' Day was to be 9 September and 'H' hour 3.30 am, and, because of the long voyage from Tripoli, the convoy of landing craft were to refuel at Termini, a small port in North West Sicily, before sailing through the Tyrrhenian Sea to Salerno. On the same day that we sailed from Tripoli, the 8th Army crossed the Messina Straits and landed on the toe of Italy. The intention was that the troops to be landed at Salerno would move South and link up with the 8th Army advancing up the coast of Italy.

Our voyage to Termini via the west coast of Sicily was uneventful. We stayed at Termini only long enough to refuel from lighters, and we were all under way again early on 8th. As we steamed into the Tyrrhenian Sea a heavy swell was running, creating conditions similar to those we had experienced in the first few days of the Sicily operations. Far out on the horizon a convoy of troop transports and supply ships was sighted, heading in the same direction as ourselves.

Forty miles south of Salerno Bay the convoy reduced speed, and finally stopped. The Commodore had received a signal stating that the Italians had surrendered. Among the crew there was a good deal of speculation as to whether "Avalanche" would now take place. However, as German forces were concentrating in the Salerno area, the operation was to proceed as planned. Soon after the news of the Italian surrender had been received, and while we were hove to, four FW190 fighter bombers attacked the convoy, but were driven off by a barrage from the close range weapons.

Although we were unaware of it at the time, other convoys proceeding to Salerno Bay had also been sighted by the Germans and attacked by aircraft. It was obvious that the element of surprise had been lost. Some indication of what was to come soon became apparent when the first ships to enter the bay came under heavy fire from shore batteries, whilst flares and starshells illuminated the scene. Our first task was to escort a flotilla of LCIs ferrying the British 138th Brigade a

distance of about two miles from a transport to the beach. 41 Royal Marine Commando and No 3 Army Commando were already ashore and meeting stiff opposition from the Germans. Cruisers and destroyers were in action against shore batteries and other known positions, and the LCGs had moved close inshore to bombard enemy locations close to the landing area. As we approached the beach under heavy fire from the shore batteries, a large calibre shell fell close to our stern, the explosion lifting the stern clear of the water and the propeller thrashing the air caused the craft to shudder violently. At my action station, on the starboard after Pom Pom, it was only by gripping the nearest rail that I avoided being thrown down the ladder, which led from the superstructure to the main gundeck.

To hide our approach, motor launches laid a smoke screen ahead of us, giving us some protection from the small arms fire, which intensified as we neared the beach. The smoke and half light made navigation difficult, but we maintained our position on the right of the LCI flotilla. Once clear of the smoke, all guns that could bear opened fire on enemy positions near the beach, selecting targets by observing gunflashes during our approach. The gunners manning the 20 mm Oerlikons in the bows of the LCIs concentrated on targets ahead, while the LCFs engaged targets on each flank. The LCIs, however, were ordered to cease firing as soon as we beached to avoid hitting our own troops disembarking.

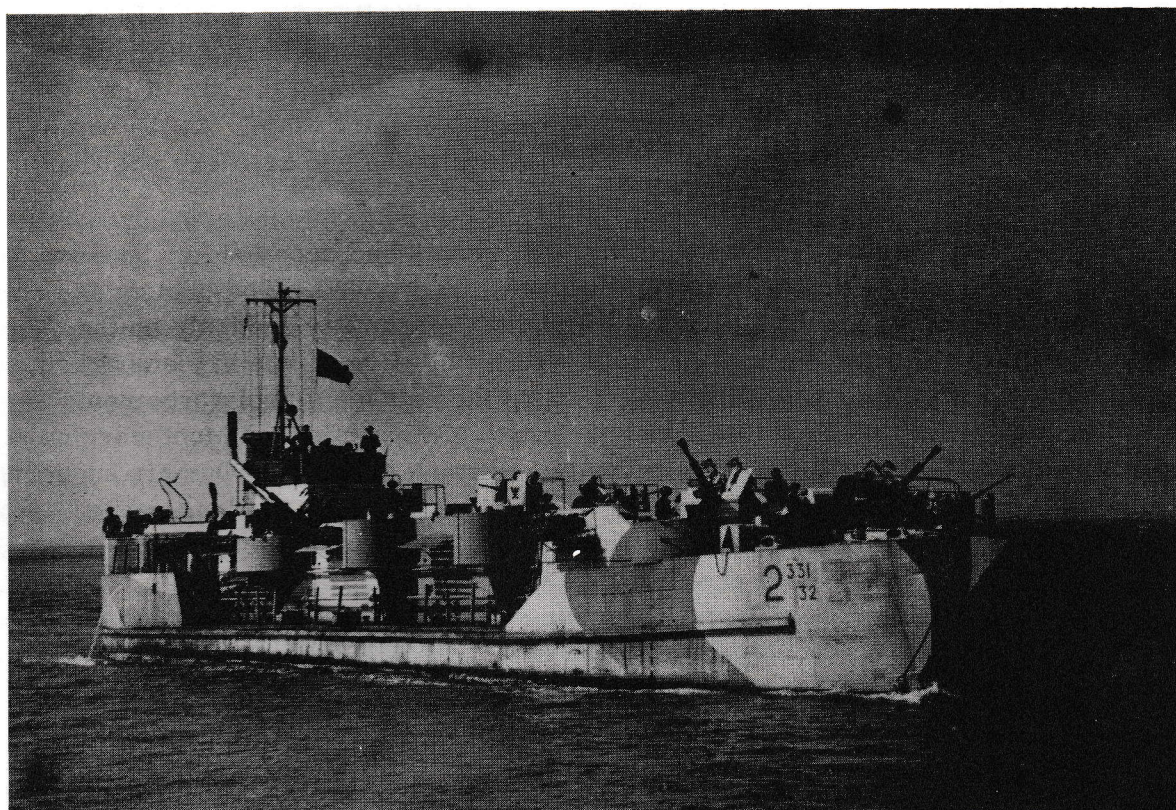
Two further trips between the troopships and the beach were necessary before the Brigade, with its supporting units, were all ashore, with LCTs bringing in the heavy equipment in the last two waves. The last run in to the beach was the worst as far as we were concerned because, by the time the last troops had been embarked in the LCIs for the journey to the beach, it was daylight and enemy fire was becoming more accurate. British and US Cruisers were shelling targets well inland, while the destroyers and LCGs operating close inshore were almost constantly in action against positions near the beachhead. As we commenced the last run in under cover of smoke, we came under fire from six barrelled mortars, or 'Moaning Minnies' as they became known to our troops. They were very effective weapons, capable of rapidly putting down a heavy weight of bombs. Coming under their fire from the hills above Salerno was a nerve-racking experience. Some craft were hit and set on fire, but most of the last wave succeeded in reaching land. Enemy small arms fire had considerably slackened, presumably due to the fact that their positions in the immediate area of the beach had been captured by our troops. With the last of the Brigade ashore, many of the craft embarked casualties for evacuation to the hospital ships anchored far out in the bay. Stretcher cases were carried aboard the LCTs, whilst our own craft embarked about twenty walking wounded, as we had no forward ramp.

We had been lucky enough to avoid any serious damage or casualties so far, although numerous shell fragments were found later embedded in the steel side plates, and the craft had received a severe shaking from near misses.

On 13 September, our own craft was singled out for attack by two FW190s. We were stationed some three miles out from the beach, away from most of the main fleet, when two planes approached us from astern almost at sea level. The two Pom Poms, which were the only guns that could fire directly astern, were about to open fire when the tribal class destroyer, HMS TARTAR, steaming closer inshore to shell enemy positions, ploughed across our stern at high speed and put up a heavy

barrage of AA fire at the oncoming aircraft. The destroyer's sudden appearance immediately astern of us prevented our two guns on the after superstructure from firing. The second of the two planes was badly damaged by the barrage from TARTAR, and was seen to be pouring black smoke as both planes climbed steeply away, heading towards Naples.

On the same day, the Germans used a new weapon against ships of the bombardment force. We were patrolling the entrance to the bay, with HMS UGANDA at anchor about half a mile from us, when she was hit by a glider bomb. The British Cruiser began to list heavily to starboard, and appeared to be sinking by the stern. However, salvage tugs were soon assisting and with the list reduced, the crippled ship was able to leave the bay for Malta, together with the US Cruisers SAVANNAH and PHILADELPHIA, which had been similarly hit. All three cruisers had also suffered several casualties and their withdrawal greatly reduced the fire power of the bombardment force.



An LCF(L) in April 1944

The 'flakships' had assumed the duties of AA guardships, whilst the LCGs still continued to shell targets in the surrounding hills. At our briefing prior to the commencement of 'Avalanche', we had been instructed to assume all low flying aircraft approaching the beachhead to be hostile. As a result, friendly aircraft which ventured too low found themselves under fire from ships of the invasion fleet. Experience gained in the North African and Sicily operations had shown that most damage to our shipping had been caused by high speed low flying aircraft. The P38 Lockheed Lightning, which frequently patrolled over the Salerno beachhead, was easy to identify as its twin booms and engines gave it an appearance unlike any other aircraft operating in Europe.

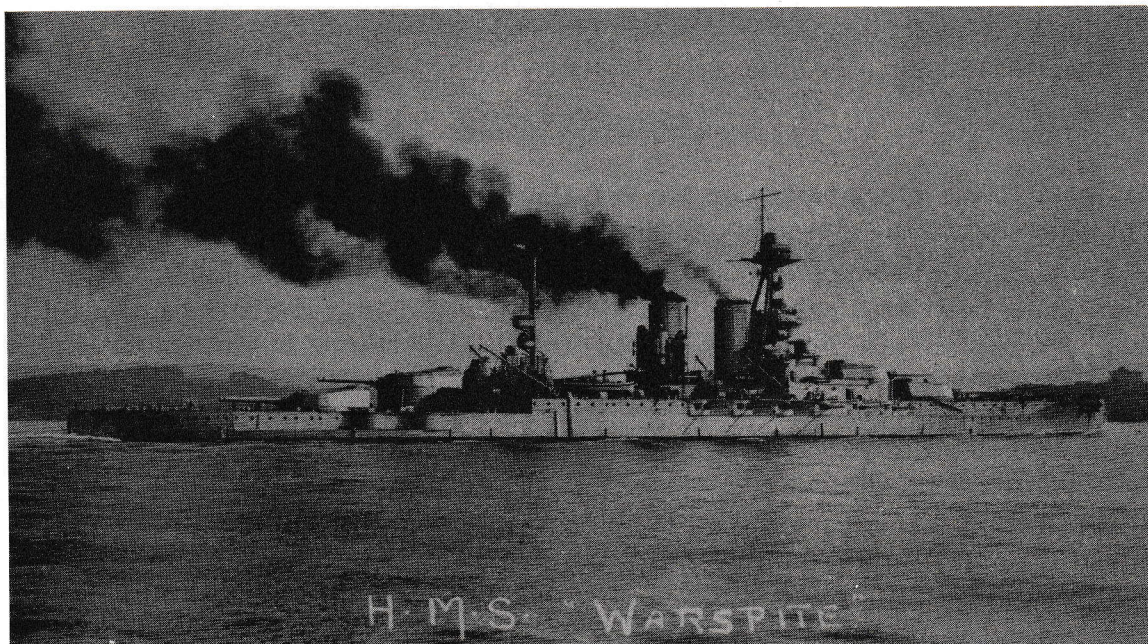
The headquarters ship 'HILARY' issued daily newsheets to keep all personnel informed of the progress of the operations. It was from these newsheets we learnt that the enemy had counter attacked during the night of 11th/12th, and had driven a wedge between the British and American forces, which almost reached the sea in one place. We realised how serious the situation was when all ships in the bay were ordered to maintain a full head of steam, in case it should be necessary to evacuate the beachhead. The invasion fleet was under heavy attack from shore batteries and air attacks by small groups of enemy aircraft, although a heavy barrage of AA fire put up by the fleet kept most of these at a high altitude, and prevented them from pressing home their attack. The three hospital ships, which were anchored far out in the bay and brilliantly illuminated at night, became particular targets of enemy aircraft.

