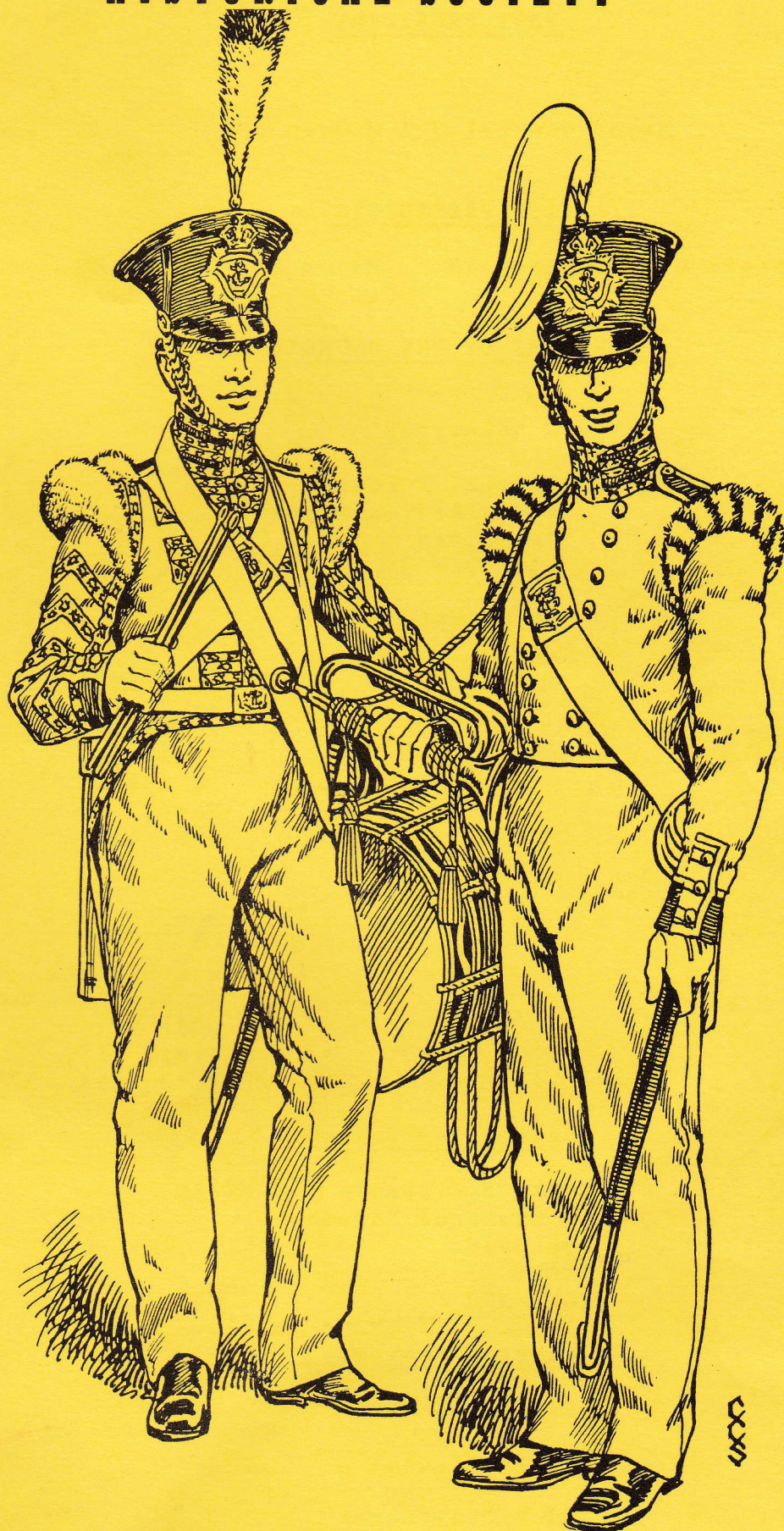




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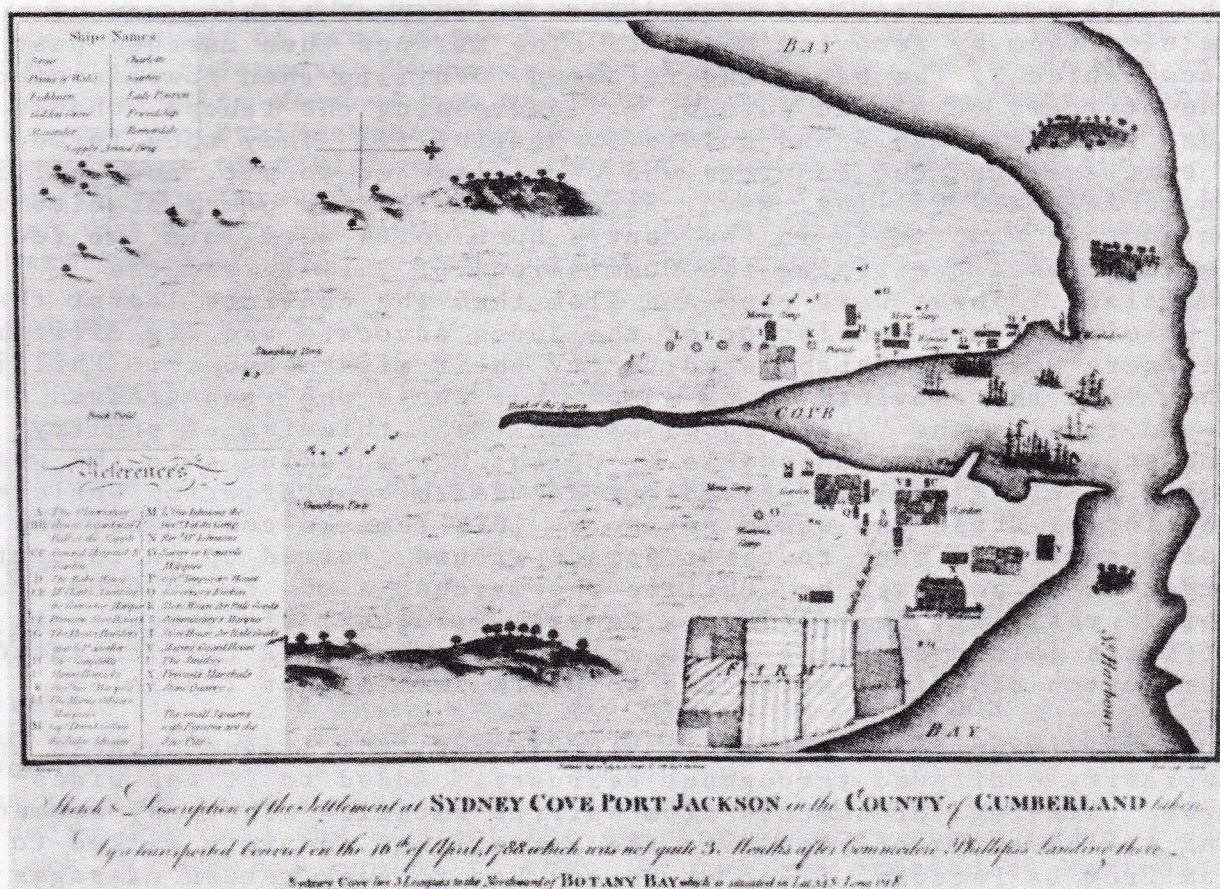
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Whilst every effort is made to ensure that all information is correct, contributed material is the sole responsibility of the author concerned. The Editor wishes to thank the Corps Museum Photographic Department for the use of illustrations in this issue.



AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL

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AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL

THE MILITARY AND NEW SOUTH WALES SOCIETY, 1788-1791

By Lt Col J H Moore, ED., MA., MACE.

