



Royal Marines
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SHEET ANCHOR

Volume VIII Number 2

PRESIDENT

General Sir Ian Riches KCB, DSO.

PAST PRESIDENTS

Colonel M Archdall CBE

Colonel F B Pym

Major General J I H Owen OBE

VICE PRESIDENTS

Captain G H Hennessy RM

Major A J Donald RM

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Chairman

Colonel E Potts
Passaford Farmhouse
Passaford
SIDMOUTH
Devon
EX10 ONL

Hon Secretary

L Garrett QPM
14 Sarisbury Close
Downview Road
FELPHAM
W Sussex PO22 8JN

Hon Treasurer

P J Hayes
1 Hadrian's Close
ST ALBANS
Herts AL3 4TY

Hon Membership

Major A P Whitehead RM
2A Seaview Road
Drayton
Portsmouth PO6 1EN

Hon Editor

A J Perrett
20 Brighton Avenue
GOSPORT
Hants PO12 4BX

GCRM's Representative

Corps Secretary
Royal Marines Eastney
Southsea
Hants PO4 9PX

Clerk to Secretary

J D Ladd
c/o RM Museum
Royal Marines Eastney
Southsea
Hants PO4 9PX

Elected Members

Colonel E Potts

A E Howell

J R Cullimore

Major A E Marsh RM

THE SHEET ANCHOR

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 2

AUTUMN 1983

CONTENTS

The Uniform of the 6th Marines (George S Sausey)	Page 26
The Rotely Papers (Tony Brown - Museum Director)	Page 28
C/Sgt William George Peters DSM MSM (Peter Pennell)	Page 30
The American Captain Allen (Naval Chronicle & Editor)	Page 32
RMs in the 1921 Coal Strike (George R Hawkins)	Page 34
Royal Tour of 1921-22 (J Eggo RMLI)	Page 38
The Sudan - Finale (Arthur R Chater)	Page 42
Per Mare - 1896-98 (Army & Navy Gazette)	Page 48
News Extracts (Submitted by Herbert Heather)	Page 41

SOURCE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Respective Authors	Pages 26, 30, 35
RM Museum Photographic Library	Pages 40, 45, 46, 47
The Army & Navy Gazette	Page 48
The Editor... ..	Page 37

(While every effort is made by the Editor to ensure that information contained in this publication is correct, contributed material is the sole responsibility and opinion of the author).

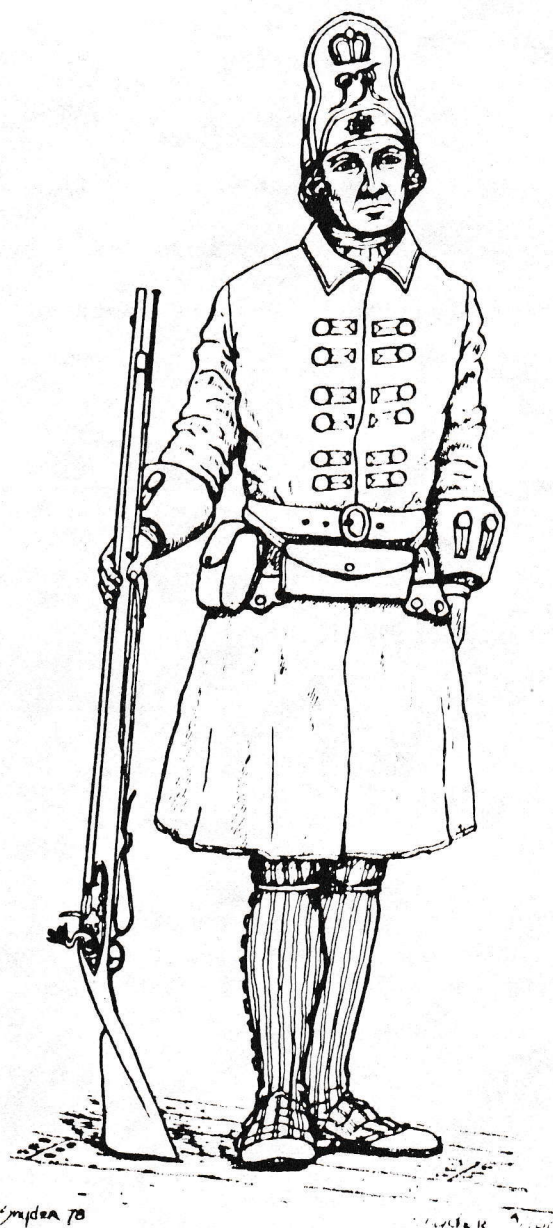
Privately Published
by the
ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY
and Printed at Eastney
Copyright RMHS 1983

THE UNIFORM OF THE 6TH MARINES - by George S Saussy

Following on from the article "Hector Vaughan and his 40 Marines" by this author, featured in Number 1 of this Volume, some details of the type of uniform likely to have been worn by these men of the 6th Marines (49th Regiment of Foot) stationed at Charlestown (South Carolina) in 1744.

There is no account of the uniform worn by Lieutenant Vaughan's detachment but it can be reasonably surmised that they would have worn one similar to that depicted for the 6th Marines in the 1742 Cloathing Book. (James Laver's book 'British Military Uniforms' published London Penguin 1948 depicts a colour plate of a 6th Marine taken from the 1742 Cloathing Book). The uniform is similar to those worn by grenadiers of the period and was apparently worn by the entire unit, but exhibits a number of features that were unusual for British regiments during that period, and generally resembled that worn by Marines during the siege of Gibraltar in 1704.

The red coat would have been lined with brown linen for tropical service. The full skirts of the coat were fastened back, as was fashionable at that time. The coat was closed in front by three buttons at the waist (covered by the waist belt and belly box) (Thomas B Sea 'Some Observations on the 1742 Cloathing Book' published Tradition Magazine No. 42 pages 32-33). Above these were set three pairs of white metal buttons on dummy button-holes of white tape. The back of the coat had a white metal button set at waist height on each hip. There would also have been dummy buttonholes along the back slit in pairs as on the front of the coat. The collar and cuffs were green, the cuffs having two dummy buttonholes and buttons each. (Ceicil CP Lawson (The History of



*6th Marines (49th Regt. of Foot)
1744 - Charles Town, S.C.*

the Uniforms of the British Army' published London Norman Military Publications 1963 Volume II page 23).

The sleeved waistcoat, made from the previous year's coat, would have been red, possibly with white edging. The waistcoat was worn without the coat for working parties in order to preserve the uniform coat as long as possible. The breeches were red but seldom appear from beneath the full skirted coat, and thigh length gaiters made of blue and white striped ticken. (Howard L Blackmore 'British Military Firearms' published New York Arco Publishing Company Incorporated - pages 45-46).

The black leather cartridge pouch on the right side was slung from a buff leather waistbelt and was used to carry hand grenades, as was customary for grenadiers. The smaller belly pouch was suspended from a narrower black belt which was buckled over the waistbelt. The bayonet was attached to a frog on the left side of the waistbelt. The regulation Long Land service musket with either iron or brass fittings with a buff leather sling was in use at the time. (F. McMaster 'Soldiers & Uniforms South Carolina').

The most intriguing part of this uniform is the grenadier cap which was apparently worn by all rank and file. It consisted of a stiffened cloth frontpiece with a small flap at the base and a loose cap bag attached to a cloth base circling the head behind the frontpiece. The frontpiece was of green cloth edged with red tape as was the little flap. A yellow embroidered crown with a red centre and the Royal Cypher 'GR' embroidered in red were on the frontpiece. A Garter star with white rays, a blue outer circle (the quarter) white centre and red cross was embroidered on the little flap. (Laver plate from 1742 Cloathing Book).

A number of regiments had their regimental number embroidered on the rear base of the grenadier cap. (Lawson page 23). There is no indication that if this was done for the 6th Marines, what form or what number would have been put there, some regiments having the number in Roman numerals, others in Arabic. The cap bag was red without decoration and was not sewn to the back of the frontpiece but left to hang down in the same manner as those of drummers.