The 12th to the 15th September was a critical period for the army ashore. In an effort to reduce the weight of the counter attack launched by Kesselring, every ship in the bombardment force was almost constantly in action, shelling German positions and supply routes. The battleships WARSPITE and VALIANT arrived in the bay during the afternoon of the 15th, and steamed close inshore to shell targets at long range, thereby laying an effective barrage in rear of the enemy positions and preventing any reinforcements reaching them. At the same time, heavy air attacks by allied aircraft on supply routes and artillery positions gradually brought the counter attack to a halt.

The landing of more troops and equipment, which had been held up because of the German threat to the beaches, was now able to proceed. The cruisers SCYLLA, CHARYBDIS and EURYALUS, which had left the bay suddenly on the 12th September, returned on the 15th, each with a battalion of infantry embarked, having steamed at top speed to Tripoli to pick up the brigade as reinforcements for the hard pressed troops holding the beachhead. The airfield at Montecorvino had been captured, but was still under fire from enemy artillery. Our air support, provided by a Carrier Squadron operating off the coast, and by the long range USAAF Lightnings, drove off many hostile aircraft, but this did not prevent some of them sneaking in and making dive bombing attacks on the larger ships. The hospital ship NEWFOUNDLAND was badly damaged and sank with heavy loss of life, whilst another hospital ship, the LEINSTER, was damaged.

On the afternoon of the 16th September, we noticed what appeared to be shells falling near the WARSPITE, followed shortly afterwards by a loud explosion and smoke rising amidships. The Luftwaffe, using several aircraft, had made an attack with Glider bombs, and what we had thought were shells falling near her had been near misses with these bombs. The noise of gunfire had drowned the sound of the approaching high flying aircraft. The old WARSPITE had been heavily damaged, and required the use of four tugs to tow her to Malta for temporary repairs.

This operation had been the hardest fought battle so far in the Mediterranean but by the 16th the success of the Salerno landings was assured. The 8th Army, advancing north along the coast from the toe of Italy, had linked up with the 5th Army south of Salerno. The two Commando units, which had borne the brunt of the fighting against an enemy warned of our approach and well dug in, had suffered heavy casualties. The Naval bombardment, which had been maintained



HMS WARSPITE

for eight days, had played a major part in reducing resistance by shelling gun positions, troop concentrations and preventing reinforcements from reaching the enemy. Finally, when the Germans counter attacked and almost reached the beach, gunfire from the fleet forced them to retire inland.

The 5th Army captured Naples on the 21st September, and on the 23rd the squadron of LCFs and LCGs left Salerno bay for Palermo, where we remained for nearly two weeks rest before sailing for Malta. On arrival in Grand Harbour we found that one of the LCGs, from a squadron supporting the landing of the 8th Army on the toe of Italy, had brought in an Italian corvette which had surrendered to the 'G' off the west coast of Sicily on the day the Salerno operations commenced.

(To be concluded)

WANTED

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MARRIED ON THE STRENGTH

BY

JAMES AVENELL

An answer to the query raised by Mr W E Davey, on the origins and meaning of the term "Married on the Strength", in the last issue of the Newsletter.

Traditionally, soldiers are discouraged from indulging in matrimony. This is an army practice, which the Corps has also followed. It was only with the introduction of the "military salary" in 1970 that the last few remaining restrictions were in fact lifted. These were that, men marrying under a minimum age limit (21 for other ranks, 25 for officers) would not be entitled to marriage allowance and married quarters.

In bygone days the rules were much more strict. At one time married soldiers were not recognised as such at all. Wives merely formed part of the body of camp followers, which trailed after every regiment. Women were tolerated only for the useful functions which they could perform. Thus, from Regimental Standing Orders of 1831: "No woman is to be allowed in Barracks who objects to make herself useful in cleaning the rooms, cooking etc".

It was incumbent upon officers to discourage men from marrying, but if they persisted with the notion, "It cannot be too often repeated to the men that they are on no account to marry without leave..... It is impossible to point out the inconveniences that arise and evils which follow a Regiment encumbered with women." A final note added that, whatever his present feelings might be, after a short period, the soldier would be grateful to his officer for such discouragement.

As time went by, the inevitable changes and relaxations of the rule took place. In the recruiting pamphlet, "How to Join the Royal Navy", published in 1913, it says in the section dealing with the Royal Marines:

"Permission to Marry - Sixteen in every 100 are permitted to marry, and are either provided with quarters or allowed to reside out of Barracks whilst on shore, receiving lodging money in lieu of quarters. Permission is not required in the case of Warrant Officers."

This does not mean that the seventeenth man was forbidden to marry, but his marriage was not recognised by any form of allowance. Sixteen men in every 100 was the establishment figure of men "married on the strength". The remainder simply had to wait their turn on the roster.

Obtaining permission to marry could be quite a business. It was well known that men returning from a long commission overseas, their pockets full of money, were an obvious target for the harpies who used to hang around the Dockyard and Barrack gates. The intended bride was expected and required to provide proof of her good character to the Commanding Officer before he would consider her fit for marriage to one of his marines. The request filled in by Gnr Hughes RMA for permission to marry in 1906, and now on display in the Corps Museum, is a good example of this. Before forwarding the request to the Commanding Officer, Hughes' Company Commander carried out an investigation, and reports on the respectability of the parties concerned on the bottom of the request.

THE ROYAL TOUR OF INDIA, 1905

BY

A C GREEN

The Royal Naval School of Music had the honour of providing the Band to accompany their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales on the Royal Tour of India and Burma in HMS RENOWN, in 1805/06.

The Royal Marine Detachment and Band joined RENOWN on 7 September, 1905. The Detachment was composed of two officers, Major H S Neville White RMLI and Lt A G Bourne RMA (later Adjutant General Royal Marines, 1939-1943), and 115 other ranks, half Portsmouth Division RMLI and half RMA. All were specially selected for character and physique.

The Band consisted of 41 performers under the Musical Director, Ty Lt E C Stretton, a former Bandmaster with the 65th Regiment, who had been recalled from India to set up the Royal Naval School of Music at Eastney in 1903. He wrote a new march, "The Royal Tour", to mark the occasion of this Royal visit.

There were many outstanding instrumentalists in the Band, as Stretton had the pick of the RN School of Music. The leader of the orchestra was a Maltese Bandmaster, Paulo Grosso. Among the first violins was B/M Gilbert Dowell, who, on retirement through medical unfitness in 1920, became Director of Music to the Viceroy of India, and in later years, Mayor of Droitwich. Another was young Joseph Skuse, the son of the Director of Music at Covent Garden Opera House. He was a superb violinist and had only just joined the RNSM. Stretton was so delighted with his playing that he put him straight into RENOWN's Band.

Joe, a small boy for his age, attracted the attention of the Princess, and during the voyage to India, he used to play his violin for her in her cabin each evening before dinner. A never to be forgotten incident occurred during an orchestral programme on the quarter deck. Joe shared a stand with Paulo Grosso, the leader. A string broke on Grosso's violin and he reached immediately for the junior's instrument, but Joe clung on tenaciously and continued playing until the end of the number. Grosso, of course was furious, and complained to the Director of Music. As a punishment, Joe was demoted to the second violins. But he was quite happy, since he was made leader of the second violins, and thereby achieved an ambition to be come a lead violinist. Sadly, Musn Skuse was to die of wounds in November, 1918.

Other players of note were: cellist, Corporal Sparrow, who retired as a Commissioned Bandmaster in 1925, and died recently aged 94 years; oboe player, B/M Robertis, another Maltese; and bassoonist Gerald Barham, who was to be killed at the Battle of Jutland when B/M of the INDEFATIGABLE.

Among the youngest players were a number who in later years were to become Directors of Music themselves. Sammy Fairfield, who played the euphonium, was Director of Music in another RENOWN for another Prince of Wales in 1921. Double Bass player, E W Faithfull won a Mention in Despatches while attached as Bandmaster to the Royal Naval Division in the Dardanelles campaign. He was the

first Band Boy of the 1903 intake to reach commissioned rank, which he achieved in 1920. Flautist, Arthur Pragnell was to become Director of Music for the Duke and Duchess of York's tour in 1927, and Musical Director of the School of Music from 1935 to 1945.

I was tympanist and pianist, and was also later destined to be a Director of Music for a Royal Tour; that of Canada and the USA in HMS REPULSE in 1939, which unfortunately, eventually was withdrawn because of the gathering war clouds.



The Orchestra

On 30 September, the Princess of Wales visited RENOWN in Portsmouth Harbour and was delighted with all she saw. In her diary she wrote: "Looked over RENOWN. It looked lovely, painted white. Tea on deck. Nice afternoon. Band played. Enjoyable day."

RENOWN left Portsmouth early on Sunday morning the 8 October, followed by her escort, HMS TERRIBLE.

Except for a few hours blow in the Bay, and again in the Gulf of Lyons, we had a calm passage to Genoa, which was reached on the 18 October, after stopping two days at Gibraltar for coaling.