THE MARINES AND THE CONVICTS

The first few weeks of the settlement saw widespread debauchery and disorder. When the female convicts landed on 6 February, there erupted an orgy which was beyond Doctor Bowes' ability to describe, and which Lieutenant Ralph Clark could only liken to Sodom and Gomorrah. On the next day, Phillip's Commission was to be read to all the new arrivals. The marine detachment spent the early morning with the usual 'spit and polish' preparation which precedes ceremonial parades, for Phillip, mindful no doubt of the preceding day's dissipation, had determined that the occasion was to be an impressive one. The parade fell into two parts: Phillip's inspection of the detachment, followed by his comments to the convicts. As it was the first parade on Australian soil, you might be interested in its description. At 11am the detachment under arms, with colours flying and band playing, formed a Guard of Honour to receive the Governor. As Phillip, accompanied by Major Ross, the Chaplain, and other principal civil officers approached the colours, the colours were dipped in respect to him, and he saluted them by removing his hat. The marines then marched past accompanied by the band, and reformed. Phillip then complimented the officers on a fine parade, and addressing the troops, thanked them for their manly and soldierly bearing.(1) They then formed a circle around the convicts who were directed to sit, and Phillip, Judge Advocate Collins, Revd. Richard Johnson and other dignitaries, moved to a camp table in the centre upon which were laid two red leather cases containing the Commissions of Phillip and the Judiciary. These were read and from them the convicts learnt that a Criminal Court consisting of the Judge Advocate and six military officers would be established to try their misdemeanours. Phillip then left the convicts in no doubt that those who transgressed would receive the "*full rigour of the law*": thieving of poultry and stock would be punishable by death; men sneaking into the womens' tents at night would be fired on; and death by starvation would be the lot of those who would not work. His remarks concluded, the marines marched back to their parade ground, formed up in inspection order to be reviewed by Phillip who marched along their front rank. Before retiring, he received a General Salute(2) after which all officers joined him in a large marquee nearby for a cold collation, the mutton of which, according to Clark, was maggot ridden.(3)

However, in spite of Phillip's stern words, the licentiousness and depravity continued throughout February. Added to it was widespread thieving, drunkenness from spirits smuggled ashore by seamen, and the breaking of bounds to the extent that convicts walked to and from La Perouse' fleet at Botany Bay to seek return passages to Europe. Against this lawless chaos and confusion, Phillip decided to take no action but wisely let it run its course: and by not committing the marines as policemen, for Ross had refused to allow them to supervise convicts, there was probably prevented a souring of relations between the two groups.



*Celebration on arrival at Sydney Cove.
Marines parade at waters edge.*

It was inevitable however, that with the two groups thrown together in so confined an area as Sydney Cove, that convict familiarity with the marines would grow - and grow it did for convict sauciness and veiled impertinence to the military became at times, a vexing problem as some examples will illustrate.

The first recorded incident occurred the day after Phillip's Commissioning when convict Samuel Barsby abused Drum Major Cook, hit Drummer West with an axe, and repeatedly abused the sentries with whom he became so violent that he had to be bound and gagged. His trial was the first in the colony and from it he received 150 lashes. Another case occurred later when convict James Cullen threatened and abused Sergeant Thomas Smith for which he received 25 lashes. Mary and William Thompson in a state of drunkenness, were insolent to the marine guard in front of an impressive line-up of military witnesses for which he received 30 lashes, and she received 25.(4) When convict George Eccleston, watching Drum Major Cook trying to break up a fight between a marine and a convict, shouted that all marines were "*bloody buggers*", he received 50 lashes;(5) and when convict Fraser was asked by Sergeant Connor to cease wandering through the marines' lines, and replied by telling Connor, "*You may kiss (sic) my arse*", he was punished with 25 lashes(6)

Now, these sentences ought to be compared with those given to marines for similar offences. When Private Thomas Bramwell struck Elizabeth Needham, "*a most infamous huzzy*" according to Clark, he received

200 lashes and yet his crime was far less serious than that of Barsby who had received only 150 lashes. Convicts who stole rations were generally flogged whereas six marines who stole from a store were hung.

Two points are illustrated by these incidents: firstly, marine punishment was usually more severe than convict punishment; and secondly, marine discipline of convicts was not so severe as to deter at least some convicts from adopting a saucy attitude towards them. There was however one convict crime which the marines would not tolerate, and that was convict thefts from military personnel. Thus when convicts Peyton and Corbett stole from Lieutenant Furzer and Captain Meredith, they were hung - such was the sanctity of property in the eighteenth century.



*"Scots born Major
George Johnston
(1764-1823)"*

At times, convict behaviour exasperated the marines. Thus when convict Daley told Major Ross that he had discovered a gold mine near Sydney Heads, Ross ordered Captain Campbell to accompany Daley to the site. A boat was procured from 'SIRIUS' and they rowed to the alleged spot, but Daley escaped and returned to Sydney saying that Campbell was guarding the mine but needed reinforcements. Excitement ran high; Daley was given a grand dinner; and the reinforcements prepared to depart - when Campbell returned and exposed the hoax. Daley was ordered to be whipped but countered by saying that if another officer was sent with him, he would show him the mine. His dissembling was so impressive and convincing that Lieutenant George Johnston (who later as Lt Col Johnston of the NSW Corps was to arrest Governor Bligh) was ordered to accompany Daley once again. But Johnston decided to test Daley's honesty and threatened that if he was deceiving him, he would shoot him. This was too serious for Daley who confessed and was punished.(7)

There is no evidence of a policy of marine harshness or tyranny towards convicts and this can probably be ascribed to four reasons: firstly Phillip would not have allowed it, for his view was that convicts were not slaves; secondly, because convict overseers rather than marines supervised the convicts, this separation of marine from the day to day rascality of the convict probably lessened friction between the two groups; thirdly, many of the marines came from the same social class as the convicts and would have understood their ways; and fourthly, for their entire tour of duty in the settlement, marines were on the same ration scale as convicts and endured the same sufferings and deprivations as they endured even to mounting "many a guard in which the number of soldiers without shoes exceeded those with shoes".(8)

THE MARINES AND THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

This aspect revolves around the relationship between Major Ross and Governor Phillip. Ross, from the time he was given command of the detachment in October 1786, appears to have formed a dislike of Phillip from which he developed a covert antagonism and disloyalty towards him which ultimately brought the settlement, in the words of Phillip, "*to touch upon the moment of a general confusion*"(9) and would possibly have lead to an open civil-military breach if Phillip had not sent Ross to Norfolk Island on 7 March, 1790.

We do not know what caused Ross's dislike of Phillip but a comparison of the tenor and phraseology of his letter to Phillip of 22 December 1786(10) in which he uses such terse expressions as "*You will be pleased to demand equipage*", and "*I must again request attention*", and "*I as Commanding Officer of the detachment*", have about them suggestions of arrogance not normally found in eighteenth century correspondence from a subordinate to a superior. Nor is their arrogance reproduced in his correspondence with others such as Nepean, Under Secretary in the Home Office, to whom he uses such fulsome phrases as "*You, my dear sir*", and "*Adieu, my dear sir, with real esteem and regard, believe me*".(11)

To gain an appreciation of the repeated attempts by Ross to subvert the authority of Phillip, an investigation of a few of the crises initiated by him will suffice.