Lieutenant Vaughan's uniform would have been a finer version of the one described above with the better quality of cloth, and distinctions described as follows, from the 'Leeds Mercury' 18 January 1739.

"The Officers Cloaths of Colonel Moreton's (the Sixth) Regiment of Marines are to be red with green velvet cuffs, gold shoulders, knots, and lapelle waistcoats gold chain lace".

(George S Saussy (author) and H Stephen Snyder (drawing) are members of the South Carolina Military Miniatures Society. Further reference on the uniform of this period can be found in Volume V No. 2 of Sheet Anchor, pages 2-5. Editor).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

'The Uniform of the 6th Marines' appears by courtesy of the Company of Military Historians, Westbrook, Connecticut 06498 USA.
(*'Military Collector and Historian'*, Fall 1980 p 109).

Two short articles on Lieutenant Lewis Roteley RM in the last edition (Number 1 of this Volume, pages 2-4) were just a foretaste of a wealth of information that has come to light on this personality, and in particular the private papers that have recently been obtained by the Corps Museum, as the Director explains. (This article appeared in the *Globe and Laurel*, March 1982)

THE ROTELEY PAPERS by MAJOR A G BROWN MBE RM

Some weeks ago I was fortunate enough to acquire at auction, certain papers relating to 2/Lt Lewis Roteley RM, who was one of the subalterns aboard *Victory* at the time of Trafalgar. Roteley received his commission on 27 July 1805 and was posted to 89 Company at Portsmouth. After Trafalgar he saw service in the West Indies, being present at the capture of a French Frigate the *Topaze* at Guadeloupe in 1809 and the capture of Martinique in 1809. He retired on full pay in September 1814 and lived in Swansea until his death in 1861 at the age of 76.

An examination of the correspondence is a remarkable insight into the way of life of the period. It starts in October 1803 when Roteley was desperately trying to procure a commission in the Army as an Ensign. He was informed of a vacancy in the 61st Regiment for 350 guineas for which "it would be necessary for him to procure an introduction to the Colonel". Nothing appears to have come of this for a month later he again applied and received offers of another four vacancies from 340 guineas as an Ensign in the Queen's German Regiment to 400 guineas as an Ensign in the 31st Regiment of Foot.

Between then and his next series of letters in 1805 Roteley had either given up hope of an Ensign in the Army or the offers were not within his means, since in July 1805 he had successfully obtained a commission in the Royal Marines, although by what means is unrecorded. On 14 August 1805 we find him at Portsmouth writing to his father and with all of 18 days seniority as a 2/Lt discussing promotion of all things! He cites 280 2/Lts "all to be made 1st Lieutenants before it comes to my turn as they are all promoted by seniority". However, his luck was in for he talks of being particularly fortunate in joining the Division at this time as "there is an augmentation going to take place consequent by upwards of 100 2/Lts will be made 1st Lieutenants which will put me a great ways up the lists". He goes on to point out some of the snags of being over confident, since sometimes officers below the age of 20, which in fact he was, were not always entered on the lists and had to mark time whilst others more fortunate in age were entered above him which quote "will be a material injury to me". The other remarkable point he brings out in the same letter is that although a newly commissioned 2/Lt he was first for sea duty!

Money is discussed in some detail. We learn he was paid 4/8d per diem as a 2/Lt, not bad for those days, and as the mess was full he received 6/- per diem for lodgings. Out of his first month's pay he was expected to pay one guinea to the mess plus a further 10/- a week thereafter. He goes on to say that "when perfect in my exercise a further 10/6d would have to be paid to the Drill Sergeant and on the first night of mounting Guard, another one guinea to the Guard and Band". His uniform costs came to £42.8.0d for everything against a £40 advance from his Agent.

Roteley's next letter comes on 29 August and finds him still at Portsmouth complaining bitterly that he had expected to be posted to the *Apollo*, a fine new Frigate, "but a young man who had a little interest with the Field Officer was appointed over my head". He goes on to say that he could have appealed to the Admiralty but "that might get me the ill will of the Field Officers".

Four days later Roteley writes of being ordered to embark on Victory on 3 September which "completely ready for sea was only waiting for Lord Nelson to return from town". Settled aboard he talks of "16-18 sit down for dinner every day among which are the Captains and 9 Lieutenants of the ship and the Captain and 3 Lieutenant Marines. I like the officers of the ship and they are a fine set of Fellows". The cost of his messing aboard was £50-£60 a year.

By 13 September the ship was under way and nothing more is heard until a letter dated 4 December 1805 when Victory arrives back at St. Helens after a months tedious passage from Gibraltar. Although he had apparently sent information of the battle home from Gibraltar, this letter is not amongst the collection. However, the letter of 4 December contains the following:-

"At the beginning of the action we had stationed on the Poop 40 Marines with small arms among which were the Captain and 3 Lieutenants. In so short a space of 5 hours our Sergeant Major and 5 Marines were all that remained unhurt. Myself received several slight scratches but nothing to induce me to leave the deck. During the contest we were reinforced by several Marines from the great guns. I assure you I am not a little proud of having had the honour of commanding the Marines on board Lord Nelson's ship, the junior Lieutenant. Our Captain Adair, a truly brave man was shot about the middle of the action and instantly expired. His death will be universally lamented by all that knew him. Lord Nelson's death is particularly felt aboard this ship. Had his Lordship lived he would have done something for every officer on board. Before the Redoubtable struck she cut away her main yard in order to board us but I believe they thought better than to hazard the attempt though the Captain of her declares a midshipman and 4 seamen got upon our anchors".

Amongst the papers there is an account of the period 18-29 October and a journal from 3 September 1805 to 1809 which are too detailed to report here but which nevertheless are a remarkable contemporary account of a great naval occasion.

Further letters from Roteley deal with the period 1806-1809 and cover his embarkation in the Milan and Cleopatra for service in the West Indies and subsequent events on that station. In 1810 we find a remarkable letter from his wife written from his home town of Swansea. It begins (and I have purposely used the original spelling)

"My Dear Roteley

I received your unkind letter the 8 of December dated the 18 of September. I was glad to see it but am sorry to say I did not find one kind word in it which has made me more unhappy than ever. (Here follows some personal details concerning health and events) I suppose I shall not know you when I see you there will be such a change. I wish you could find such a one in me for the better but I fear not for I am now four years older and no handsomer than I was when you left me I have a very bad conceit of my self which makes me fear that you will have less love than ever but I must hope for the best"

From your affectionate and loving wife

Elizabeth Roteley

I am pleased to be able to say that despite these misgivings Roteley returned to his wife and lived together in Swansea after he retired until his death.

The remaining papers, although not directly related to him personally are

nevertheless of great interest in that, as I said earlier, they are an indictment of conditions of the day. They include:-

- a. His account of the naval life of Nelson up to Copenhagen.
 - b. Ships' Orders of c 1805. I repeat here article VIII since despite its crudity shows what could happen "He that pisseth between decks or otherwise easeth himself either there or in any other place such as is appointed on that behalf, shall for the said offence be brought to the Captain and there receive on his bare back so many lashes according to the practice of the sea (not exceeding 12) as the Commander of the ship shall think fit". Swearing resulted in the loss of a day's pay.
 - c. Payment of prize money including a sworn statement whereby a naval officer, in consideration of payment of £10, sells his share of prize money to Roteley.
 - d. Articles drawn up by ships' officers for gun room guests and wine 1806.
 - e. A page from a log for Nov/Dec (1804?) with the signature at the foot 'Nelson & Bronte'.
 - f. A copy of Steel's Navy List of 1808. Not only is this a seniority list of RN/RM officers but it gives details of all French, Spanish, Dutch, Turkish and British ships lost during the period of hostilities and the disposition of the Fleet on the various stations
- and a number of other papers of general interest.

All in all these papers are a valuable addition to our archives.