Two days later, the Prince and Princess of Wales, having travelled overland from England, arrived, and at once embarked. Early next day we left Genoa escorted by HMS SUFFOLK and LANCASTER, belonging to the Mediterranean Fleet, and at 10 am, the official reception of Their Royal Highnesses took place. They were received on the quarterdeck by a Guard of Honour and the Officers were presented to them. At noon we celebrated the Centenary of Trafalgar. A guard

presented arms, the Band played "Rule Britannia" and "The Death of Nelson" followed by a short service, at which the Chaplain read Nelson's last prayer before the battle. Finally, the "mainbrace was spliced".

Sailing through the Straits of Messina, we met the Mediterranean Fleet. They were in line abreast and made a magnificent spectacle; the battleships and cruisers in the first line and the destroyers in the second. When a mile distant, the first line saluted. As RENOWN steamed through the centre between the two flagships, all the ships turned sixteen points outwards, thus bringing them in line abreast again and on the same course as ourselves. Then the destroyers passed through the intervals at 20 knots, altered course at eight points inwards, saluting as they did so, dressed to opposite flanks of the line, and finally came up in line ahead on the two flanks. All day we steamed on our course, escorted by the Fleet in various formations, only stopping to take on board Admirals Lord Charles Beresford, Grenfell and Lambton, and again to enable them to return to their ships. As soon as it was dark, the Fleet was illuminated with coloured lights, Very lights and bouquets of rockets, and RENOWN passed on her way under an arch of electric light beams. The last seen of the Fleet was the message, "Good luck, Good-bye", divided amongst four of the ships and gleaming in the darkness.

Eighteen days after leaving Portsmouth we arrived in Port Said. The following day we coaled before passing through the canal to Suez, where we spent the night of the 29th. We reached Aden after a fairly cool passage through the Red Sea. Passing Perim at night, they flashed us a message of welcome from, "The gate of the Indian Empire". We only stayed an hour or two at Aden, where the Governor came aboard, and HMS FOX and PROSERPINE met us to form an additional escort to Bombay.

RENOWN headed out into the Indian Ocean for Bombay. As there was no regular gun drill on board, a good deal of the new Swedish Drill took place, and one evening a gymkhana was held at which Their Royal Highnesses kindly presented prizes. Acting Bdr Calvert RMA won the Marines bayonet fighting, beating L/Cpl Ashton RMLI in the finals. A Marines Gun Crew won the 6-inch loading competition. Lt Borne won the Officers bayonet fighting.

The island of Bombay loomed through the steaming mist at sunrise on 9 November. Escorted by FOX and PROSERPINE, RENOWN steamed slowly into Bombay Harbour, and moored a mile off the Apollo Bunder. At 3 pm, the Viceroy and Lady Curzon came aboard followed by the Governor of Bombay, Lord Lamington, who presented members of the Bombay Legislature. The King's Birthday was celebrated with more salutes and guards, then the Prince and Princess left the ship accompanied by Lord and Lady Curzon, to make their first official entry into India.

On 14 November, the Prince and Princess dined aboard RENOWN with the Officers, and then left for Indore by train. The ships were illuminated, and as the Royal Couple left the gangway, the ship's company of RENOWN manned the forecastle and sang "All's Well", a verse specially composed for the occasion by Sir Walter Lawrence of the Prince's Staff, and a favourite song of the Prince and Princess played nightly by the Band. Both RENOWN and TERRIBLE cheered ship.

On the 8 December, a Grand Evening Concert was given by the Prince of Wales Orchestra of HMS RENOWN in Bombay Town Hall.

RENOWN left Bombay on 13 December, arriving at Colombo three days later to find there the Russian battleship Tsarevitch in an incipient state of mutiny. HMS HYACINTH had been recalled from Trincomalee in case of an outbreak, and some 30 of the more disaffected members of the Russian crew had been landed. These were eventually conveyed home in a mail steamer and the Tsarevitch left without them.

After four days we sailed from Colombo to reach Madras on the 23rd.

A party of 230 bluejackets and 60 Marines from the RENOWN went by special train to Calcutta on 28 December, to attend the annual Proclamation parade on New Year's Day. The distance is about 1,050 miles and the journey lasted 45 hours, much time being wasted in long stops at railway stations. Food was provided for Officers and men by the railway authorities, and meals were laid out on long tables on the platforms, many of which were decorated with flags and flowers. Appropriately, the engine was called Renown.

On arrival at Calcutta, we found a comfortable camp already pitched on the Maidan, on the glacis of Fort William. During our stay of three days we were the guests of The Municipality and of the Army, who looked after us well. The Officers dined with Lord Kitchener, whose headquarters were in the Fort. The Regiment quartered there got up some boxing and other competitions, and Private Butt RMLI won a substantial prize.

At the Proclamation Parade there were two companies of Marines, each about 30 files strong. They formed a separate unit under Lt R H Colley RMLI of the HYACINTH. They wore red tunics and white trousers and, it need hardly be said, looked splendid as they marched past.

The day after we returned to Madras we left for Sauger Roads, at the mouth of the Hooghly, where we picked up Their Royal Highnesses. The TERRIBLE, which came with us, had to anchor out of sight of land as she could not cross the bar.

We arrived at Rangoon on 12 January, and two days later the Prince and Princess of Wales landed and left for a five day visit to Mandalay. On their return, we once again sailed for Madras.

On the 22 January, "Musician Arthur C Green lost a bass drum stick overboard by accident, through no fault of his own". The certificate, signed by Major H S Neville White and approved by Commodore H Tyrwitt, is still in my possession.

We landed the Royal party at Madras and left for Colombo, where we met Prince Arthur of Connaught, en route for Japan. After a few days there we returned to Bombay, where we remained for a month before sailing for Karachi to pick up Their Royal Highnesses.

19 March was our last day in India. The Port had been decorated with flags and elaborate arches. At the shore end of the jetty, alongside which RENOWN was lying, an arch had been constructed out of two of the Dockyard cranes, which met at the top and supported a native fishing boat in full sail. Bags of grain suspended on either side of the archway represented the trade of the Port.

At 6 pm Their Royal Highnesses arrived on board. The last farewells were said, and RENOWN glided away from the pier amidst the cheers of the crowds assembled to see them off, and to the strains of the Band playing "Auld Lang Syne" and "Rule Britannia". Steamers laden with passengers followed us out to sea, cheering and singing "God Save the King". In the gathering darkness, RENOWN headed homewards and the memorable visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to India had come to an end.

HMS HERMES accompanied us for a few miles; then, with a display of fireworks and the word "Farewell" in electric lights, she steamed quite close alongside and "cheered ship". She then asked permission to part company, and sailed for the Persian Gulf.

In her diary, the Princess wrote: "Steamed away from Karachi about 6 pm, our Band playing "Auld Lang Syne" while we watched India vanishing from sight. Most upsetting."

RENOWN reached Aden on 24 March and coaled. There we met the Duke and Duchess of Connaught on their way home from the Cape.

Whilst in the Red Sea, another Gymkhana was held on board. Privates J W Turner and R W Smith, and L/Cpl Ashton won the feather, medium and heavy weight boxing competitions open to the ship. Their Royal Highnesses landed at Suez on 29 March to spend a week in Cairo, while the ship went on to Port Said and coaled.

The Mediterranean Fleet met us at Corfu and escorted us to the anchorage. On 11 April, King Edward and Queen Alexandra arrived in the Royal Yacht, Victoria and Albert, and steamed between the lines of ships, being cheered by each ship as they passed. During our stay at Corfu a boxing competition was held in the Prince of Wales, and Pte Butt beat the heavy weight champion of the Mediterranean Fleet. The Fleet left on 15 April, steaming in line ahead at 15 knots, just clear of the bows of the Royal Yacht and RENOWN, saluting and cheering ship as they passed. It was a fine sight, rendered more exciting because their course had suddenly to be altered at the last moment, owing to a merchant steamer getting in the way. The King of the Hellenes was also present in his yacht, "Amphitrite", which left for Athens the following day, closely followed by RENOWN. We arrived there for the inauguration of the Olympic Games on the 22nd, and stayed two days.

For the first time since leaving Genoa, we met with unpleasant weather on the passage to Gibraltar, where we met the Atlantic Fleet. At last, after a smooth passage across the Bay, we steamed into Portland Harbour early on the 6 May. The Channel Fleet was there, looming out of a thick fog, which shut out any glimpse of England. The Fleet left early next morning, to receive us at Spithead, and we ourselves, with TERRIBLE, followed later in the day, passing the Fleet in the fog.

On 8 May, the little Royal Princes and Princess Mary came aboard at Spithead and were re-united with their parents. That morning we weighed for the last time as a Royal Yacht. Amidst the booming of guns and saluting of guards, we steamed up harbour and tied up at South Railway jetty, just seven months after we had left it. Shortly afterwards, TERRIBLE steamed slowly by on the way to her moorings further up harbour, and, as she passed, she manned ship, the ship's company sang the first verse of "God Bless the Prince of Wales" and then gave three cheers.

A Guard of Honour of 100 men was mounted on the jetty, with the Bands of the RMLI from Forton Barracks and the RMA playing the National Anthem.

Before leaving RENOWN, the Prince of Wales presented each Officer and man with a small silver medallion to be worn attached to the watch chain. Then he and the Princess departed by special train for London, to the cheers of the ship's company. A memorable end to a memorable Tour.

I have one personal memory of young Prince Edward. When the Royal children visited the Band Room, he was rather too zealous in his efforts to beat the bass drum, and I had the greatest difficulty in restraining him from jumping on it.

In his report of the Tour for the "Globe & Laurel", Major H S Neville White wrote:

"I feel I ought not close this letter without some reference to the Band and the Detachment. With regard to the former, they have won unstinted and fully deserved praise from their Royal Highnesses, and everyone else who has heard them. Under the able conductorship of Mr Stretton they have reached a high pitch of excellence, and as a string band, certainly, they need not fear comparison with some of the finest of our Military Bands. It has been an education to listen to them, and the only regret expressed on all sides is that so fine a band should now be scattered to the four winds. In India they achieved a reputation which will not readily be forgotten.

As to the Detachment proper, every Officer, non-commissioned officer and man has been proud to serve under the immediate notice of his Colonel-in-Chief: and, from start to finish, the behaviour and bearing of the men have been thoroughly worthy of the occasion and of the Corps to which they belong."



THE DETACHMENT

RM ARMoured SUPPORT GROUP

BY

JAMES AVENELL

The Royal Marine Support Craft Regiment was formed in the Autumn of 1943 from the RM Field Regiment, which had been part of the RM Divisional Artillery. With the invasion of France in mind, there was a need to give close support to Infantry during the initial landings. The crews of the Howitzer Field guns were of course very vulnerable to small arms fire, and it was envisaged that better support could be given for a longer period if gun crews were protected. 95 mm howitzer guns were fitted in the turrets of Centaur tanks. The tanks, less their engines, were to be mounted on a Bailey Bridging type of structure in LCTs. There were two guns per craft operating in a similar manner to the usual ship's turret, one being higher than the other. The whole assembly was known as a Landing Craft Tank (Adapted).