The Campbell affair arose out of a dislike by the officers to serving on the Criminal Court even though Phillip's Commission clearly stated their requirement to do so. Captain Campbell and Major Ross were great friends and Campbell wrote to Ross asking that he be freed from court duty. Ross passed the letter to Phillip who to preserve harmony withdrew Campbell's name from the panel. Ross then objected, saying, that other officers objected to the chore as well, and when the Judge Advocate asked Ross for the names of officers to try a particular case, Ross refused and quibbled by asking that either the request appear in General Orders or that Phillip send it to him as a verbal message. Phillip complied but Ross sent a list which included Campbell. Next day, Campbell sat as a member of the court and when Phillip sent for the officers comprising the court, they assured him that they had never doubted that court duty was part of their service. Obviously Ross had been misrepresenting their attitude to Phillip. In May 1789, Ross again told Phillip that the officers didn't think the Criminal Court their duty. Phillip interviewed all the officers but only Campbell objected to court duty. The Judge Advocate then interviewed the detachment's five senior officers who told him that Ross had encouraged them to join Campbell in declining court duty. This covert disloyalty by Ross was reprehensible and probably constituted a military offence. Phillip however, displaying the most remarkable forbearance in dealing with Ross so that the harmony of the settlement would not be disturbed, thought it best to let the matter rest.(12)

Another incident was the Night Watch Affair. To stop night pilfering of food, Phillip formed a night watch of twelve convicts. They were cautioned not to have any dispute with the soldiers. Phillip drew up the regulations governing the watch and gained Ross's agreement to them including Article 5 which outlined the procedure of leaving at the guard house, any soldier stopped by the watch. One night, such an occurrence occurred. When Ross heard of it next

morning, he ordered Adjutant Long to tell Judge Advocate Collins that the stopping of a soldier by convicts was an insult to the Corps. When Phillip heard of Ross's objection, he asked for him to appear, but Ross refused, saying that he would come next day with two of his officers, but that he wanted the Article 5 which *"puts soldiers under the Command of convicts"* to be repealed. Ross had to admit that since the establishment of the watch, night robberies had declined and he could not deny that stores had been robbed by soldiers prior to the formation of the watch. Nevertheless, he insisted that Article 5 be withdrawn and Phillip did so. But that was as far as Phillip was prepared to be baited. As Ross had offered to come with two of his officers, Phillip now suggested he bring them all, for Phillip was perspicacious enough to realise that any two officers Ross would bring, would be prejudiced in Ross's favour. At this point, Ross reneged and requested the matter be dropped. His brinkmanship was over; his bluff had been called. In this affair, Ross had been rude and insubordinate to the Governor; he had reneged on a regulation agreed to by him; and it appears strongly by his refusal to bring all his officers before Phillip, that he had been misrepresenting their opinion and using them as pawns in his squalid fight with the Governor.

Other incidents included Ross's arrest of all five officers comprising a Court Martial; a covert attempt to purloin Judge Advocate Collins to replace the deceased Captain Shea and thus deny Phillip and the settlement of a Judge Advocate; and an attempt to misrepresent the action of Judge Advocate Collins in the Brewer affair. In correspondence to Nepean, Ross complained that Phillip had *'kept him in the dark'* and had prevented the corps receiving necessaries. When Phillip asked him what deficiencies had not been supplied, he could answer nothing specifically.

Of all Phillip's problems, Ross was probably his greatest. As Australia's first governor, Phillip was a magnificent success; as Australia's first Commanding Officer, Ross was a carping, conniving disgrace.



"A sketch of Sydney Cove August 1788
by Captain Hunter RN"

THE MARINES AND ABORIGINES

The marines had made their initial contact with the aborigines during the week the fleet spent at Botany Bay when an exploration party of marines led by Lieutenant Philip Gidley King was surrounded by a large group of aborigines who, naked themselves, were anxious to know the sex of the clothed Europeans. King ordered one of his group to "*undeceive them*" by revealing himself whereupon the aborigines according to King "*made a great shout of admiration*" and immediately offered their women to the European's service.(13)

Phillip had decreed that every effort was to be made to establish friendship with the natives and that ball ammunition was not to be fired at them.(14) The marines themselves carried out Phillip's intentions but because the convicts antagonised and were treacherous to the aborigines who often could not distinguish between Europeans, be they marines or convicts, the marines were often the '*meat in the sandwich*' in convict-aboriginal situations.

When at first, the aborigines did not realise that the Europeans had come to stay, friendly relations prevailed. Thus when Dr. Worgan went fishing, some aborigines helped haul in the catch;(15) and when Hunter surveying the harbour, landed at Camp Cove with a party of marines, and was preparing a meal, aborigines fraternised and watched the way the meal was cooked.(16) But once the European stay was seen to be permanent, the aborigines saw that their land and hunting ground had been taken from them and by mid-February 1788, Bradley judged it prudent not to land during an exploration trip in Middle Harbour.(17) The marines had no part in this deterioration of relationships. By March, several convicts who had eloped to Botany Bay were killed by aborigines,(18) and Captain Meredith had a spear thrown at him.(19)

Serious troubles began however on 30 May: Captain Campbell had used two convicts, Okey and Davis, to cut rushes along the harbour foreshore, for thatching his roof. They were found dead: Okey had three spears through his chest, his skull split open and his brains dashed out, and his eye seemed to have been cut out by an axe.(20) Davis had been hit on the forehead. But it was Phillip's view that convicts, and not the aborigines, had provoked the fatal reprisal. He ordered a marine patrol to apprehend the culprits but the marines could not find them.

A similar marine expedition against aborigines was made necessary by the McEntire affair.(21) On 9 December 1790, a party including McEntire, a marine sergeant and three convicts, went shooting kangaroos near Cook's River. At 1am that night, they heard a rustling noise and when they looked out of their hut, they saw armed aborigines approaching. McEntire, unarmed, went out to speak to them but was speared in the left side. The shaft of the spear was broken off, and the party got him back to Sydney but he died. Phillip sent a marine party commanded by Captain Watkin Tench to apprehend the culprit, but he was not found. Two natives however were detected robbing a potato garden; they were pursued by some marines who, contrary to Phillip's orders, fired amongst them killing one. This appears to be the only occasion that a native was shot by a marine though Hunter places a different complexion on the incident by saying that the marines fired in self defence after being seized and having a club thrown at them.(22)

Another occasion when marine relations with aborigines could not have been enhanced, though through no fault of the marines, was when Phillip asked them to capture Arabanco so as to produce a reconciliation with the aborigines through him. The marines, as ordered, caught Arabanco at Manly after lulling the aborigines into a sense of false security; but after fastening him to the bottom of their boat, he "*set up the most piercing and lamentable cries of distress*".(23) The marines' image with the aborigines must have suffered considerably as a result.

But the convicts continued to provoke aborigines in such a way that at times, the natives could not suppress a justified rage. In June 1791 marines stationed at Parramatta had been being supplied fresh fish caught in Sydney Harbour, by aborigines who rowed up the Parramatta River. In return for the fish, the marines gave them bread and salted meat. But when Balooderry, a young aboriginal, was away from his canoe delivering his fish, six convicts smashed the canoe. He was so enraged that he threatened to take revenge on all whites. The marines caught the culprits but when Balooderry began throwing spears at whites, the marines had to warn him off. Collins was disgusted with behaviour of his own kind and wrote bitterly of them that they were more uncivilised than the native who was the sufferer.(24)



Captain of Marines
David Collins

ness. Tench was deeply impressed and wrote of them with loving admiration:

There were occasions when aborigines showed considerable kindness to marines and a complete lack of treachery towards them. When Tench and Sergeant Knight in May 1791 were exploring to see whether the Hawkesbury and the Nepean were one river, it became necessary for them to cross the river, but Knight could not swim. An aboriginal named Deedora fetched his native canoe and allowed Knight to cross by it. Tench, suspecting that the canoe could not take both of them, swam over, leaving the gear and the three muskets to be brought across by other aborigines. Whilst they were doing this, they had Tench and Knight entirely at their mercy, but the aborigines took no advantage of the whites' helplessness. Tench was deeply impressed and wrote of them with loving admiration:

".....let him whose travels have lain among polished nations, produce me a brighter example of disinterested urbanity, than was shown by these denizens of a barbarous clime, to a set of destitute wanderers on the side of the Hawkesbury".(25)

Shortly after, a second incident again deeply moved Tench in his admiration for aboriginal integrity. On Richmond Hill, he shot a hawk which fell into a tree. Deedora offered to climb the tree but needed an axe to assist him which he was given. He retrieved the bird but admired the axe and asked if he could have it. As Tench needed it, he said falsely, that he would give it next morning. Tench, touched by Deedora's dignity wrote:

"Not a murmur was heard; no suspicion of our insincerity; no mention of benefits conferred; no reproach of ingratitude; his good humour and cheerfulness were not clouded for a moment".(26)