- oOo -



The King's Badge

It was in March 1918 that HM King George V on a visit to the Depot at Deal directed that in future the Senior Squad under training should be designated the King's Squad, and that the best all-round recruit should wear the Royal Cypher on his left shoulder as 'King's Badgeman' throughout his career in the Corps. CSgt W G Peters DSM, MSM (pictured left) was one of the first to win this award, as Society Member Peter Pennell explains on the opposite page.

An Early King's Badgeman

Po 17265 Colour Sergeant William George PETERS, DSM, MSM

By Captain Peter Pennell RM

Colour Sergeant Peter's widow, who is a friend and neighbour, has been kind enough to lend me his Service Certificates and other mementoes of his career. It spanned the years 1914-1945, from his enlistment as a boy bugler, transfer to general duties, award of the Kings Badge and DSM until his award of the MSM after his final retirement. I have based my short sketch of his career on his Service Certificates and Mrs Peters' recollections.

Will Peters, son of a red marine, enlisted as a Bugler, RMLI, in London on 25-5-1914, aged 14 $\frac{3}{4}$. He served at Portsmouth, in HMS Vindictive in 1916, St Vincent and Fort Blockhouse before transferring to complete training with a recruit squad in 1918. His first foreign commission was to the Naval Party sent to Archangel in 1919, borne on the books of HMS Glory III. While abroad, he heard that he had been awarded the King's Badge, or "Kings Certificate" as it was originally entered on his Service Certificate; the award was eclipsed by the award of his DSM and it was not until his return to Portsmouth that its significance was explained and he was able to wear the badge.

After service in Malta in the 1920s, he went to Deal as a potential Drill Instructor in 1926 and served as a Corporal in HMS Nelson in 1930-31 before being promoted. He steadily climbed the Drill Instructors' promotion ladder and in 1934 had the good taste to marry the daughter of a red marine, who remembers the married quarters at the Depot which were then in the Coastguard houses in Liverpool Road. While at the Depot, Will Peters trained the King's Squad which passed for duty before the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), took a King's Squad to the Royal Tournament at Olympia and became a Corps cricketer. He went to Eastney in 1937 and was one of the Colour Party outside Westminster Abbey for the Coronation. He retired to pension in 1938 and worked in the GPO at Bexley. He was recalled to service for a week during the Munich crisis and for wartime service in October 1939; serving firstly at Eastney, where he had the first National Service squad, and then at Lympstone. He was discharged physically unfit in September 1945 after serving a total of 30 years 4 months, in the ranks of Bugler, Private, Lance Corporal, Acting Corporal, Marine (for a short time after the amalgamation), Corporal, Sergeant, Colour Sergeant, Acting QMSI and Colour Sergeant. His medals were the DSM, British War and Allied Victory medals, Defence Medal, Jubilee and Coronation medals, Long Service and Good Conduct medal and he wore the King's Badge. He returned to the GPO until his retirement and was awarded the MSM in 1952. He moved to Fareham after his retirement.

Will Peters was a very active instructor to the RMVCC and trained many King's Squads. He had the reputation of a stickler for niceties and formalities. I find it interesting that his own King's Badge should have been awarded apparently retrospectively and recorded haphazardly and my imagination sees a slightly wry smile when in later years he advised King's Badge boards or occupied breaks in drill by questioning squads on the origins and history of the award.

(The Corps Historical Records Officer Reports: Number 5 Squad was the first to bear the title 'King's Squad' and CSgt Peters of No 14 Squad was in fact the tenth King's Badgeman. Of the first 27 Squads all but two produced men to qualify for the award).

Naval Chronicle,

As several mis-statements have appeared in the public prints relative to the death of the late Captain Allen, we subjoin the following particulars, communicated to us by a friend, which may be depended upon:-

Captain Allen's left thigh was amputated by his own surgeon, in a very proper manner, about three quarters of an hour after the close of the action. On the morning after the arrival of the 'Argus' (Tuesday), the chief medical officer from Mill prison attended him, and soon discovered that dangerous symptoms (which had escaped the observations of his surgeon, who thought favourably of his situation) were insidiously approaching, and accordingly communicated his apprehensions, and recommended such remedies as were deemed advisable. In the evening he was again visited, when the prognostic given in the morning was found to be verified. On the following day, his symptoms were much aggravated, and his immediate removal to Mill Prison Hospital was strongly recommended, in order to obtain the most prompt remedies, and where he might have all the care and attention his situation demanded.

He arrived about noon; but in spite of every effort gradually sunk until he breathed his last, about eleven o'clock that night, during which period he was never left by his physician. We understand that he was not conscious of the danger to his situation, but conversed familiarly with those present with him until about three quarters of an hour before he died. His death was conceived to be chiefly occasioned by the great loss of blood which he sustained previous to amputation, by his persistence in remaining on deck after he was wounded. Throughout the whole he bore his suffering with that manly determined fortitude and composure which might be expected of a brave and gallant officer, and never once complained of pain; but his mind constantly dwelt on the loss of his ship, which he regretted in the most feeling and manly manner. In person he was about six feet high, a model of symmetry and manly comeliness, and his manner in conversation a highly finished and accomplished gentleman.

His Funeral:

At Plymouth, on the 21st of August, was interred with military honours, William Henry Allen, Esq. late commander of the United States sloop of war 'Argus', who lost his left leg in action with His Majesty's sloop of war 'Pelican', J F Maples, Esq. captain, in St. George's Channel, on the 14th; of which he died in Mill-prison Hospital, on the 18th following.

Procession:

Guard of Honour:- Lieutenant-Colonel of Royal Marines, with two Companies of that Corps. The Captains, Subalterns, and Field-Adjutant (Officers with hat bands and scarfs), Royal Marine Band, Vicar and Curate of St. Andrews, Clerk of ditto.

The Hearse:- With the Corpse of the deceased Captain, Attended by eight Seamen, late of the 'Argus', with crape round their arms, tied with white crape ribbon. Also, eight British Captains of the Royal Navy, as Pall-bearers, with hat bands and scarfs. Captain Allen's servants in Mourning, The Officers, late of the Argus, in uniform, with crape sashes and hat bands, two and two. John Hawker, Esq. late American Vice-Consul, and his Clerks. Captain Pellowe, Commissioner for Prisoners of War. Dr. M'Grath, Chief Medical Officer at Mill Prison Depot. Captains of the Royal Navy in Port, two and two. Marine and Army Officers, two and two. Servants of the American Officers, two and two. Followed by a very numerous and respectable retinue of Inhabitants.

The procession left Mill Prison at twelve o'clock. The coffin covered with a velvet pall, on which was spread the American ensign under which the action was fought, and whereupon the hat and sword of the deceased was laid. On the coffin being removed to the hearse, the guard saluted; and when deposited in the hearse, the procession moved forward, the band playing the "Dead March in Saul". On arrival near the church, the guard halted and clubbed arms, single files inward, through which the procession passed to the church, into which the corpse was carried, and deposited, in the centre aisle, while the funeral service was read by the Reverend Vicar; after which it was removed and interred in the south yard (passing through the guard in the same order as to the church), on the right of Mr. Delphy, midshipman of the 'Argus', who lost both legs in the same action, and was buried the preceding evening.

The naval action to which it refers took place 14 August 1813 about 0600, when RN Sloop HMS Pelican (18 guns) under Captain J F Maples command challenged the American Sloop 'Argus' in St. Georges Channel, following her attack on a merchant ship laden with wine from Oporto (Portugal) the previous evening and the burning of which had attracted the British ship to the scene. The American Navy was just making itself noted in world affairs at this time, and emboldened by the fact that the RN was scattered over various areas of conflict abroad, not least of which was the 'War of 1812' involving the USA and Canada, they had taken to raiding the Irish sea and even into the English Channel itself to plunder our shipping.

The 'Pelican' outmatched the 'Argus' (16 guns) being 467 tons against 298 tons, with a crew of 116 compared to 104 (many of whom were drunk from the captured wine consumed overnight!) and the action lasted barely 45 minutes, during which time the 29 years old Captain William Henry Allen had a leg shot early in the engagement but remained at his post until passing out, his 1st Lieutenant J M Watson then briefly held the command until being hit in the head with grapeshot, and was in turn superseded by Lieutenant William Howard Allen (no relation to the Captain) yet recovered just in time to see the RN crew boarding his ship to haul down the colours.