Major M Britton-Johnson, who commanded the 2nd Regiment during Operation Overlord, remembers that, "Regarding the Centaur tanks, I am very certain it was the only occasion they were used in action. Although they were modern in design they had, as I recall, several mechanical faults, partly due to a transmission weakness in the old type clutch. The Cromwell which replaced them for the normal RAC role in "Overlord" looked identical, but it had the 6 Pounder Gun (instead of our 95 mm Gun How'), also a modern Rolls Royce Engine with Borg & Bec clutch. The Centaur had an old design 12 cylinder Morris Liberty Engine from the 1920s, I think. When we formed in Devizes in late 1943, we received 105 Centaurs, all in brand new condition, quite unused".

The Centaurs were disposed all around the shipyards of the UK to have engines removed to form an additional ammunition compartment. At the same time, the vehicles would be bolted down on the decks of the LCTs. The guns could fire direct on approaching the landing area, and then it was intended to beach the craft and use them as a field gun section or battery. There were numerous problems, the most important of which was to set the guns on the correct line, particularly as craft would probably beach at varying angles. Colonel Peskett, and the late Majors Ingleton and Mabbott devised a method known as a PIM board, which enabled the beached craft to operate as section, sections or battery, and this was reasonably successful.

A few weeks after work had commenced in February, 1944, there was a large training and demonstration exercise on a divisional scale at, or near, Studland Bay. King George VI attended with General Montgomery and many others. It was reliably reported in confidence at the time that George VI said, "I am interested and pleased to see tanks available to support the infantry at H hour, how soon do they land?". He was observing our one and only troop, which was all we had; only partly ready and hardly trained. Montgomery asked a Staff Officer to answer the King's question, and was told, "They do not land, but give close supporting fire from the LCTs for about an hour, to a maximum range of 5800 yards". Montgomery was not impressed, for he fully realised the great disadvantages. The beached craft would obstruct the landing areas, and landing craft were too vital to be kept on the beach as gun platforms, when they could be better employed in returning to England for more supplies. The tanks must be driven ashore and fire from the beach. They would also then be able to advance inland with the infantry and provide much needed artillery support for a longer period. Orders were

immediately issued to stop all work at shipyards and replace engines. All vehicles were to concentrate in Wiltshire for driver training and field gunnery exercises.

With the complete reversal of role came a new title, The Royal Marine Armoured Support Group. Experts from the RAC and Royal Artillery were loaned to the unit to assist in training, and whilst this progressed, details of the Group's function changed unexpectedly every two or three weeks. Major Britton-Johnson again, "No authority would allow the tanks to remain and give supporting fire from the beach. The Senior Bench Master said they cluttered up every one, consequently we had to drive 200 yards to get clear of the beach. Two weeks later this was unacceptable, and we were to move 2,000 yards inland. By D Day and D + 1, this had become ten miles. Therefore, our driving and gunnery training became very extended, with many problems and very little time before D Day." In fact, all this had to be accomplished within the space of one month. Training in tank gunnery methods and tactics had begun on 16 March. By 8 April, the units of the Group entered concentration areas prior to embarkation.



The illustration shows a converted Centaur tank of the RM Armoured Support Group. Major Britton-Johnson points out, "We could not put out an officer or NCO on the ground with a director on a tripod to pass angles to the guns, so we painted the degrees of the circle on the tank turrets, and could read angles from tank to tank through the modified RA dial sight. This gave us great speed in action and officers and NCOs were not exposed to enemy fire. It must be remembered we were training to operate up with the infantry at H hour and onwards, before the RA Field Regts arrived. As you will appreciate, the Gunners are normally back 1,000 yards or more; our extreme range was only 5,800 yards, so we kept moving up with the infantry."

The gun sight is covered by the rectangular box on the turret. This tank would appear to belong to H Troop of the 2nd Battery. It is not possible to tell the Regiment. The figure 2 is painted on a plate bearing the Corps Colours.

The CRA of the Group was Brigadier D C W Sanders OBE AFC RA, who was killed during the operation. The Deputy CRA was Colonel A J Harvey OBE RM. The Group was organised into two Regiments of eight Troops and one Independent Battery of four Troops for the assault. Each Troop consisted of one Sherman tank, armed with a 75 mm gun, which was the Troop Commander's vehicle, and four Centaurs, each mounting 95 mm gun-howitzer. The total number of tanks deployed by the Group therefore, was 20 Shermans and 80 Centaurs. For the planning, preparation and training stages only of "Overlord", each Regiment was divided into two Batteries of four Troops under a Battery Commander. In the actual landing, the HQ personnel of each Regiment were accommodated in a single jeep.

The 1st Regt (Lt Col S V Peskett RM) was under command 50 Division, the 2nd Regt (Lt Col M Britton-Johnson RM) under command 3rd Canadian Division and the Independent Battery (Major R J Freeman RM) under 3 Division. Thus, it will be seen that the unit was spread over the whole front of the British assault. Their task, as finally defined, was to give support in the early stages before the arrival of normal field artillery, secondly to fire direct at any targets that presented themselves during the run in, and thirdly to operate for a limited period with the self-propelled artillery to thicken up their fire. It was agreed that, owing to the absence of an administrative and maintenance organisation, the Group would not be expected to operate more than about a mile from the beach. Actually, it stayed in action for 15 days and operated up to ten miles inland.

On D Day the primary task was dependent on landing at the right time and the right place, but the weather, assisted by some action on the part of the enemy, effected some disturbance in the plans. Twenty Centaurs were lost through sinking or disablement of their craft; and others were held up or put ashore at the wrong place.

However, twenty 95 mm guns were ashore within 15 minutes of H hour and 48 by H + 4 hrs. A further twelve arrived later. Of these, about ten engaged shore targets during the run-in with success, and most of them were in action from the beach area soon after landing. One Troop, receiving no call for fire, went off on its own and knocked out a machine-gun nest taking 21 prisoners. Another, being unable to contact its FOO, attached itself to an adjacent unit, firing 100 rounds per gun in support of an attack on a 105 mm gun position.

It was execution of the third part of the Group's role that provided most of the excitement, contrary to expectations. This was for two reasons: first because the mobile Troops of the Group were easily detached, without interference with the main battle fire plan, in support of troops engaged on special tasks (this bringing them into contact with RM Commandos); secondly, being completely armoured, the Centaurs could give artillery support from within range of enemy small arms and mortar fire. This made them especially useful in close country and in support of troops engaged in street fighting. In many of these actions the Troop Commanders went forward in their Shermans to observe for their Centaurs, as otherwise they were dependent on FOOs of the SP Artillery.

Troops of the Group supported 46 and 48 Royal Marine Commandos in street fighting in Langrune and Petit Enfer, others were engaged with 6th Airborne Division, Army and RM Commandos across the Orne, being deployed well forward to knock out troublesome enemy mortars. The Canadians employed the Centaurs extensively, usually about 3,000 yards in advance of field artillery areas.

On D + 5, three Troops gave support to 46 RM Commando while clearing the closely wooded valley of the River Mue, an operation which culminated in a savage little battle in the village of Rots, where the Marines of the Commando fought a large party of Panzer Grenadiers to a standstill, leaving 122 of them dead in the streets.

As time went on, numbers of the Centaurs began to succumb to mechanical defects with which the Marines had neither the experience nor the equipment to cope. However, 50% of the guns were kept continuously in action until D + 15, when the majority were withdrawn from the line. They had penetrated much further and kept going far longer than had been anticipated.

One of their last actions was in support of 41 RM Commando, first of all in harassing and then in assaulting the Douvres Radar station. The whole Group was withdrawn on 24 June. In the course of their operations they had mixed themselves up in battles in all parts of the British front and made themselves useful in a great variety of tasks, so useful in fact that their last act was to train Royal Artillery personnel to take over their tanks. This possibly was a difficult task, for their methods were very much their own. But they achieved the right result at the target end and they could engage targets with a speed that never failed to impress the formations they supported and - presumably - the enemy.

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgements are made to Major H Britton-Johnson RMR and Mr K A Atkinson (Ex QMS Ex/4624), whose extensive notes on the RM Armoured Support Group, now held in the Corps Archives, have provided most of the material for this article.

EXTRACT FROM THE "LEICESTER JOURNAL" OF 14 JUNE 1783

On Sunday afternoon the following singular circumstance happened in St James' Park. As Captain Bailey of the Marines was walking in company with a Lady, a gentleman of the name of Miller who served as a Surgeon in the Army in Newfoundland under Mr Adair addressed him and requested he would quit the Lady, who it appears is Mr Miller's wife.

Some altercations ensued and Mr Miller suddenly drawing a pistol from his pocket fired at Captain Bailey, and shot him through the shoulder. He was immediately taken into custody and did not attempt any resistance, on examining him, one pistol was found loaded in his pocket, the pistol he fired off, it appears he instantly threw away. Mr Miller expressed great concern at having wounded Captain Bailey, he having formerly known him on a friendly footing. An examination took place before Sir Simpson Wright, who went into a very candid and liberal investigation of the offence. Captain Bailey is declared to be out of danger, but from the nature of the trespass, Sir Simpson committed Mr Miller to Fothill Fields Bridewell for further examination, when Captain Bailey is expected to be able to give evidence against him.

Mr Miller has lost one of his legs by some accident.

Submitted by: H Heather

FOUNDING FATHERS - PART I

BY

JAMES AVENELL

Throughout the history of the Corps, Royal Marines have played a prominent part in the expansion of the Empire, either by conquest or through more peaceful means. Thus, Royal Marines played a major part in the capture of Gibraltar in 1704, and the founding of the first settlement in New South Wales in 1788, where they were the first representatives of British constituted authority. More recently, Sergeant Peel, a cliff leader with 42 Commando Royal Marines, landed on Rockall in September, 1955, from HMS VIDAL, and took possession of the island in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. But, amongst all this activity down the years, perhaps the strangest, and certainly one of the most interesting tales is that of Ascension Island.

The 1,000 foot cliffs of Ascension Island, rising sheer out of the South Atlantic present a forbidding sight. The 35 square mile island is the peak of an extinct volcano, part of the mid-Atlantic ridge which runs for 10,000 miles below the ocean. It is a barren outcrop of lava and volcanic ash, possessing virtually no fresh water sources, so that for centuries it was the exclusive home of sea birds.