It appears therefore, that away from Sydney, the marine and aborigine enjoyed a harmonious relationship which carried over even to others in military uniform, because when a soldier of the vanguard of the NSW Corps became lost near Parramatta, he in fright, gave an aborigine named Colebe, his rifle as inducement to show him the way. Colebe was greatly honoured and walked him to Sydney which he said was closer, and as they drew to the end of their journey, Colebe returned the musket, and departed without even accepting the gift the grateful soldier offered him.(27)

The only marine officers who disliked the aborigines were Ross and Campbell. Ross distrusted them(28) whilst Campbell described them as the "*filthiest of God's creatures*", who slept like "*pigs, one upon the other*", and whose breasts resembled "*half filled black bladders*".(29) But Campbell is the only chronicler who describes the aborigines with such disparagement

THE MARINES AND GENERAL COMMUNITY LIFE

The marines had various functions which they had to discharge to the community generally. Foremost amongst these were the commemorations of the King's Birthdays. Typical of these was the first celebration of the King's birthday on 4 June 1788 when at sunrise, at 1pm, and again at sunset, the SIRIUS and SUPPLY fired twenty one gun salutes.(30) At noon, after marching from its barracks, the marine detachment was drawn up in front of Government House where it fired three volleys whilst the band played the first part of the National Anthem between each volley.(31) At 1pm, the officers went into Government House to pay their respects, and at 2pm they dined with the Governor, the menu including mutton, pork, duck, fowl, fish, kangaroo, salad, pies, preserved fruit, and madeira wines. Toasts were drunk for the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, and Prince William (later William IV). Outside, each marine was given a pint of porter and food. The occasion closed with the guests offering a toast to "*The Governor and the Settlement*" for which Phillip expressed hearty thanks and reciprocated their compliments by toasting their healths. At 5pm, the party broke up.(32) Loyalty to the monarchy was deeply entrenched, sincerely held, and no matter what difficulties were prevailing - even the famine of 1789-91-celebrations of royal occasions were assiduously and eagerly observed. At the Queen's birthday of January 1789, a party of convicts performed the first play performed in Australia. It was called 'The Recruiting Officer', was performed in front of Phillip and sixty people, and its venue was a mud-walled convict hut lit by a dozen farthing candles. Thus royal occasions were special occasions.

Another task which the marines had to perform was attendance at all hangings. It was a macabre aspect of marine duty and as some of the hangings were extremely sad and appallingly bungled, it is reasonable to assume that Private soldiers at least of the sensitivity of Southwell and others like him, would have regarded such a duty with distaste. The first hanging at which the detachment attended was on 27 February 1788. At 5pm, the marine detachment was formed up with muskets and marched to the execution site where at 5.15pm the condemned convicts Barrett, Lovell, and Hall arrived. At 6pm, the marines were drawn up opposite the tree which was to be the gallows, and all convicts were present. Shortly, Major Ross received a twenty four hour respite for Lovell and Hall, but the execution of Barrett, "*a most vile character*",(33) was to proceed. Arrogant at first, but then contrite, Barrett mounted the

ladder, but at this ghastly moment the hangman could not bring himself to place the noose around Barrett's neck. Embarrassing moments ticked by whilst every persuasion was brought upon the reluctant and faint-hearted hangman. Mr Brewer and Major Ross bullied him; Ross said the marines would shoot him if he did not perform. Brewer was forced to take over and after the Chaplain had prayed fervently, Barrett, in the words of Bowes, was "*turned off and... launched into eternity*".(34) A few days later a convict named Freeman was brought to be hung but was pardoned on condition that he became the public hangman, and so the problem was resolved.(35)

Church parades also were occasions at which the detachment had to be present. The services were long and sometimes followed by a baptism or two, but one is struck by the extent to which the words and phrases of the Book of Common Prayer were known by many, especially by Ralph Clark whose sheer joy at having his table used as the altar for the first celebration of Holy Communion in Australia, was quite touching.(36) Congregations were often large - up to 600-800,(37) and the behaviour of the marines was 'regular and attentive'.(38)

Exploration of the Sydney Plain was another aspect of the marines' tour of duty which brought the settlement considerable benefit. During their time in the settlement, fifteen exploring parties were mounted. All but one of these were accompanied by marines as guards, and eight of them were exclusively marine expeditions. Marines accompanied each of Phillip's five expeditions during the first half of 1788 to Broken Bay, French's Forest, and the Hawkesbury River, but after the Hawkesbury was discovered by him in June 1788, the marines took over exploration activities. They reached as far afield as Mt Twiss (54 miles inland in the Blue Mountains), Broken Bay, and the Windsor-Kurrajong area from where they proved that the Hawkesbury and the Nepean were the one river. They carried packs of forty pounds and the expeditions reminded Doctor Bowes of a "*gang of travelling gypsies*".(39) They slept on the ground in their greatcoats and bore with equanimity, their disappointments and frustrations with failure to reach objectives or to traverse the barrier of the Blue Mountains. Tench was the most dedicated explorer of the officers and it was his determination to solve the riddle of the Hawkesbury and the Nepean, that proved them to be one river.

THE MARINES: AN EVALUATION

After their relief by the New South Wales Corps most of the detachment left for England on 18 December 1791, aboard HMS GORGON. After their departure, they were missed: Collins referred to them as "*our friends and associates*", and of them he wrote:-

"As valuable a Corps as any in his Majesty's service. They had struggled here with greatly more than the common hardships of service, and were now quitting a country in which they had opened and smoothed the way for their successors, and from which, whatever benefit might hereafter be derived, must be derived by those who had the easy task of treading in paths previously and painfully formed by them".(40)

Their commander had been unworthy of them; their officers had not been able to perform as they might because of his intransigence, though even so, on balance, they set the tone of understanding and humanity by which their troops dealt with convicts upon whom no heavy military burden had been inflicted. Their policy towards aborigines was a humane one and they shared with all others in the settlement, the hunger, deprivations, and loneliness which so cruelly afflicted the settlement for its first thirty months. They laid the foundations and presented their successors with a developed military station. That those successors were to sully the reputation which the marines had established, was no fault of the marines for the evidence supports Collins' assessment of them that they were:

"as valuable a Corps as any in His Majesty's Service".

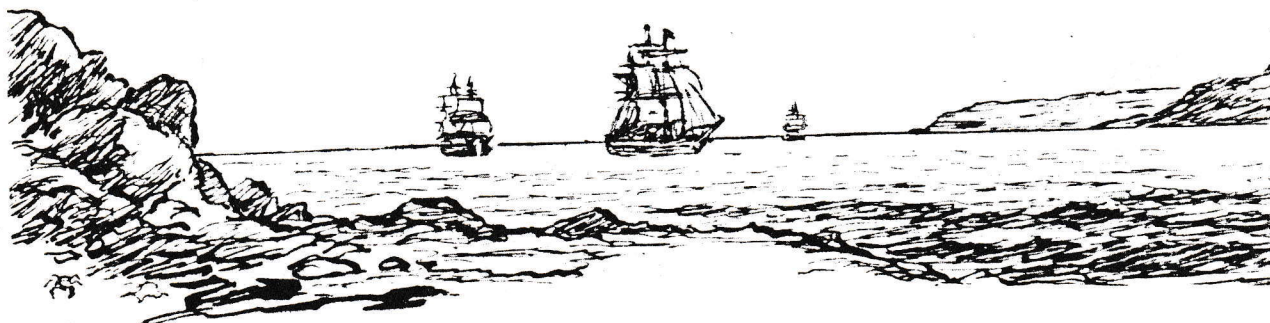
FOOTNOTES

1. White, John: Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales, p.114
2. Collins, David: An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, p.7
3. Clark, Ralph: Journal and Letters 1787-1792, p.96
4. Copley, John: Sydney Cove 1788, p.218
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7. White, op cit, pps.162/3
8. Tench, Watkin: Sydney's First Four Years, p.166
9. HRA Vol 1, p.150
10. HRNSW, Vol 1, pt 2, p.40
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13. King, P.G: Journal, p.34/5
14. Worgan, George: Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon p.33

15. Ibid
16. Cobley, J: op cit (1788), p.4
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18. Bowes, Arthur: Journal, p.77
19. Cobley, J: op cit (1788), pps.107
20. Worgan, G: op cit, p.51
21. Tench, W: op cit, pps205/6
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24. Collins: op cit, pps 137/9
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28. HRNSW, Vol 1, pt 2, p.171
29. ML Document. 1174
30. Easty, J: Memorandum of the Transactions of a Voyage from England to Botany Bay, 1787-1793, p.103
31. Worgan, G: op cit, p.53
32. Cobley, J: op cit (1788), pps. 158/9
33. Bowes, A: op cit, p.75
34. Ibid
35. Clark, R: op cit, p.102
36. Ibid: p.99
37. Cobley, J: op cit (1791/2), p.121
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39. Worgan, G: op cit, p.43
40. Collins, D: op cit, p.159

John Moore, who very kindly contributed this article, is also the author of the recently published book 'THE FIRST FLEET MARINES 1786-1792' (Queensland University Press - Australia.)