Captain W H Allen was one of America's most promising young officers, a midshipman at 17 years of age he was onboard the 'George Washington' when in 1800 she made the first visit by any USA warship to the Ottoman Empire capital of Constantinople (Istanbul), and as a Lieutenant in 1807 on the 'Chesapeake' engaged in action against HMS Leopard was said to have taken a live coal in his hands to fire one of the guns.

(Editor)

- oOo -

LEICESTER CHRONICLE SATURDAY 16 JANUARY 1813

The DIADEM 64, and LATONA 44, with a fine Battalion of Royal Marines which has been on service in the North of Spain, arrived at Plymouth on the 4th inst.

They came last from Portsmouth having overshot their post. These fine fellows, all picked men will, when landed occupy Frankfort Barracks, till the Spring when it is said they are intended to join our brave lads in Canada, where their services will be particularly useful on the lakes of that country, from the nautical knowledge they have acquired during their embarkation on board different ships of war, previous to their being embodied as a regular battalion for service on shore.

Earlier this year a national coal strike was fortunately averted, after balloting the miners, but sixty two years ago a similar threat turned into reality.

ROYAL MARINES IN THE 1921 COAL STRIKE

by

LT COL GEORGE R HAWKINS OBE RM

In the early days of 1921 the headlines in the newspapers were extremely gloomy. The submarine K5 was lost with all hands, the German Delegates refused to sign the Paris Agreement, in Ireland Sinn-Fein outrages occurred almost daily; to add to the gloom the miners declared a National Strike, and appealed to the transport and railway workers for support. This was stunning news because the miners took the unprecedented action of calling out the safety men who man the pumps, with the possibility of mines therefore becoming flooded and destroyed.

Although the mines were privately owned (they were not nationalised until 1947) the Government could not allow the destruction of this valuable part of our national wealth. A state of emergency was declared in the United Kingdom, and armed forces were ordered to protect the coal mines.

An emergency force of R.M.A. from Eastney, and R.M.L.I. from Gosport (Forton) was formed in great haste. In fact, at such short notice that the drafting officer at Forton had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to get the numbers required. He could only do this by including the tug-of-war team training for Olympia, the divisional soccer team, and the 'gravel bellies' earmarked for Bisley. All the Young Officers courses were stopped, probably to their delight, and the 2nd Lieutenants were made platoon commanders.

Nobody knew our destination although there was a rumour that it was the Fife coalfields. This interested us because the Scottish miners were the most militant and toughest in the industry, and there was a Scottish saying "Ye need a lang (long) flanked spoon to sup with a Fifer".

The rumour was true, and we went by special train to Glasgow, where we were quartered in the Highland Light Infantry Barracks to await final instructions. The time was well spent on lectures about 'Aid to Civil Power'. The 'Royals' and the 'Jocks' got on extremely well; their regimental tug-of-war team was training for a Scottish Tournament, and an invitation to the Royal Marines to give them a pull was willingly accepted. It was no disgrace to the 'Jocks' to be beaten; they put up a very good show against the team that had won the event at Olympia in the previous year. We hoped that our visit helped them to win their Scottish contests!

The stay in Glasgow was short and enjoyable: as we marched away a piper played "Will ye no come back again" and we were very touched, but in marked contrast we received a chilly reception in Fife. In every village we were greeted with jeers and boos, and at Dysart we were stopped by a road block manned by an angry mob who hurled stones and abuse. Colonel Patterson, the CO, had a quiet manner but larger than life personality. Having selected the striker with the biggest mouth and most abusive tongue he said to a hefty 'Blue Marine', "Bring that man to me for a friendly chat". His words worked wonders, the miner walked back meekly and told the mob to sut up and clear the road, which they did, so we could continue on our way.



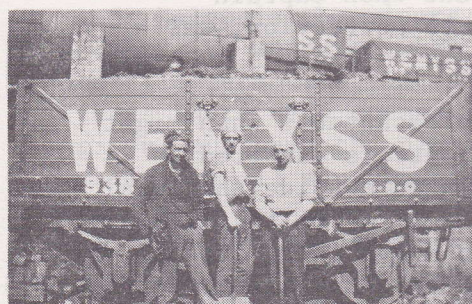
Major Chancellor RMA
(Bn 2nd in command)
Capt Dewhurst RMLI



Hawkins on
Hannah Snell



Sentry



Two Volunteers
(and Hawkins)



The Author



Patrol In
Army Doctor's Car



Hawkins, Dewhurst
and Warren



Group outside
HQ.



Field Kitchen
and Cooks



Miners watch Marines
fall in for departure

Fife is studded with coal mines and the company to which I belonged occupied Balgonie Colliery, but the routine that I describe there was similar to all the others. An angry mob threatened to prevent our entrance to the pit, yet wisely refrained from using violence, so we pressed on and took possession. The OC at Balgonie was Captain F W (Freddie) Dewhurst supported by 2nd Lieuts A G (Cock) Warren, Bertie Knowles and myself. ('Cock' Warren was the subject of a recently published book, 'Marines don't hold horses'). Sentries were posted immediately and barriers erected (fortunately logs, planks, pit-props and ropes were plentiful) and having made the colliery secure thoughts turned to cooking meals, but apart from a small gas ring, no facilities existed for cooking. This however presented no problem as all marines had practised cooking in the field but, much more fortuitous, quite a large number had served at sea before 'general messing' was introduced, and had in turn to prepare a meat course and a pudding for their mess mates. It took very little time to construct an efficient field oven and dig narrow trenches for cooking in mess-tins.

By nightfall we had settled in and an excellent hot meal was enjoyed by all, including the pit manager and the volunteer undergraduates from Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities. The messing was very good and there were few complaints about the cooking; Balgonie simply swarmed with rabbits so we had rabbit pie, stewed rabbit, stuffed rabbit and other dishes that Mrs Beeton had never heard of! Private Johnson, the officers' cook was excellent, and when Captain Dewhurst had a birthday the jugged hare, cooked secretly to perfection, was a pleasant surprise for Freddie!

Considering all the circumstances there was much less unpleasantness than might have been expected; not even a squeak of protest came as patrols escorted volunteers in and out of the pit although pickets were placed outside the local store (the Co-op) where they had persuaded the manager not to serve the military. Consequently when marines went to buy bread he refused to serve them, explaining that the miners were his best customers and he could therefore not afford to have his store 'blackened'. This was reported to 'Cock' Warren who called on him and asked for a signed statement "that he would not serve Royal Marines" to be forwarded to 'a higher authority'. This stunned the manager who was unsure of his ground, and immediately he withdrew his objection, but requested that the marines would be 'armed' to impress the watching miners outside his store. This was an isolated incident.

The tension of the first few days died down and we were able to have a more settled routine in which the time from 'reveille' to 'lights out' was fully occupied, as apart from guard duties, patrolling and cooking, there was PT, swimming, bayonet fighting with blobstick (home-made), vaulting on a box-horse (also home-made) and exercising ponies. In the evening there was usually a sing-song round the camp fire to the music of the mouth-organ or a fife, or games were played.

The pit ponies had become such good friends that they deserve a mention; they had been below ground for months and it was a pleasing sight to see them gambolling in the fresh air ... the marines knew the names of all of them except one, which they christened 'Hannah Snell'! When we first saw the brass on the harness it was as black as the leather to which it was attached, but on our departure, after plenty of Brasso and 'elbow-grease', it shone like the ships bell in the fleet flagship!