This remote and desolate island was first sighted by a Portuguese merchant man bound for India in the year 1501. They named it Conception. Two years later, another Portuguese captain, Alfonso d'Albuquerque spent the night off shore in very stormy weather, but decided that Ascension Island had no attractions compared to the well-watered and fertile island of St Helena, seven hundred miles further south. Tradition has it that it was Albuquerque who gave Ascension its name, because he sighted it on the feast of the Ascension. But, the account of the voyage written by a certain Giovanni da Empoli would seem to discount this. At any rate, he did not land, and it was left to some later Portuguese expedition to put goats ashore - a common move, made in order to provide fresh meat for any human who might get stranded. The Portuguese officially recognised Ascension as part of the empire in 1539, though it remained uninhabited except by the goats, the land crabs, the multitude of sea birds and the giant green turtles, which came to lay their eggs in the hot sand of the beaches. At some stage black ships' rats got ashore and multiplied horribly, so that by the early eighteenth century they infested the island in swarms.

Human visitors, at first, were rare, but by the mid 1800s Ascension had become famous amongst sailors for its turtles, which provided ships of all nations with the fresh meat essential for the prevention of scurvy. It also became widely known as a sailors' post office. Passing ships would leave letters in bottles at a recognised spot, safe from rain and sea spray, for whatever vessel might next pass by. The practice is remembered today by a point called Letter Box; though this would appear to be misplaced, since it is impossible to land anywhere in the vicinity.

In 1701, Captain William Dampier was stranded on the island with his crew, when his ship, the Roebuck, sprang a leak and, despite all efforts to stop it, sank just as he reached Ascension. Tradition has it that they found water by following a goat to a spot still known as Dampier's Drip, where water seeps from the rock walls of a ravine on the side of Green Mountain.

About seventy years later, Captain Cook, on his way home from the South Seas found Ascension a forbidding place. "The dreariness of this island surpassed all the horrors of Easter Island and Tierra del Fuego, even without the assistance of snow. It was a ruinous heap of rocks," wrote George Foster, Cook's naturalist and draughtsman.



The barren, almost lunar appearance of most of Ascension is well demonstrated in this photograph.

The desolate peace of Ascension was soon to be shattered permanently, following Napoleon Bonaparte's defeat by Wellington and subsequent exile on St Helena. The decision to occupy Ascension was taken not by the British Government but by Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who escorted Napoleon to St Helena in his flagship the *Northumberland*, arriving on 13 October, 1815. He took this step " - particularly to prevent America or any other nation from planting themselves there as upon a hitherto unoccupied and unowned island for the purpose of favouring sooner or later the escape from hence of General Bonaparte or any other persons unwillingly detained here".

Thus, Captain James White of the sloop *Peruvian* was ordered, with the sloop *Zenobia*, to take possession of Ascension, "hoisting upon it the English flag, and putting ashore upon it an officer, about ten men and a gun; and erecting upon it for these men (who are to remain constantly on shore) tents or other accommodation according to the means at your disposal and as the nature of the situation may require." The two vessels arrived at Ascension Island on 22 October and Captain White went on shore to take formal possession of the island at 5.30 pm.

For the next few months *Peruvian* and *Zenobia* took turns in lying off shore as guard ship for the newly established base. The first garrison of eleven Marines was brought from St Helena by Captain White and landed on 21 December.

The initial problem was fresh water, or rather the lack of it. Attempts to dig wells produced either no water at all or brine. After a prolonged search they found two sources: the already mentioned Dampier's Drip, and at the southern base of Green Mountain, four or five tuns collected in small reservoirs. Cockburn

decided shortly after establishing the garrison to place the island on the establishment of a "Sloop of War of the smaller class, of 65 men all included." This, he said, would make for better discipline and be more effective than a company of soldiers, whom he could ill spare anyway. Thus Ascension officially became a ship.

By 1821, when Napoleon died, the island had assumed a new role, that of providing a sanatorium and victualling base for the ships of the South Atlantic Fleet, then engaged in suppressing the slave trade on the West African coast. Store buildings had by this time been erected around the area later named George Town in honour of George IV. A small farm had been established on Green Mountain. A detachment of Marines was stationed at Dampier's Drip to collect the water. They became troglodytes, living in caves which they carved out of the soft volcanic rock. To connect these two outposts with George Town, a road had been started in 1816. Even by modern standards and methods this was an immense task. The road rises gently to a height of about 600 feet, at which point it becomes almost vertical. A series of sharp hairpin bends, and gradients of one in three make this one of the steepest climbs in the world. However, a report made by an inspecting officer in 1821 shows that even after five years occupation the settlement was in a thoroughly rundown state. The report notes that buildings had been poorly constructed, the galley was useless, defence batteries unprotected or unmounted, the garden partially overgrown and livestock inadequate.

The garrison, which consisted of thirty-one naval and Royal Marines personnel, was too small to run the island efficiently. Captain Brown, the inspecting officer, recommended that in future tradesmen should be drafted to Ascension. His advice was accepted, and from then on men for Ascension were selected mainly for their professional skills, and spent more of their time on Works Department services than military duties.

Although the garrison had included Royal Marines from the start, it was not until 1823 that a Royal Marines officer was appointed Commandant. Edward "Fighting" Nicolls is probably the most distinguished officer the Corps has ever had. In forty years of service he was in action no less than 107 times, and received a series of near fatal wounds. This was just the man to galvanise the garrison into improving conditions on the island. He brought in fifty-six liberated Africans as extra labour (African labour was employed until 1922) and asked the Admiralty if he could have some convicts for heavy work, but these he never got. Turtle ponds were established, in which the turtles captured (or turned - from the method employed of rolling a turtle on its back) were kept until needed for fresh meat. Capt Nicolls instituted the practice of selling or bartering surplus turtles to the captains of passing merchant ships. Money received was placed in the public account and goods went into the public store, where men could buy what they wanted at modest rates. Even with these little luxuries the diet must have been monotonous, but it was relieved somewhat by the rum issue which Nicolls managed to obtain from the Admiralty.

Cats had been introduced by the garrison at an early stage to control the enormous rat population. But the cats found the birds easier and more acceptable prey. They soon ran wild, becoming as much of a menace as the rats they had been imported to keep down. The answer to this problem was dogs, and Nicolls set about hunting the cats with a pack of bull-terriers. The dogs were also trained to hunt the land crabs, whose burrows were a constant source of trouble to the

agricultural efforts of the Marines. Incentives, in the form of extra rum issues, were made to encourage the men in destroying vermin.

Nicolls, who owned a farm in England, quickly revived enthusiasm for horticulture. He put in a demand for seeds of a great variety of vegetables, and so well did the garden flourish under his direction, that by 1825 it produced 5708 pounds of vegetables and fruit. He was also responsible for establishing a breeding stock of cattle for beef purposes on the island.

However, not all Nicolls endeavours met with success. His attempt to introduce game birds and animals for sport failed, because they were unable to survive the rigours of the long voyage from England.

Nicolls was succeeded in 1828 by Captain William Bate Royal Marines who was to remain in command of the Ascension garrison for the next ten years. To the senior naval officers of the Cape of Good Hope he was the perfect commander of their curious outpost. "I do not think the Marine Corps could produce an officer whom I could prefer as Commandant of this island", wrote Rear Admiral Frederic Warren in 1832. One of his first actions was to order a report on the state of the island from a board of officers of the garrison. Their survey showed things to be far from satisfactory. Buildings were still squalid and full of vermin, the men at Dampier's still lived in damp caves, and whole sections of the road were in a bad state.

Bate saw as his first priority the creation of a proper water system. The daily transporting of water about the island by donkey and cart was an enormous waste of time and effort. So, he immediately set in motion a plan to pipe water down the mountain to a large tank he had excavated at George Town. He was greatly assisted by Lt H R Brandreth RE, who first arrived on the island in 1829 to make a hydrological survey. The initial pipe and reservoir system was completed by the end of 1831. Additions and improvements, including a 300 yard tunnel through the top of Green Mountain to carry pipes, were later added. But the basic system remains in use to this day.

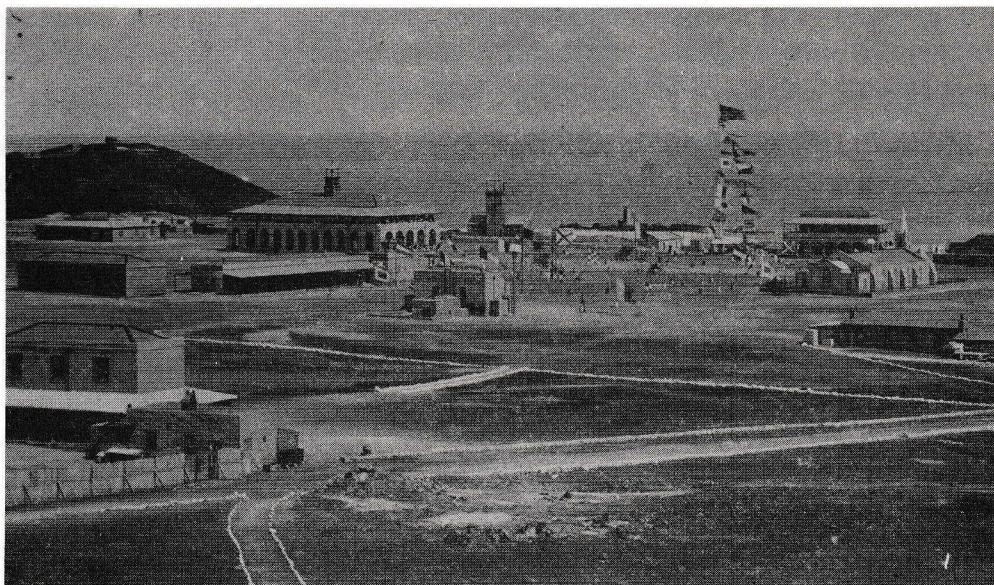


The road to Green Mountain. This illustration gives a good impression of the steepness of the road and the hairpin bends.

With planning assistance from Brandreth, Bate also set about reconstructing George Town. In addition, he built a hospital in the Garrison and a new Marine Barracks on the Mountain. The barracks was his one big mistake, being made damp and unpleasant by the frequent fog or low cloud which envelopes the summit. It was replaced by another lower down in the 1860s, becoming probably the only cowshed in the world to bear a stone carved Corps crest.

Bate was ordered to reduce his garrison of two hundred NCOs and privates by seventy in 1834, and send them home as soon as possible. This severe cut in personnel greatly hampered the redeployment plan, but Bate pressed on as best he could. New officers' quarters, and a continuation of the pipe line to the head of the jetty, so that vessels could take on water direct from it, were completed.