The RMHS SPECIAL PUBLICATION No 11 will feature extracts from the diaries of a Marine, Sergeant and Officer who sailed with that first expedition to (Port Jackson) Sydney. EDITOR.



THE MAIN PARADE AT EASTNEY

It's amazing to think as I sit here and drink
My tea, under this striped umbrella,
I can do it at ease, lean back if I please,
Without hearing a bark, curse of bellow.

For this was the place men trembled to face,
The Mecca for blood, sweat and tears,
Where recruits died of fright, when faced with the sight
of the R.S.M.'s face looming near.

On this hallowed ground was heard the great sound
Of the Portsmouth Royal Marine Band,
Controlling the beat for the hundreds of feet,
Pounding the gravel to sand.

Squads under instruction, receiving induction
In the making of Esprit de Corps,
Drill sergeants barking, officers marking,
We shan't see the like any more.

Divisions on Sundays, fatigue dress for Mondays,
And a full kit inspection at one,
Look west, the clock tower, tolls out the hour,
But there's no panic now my old chum.

It's like whistling in church as I gingerly perch
On this seat having tea and a sandwich,
I feel the baleful eye of an old Q.M.S.I.
Drafting my soul back to Dalditch.

I know it's not right, but I take what delight
That there is in this situation,
The Colonel may swear but who is there to care
At this deliberate, profane desecration.

So it's Sic Transit Gloria, and there ends my euphoria
For this ancient pile by the sea,
What with a tea bar and tennis, why not send for dear Dennis,
And convert it into a fun factory.

William George Seeger
Ex R.M. PO/X 113086

(On seeing a tea bar and tennis courts on the main parade
ground at Eastney barracks when visiting the museum).

- oOo -

EXTRACT FROM MEDICAL OFFICERS JOURNAL - 1941 - VOLUME 65

As my diary, notes and documents were destroyed when I thought we were about to fall into the hands of the enemy, this is not intended to be a full account of the 1st RN Tented Hospital in CRETE, but rather some indication of its activities there.

This has been compiled from my Field Service Pocket Book, and some notes which I had in the pocket of it, also from memory. Dates and times are almost exact where given, as they were written down at the time in the note book.

The rest of the Medical Officers have each made notes which I have edited and added to my own during the first few days after our arrival in Egypt.

8 Feb 41. GLASGOW

Having waited here for three days to collect the rest of a very large convoy, we sailed today.

In troopship H.1., were myself, Surgeon Lieutenants Crossville and Burke, CPO Miller and PO Corder, with four SBAs. In H.2, were Surgeon Lieutenants Jeffrey, Innes, Wallace and Sugars, with CPO Congdon, PO Stokes, PO Empson, PO Welsby, PO Jenkins with SBAs. In H.3, Surgeon Lieutenants Wheeler and Ball, and Macritchie, with SBAs.

Three SBAs had been allocated for medical charge of the three cargo ships, SBA Beddingfield, Brown and Hodden. The three latter did very well according to their reports from Commanding Officers. Each made out a journal for me, but unfortunately these journals were lost in Crete.

This comprises the whole of the medical staff except for three cooks, who were attached to the 1 RM Group, MNBDO, under my charge.

Medical Officers had been given instructions to contact the medical staff of the ships they were in, to offer help as much as possible, to finish off any mis-musters of inoculations, and to give lectures on Hygiene, V.D., and Health.

2 Mar 41 We arrived today in FREETOWN, but there has been no general shore leave.

8 Mar 41 We left FREETOWN. During our visit I went aboard H.2, where I had lunch. All the medical side seemed to be very happy and comfortable. They have practically taken over medical charge of the ship as the two RAMC Officers know nothing about ship's organisation.

25 Mar 41 I stayed on board today doing a day on for the RAMC. Burke and Crossville will do days on as well.

1 May 41 Early this morning we left DURBAN and continued on our way North. I was rather disgusted with the RAMC on board my ship, as I did two days on in Durban and the Senior Medical Officer, a Major Coope, very much junior to myself did not do a day on at all. I spoke to the O.C. Troops about this, and his only solution was to put the RAMC Lieutenant on duty. This I would not allow, so I did the day myself.

21 Apr 41 Very early this morning we arrived at SUEZ and were very surprised to find so much shipping there. We had stopped at ADEN on the way North.

22 Apr 41 There seemed to be a great deal of difficulty about the transport to take us to TAHAG Camp, which is a Transit Camp, and where we understood we will remain until moving off to our ultimate destination.

Two days before this I had received a signal to arrange for a Rating to be detailed to go up to HAIFA where he would be in charge of our stores. I would be told when to send him later. CPO Congdon, whom I detailed, was never told to move to HAIFA - neither was I. This resulted in chaos as far as our stores were concerned when they arrived in CRETE. During the day, the rest of the medical staff arrived from the other two ships and we made contact. They had arrived from PORT SAID, having gone through the Canal.

TAHAG is a very large Camp Site, said to contain 10,000 men with ease. There are over 40 separate camps. These Camps are on either side of a road running roughly East to West. Each Camp has a frontage of 400 yards and stretches back from the road anything up to 1,000 yards depending on the size of the unit there. The first Tented Hospital has been put in 16 Camp. Ball is in 22 Camp and Crossville in 16 Camp. Burke is in 24 Camp.

I contacted the ADMS, Lt Col Allcock and arranged that we would run small Sick Bays in our Camps. It is much better that we look after our own people, even if it is only for a few days. The Army call these small Sick Bays "Medical Inspection Rooms" but their's have no beds, and there is one MIR to every four camps. Therefore, ours will look after Army as well as Royal Marines.

We have no medical stores at all with us, except the Field Valises that I organised for each train. The ADMS has sent us a few stores to carry on with. The Army do very little in their MIRs, and send everything into hospital. This, to my mind, causes a great deal of unnecessary hospitalization which could be avoided by the provision of a few beds in each MIR, with a few more stores.

The tents used here are of the Indian pattern and are well suited to the heat. They measure 22 x 18 feet, but have the disadvantage of being very heavy to move. According to the Army, they sleep 12 to a tent, but I am glad to say there is no need to crowd our men like that.

Latrines are of the bucket type, and each latrine, of which there are plenty, has a urine pit.

23 Apr 41 All men are being examined as to their last inoculation of TAB, and those that have not entries made to this effect in their Pay Books are being brought up-to-date. There are very few to be done as we have made efforts to finish these in the ships on the way out.

I got all the Medical Officers together this evening, and we had a small party as several had not met before.

24 Apr 41 As we have three Medical Officers who have little or nothing to do, I have arranged for two to be attached to the 2nd General Hospital and work and live there. After a ballot it was decided that Sugars and Innes should go, but unfortunately, just as they were getting into their stride we moved off.