An army doctor, a Captain RAMC(TA) was attached to HQ but fortunately we never needed his attention, though his car was useful, especially for picnics! There was no Chaplain with the force and in the early days Sunday had to be just an

ordinary day, but later when the pressures eased Royal Marines in uniform could be seen in the congregations at many churches, especially at Leven where the OC was Captain Sammy Bucknall a lay-reader who took 'Holy Orders' after he retired. The Minister at Leven welcomed RMs to his church and to the Manse afterwards, in fact Mr and Mrs Patterson and their daughter Jean were very kind to us and organised picnics and sightseeing trips, the favourite attraction being the house where Alexander Selkirk (Robinson Crusoe) was born.

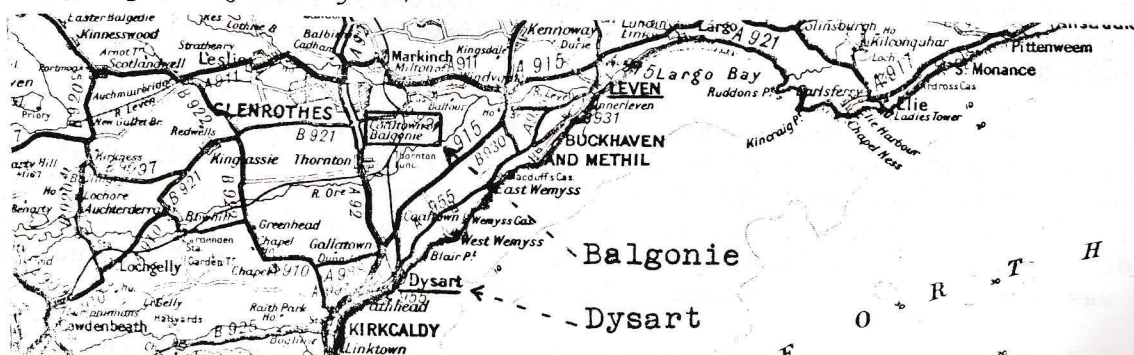
On 25 April, in an effort to get peace, the Government made an offer of ten million pounds but this was rejected by the miners; nevertheless the RMLI tug-of-war team was recalled to Forton in time to complete training for the Army and Navy Tournament at Olympia (they made a habit of winning the light-weight event whilst the RMA won the heaviest) and a coal strike could not be allowed to spoil the sequence! Social Security, as we know it today, did not exist in 1921 so the miners were forced to rely on their strike funds which were getting dangerously low, although soup kitchens which were organised in every village prevented starvation. Concerts, whist drives, football matches, and fancy dress parades were organised to help the funds, but insufficient money was raised to save the miners and an agreement was finally reached at the end of June. The miners returned to the pits, the volunteers to the Universities, the pit ponies to the underground, and the Royal Marines to their Divisions.

Living for three months in a coal mine had been quite an experience and as we left Balgonie the miners, their wives and children, waved until we were out of sight. We wondered what would happen at Dysart, where we had received such a hostile reception, but as we marched through the village this time instead of jeers there were cheers. When the order "March at ease, carry on smoking" was given, out came the pipes and baccy plus the proverbial mouth-organ to be played whilst we all sang lustily.

It is hoped that the Dysart miners forgot our arrival and only remembered our departure as we marched away singing a song of the Great War "Good bye-ee, don't cry-ee, wipe the tear Baby dear from your eye-ee, though it's hard to part I know, I'll be tickled to death to go. Good bye-ee, don't sigh-ee, there's a silver lining in the sky-ee"

(Footnote: Dysart was the home of Major John Pitcairn (1722-1775) OC of the British Marines stationed at Boston [Mass], killed at the battle of Bunker Hill; and his son William, as a Lieutenant, served with him but survived the battle.

Second Lieutenant Frederick W Dewhurst thereafter fulfilled a most varied career, being promoted to Captain soon after, he served on HM Ships 'Calliope', 'Repulse' and 'Eagle' and then as a Major in 1934 held a number of appointments in Portsmouth and Plymouth areas. He was notably OC of the newly established RM Reserve Depot, Exton in its early building stages in 1940 (now CTCRM Lympstone) and was promoted Brevet Colonel in 1943, his last appointment being at Chatham prior to retirement from the Corps in 1947. He died 25 April 1979, aged 81 years, and his detailed obituary can be found in the 'Globe & Laurel' journal for July/August of that year).



SERGEANT J A EGGO RMLI - ROYAL TOUR 1921-22

On return from leave I was detailed for HMS RENOWN which I hailed as the most welcome change, for hitherto I had known nothing but service under war conditions, but now had before me the prospect of a 'pleasure cruise'. For the 32,000 ton battle cruiser was to be commissioned to take HRH the Prince of Wales on a tour of the far east, an ultra ceremonial occasion in which the tunic brush could now come into its own! For the Royal Marines were to be fitted out with the scarlet facings and yellow piping, while the RMLI had the scarlet tunic with Royal blue facings and white piping; indeed the RMLI differed little in appearance from the Brigade of Guards, the main distinction being that of the white Wolseley pattern helmet instead of the bearskin. The Wolseley helmet was, I believe, introduced in 1912 and differed from its Victorian predecessor in that it was less 'straight up and down' but curved outwards towards its lower parts, thus giving greater protection from the sun. The helmet was surmounted by a brass ball top and had the usual front plate of brass. It was a suitable head-dress for the Marines in view of their extensive service in tropical climates. It should also be pointed out that white uniforms were worn in the tropics, and not red tunics.

At last the great moment arrived when HRH stepped on board and the command rang out:- "Royal Marines ... Royal Salute ... Present Arms", and the band struck up with the National Anthem, HRH saluted and the Royal Standard broken at the mast head. Soon after we fell in for leaving harbour (Portsmouth), and a warship entering or leaving port is an impressive sight, and is intended to be so, with not a vestige or disorder or untidiness in ship or personnel permitted to be visible. A minimum of smoke must be emitted from the funnels, a point that was once neglected by a certain ship leaving harbour which brought a signal from the Flag Officer of the station which read, "Your toast is burning"! A ship the size of the 'RENOWN', and especially for such an occasion, will carry a band which plays a march tune as the vessel glides out of harbour.

Thus we set out along that route so familiar to many of our fellow countrymen sailing under the White Ensign, the Red Duster or Flags of private lines such as P & O. It is thought that apart from Port Said and Suez, the first non-British port will be Yokohama, so as the route to the far east is known to so many, there is little I can add to my first ever voyage that way, though in later years I was to spend over 19 years between Gibraltar and Malta.

The north face of 'The Rock' rises a sheer 400 feet, and the name Gibraltar is arabic, meaning 'The hill of Tarik'; it is found on the crest of the Royal Marines along with the latin 'Per Mare, per Terram' ... two foreign languages on the regimental crest! In Malta most educated people can understand Italian, yet for all that Maltese is a mixture of many languages, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic etc., (for example 'Ghain Tuffeia', the RM camp site, means 'The Well of Apples'), and on the lighter side their pidgin English has long been a source of amusement. I have personally seen such announcements as 'Cars for parking 2/6d - Cars for washing 3/6d.' ... (Tailor shop) 'Ladies can have fits up stairs' and (very unkindly) 'Suits made to measure for Officers of the Army and Navy, and for Gentlemen'!

Apart from the passage through the Suez Canal, I have no recollection of the run from Malta to Bombay (It is after all 56 years ago!), however I do recall that as we passed through the canal there was a soldier on the west bank mounted on a camel and our OC must have his men up on deck to get a sight of this fine specimen of restrained discipline, for the man was as still as a statue, and restraint was strongly emphasized in our infantry drill.

The port of Bombay appears to use hawks instead of sea gulls, evil looking

things. Here we parted company with HRH who must proceed on his Indian tour and thus the Royal Standard was hauled down and we became an ordinary ship again; this gave opportunity for the 'RENOWN' to visit Muscat (one of the hottest places on this earth, they say), the Persian Gulf, Karachi and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

Also during our stay at Bombay the ship's company were treated to a rail trip to Agra for the Taj Mahal, the Jumping Well and the 'Stainless Steel Column'. The jumping well was one which was cut in half vertically, and on the open side terraces provided seating for spectators. Men would jump from the well's mouth into the water then climb the terraces with hands outstretched for "Bucksheesh Sahib"!