Ascension was a constant port of call for ships suffering with disease. Crews with contagious diseases, such as small pox or cholera, were banished to Comfortless Cove (so called from its barren surroundings and its use as a quarantine centre). Food would be left for the sick by members of the garrison, but all contact was forbidden. Today, the area is dotted with the graves of dead seamen. Those suffering from other complaints were taken to the new hospital for treatment. Diagnosis was extremely haphazard, and it was only a matter of time before a serious epidemic struck those ashore. In March, 1838 this is exactly what took place. Yellow fever broke out among the garrison killing at least twenty-five, including Bate himself.



George Town. This view shows nearly half the buildings. The Church is on the right, the offices on the left. The large building is the Marines Barracks. This photograph was taken on Ascension Day, a holiday on the island, hence the decorations.

To be concluded

A PROBLEM OF DRESS

The letter reproduced below, from Lt Colonel Arthur Collins, Senior Marine Officer with the Army, at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1776, shows that uniform problems are no new thing in the service.

Lord Sandwich was First Lord of the Admiralty from 1771 to 1782.

Nothing ever came of this suggestion, but his choice of the colour green is interesting, as the Marines were later to be denoted a Light Corps.

Halifax. 13 July 1776

Sir,

Permit me to lay before you some observations on our present white facings which the inconvenience and expense were never more fully experienced than at present in America.

The necessity of appearing clean under arms with the difficulties attending it on actual service not only fatigues the soldiers when off duty but wear out the clothes in a short time. Whitening, pipe-clay etc burns the lapels, destroys the lace and fills the front of the coat with dust so as to spoil the colour and rot the cloth.

Green facings would obviate all these evils therefore the majority of the officers composing the two battalions under my command being fully convinced of the rectitude of this change have desired me to address the commanding officers of the several divisions for that purpose.

In this light I flatter myself with the hopes of you gentlemen uniting in an application to Lord Sandwich for the uniform he was so kind to propose in the year 1773.

And am Sir,
Your most humble Servant
Arth Collins
Lt Col Mar

From the National Maritime Museum, May 1969 (SAN/T/4).

Copies from The Sandwich Transcripts in the possession of Viscount Hinchbrook.

NAVAL GOOD SHOOTING MEDAL 1903-14

BY

SIDNEY WOOD

This medal, which is somewhat rare, was authorised by King Edward VII in August, 1903. It was instituted with the object of encouraging good performances in gunnery at the Annual Fleet Competitions. Awards were made to seamen and marines who scored a very high percentage of hits with their particular weapon. This accounts for the fact that medals were issued for every type of gun used in the Royal Navy during the period 1903-14.

The obverse bears the effigy of the reigning Sovereign in naval uniform with the usual inscription.

On the reverse appears the figure of Neptune facing right, grasping five thunderbolts in each hand. In the background is the bow of a Roman trireme drawn by three sea horses. Above is a trident and the legend AMAT VICTORIA CURAM (Victory delights in care).

The ribbon is navy blue with a red centre, with white stripes in between.

The medal was first awarded without a bar, with the recipient's name, rank and number, also the name of the ship, the year and calibre of the gun, impressed in block letters on the rim. If a man qualified for the medal again, he received a bar on which was the name of the ship, year and calibre of gun.

It is as well to remember that in those days the predominant factor in good shooting was the human element. It was before the introduction of scientific instruments to co-ordinate allowances for speed, course, temperature, etc, now in use. In fact, the skill required by the gun's crew was similar to that required to hit a rabbit with a shotgun.

A total of 974 medals and 62 bars were issued. Sgt G Boyce RMA was the only man to receive a medal and three bars.

Only three men received two bars, and one of those was a marine, L/Cpl C E Walker RMLI.



The list below gives the names of those Royal Marines who won bars to their medals:

<u>Name & Rank</u>	<u>Medal Impressed</u>	<u>Bars</u>
G BOYCE, SGT RMA 4638	HMS ILLUSTRIOUS 1904 6 IN QF	HMS ILLUSTRIOUS 1905 6 IN QF HMS NATAL 1908 9.2 IN BL HMS INFLEXIBLE 1913 12 IN BL
S G CASWELL, CPL RMA 7804	HMS COMMONWEALTH 1908 6 IN BL	HMS JUPITER 1910 6 IN QF
J CLERK, CPL PLY 12415	HMS VICTORIOUS 1911 6 IN QF	HMS CONQUEROR 1913 13.5 IN BL
J T GERMAN, SGT RMA 6845	HMS ACHILLES 1907 9.2 IN BL	HMS THUNDERER 1913 13.5 IN BL
E GOODYEAR, CPL RMA 9607	HMS BACCHANTE 1909 6 IN BL	HMS JUPITER 1911 6 IN QF
W G MANN, L/CPL PO 9085	HMS BULWARK 1906 12 PDR QF	HMS DUNCAN 1909 3 PDR QF
W C WALL, SGT RMA 4031	HMS CEASAR 1904 6 IN QF	HMS DOMINION 1905 6 IN BL
C E WALKER, L/CPL PLY 14405	HMS MONMOUTH 1911 3 PDR QF	HMS MONMOUTH 1912 12 PDR QF HMS MONMOUTH 1913 12 PDR QF
A P WARNER, BDR RMA 9197	HMS INVINCIBLE 1911 4 IN BL	HMS MONARCH 1914 13.5 IN BL

A FOOTNOTE TO A CHAPTER OF CORPS HISTORY

BY

COLONEL G W M GROVER OBE RM

In 1923, as we know, the two branches of the Corps, which had been separate, with brief intervals, since 1804, were re-united under the ancient style of the "Royal Marines". In that year - 1923 - so great were the reductions in strength following the Kaiser War, only two officers were entered and, although they joined after the amalgamation of the Corps had taken effect, they had been selected for the RMA and RMLI respectively. They were thus the last of the old or first of the new, whichever way you choose to look at it. Their names, corresponding to the above branches of the Corps, were B G Ralls and C F Phillips. Both were pleasant and personable youths, but it would have required an out-size in crystals and more than ordinary ability in its use for the observer to foretell the heights to which both were destined to rise.

To begin with the first in order of retirement, if second in initial precedence of branches, C F Phillips early showed aptitude in the infantry activities of the Corps and in 1930 was appointed Adjutant of the Plymouth Division, an appointment to which he brought marked ability for three years in those disheartening days of reduction of Corps strength and the resulting diminution of training activities. His service afloat carried him to all foreign stations and in 1939, on the outbreak of the Hitler War, he was serving in HMS COURAGEOUS. When this ship was sunk in September of that year, his qualification at the Staff College, Camberley, resulted in his appointment as GSO2 of the 1st Army Division, from which he was promoted to be GSO1 of the Royal Marine Division. On the transformation of the Division into Commandos, he assumed command of No 47 (RM) Commando, which performed specially distinguished service following the Normandy landings in 1944. Chester Wilmot in the "The Struggle for Europe" wrote, "Between this beach (Omaha) and Gold there was a seven-mile stretch of unsubdued coastline, but here the Germans were already feeling the squeeze, for No 47 (Royal Marine) Commando was within sight of Port-en-Bessin, having carried out a fighting advance of nine miles behind the defences". He was awarded the DSO and continued in command of 47 Commando during the Normandy operations, and was still in command of it at the assault on Walcheren on 1 November, 1944. On the reconstitution of landing boats' crews and other details into 116 and 117 Brigades, he assumed command of 116th RM Brigade, consisting of 27th, 28th and 30th Battalions RM, and commanded the Brigade in the operations on the lower Maas and the advance to Oldenburg. For his services in Holland he was created Knight Commander of the Order of Orange Nassau.

His services following the conclusion of the war were no less memorable than those rendered during it. From the end of the war until 1948, he was on the Staff of the newly created Joint Services Staff College and was then, until 1950, Chief Instructor of the School of Combined Operations. From 1951, until his promotion in 1952, he commanded 3 Commando Brigade during the operations against bandits in the State of Perak in Malaya and, from 1952 until 1954, was Major General commanding the Portsmouth Group. His last service, before his retirement in 1957, was Chief of Amphibious Warfare, an undertaking to which he brought all his qualities of enthusiasm and efficiency. Besides his DSO and decoration from the Queen of the Netherlands, he was created CBE in 1953, CB in 1955 and was promoted to KBE in 1957.

During the relatively short span of life which remained to him, his work for the Corps, great though this was, was probably eclipsed in value to the nation by his

selfless devotion to the interests of the Fishing Fleet. In 1957 he became President of the British Trawlers Federation at a most difficult time in the annals of the Fishing Fleets. For some centuries these had prospered to the benefit of maritime nations, under restrictions of coastal waters which had been roughly (though not exactly) agreed, limited by conventions designed to protect breeding grounds. Between the two World Wars the claims of certain Nations to a larger sphere of territorial waters, and thus the right of exclusive fishing in them, had been advanced, and these rose mightily after the Hitler War when assertion to maritime jurisdiction ranging as far as 200 miles was made. So far as Northern fisheries were concerned, the Scandanavian nations' claim to a 4 mile limit could hardly be resisted as being older than the Anglo-American 3 mile agreement. But the matter went far further than this to include all waters washing offshore rocks, and the judgment of the International Court of Justice in the Norwegian claim, which gave assent to that country's 1951 contention to exclusive control of very large areas indeed, had set a large sized cat among the piscine pigeons, if such a phrase be apt. Following this, a United Nations conference on the law of the sea opened in 1958, in which it was clear that the advocates of the Anglo-American 3 mile limit, the insistence on which had prevented agreement at the Hague Codification Conference of 1930 being reached, would be overwhelmed. It only remained to discover how much could be saved, if the extreme extent of jurisdiction over maritime waters, as asserted by the Scandanavian powers and by Russia, were admitted, British and French fishing would be limited to zones which would be completely unprofitable. At such a time it was fortunate that the British advocates had at their disposal so sage and knowledgeable a counsellor, and one whose keen brain was able to see clearly through the jungle of verbiage which threatened to obscure the main issue, as Major General Sir Farndale Phillips. Before his untimely death in 1961, General Phillips had the satisfaction of knowing that, while Great Britain had not secured all that she wished, or anything like it, much had been salvaged from what appeared to be a hopeless case - a case which only an advocate of unusual powers of persuasion, together with the possession of a character in which forcefulness and integrity were equally blended, could have brought to so relatively successful a conclusion.