25 Apr 41 This evening I had all the senior ratings up to my tent, several not having met before. They all came from different ports, which is always difficult in a ship. However, after a little beer the party went quite well. PO Corder whom I hardly knew, is going to be a useful member, and PO Parkes is another who stood out.

28 Apr 41 Very much to my annoyance CPO Congdon had not been told to go up to HAIFA with the other senior hands to look after unit stores. The 2nd Tented Hospital had sent a representative, but nobody told us. CPO Congdon had helped to pack our stores, and knew every case and bale. The 2nd Tented Hospital had never seen their stores, and as far as I know did not even know what they were supposed to have. All this was to lead to serious consequences, for when our stores were sent to CRETE half of them were left behind and quite a lot of the 2nd Tented Hospital stores sent by mistake.

The Petty Officer detailed by Surgeon Lt Commander Gay-French did not even ask Major Salter, who was in charge of the loading, what our official signs meant, but on his own initiative sent what he thought fit. We had our own markings on our stores in order of importance, 1, 2, 3, as well as the markings we had been told to put on by the Landing Company, and which had taken us three days to paint on. This led to the fact that in CRETE lots of our stores were in duplicate, while lots of things we wanted we had not got at all.

29 Apr 41 I have received information that the 1st Tented Hospital will soon be moving to take up a job. The destination is rumoured to be CRETE. The rest of the Medical Officers and their staffs will move with their units, and I have given orders to this effect.

30 Apr 41 We move off the day after tomorrow, but it has to be kept dark and this is not altogether easy with so many officers in different camps. Crossville, Burke and Wheeler will remain and move when their units do. Burke with the A.A. Regiments should have come over to CRETE later when his unit moved, but he never did so, and it is very difficult to find out why he did not come. His unit expected and had made arrangements for him, and his staff and himself were packed up. As far as I can find out, Wheeler said that he could not be spared and told Colonel Lucas, the senior officer remaining.

Although Burke would have proved of great value to us, and was of course bitterly disappointed, as were his staff, he had to remain.

1 May 41 All up very early and ready to move off by 0700 hours. However, we in the second train did not leave TAHG until 0900 hours, and then nearly got left, as we were not told that it was the last truck that was moving off.

We seem to fall between two stools, and senior officers, with all these different units forget that we exist.

We arrived at PORT SAID soon after noon, and after a struggle as my unit had nobody to direct them, I took the law into my own hands and marched them on board the City of Canterbury, a much better ship

than the one I came out in and nothing like so crowded.

3 May 41 Two of the Medical Officers have been ashore by special permission to do some essential shopping, but in future nobody is to be allowed ashore.

4 May 41 Our destination is still a secret but everyone guesses it is CRETE. We were much amused this morning when some captured Italian guns were hoisted inboard with chalk marks directing them to "Officer Commanding, Crete".

This afternoon I called a meeting in Sugars' Cabin of all Medical Officers, and the following was arranged.

Innes to be Senior Surgeon, as he has most experience.
His team will consist of Stokes, Kay and Radcliffe.
Jeffrey to be Second Surgeon with PO Jenkins, SBAs Jones and Morgan.
Innes is also to be Mail Officer, and Jeffrey Paymaster.
Sugars will be Transport Officer and Anaesthetist.
Wallis, Reception, Shock, Ressuscetation and Hygiene.
Macritchie, Anaesthetist and Physician.
I will do V.D. in addition to my other duties.
CPO Miller, General Administration.
CPO Congdon, in charge of Stores.
PO Corder - Reception.
PO Empson and Beddingfield - Dispensary.
PO Welsby - Baggage Stores and patients effects.
LS B A Craig - Lavatory and Mortuary.

The rest of the staff divided up for two Surgical and one Medical ward, with one small V.D. section.

The two ships Doctors are very good and keen to help in any way possible. We gave them a demonstration of the Neal Robertson stretcher today.

5 May 41 We moved our billet and left PORT SAID the next night.



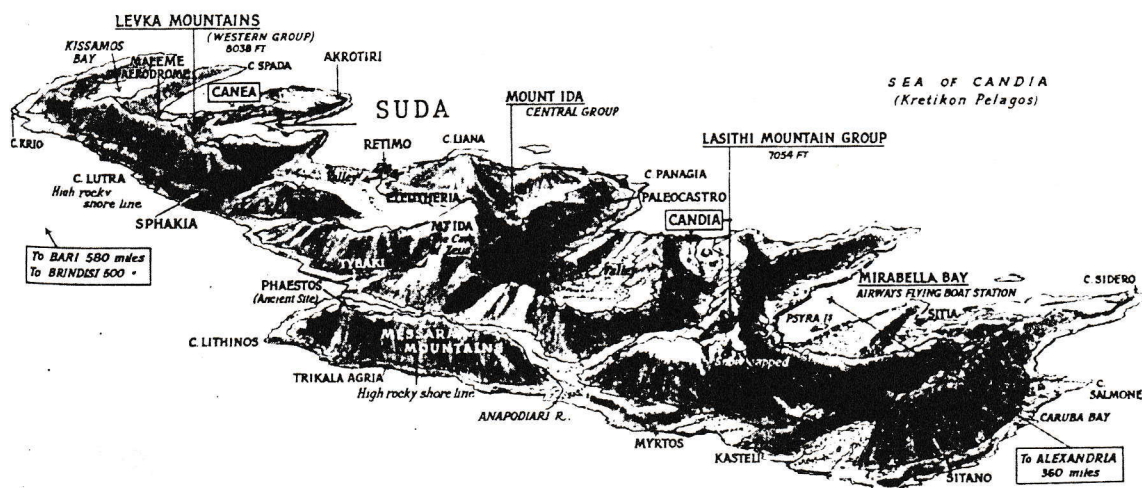
"Suda Bay"

9 May 41 The 1st RN Tented Hospital, consisting of the following landed at SUDA from H.M.T. "City of Canterbury" shortly after noon.

S/Lt Commander	L G Yendoll R.N.	S/Lt	C C Jeffrey R.N.V.R.
S/Lt	A H Innes R.N.V.R.	"	D W Wallace "
"	J C Sugars "	"	M Macritchie "
"	J W Ball "	SBCPO	Miller
SBCPO	Congdon	SBPO	Corder
SBPO	Jenkins	"	Stokes
"	Empson	"	Welsby
LSBA	French	LSBA	Dunthorne
"	Black	"	Slater
"	Craig	SBA	Oldroyd
SBA	Kay	"	Witaker
"	Jones	"	Taylor
"	Rudland	"	Morgan *
"	Ratcliffe *	"	Blundell +
"	Grey +		
Cook Staff PO(Cook)	Parkes,	Cook	Hollins.
Royal Marines acting as WRA's	Mne	Harris	
	"	Nicholls	
	"	Stewart	
	"	White	
	"	Robertson +	

*Theatre Staff

+Did not join up with the hospital until May 19th.



On the short march to the Transit Camp we met Col Wills RM who told us that there was plenty of food, (a relief to me as other units had drawn three days rations at TAHAG before leaving Egypt, and we had not been told to do so). That we were to camp out beneath the olive trees and await further orders and that we now came under the SMO of the Island.

The part of the Transit Camp allocated to us was very filthy, and worse than any camp we had ever seen, the site being covered with toilet paper and human faeces lying in any ditch or depression, despite perfectly good deep trench latrines provided.

I at once got a working party to clear up as much as possible. We then had food and started to clear the camp up properly and build a urine pit. The urine pits built by us were the only ones I ever saw in the Island. We also built an incinerator and cleared a ditch to act as a slit trench. PO Parkes built a field oven out of scrapes of material that he had managed to collect. I then called the men together and spoke about sanitation, meal times, and general routine, that we would try to get an issue of Naval tobacco, and that all drinking water had to be boiled. Also, that there would be no smoking, or lights after dark. We had been told that the Australians have a habit of firing a rifle at any light they saw. The water point is a long way off and we are not allowed to use the tank in the next camp. I had noticed a large building by the waters edge with a red cross on the roof, and walked down to see it after dinner. It turned out to be a deserted Lunatic Asylum and was full of half-looted stores of all kinds. We were later to be very grateful for some of these stores ourselves.