The 'RENOWN' had a soccer team resplendent in a livery of Royal Blue shirts with the Prince of Wales feathers printed on the breast, with white shorts etc. but were not very good at the game so a match arranged with the King's Own Scottish Borderers (Kos-bees) at Delhi had the expected result! Sri Lanka is a lovely island and we were privileged to explore the Peredeniya Gardens where some of us had the uncommon experience of riding an elephant bareback across a stream, a most uncomfortable ordeal wobbling from side to side, and one of our boys had the misfortune to let his toupee fall into the path of the 'Jumbo' who firmly planted his foot on it. Rarely can the structural weakness of the Wolseley helmet have been so disastrously exposed!

In time the Prince rejoined us and we were away to Hong Kong, and ports in between; then from Hong Kong we made for Yokohama escorted by the light cruiser HMS DURBAN. We had to pass through the straits of Formosa (Portuguese word for 'beautiful') the island now known as Taiwan, where the sea was so rough that 'DURBAN' had to return to port. The order was given that as little smoke as possible was to be made on entering Yokohama, which was done, and I feel sure that our entrance into this Japanese port was one befitting this important visit. A few days later we were to listen to a Japanese orator giving an address of welcome in which he referred to HRH as "Successor to the proudest Crown in the whole world"; truly it was red carpet treatment with a vengeance for every man of the 'RENOWN', and there was no thought of the horrible tragedy of an earthquake that was to strike the following year. We just thoroughly enjoyed the Garden Party in Ueno Park (Tokyo), the cruise through the Inland Sea, the sight of Osaka from the high hill, which one Japanese shrewdly observed was not anything like the popular image of Japan, but more like a view of Oldham or Rochdale!

After Japan our next visit, to the Philippines, was an anti-climax; the United States Navy were there and they just ignored us. Next came a call to Jesselton, North Borneo, where I saw a very strange contrast of human attire. A group of officers were standing on the Quarter Deck resplendent in immaculate white starched uniforms ornate with gold lace (plenty of that!) whilst in the midst of this splendour, with his back turned to me, was a native chief wearing a top hat, a piece of string around his waist, and nothing more!

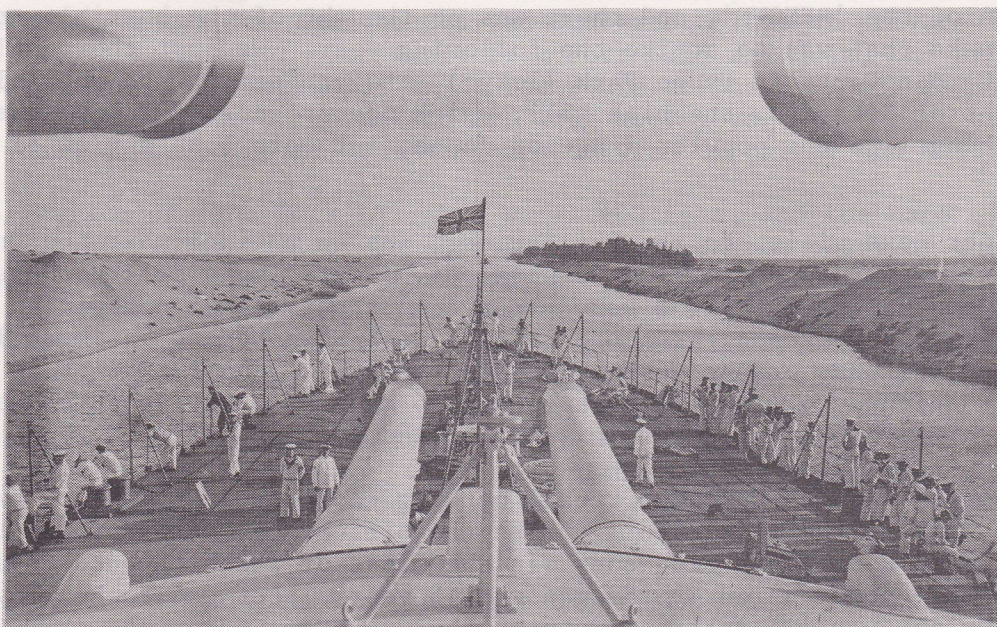
On the voyage home to the UK I can recall nothing save that our port of arrival was Plymouth, and on the last evening there the officers gathered around the piano in the Ward Room for a sing-song, in the midst of which the door opened and in walked HRH accompanied by the man who 15 years later was to be crowned in Westminster Abbey:- 'George the Sixth by the Grace of God'. The 'RENOWN' was now to take us round to Portsmouth to pay-off, and as our ship approached the South Railway Jetty we noticed standing there a lady who had come to greet her husband, one of our officers, and I was told that she was Ursula Bloom, whose writings are no doubt known to many of us.

So presently back to Forton Barracks, but not for long as in a few weeks time I had marched out of that Institution for the very last time, to embark in HMS DIOMEDE for passage to Hong Kong where I was to join my new ship, the Light Cruiser HMS CARLISLE.



(Above) HMS Renown departs Portsmouth Harbour 26th October 1921 with crew assembled on deck, as HMS Victory (in background) fires a salute.

(Below) On passage through the Suez Canal.



October 23. - A Court Martial took place on board the Salvador del Mundo, Hamoaze, for the trial of Lieut. William Gibbons, commanding His Majesty's schooner Alpheia, on account of the treatment experienced by one Mrs. Bentley, the wife of a Corporal of Marines, who was, in August last, by Lieut. Gibbons's order, put, and left, on the warping buoy, between the island and the main; and for a breach of the 33d article of war. It appeared that on the 14th of August, Lieut. G. went on board the Alpheia, to proceed to sea, and enquired what women were on board. He was told Corporal Bentley's wife; whom he had given positive orders should not come into the ship. Lieut. G. desired a boat to be manned to take her on shore; upon which the woman commenced the most violent abuse of Lieut. G. which induced him to say to the men, "put her no farther than the buoy; put her on the buoy." She was there a quarter of an hour; when a boat from the shore took her off. Lieut. G. on his defence, admitted the fact; he thought no injury could arise to her from it; did not know she was pregnant; the buoy was so large that he and 16 others had stood on it. The Court thought that the treatment experienced by Grace Bentley, pursuant to Lieutenant Gibbons's orders, was highly improper and reprehensible, but that the said Lieut. Gibbons has not been guilty of a breach of the 33d article of war. The Court did, in consequence, adjudge him to be dismissed the command of His Majesty's schooner Alpheia.

LEICESTER CHRONICLE SATURDAY 15 AUGUST 1812

A young man who had been enticed into the Marines at Oxford, was sworn in on Wednesday se'nnight, deserted the following day, and was apprehended a few hours after at Witney, previous to being handcuffed, he asked for some beer, and after drinking it, he cut his throat with a razor he had concealed in his hand, so dreadfully, that he is not expected to live.

LEICESTER CHRONICLE SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 1812

On the 13th inst, a shocking occurrence took place at Radstock. Corporal Green, who has been for some time at Bath, with a recruiting party of Marines, went over to the above place, with the avowed purpose of apprehending a deserter, but called on a respectable young woman, of the name of Smith, to renew his addresses, which had formerly been rejected by her parents.

They walked out together in the neighbouring lane when the villian, in a fit of desperation, took out a double-barrelled pistol, the contents of which he discharged at the unfortunate young woman, and with the other shot himself through the head. He died on the spot, but his intended victim survives, and hopes are entertained of her ultimate recovery. A woman, in passing through the lane, heard the man exclaim, "in that case we will both die together".

She had not proceeded above a hundred yards when the reports of a pistol induced her to return, and was the first witness at this dreadful scene.

THE SUDAN - FINALE

Having stored most of my uniform, collected some cases of food and sold my beautiful polo ponies, I was ready to set off. I was provided with an escort of some fifteen men and twenty five camels. For myself I had a riding camel and my parade pony. Leaving El Obeid in the afternoon of 12th February 1922, and being seen off by a number of well wishers, I thought it best to ride my pony: but when after the first night halt, the march was resumed before daylight, I mounted the camel. By the time it was light enough to be seen, I was well established in my new element, and I rode the camel nearly all the rest of the way.