Major General Sir Farndale Phillips KBE CB DSO died on 25 February, 1961, in the plenitude of his powers, leaving to the Corps the inspiration of his example, to the Fishing Fleets on which, together with the Royal and Merchant Navies "the wealth, safety and strength of the Kingdom chiefly depend" a record of outstanding service, and to his friends the memory of an ardent and charming personality.

.....

The second of the two young officers who so shyly entered the Mess anteroom on that pleasant summer evening so long ago, retired as Major General B G Ralfs CB, President of the Ordnance Board, in 1965, after completing nearly 42 years service. Unlike his comrade in arms, Lieutenant Ralfs early showed outstanding interest in, and promise of performance at the intricacies of gunnery, which then figured so large in the activities of the Corps. He was, early in life, Principal Control officer of his ship, to the efficiency of which he greatly contributed in this and other ways, and he qualified as Instructor of Gunnery at HMS EXCELLENT, passing with a first class certificate. From 1932 to 1934 he was Assistant Instructor of Sea Service Gunnery at Eastney, and his efficiency communicated itself to all who passed through his hands. Thereafter he applied, and was accepted for, a post as Assistant Inspector of Naval Ordnance. This was generally thought to be something of a dead end so far as a career in the Corps was concerned but, for that matter, so appeared any other in the thirties. There was however, this to be thought of, owing to the advent of aircraft, a radical change in the nature

of guns and gunnery, and, at all events, unless missiles greatly extended their range and power, surface sea warfare would vanish and air war take its place. However, guns with a range of 75 miles had made their appearance in the Kaiser war and might do so again. (That developments of Congreave's rockets of Waterloo days would make a come back appeared too fantastic for serious thought). Whatever the future might be, however, it was bound to be full of interest, and so Ralfs found it.

Here a digression appears called for. Guns had made their appearance in British armies at Crecy in 1346, but had made small impact. By 1415 however, in the Agincourt campaign, they played a major part and, under Humphrey, King Henry V's brother, the "nimble gunners" of the "London", "Messagere" and "Kinges Doughter" as the larger guns were named, effected the breach in the walls of Harfleur of the "Once more unto the breach dear friends" fame. Present as the permanent official was one Nicholas Merbury, "Master of the Ordnance", and from this official, and from this date, the office which Major General Ralfs recently held, is historically traced. True to form the English, having established a commanding lead in one form of warfare, lost little time in losing it, and the Battle of Castillon in 1453 was won by French guns and ended the reign of the longbow and the Hundred years war in one blow. The British however, again true to form, made determined efforts to make up for lost ground, and the importance of the office was enhanced, so that at the time of the Armada, when the gun really established itself at sea, the office of "Master" was augmented in status to "Great Master" and then "Master General" and in importance, gradually took its place as similar to the Admiral as below, but not much below, the Great Officers of State. The Duke of Marlborough was Master General of the Ordnance, and the work of his "train of artillery" contributed to the foundation of the Royal Artillery in 1716. Before that, an officer with the proud title of "Chief Bombadeer and Engineer" had accompanied the Vigo expedition of 1702 and, until the foundation of the Royal Marine Artillery in 1804, detachments for the bomb vessels (the inshore craft operating with the Royal Navy) were furnished by the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The office developed into a Ministry of Supply, being responsible for all Army stores of a warlike nature and, with the Lord High Admiral, for those of the Royal Navy on an agency basis. From the Hanoverian Kings, the holder of the Office was always of Cabinet rank. The great Duke of Wellington held the office of Master General with a seat in the Cabinet, together with that of Commander in Chief of the Army on the death of the Duke of York in 1826, though this state of affairs was unsuitable for continuance.

In 1855, Lord Palmerston, as Prime Minister, deprived the Office of Master General of its importance, and the name, together with the board, lost its pre-eminence but not its identity, the position being comparable in a lesser degree with that of the Admiralty of today. Shorn of many of its duties and re-named the President of the Ordnance board, the office carried on being the highest post to which a purely technical gunner can aspire and holding traditions dating back, as has been stated, to Agincourt in 1415. Major General Ralfs was the first or (if you count the Duke of Marlborough a Marine by virtue of his promotion from the King's Company of the First Guards into a captaincy in the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment in 1672) the second member of the Corps to hold this office and will probably be the last. It is, however, fitting that his first allocation in the Royal Marines was to the old Royal Marine Artillery.

A SOLDIER OF THE DUKE OF YORK AND ALBANY'S MARITIME
REGIMENT OF FOOT 1664



A SOLDIER OF THE DUKE OF YORK AND ALBANY'S MARITIME
REGIMENT OF FOOT 1664

(The Lord High Admiral's Regiment)

BY

CHARLES STADDEN

DRESS AND EQUIPMENT

"Upon a Report from the Lords the Comm^{tee} for the Affayres of his Ma^{ty}s Navy Royall & Admiralty of this Kingdome this day read at the Board; His Ma^{ty} was pleased to Order and direct (amongst other thinges) That twelve hundred Land Souldjers be forthwith raysed, to be in readinesse, to be distributed into his Ma^{ty}s Fleets prepared for Sea Service w^{ch} said twelve hundred Men are to be putt into One Regiment Under One Colonel, One Lieutenant Colonell and One Serjeant Major, and to be devided into Six Companies, Each Company to consist of Two hundred Souldjers; And to have one Captain, One Lieutenant, One Ensigne, One Drume, Fowre Serjeants, an Fowre Corporalls, and all the Souldjers aforesaid to be armed with good Firelocks; all w^{ch} Armes, Drummes & Colours are forthwith to be prepared and furnished out of his Ma^{ty}s Stoares; The care of all which is recommended to the Duke of Albermarle his Grace, Lord Generall of his Ma^{ty}s Forces."

On the 28 October, 1664, at a Court held at Whitehall, Charles II affixed his seal to the above Order in Council, which was the first act in the formation of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot. Whether the Regiment was recruited mainly from the Trained Bands of London, or elsewhere, may in fact be true, as in the short space of three weeks twelve hundred men were organised into a force, which must mean that the bulk of the men were drawn from organised bodies. This practice was normal in the case of raising a new regiment; sometimes complete companies were drawn from existing regiments.

There are many contemporary references regarding the early dress of the Regiment in private letters and official papers, but all were very vague giving no precise detail. From these it does certainly appear that yellow or tawney coloured coats with red linings were worn from the formation. It seemed that yellow was the favourite colour of the Regiment's Colonel, the Duke of York.

In a letter dated 11 May, 1667, from John Lysle to Mr Secretary Williamson, it stated "The PARADOX, carrying over a company of the Duke of Yorks yellow coats to Guernsey, had a hot dispute with a French Fly boat".

There are many other such references in letters of the period, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who visited England in 1669 and landed at Plymouth, wrote the following in his account of his travels:

"The Governor my Lord John Granville, Earl of Bath and Sir (John) Skelton is his lieutenant. Five companies of about seventy men each, officers and soldiers are on duty there, one belongs to the Dukes Regiment. The men are very handsome and in excellent order, four companies wearing red jackets lined with yellow, and that of the Dukes yellow with red lining."

The four companies referred to in red with yellow lining belonged to the Holland Regiment, which had four years previously passed to the English Establishment. (The Holland Regiment subsequently became the Buffs, the Royal East Kent Regiment and now, in 1973, its history and tradition are carried on by the 2nd Batt of the Queens Regiment.)



"COLLAR OF BANDELEARES"

Twenty years after the formation of the Admiral's Regiment, on the 1 October, 1684, Nathan Brooks gave an eye witness account of the Review on Putney Heath of the King's Forces. He wrote:

"The Admiral's Regiment consists of twelve companies, without grenadiers, coated yellow, lined red."

And the following year, the London Gazette of the 5/8 January, 1684/5, old calendar, the uniform was described as:

" coats yellow, lined red, stockings red."

And again in a later edition 9/13 April, 1685.

" Coats of yellow, breeches red, shoulder belt for sword."



Coupling all the above extracts together with the known general dress of other existing regiments, this is what the illustration of the uniform is based on, taking into account also the trend of civil fashion of the time. No one can be absolutely sure of what was worn at these very early times, so in all fairness the illustrations to this article are mainly conjectural, owing to the lack of detailed evidence, but should be a reasonable guide to what was worn.

The equipment consisted of a fire-lock, collar of 'bandeleares', swords and belts, bullets in a bag and a powder flask. The whole regiment was armed throughout with Snaphaunch Muskets, being the first regi-

ment under the Crown to be so equipped. (In the Commonwealth Army, regiments to guard Artillery and Transport had been so armed.) This was, at the time, unusual, as the rule of the service at this period laid down the necessity of a considerable number of pikes per regiment.

The collar of bandeleares consisted of a leather belt, natural coloured, to which were attached the "Twelve Apostles" or wooden cartridges filled with powder. A bag of bullets was also attached to the belt under the right arm, and below this,

secured by a red cord, the leathern powder flask. Over the right shoulder was the leather sword belt (in later years this belt was worn round the waist), the sword brass hilted in a black scabbard with brass mounts.

The head-dress was black, bound in yellow lace. The hair was worn as by the common people of the period. Around the neck was worn a white cravat. The coat was tawney yellow with red linings and cuffs, and all buttons pewter. It had cross pockets, with scalloped flaps secured by three buttons each, was slit at the back to just below the waist, and had a slit at each side secured by buttons. Red breeches and stockings were tied under the knee with red ribbons. Shoes were black or possibly buff, interchangeable to either foot, with red ribbon bows.

Sources: Military Antiquities - Grose
History of the Royal Marine Forces - Edye
Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research
Royal Marines Museum
Britains Sea Soldiers - Field
History of the Uniforms of the British Army - Lawson
A History of Costume in the West - Boucher
Concise History of Costume - Laver

CHRISTMAS DAY ON BOARD SHIP, 1675

"25 - Christmas day wee keepe thus. At 4 in the morning our trumpeters all doe flatt their trumpets, and begin at our Captain's cabin, and thence to all the officers' and gentlemen's cabins; playing a levite at each cabine doore, and bidding good morrow, wishing a merry Christmas. After they goe to their station, viz on the poope, and sound 3 levitts in honour of the morning. At 10 wee goe to prayers and sermon; text, Zacc ix 9. Our Captaine had all his officers and gentlemen to dinner with him where wee had excellent good fayre: a ribb of beife, plumb-puddings, minct pyes, etc and plenty of good wines of severall sorte; drank health to the King, to our wives and friends; and ended the day with much civill myrth."

Teonge's Diary

CURATOR'S NOTES

The main Museum effort over the past months has, of course, been directed towards the Appeal. This has continued unabated and to date has realised the sum of some £33,000. A full list of all the individuals and organisations who have contributed towards the effort has been published in the Globe and Laurel and the Trustees are most grateful for all the support they have received.