Sleep very much disturbed by rifle shots and Australian soldiers walking about although there is supposed to be a Curfew at 2000 hours.

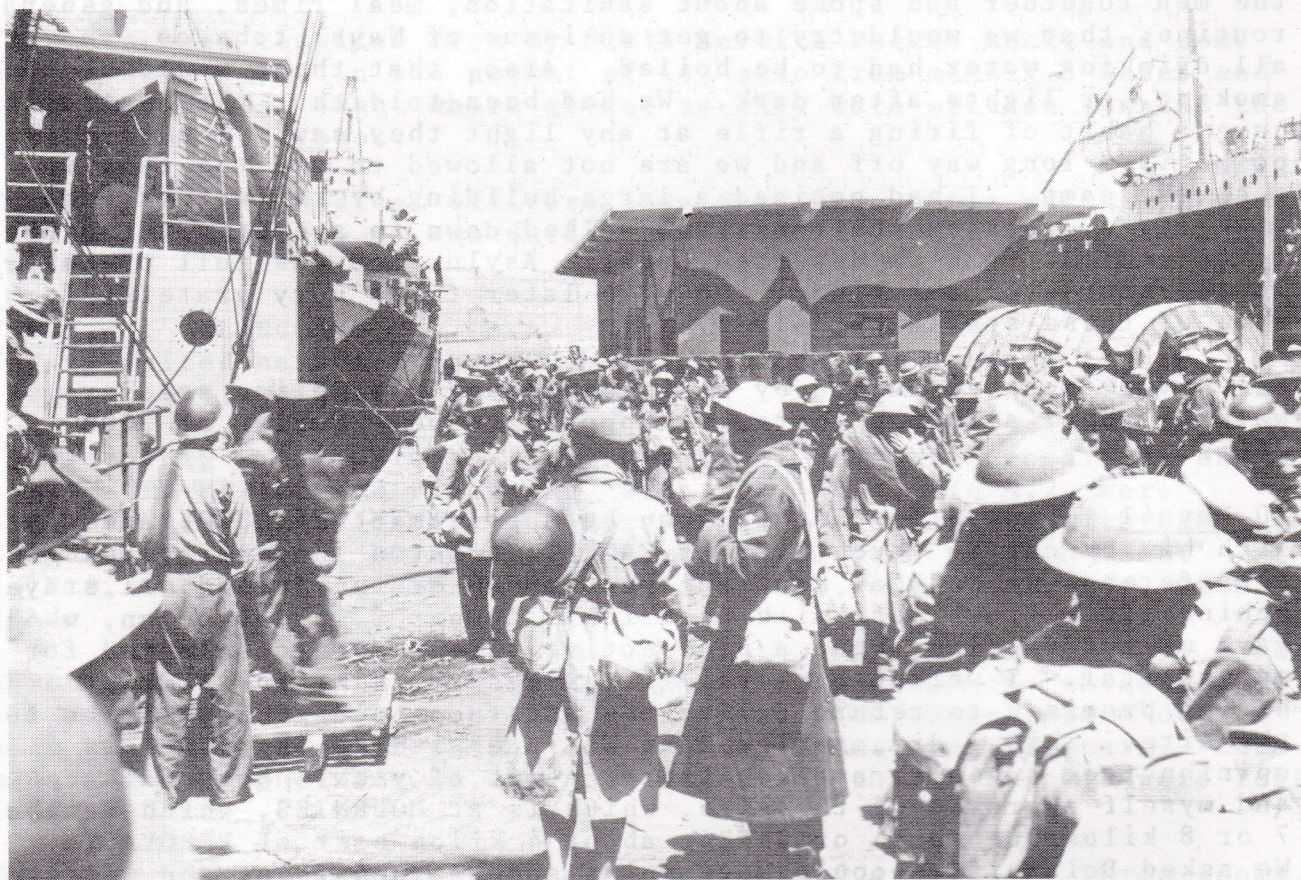
10 May 41 I met S/Commander Brown by appointment at 0900, and went with him by car to Force H.Q. at CANEA. After a long wait, due to a conference we met Col Kendrick who is SMO of the Island. I stayed behind after Brown left with Kendrick's number 2, a Col Dolan, who gave me information about a prospective site they had selected for my hospital. I walked back the five miles to the Transit Camp, having promised to return during the afternoon and go with Dolan to the site. This I did, taking S/Lt Wallace with me, to give his opinion from a health and sanitation point of view. Both Wallace and myself approved of the site, which is at MOURNIES, which is about 7 or 8 kilos due south of CANEA, about 4 kilos east of PEROVALIA. We asked Dolan if we could move in as soon as possible, and were told to carry on.

S/Lt Sugars and CPO Congdon supervised the unloading of our stores on the jetty at SUDA BAY all day. A few junior officers, mostly friends of the Medical Officers are the only people we get the slightest help from. Although it is appreciated that fighting material must take priority, no senior Marine Officer helps us at all with our difficulties. I had intended getting a few knives and forks for the use of Officers today, but there are none to be obtained, so we can only feed like civilised people by courtesy of our friends and the MOAs. 36 cases of ours are missing. These contained some of our most important utensils, such as knives and forks, 15 beds, two X-ray tubes, shovels and tent boards. One or two things such as sera came later in another ship. We had all the latrines of both tented hospitals.

S/Commander Tanner ex HMS YORK came over to see me today. He wanted to borrow a Medical Officer to help in the Sick Bay he has established in the Naval Camp a little higher up the hill. I could not give him aid as we intended to get started on the job we came out for as soon as we could.

There is very little idea of camp sanitation here even in the Naval Camp. Few bother to replace the lids of latrines. It has been officially stated that men may pass water against a tree if 25 yards away from a tent. However, there are very few tents, most people having to sleep and live beneath the trees.

There was a sharp air-raid tonight on SUDA.



"Troops disembarking at Suda Bay"

11 May 41 S/Lt Jeffrey, Innes and myself together with PO Stokes and Jenkins walked over to the new site this morning, a distance of about 10 kilos. I was anxious for as many as possible to see the new place. It takes about 80 minutes to walk there from SUDA. SBAs Beddingfield and Brown joined us today from the Transports in which they came out from Emglend.

During the afternoon, S/Lt Sugars who had been at the dockside all day unloading, by hard work, some talk and initiative managed to get hold of one of the ambulances that had been unloaded. I then decided to send over a small holding party to MOURNIES, the ambulance being loaded with a small marquee, and a small working party to erect it.

I sent S/Lt Wallace and Macritchie. These two Medical Officers stayed the night there and were only just in time to prevent the site being taken over by a gun battery, this despite the fact that the place had been approved by Force H.Q. as a site for our hospital. I cannot get the promise of any help in moving our stores. I do not expect men, as we can unload ourselves but transport is the difficulty.

Tonight, stores were unloaded by yard-arm group lighting, until midnight, when an air-raid made it impossible to carry on. We had got the X-ray machine out to MOURNIES just before.

12 May 41 All the forenoon and some part of the afternoon was taken up in moving over to MOURNIES using the ambulance, Lt Cox was very helpful to Sugars at the jetty in letting us have a lorry later, and later still a second one. The loading up was done by Australians, Cypriots, and a small party of our own. The unloading at the other end was carried out by our own party, men and officers. During the pauses between unloading, all hands were very busy building shallow trench latrines and a urine pit and putting up the tents as they arrived. We also built a small incinerator from scraps of material we collected. Later in the evening we started a proper permanent deep trench latrine, very handicapped by our lack of digging tools, only having two spades and two picks between us. These had been obtained from the old Lunatic Asylum. Apart from this, three men were set to the digging of slit trenches. Four marquees and a number of bell tents were put up today. S/Lt Innes managed to get our issue of naval tobacco, which was distributed.

Water has to be carried by hand a distance of about 80 yards, but Col Dolan had spoken to the R Es about piping the supply over the centre of the camp.