For the journey from El Nahud to El Fasher, I was joined by Colonel Huddleston. He had joined the Camel Corps first in 1910, and had commanded it in the 1916 Darfur expedition. He was himself in command of the small party which finally rounded up the notorious Sultan. This gave him a great reputation in the Western Sudan. He had then served with British units in Palestine and Iraq: and had now returned to take over the Camel Corps again from Grigg, whose time was up. Huddleston later became Adjutant General in Khartoum, and then the first GOC of the Sudan Defence Force, and finally in 1941 Governor General of the Sudan. He was a firm friend of mine up to his death in 1950. Shortly before his death he had me appointed Honorary Colonel Commandant of the Camel Corps in his place.

The march day after day through that sandy waterless desert was a tedious business. Each morning we started in the dark and the sun rose behind us and beat on our backs. Each evening it set in our faces. However I learnt a lot about the Camel Corps, and about trekking with camels, and their management. Huddleston left me at El Fasher. I did the last two hundred and thirty miles with a very reduced party. On the evening before the morning on which I had planned to reach Geneina, the baggage camels carrying my stores and clothing stampeded and disappeared. I was left in the middle of Africa without the bare essentials of life. Not even a razor. I halted for twenty four hours, at the end of which nothing had been heard of the camels. I then marched on to take over my new command miserably scruffy and unshaven. The camels were recovered several days later, with their loads intact.

Dar Mesalit, situated between the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and French Equatorial Africa, had twice been occupied by the French, and twice the French garrisons had been massacred. After the rising in September 1921, the French had agreed that the country should be occupied by us, and added to the Sudan. The Sultan Endoka, in whose house hung the uniforms of the French officers who had been killed, used to point to the uniforms and say "Of course I could do the same to the English, but I am a man of peace". I called on him in his "palace" at Geneina in 1949, he was then an old man. He had been to London and was very pro-British. His son was being trained by us to succeed him.

At that time, the Camel Corps consisted of Headquarters, three Camel Companies, one MI Company mounted on ponies and mules, and one "idara" which comprised a troop of Mounted Infantry on mules, a machine gun section with mule transport, an infantry company of four platoons, and enough mule and camel transport to make the unit fully mobile. Some two hundred and fifty men and eighty animals. It was of this last unit that I was now given command. Each company of the Camel Corps was in itself a "unit", the OC Company enlisting, training, promoting, and discharging his own men, and having full CO's powers.

The occupation of Geneina had been carried out by a strong force some three

months before my arrival. The greater part of this force had now been withdrawn, leaving only three Companies, one of which left soon after I arrived. The garrison of this remote and isolated post for the next nine months consisted of my Company, and a Mounted Infantry Company of the Western Arab Corps commanded by Captain Meade Dennis RHA. With the help of local labour, we built a strong mud fort, in which all the essentials of defence were concentrated. We did not live in the fort: but my plan of defence was the fort should always be so garrisoned that, whatever might happen to individuals, the fort would be impregnable.

The rains were due to break in June. We would then be virtually cut off. That we were told, was the time when the Mesalit would rise and massacre us. The Doctor was a Syrian. A few days before the rains broke, he had "cold feet", resigned his commission and left. From then on, we were without a Doctor. The rains came, the broad dry river beds became great torrents like the Thames in flood, and the country turned green overnight. The Sultan was a man of his word, and there was no rising. I paid one visit to the French post in Adré some twenty miles away. We had to hand over to them an influential trouble maker. As an attempt to rescue him was possible, I decided to accompany him myself. We left secretly in the very early hours, and were in French territory by day break. The French entertained me with red wine and champagne, and I bade them farewell at sunset, in a haze of their hospitality!

Whilst I was at Geneina, the Sultan Fuad was proclaimed King of Egypt: we paraded, and saluted him with loud shouts.

When the rains were over, my Company were anxious to get back to their own country, their wives, and their families. In Dar Mesalit they were on "foreign service", and it was over a year since they had left home. Owing to delays, it was not until November that the relieving Company arrived, and we set out on the long trek to the east. The Company had come up the road by forced marches. The return was made at a more leisurely pace, in forty two days. By chance the Sirdar was visiting Nahud when we got there. He inspected us. General Sir Lee Stack complimented the Company on its martial bearing, but he could not congratulate us on the smartness of our appearance. After more than a year's service, the mens' uniform was vistically in rags. Accustomed as he was to being received with great ceremony, for which much preparation had been made, I doubt whether he had for many years seen troops dressed as we were. Eventually the great morning of our arrival at El Obeid came. There was much happiness, noise, the killing of bulls and the brewing of beer. The most painful toothache, which I had for weeks past been suffering was temporarily alleviated. It was December 1922.

In the summer of 1923, I had four wonderful months leave in England. On my return to El Obeid, I was appointed to command No 4 Company, one of the two Camel Companies stationed at Bara. This Company had previously been commanded by a number of distinguished officers, including Huddleston. My two and a half years in command of No 4 Company, were the best years of my service. Bara, forty miles from El Obeid, was off the beaten track, and one was rarely visited by anyone. I had great independance, with a minimum of paper work, and no responsibilities other than my own Company. The Company was fully mobile, the men responded to the interest taken in them, and keenness shown by their Commander, and with training became a highly efficient unit. Bara was an excellent training area. The training of the men, and the care of two hundred and fifty camels, gave one no spare time in which to get bored. When on trek, it was usual to march four and a half hours in the morning, and four and a half hours in the evening, covering thirty miles or more. About three hours were spent in saddling and loading, and off loading and unsaddling. This

allowed six hours at night, and six hours in the day, in which to eat and rest and do such administration work as was required. To cover greater distances, we sometimes did a third march during the night, we then got very little sleep. The Company could move out at a few hours notice, and we were often on the move.

In the summer of 1924, I went on leave to Kenya to stay with my brother Douglas, who had gone out there to farm in 1919. I went up the Nile to Juba (fourteen days) and from there I had to walk a hundred miles to Nimule. Douglas met me at Nimule, and we went together by steamer up the Nile to Lake Albert. Landing at Butiaba, we motored to Nasindi Port, and then again took steamer on Lake Kyoga to Namasagali, and from there by train to Jinga, where the Nile breaks out of Lake Victoria at the Rippon Falls. Crossing the great inland sea to Kisumu, I was seasick. Finally by train to Nairobi, then still a primitive town. The journey from Khartoum had taken thirty six days.

Douglas drove me round Kenya in an old box car on dusty tracks. We stayed at his farm Lolitutu near Nanyuki, went shooting with "Tiger" Thompson, and killed two lion and several antelope. Finally back to Nairobi, from whence I took a train to Mombasa, and then a ship to Port Sudan. When I last visited Kenya in 1949, it was all so different. I preferred it as it was in 1924.

Since the end of the war, in 1918, nationalist feeling in Egypt had been running high, and in the Sudan, the Egyptian officers carried out extensive anti-British propaganda. In August, whilst I was in Kenya, there was a mutiny in the Military School in Khartoum, which was then disbanded. In November, Sir Lee Stack the Sirdar and Governor General of the Sudan was shot and killed in the street in Cairo. Lord Allenby immediately handed an ultimatum to the Egyptian Government, one of the terms of which was that all Egyptian officers and troops were to leave the Sudan forthwith. In my Company, there were only two quite young Egyptian officers and we had a friendly parting: but in some other units, where there were numbers of more senior Egyptians, events were very different. In Khartoum there was a mutiny. At Talodi, the Headquarters of the Nuba Mountains Province, the Egyptian officers refused to obey the order to leave, the 10th Sudanese Battalion mutinied, and defied their Commanding Officer.