Needless to say, the sum realised to date is a long way from the ultimate target of £150,000. I hope therefore that those of you reading these notes will do all you can to bring the Appeal to the notice of all those who believe that our unique and continuing history is worth portraying in a manner which does justice to the Corps. An Appeal Brochure has been produced and can be obtained from the Corps Secretary at Eastney should you require one for any of your friends.

It is still difficult to be precise about the date of opening the new Museum. Although DOE has commenced work and a Museum contractor appointed, those of you who have been associated with works will know that there are many factors which could arise to delay operations. However, on present planning, I hope that 1 May, 1975 will see the doors open on our enterprise.

On the acquisition front, we have been very fortunate in receiving the support of countless friends who have generously donated items. Once again individual acknowledgement and itemising of every document, relic, uniform, etc is an impossible task in the space allotted, but the following will be of interest:

A Waist belt clasp of the RM Artillery Companies purchased for £15.

A frock coat of a Director of the RN School of Music with the collar badge of globe and laurel surmounted by a small lyre. This was the frock coat of Captain 'Jimmy' Green who is of course well known to us all.

The brass plaque from the 16" gun tampion of X Turret, HMS RODNEY.

Silver inscribed watch presented to Sgt Fleming RMLI in August, 1888.

Eight pen and ink drawings of RM Landings on the Irrawaddy, 1945 by Vivian Pitchforth RA, who was commissioned as a RM 2/Lt and was a reputed war artist. These were purchased for £230.

A superb model of a 38 gun frigate, 1805 made and loaned by an ex RM SNCO.

Presentation silver teapot and mug presented to Bugle Major Harris RMLI in 1874.

The original artwork of the RM Commemorative cover series so far issued, purchased for £30 each.

The Colour roughs for the Ascension Island stamp issue kindly donated by the Crown Agents.

We have also received many groups of medals. Pride of place must go to the Victoria Cross of Major Harvey RMLI who won this coveted award at the Battle of Jutland, 1916, whilst serving in HMS LION, and the Albert Medal of Lt A T Turner RM, for gallantry in attempting to save the life of a SNCO in Malta harbour in 1939. This means that we now have 8 of the 10 VCs and 4 of the 6 Albert Medals back in the Corps, a unique record. Other medals include a DSO,

2 MMs, a DSM and 2 MBEs in addition to a large number of campaign and commemorative medals. A unique family group of the Reynolds family of grandfather, RMA 5356 R F Reynolds (later Captain RMA), father RMA 14760 H J Reynolds and son Major F Reynolds RM (formerly PLY/X 114836), has also been received. This is now the fourth family group in the Museum, and we are most grateful to Major Frank Reynolds for their acquisition. Both the RMLI and RMA collections are being transferred to the Museum next year, and from the combined collections it is intended to mount an historical display of gallantry and campaigns, which will not only portray the history of each particular medal, but will be a complete history of Corps campaigns and gallantry. A number of small mobile exhibitions of a similar nature will also be prepared on a similar basis for loan to units.

Since my last report, two important changes in Museum administration have emerged. From 1 April, 1974, the Treasury purchase grant is being increased from £500 to £1500, and the staff is being re-organised to include qualified Museum grades. A Research Assistant and Museum Technician have already been recruited and next year will see the addition of a Senior Museum Assistant and 2 Museum Assistants. From 1 January, 1974, the Museum will be organised into an administrative cell, a display department and a records department. A tremendous step forward from the days of an unpaid Curator and a part time assistant!

The illustrations on the facing page show two of a series of composite uniform paintings, commissioned by the Museum from Charles Stadden. There are eight of these paintings, each depicting fourteen different uniforms or rigs of the Corps down through the ages, many of which have not been shown before.

Early in 1974 we are producing a jumbo sized set of postcard reproductions of these paintings for sale from the Museum. The reverse of each card bears an explanatory text describing the uniform and its date, and giving the sources of information for the painting. These postcards will provide a unique collection of Corps uniform history and will be quite suitable for framing.

We are also introducing Corps playing cards; two different packs, one of which bears a gold Corps crest on a blue background, and the other a gold Commando fighting knife on a green background.

Details of prices for the postcards and playing cards will be published in the Globe and Laurel when they become available. Many more items, including all the latest RM Band recordings (on disc or cassette) and Christmas cards, are available. Details can be obtained on application to the Museum for a price list.

A G B

CHARLES STADDEN COMPOSITE PAINTINGS



The Royal Marines 1923-1946

1928 Lieut. Col. (Ret.) Navy Col.	1941 Officer (Fighting Order)	1939 Corporal "Red" Drill (Retiree Order)	1944 Royal Marine Commando (N.W. Europe)	1939 Private (Drill Order)	1944 Marine (Big Battle Dress)	1939 Master Sergeant (Retiree Order)	1939 General Officer (Retiree Order)
1949 Lieut. Col. (Ret.) (Navy Col.)	1958 Marine (Embarkation Order)	1939 Colour Sergeant (Retiree Order)	1938 Q.M.S.I. (First Drill) (Drill Order)	1943 Corporal (Q.M. Patrol Coy)	1945 Royal Marine Commando (Far East)		



The Royal Marines 1946-1969

1951 Marine (Malaya)	1946 Officer (Service Dress)	1969 Corporal (Land Dress)	1959 Sergeant (Tropical Dress)	1960 Private (Retiree Order)	1969 Drum Major (Retiree Order)	1964 General Officer (Ceremonial Dress)	1969 Major (Ceremonial Dress)
1964 Corporal (Southern Arabia)	1969 Regimental Sergeant Major (N.I. Dress)	1946 Colour Sergeant (Ceremonial Dress)	1960 Musician (Tropical Dress)	1966 Adjutant (Drill Order)	1959 Officer (Red Sea Rif.)		

COUNCIL NOTES

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place at Portsmouth on 12 May, 1973. Minutes of this meeting have already been sent to members.

The Late Captain Peter Sanford RM Retd

The Council heard with regret of the death of Captain Peter Sanford, Secretary of the Royal Marines Association. They agreed that a donation of £5 should be made to the RMA in appreciation of Captain Sanford's services on the Council of the Royal Marines Historical Society. The Hon Secretary represented the Council at the Funeral Service at St Andrews Church, Eastney on Monday, 2 July.

Hon Treasurer *

Mr Peter Tilbury who had served on the Council since the Inaugural Meeting in 1968, and has been of great assistance to the Society for his valuable work while serving on the Council as Hon Treasurer has, for personal reasons been forced to relinquish this post. It is hoped that a successor will be appointed to this post shortly. Until further notice all correspondence for the Hon Treasurer should be addressed to the Hon Treasurer: c/o Royal Marines Museum, Eastney, Southsea PO4 9PX.

Membership

Membership of the Society is now 127, but not all members are up-to-date with their subscriptions, these are due for payment on 1 January annually.

Society Tie

The Society Tie has proved very popular, nearly two thirds of the quantity purchased have been sold to members.

H P P

DONATIONS

The Hon Treasurer gratefully acknowledges receipt of donations to the Society's funds from the following members:

Mr B Owen
Mr E C Rhind
Mr S G Wood
Mr G Ewing

*STOP PRESS A new treasurer has now been appointed. Details on P.25.

LETTERS

THE MILLERS IN MILITARY MUSIC (Vol IV No 1)

From: Mrs A C Green

2nd Lt George Miller RMLI

As a mere woman, it is quite obvious to me that the real reason for 2nd Lt Miller's left hand salute was, because the Bride was terrified of her father's sword being caught up in her bridal draperies, she issued an ultimatum: ". either I walk up the aisle on your right arm, or I don't go at all", which is precisely what I would have said in the same circumstances.

From: Captain A C Green RM

Band of the 63rd Regt and a possible photograph
of Bandmaster Miller

Has Mr R G Harris tried Boosey & Hawkes of Regent Street, London (they published a Military Band Journal for over a century), or the Central Music Library at Westminster?

From: Herbert Heather

I noticed in the last Newsletter, an article by R G Harris, "The Millers in Military Music" which is devoted to the career of George Miller sometime Director of the Portsmouth Division RMLI, which also gave some details of his antecedents.

In this respect I would mention that having recently read Sir Arthur Bryant's "Jackets of Green" he mentions a Bandmaster of the Rifle Brigade, named William Miller who served some forty-one years in the Rifles being appointed Band Sergeant of the 1st Battalion at Malta in 1842, subsequently accompanying it to South Africa and the Crimea. He adapted and composed the Regimental quick march "Ninety-five".

A picture of him appears in the book and I would think that he was a relation of Bandmaster Miller of the RMLI as the facial features and build are similar. Perhaps this can be verified from your records?

TWO MEDALS TO THE SAME MAN

From: S G Wood

Reading the Newsletter (Vol IV No 1) with my usual interest, I note the query about two Naval General Service Medals 1793-1840 awarded to DENNIS SULLIVAN.

Having had the opportunity to examine both medals when they appeared in the sale room, as soon as I read the article I spent a happy hour in the attic looking over old auction catalogues, and having found the two for the sales in question, I see from my marginal notes the general opinion at the time of both dealers and collectors was the three bar specimen is the genuine article.

I note from the medal roll, SULLIVAN served in HMS TOPAZ as Ordinary Seaman for Boat Service 1 November, 1809 and as a Marine in HMS ACTIVE for Lissa and Pelagosa 29 November, 1811.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SEA SOLDIER - PART II
(VOL IV, NUMBER 1)

From: Captain G P Sanford RM

I note a slightly puzzling description in the paragraph headed "Executions" in the above mentioned article.

It states - "The condemned men were hanged in batches on the wall at dawn " and then goes on to say: "The long-drawn note of a British bugle sounding "Out Lights" cut the silence like a knife; it was the last earthly sound some ten or a dozen picturesque sinners heard before they dropped into eternity".

Was it not more likely that the last notes they heard were those of Reveille?

NEW MEMBERS

Application for Membership approved by Council
since the publication of Newsletter No 1 of Vol IV

Miss Gillian Knight
Captain J D L Liddington RM
Mr J F G Niccolls
Mr J E Price
Colonel F B Pym RM
Major J L R Pym RM
Captain P G Sumner LRAM ARCM RM
Mr G E Thorp
Major A P Whitehead RM
Mr A J Woodliffe
Mr H Heather
Mr L J Bach
Mr F C Glazebrook
Lieutenant Colonel F Vician Dunn KCVO OBE FRAM RM
Major General A R Chater CB CVO DSO OBE
Drum Major David Buchanan RM