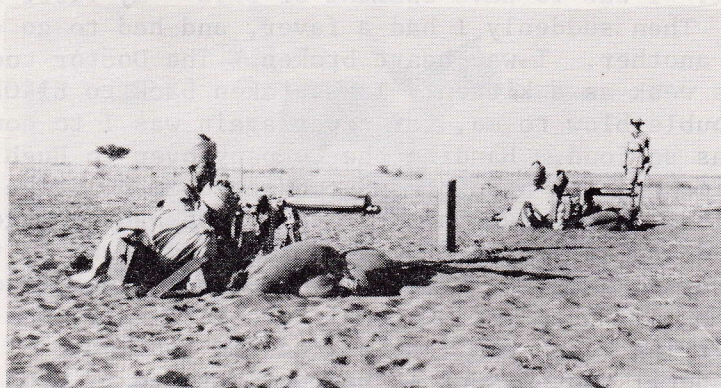
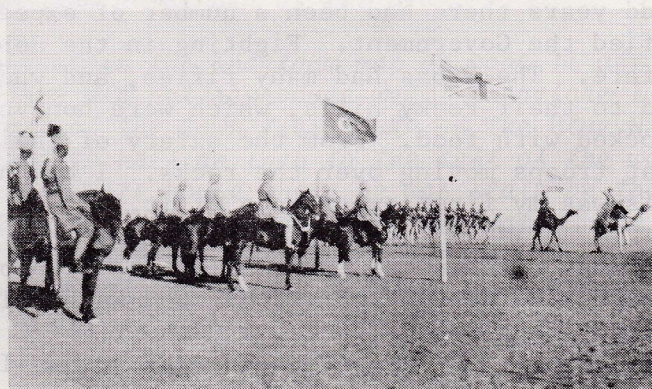
The Companies of the Camel Corps were always ready to move out at a few hours notice: and when I heard the terms of the ultimatum, I warned the two Camel Companies at Bara, to be prepared for a sudden move. So we were not surprised when an urgent message arrived ordering us to march to Talodi some two hundred and seventy five miles to the south. To emphasise the urgency, General Huddleston added to the order his hope that we would beat all previous marching records. By ill fortune, the night was moonless. A forced march is a most exhausting operation. As we sweated along the endless track, we were overtaken by a small party of British troops in requisitioned motors and a couple of old armoured cars. Shortly before we reached Talodi, the Egyptian officers left, and order had been restored, but we were kept there for six weeks as a garrison. It was hot compared with Kordofan, and the camels did not do so well. We eventually returned to Bara by a circuitous route, visiting villages where a representative of the Government was rarely seen.

As a result of the Egyptian officers and Egyptian units being forced to leave the Sudan, the British officers and Sudanese units of the Egyptian Army were formed into the newly created Sudan Defence Force. General Huddleston became the first Kaid of the new force. The proportion of British Officers was slightly increased, and I was joined at Bara by Captain JEH Boustead, Gordon Highlanders who became one of my greatest friends. In April 1925 I went on

leave to England, and it was whilst staying with Archie Craig the Adjutant of the Depot RM at Deal, that I first met Di, who nearly thirty years later became my wife.

I returned to Bara at the end of my leave, and found No 4 Company in very good order. In the Autumn of 1925, the three mounted companies of the Camel Corps attended the annual "Horse show" at Abu Zabbad, at which the new Governor General Sir Geoffrey Archer, was present. We all returned to El Obeid via Dilling, doing some useful training on the way.

In the latter part of 1925, economies were being made in the SDF. One of these was a proposal to reduce the Camel Companies at Bara from two to one. In January 1926, Lord Lloyd, the British High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan, came to the Sudan to open the Sennar Dam, and then came on to El Obeid. The Camel Corps was concentrated at El Obeid for a Review, but on the morning of the Review news came of trouble in the Nuba Mountains - the Mek of Jebel Gulud had murdered a representative of the Government, and was defying the District Commissioner. An urgent request for troops had been received. As the result of this, the OC Camel Corps was too busy to attend the Governor's lunch party, and I was invited in his place. I was seated next to Lord Lloyd, a dynamic personality. Of course I took the opportunity of telling him that one of the companies he had seen on parade that morning was about to be disbanded. This coming at the very moment when troops were being asked for in the Nuba Mountains amazed him. The Company was not disbanded. It was still in being ten years later.





The mounted companies of the Camel Corps left next day for Jebel Gulud. During the previous twenty odd years there had been a number of expeditions against the Nubas, who had defied the Government. Fighting in the Jebels was unlike any other kind of warfare. The Nubas had many rifles, and when threatened with attack, they retreated to their rocky hills, which were honeycombed with caves, some of which were stocked with food. From the safety of their dark caves, they could shoot out at troops moving over the rocks. I had heard a lot about Jebel warfare, but this was my first experience of it.

On this occasion, the Nubas withdrew to their hills and disappeared into their caves. They took no offensive action against us, and we hardly ever saw them. They eventually got tired of having us there, and their Chief surrendered to the Government. It was rather an ineffective operation: but I learnt a lot, which proved very useful to me later.

The troops withdrew from Gulud, and concentrated, prior to returning to El Obeid. The Civil Authorities asked for a smaller force to carry out a minor operation against another Jebel. I was to have command of this - my first independant operational command. Then suddenly I had a fever, and had to go sick. The Command was given to another. I was heart broken. The Doctor took me away. When I woke, I was as weak as a kitten. I was taken back to El Obeid. This turned out to be a double blow to me, for never again was I to command No 4 Company of which I was so fond. Handing the Company over to Hugh Boustead, I was promoted to Kaimakam, and appointed Second-in-Command. The CO Denys Reynolds was due to leave the Sudan in April 1927. He had arranged to get married during his 1926 summer leave. He therefore wanted me to take my leave early. On my way through Khartoum, I looked in on the Senior officer who would, I thought become the next OC Camel Corps. I made some remark about looking forward to serving under him. He smiled and replied - "I shall not stand in your way". Until that moment it had not entered my mind that I was

designated to be the next OC Camel Corps. I was thirty

FOOTNOTE:- Here the narrative ends.

General Chater married Diana Craig, the widow of one of his best friends very late in life, and died 3 January 1979, aged 82 years, after a most eventful commission in the Corps. Following this episode in the Sudan he returned to Corps duties, serving in the Far East and Home Fleet until July 1937 when he was again seconded to the Camel Corps, this time in Somaliland; was promoted Lieutenant Colonel two years later and awarded the CB, becoming Military Governor of that country from 1941 to 1943. He then came back to the Corps again, as Commandant Portsmouth Division, until his appointment to India in October 1944 as Director of Combined Operations in the Far East. Retired from the Corps in April 1948 he became Honorary Colonel Commandant of the Camel Corps, Sudan Defence Force two years later. For a full obituary and many tributes to this great man refer to the 'Globe and Laurel' journals of February and April 1979.

The Sudan episodes in his narrative have been of special interest to me, having been a frequent visitor to Khartoum and surrounding countries over the last two decades, and therefore I can appreciate the very tough life and conditions he must have endured in these regions. Apart from a few modern additions, such as Hotels, I doubt that Khartoum has altered very much since he knew it; this certainly would apply to Omdurman where the daily highlights are still the camel market early morning and the 'Souk' (general market) in the evening, and the pace of life very slow indeed, and although the climate in the winter months (same as UK) are very pleasant, it is unbearably hot for the remainder of the year.

Unfortunately the detail in the Khartoum map on page 11 of 'Sheet Anchor' Number 1 of this Volume did not reproduce well, therefore I should point out that the main part of the town lies south of the Blue Nile, and the lighter-shaded small area half an inch to the left of the word 'Blue' depicts General Gordon's large white house where he was slain on the outer steps; Omdurman occupies the top lefthand corner of the map, where the two white spots together in the centre of that town pin-point the Mahdi's Tomb and the house (now a Museum) of the Caliph who succeeded him. (EDITOR).



The Narrative of Major General A R Chater CB CVO DSO OBE series ending with this edition has appeared by kind permission of the Director of the Royal Marines Museum.

Per Mare

1896-98.