Transport is still a difficulty, but we have managed to secure two motor cycles this evening.

13 May 41 I went into CANEA early by motor cycle to see Col Dolan who seemed rather startled to find that we were already in occupation and on our way to making a start to open the hospital. He asked me if "Hiring" knew, and if they had obtained a place for us, when I said "No, we have never heard of them". We went to this department, where a very friendly Captain reassured me, and told me to carry on with the work. Two days before this, Dolan had told me to make a start as soon as I liked.

All day we had a working party at the jetty at SUDA sending the stores through to be unloaded by us at this end. The ambulance was sent for the wooden parts of the latrine from the R E stores, but there was great difficulty in obtaining them. We also tried without much success to get more digging impliments. Our lack of tools and inexperience of digging holding up the work. LSBA Slater who had worked as a miner set us all an example.

A very good grease trap was constructed next to the galley by Marine Nicholls. Every nail used had first to be removed from a packing case and then straightened on a stone. With similar difficulties of tools and material, the building of this took the whole of the day. The sump of this trap caused some concern, because the soil was not poreous, and the dirty water remained for a long time. It has been decided by Innes and Wallace that an eyaporation point may have to be built in addition to the sump. Later, two properly made grease traps were obtained from the R E stores. One of these was sunk beside Ward 1, and the water laid into an irrigation vane that S/Lt Jeffrey found running beneath the camp.

During the forenoon I went to the 7th General Hospital to see how they sank their wards, and to try to get some plates and forks for the Medical Officers to eat with. I met their Col Hope Carlton, who was very helpful and gave orders for me to get three plates and three bowls. Later we gave some of our meagre table instruments to the patients who had none at all, and we went back to the old system of eating off each others plates and with each others knives, forks and spoons. Later still when there was very little food, fingers became the universal custom.

I also met Major Wardrop whom I asked about the sinking of tents. He was dead against this as he had seen one or two nasty accidents when sunken tents were set on fire by incendiary bombs and the patients unable to escape. This relieved me a little, as it would have been impossible to sink our tents with such a small staff.

I was lucky enough to be able to buy a few cigarettes from the officer's mess there. I would have been able to get more only a loyal RAMC orderly found out what I was about, and stopped the Butler selling them. We found the absence of cigarettes a great trial. Col Dolan called later, being surprised at the progress we had made. With him, were Major Dewhurst and Capt Slade who were very helpful in telling us where we might obtain things such as latrine seats etc. Col Wills RM also called, bringing Capt Wooller NZEF, who is in charge of the training of the 2nd Greek Battalion stationed in the village of MOURNIES, 80 yards. Wills thought that our tents were rather too close together, but I was not going to change them at this juncture, not at least until we had settled down and could look around. Wooller became a firm friend of ours, and a member of our mess. He dined with us whenever he could and never forgot to pay his way, by bringing a tin of food or its equivalent. We were not very well off for food and we tried to get Naval rations instead of Army rations if possible.

Later, we were very much indebted to Capt Wooller for his news during the blitz. He was then our only contact with the outside world, and we looked forward to his cheerful arrival each evening. Even the patients, who never saw him but knew of him through the staff, always asked for his news and safety. He also lent us six of his Greek soldiers for a few evenings to help with the digging. A ward opened tonight and SBA Morgan became our first patient, suffering with Diarrhoea.

14 May 41 A local Greek told us today that our site which is an Olive Orchard had not been cultivated for 10 years and that we could do as we liked with it. This was rather reassuring to me, as the man seemed to be a person of some standing. We concentrated on the deep trench latrine and it was ready for use tonight. There was no opening ceremony. Everybody uses this latrine, but one for the men will soon be finished and is now half completed. It is difficult for unskilled men to dig such a trench 9 or 10 foot deep.



"RM Camp - Suda Bay"

Our camouflage up to now had been half hearted, but on the advice of Wooller, and after a short lecture that I got him to give, we made a big effort and in future everything was hidden or camouflaged to the best of our ability. A few days after the invasion started we realised the impossibility of being hidden from enemy aircraft because they came so low. We therefore put our cards on the table and made as many Red Crosses out of sheets as we had paint for, and pegged them out on the ground.

We tried to run Naval routine in everything we did, and had Port and Starboard watches. When the men fell in this morning, as is routine, I spoke to them, telling them that we had still much work to do, but that nobody with sore hands was to dig. All children were to be discouraged and would be forbidden tomorrow. Also, that no dogs were to be allowed in the hospital. After this the standing orders I had made were read out by CPO Miller and later passed from hand to hand among officers. A free gangway was then declared for after tea, always provided men returned if there was an air-raid over SUDA. This was the only time that any leave was granted to the staff as work was continued from dawn to dusk, after which lighting restrictions made work impossible. During the day I went to CANEA on a motor cycle to get a map that had been promised by Capt Kempford who visited us yesterday. I was anxious to find and mark on the map where all our units were so that they could be visited. Unable to contact Kempford I managed to borrow an old map from Col Dolan which were of great service to us later.

Officers sleep two in a bell tent. I myself, sleep alone in a bell tent.

15 May 41 At noon today I sent a signal by despatch rider who was doing his routine call, that we were now open to receive wounded. This I sent to all concerned, including Force H.Q., and I sent a map reference of our position. It was therefore not pleasing when a senior Staff Officer called a few days later and his first words were that he had been looking for us for hours.

The first casualty arrived from SUDA this evening, a wound of foot. We collected him in the ambulance after a bombing raid. S/Commander Brown came himself to tell us that there were wounded in SUDA. He had been trying to contact us for two hours and a half, although only six miles away. From now on until the invasion I sent an ambulance into SUDA after any large bombing attack.

The men's latrines were completed and in use this evening.

(To be continued)

These journals, compiled by the Senior Medical Officer of the 1st RN Tented Hospital of MNBDO 1, are reissued by the Head of Common Services (Records) MOD, prior to despatch to the Public Records Office.

Abbreviations:-

ADMS	-	Assistant Director Medical Services
RAMC	-	Royal Army Medical Corps
RE	-	Royal Engineers
SBA	-	Sick Berth Attendant
SMO	-	Senior Medical Officer
NZEF	-	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
SERA	-	Can any member explain this one?(p.19 line 45)

REMINISCENCES OF A WARTIME OFFICER By Major Patrick DA Ennor (RMHS)

Long before the outbreak of war in 1939 I had begun to agitate about getting back into the Service and when the various channels of application were promulgated and I redoubled my efforts filling in forms, and bothering and badgering all and sundry, there did not seem to be much prospect of being required by the Army for a very long time. There were large numbers of Reserve Officers to be absorbed and precious few jobs - and even less accommodation or equipment - for them. I could not claim that I had acquired much knowledge of signals during my Territorial service, and an enthusiasm for horses did not seem to be much of a recommendation, and was a qualification offered by many.

On the Sunday on which war was declared, just after the false alarm Air Raiding warning, I was having a pre-lunch drink. The telephone rang and when I answered it and in reply to my Mother said: "*I am having a glass of sherry*", she made it clear that she was much surprised that I should still be at home and did not expect me to be there when she should next telephone. Something clearly had to be done, and by great good fortune the means presented itself that very evening when a much loved sailor cousin, Roland Ennor, rang up to propose himself for the night. When he arrived I lost no time in making the position clear and he said: "*Why don't you try for the Marines? I know they want chaps, and I daresay Admiral Roger Bellairs, who is now at the Admiralty, might put in a word for you. The Bellairs were family friends years ago and Admiral Bellairs was my Captain when I was doing my RNR Midshipman's time in the Rodney*". Clearly this was it, and I lost no time in putting in the appropriate application and in seeking the necessary support, which was most kindly given, from Admiral Bellairs.

In due course I received a summons to present myself for interviews and medical examination. Here I foresaw trouble, one of my eyes has been defective all my life, and although the other eye is so good that my sight is still superior to that of most people (and it is only recently that I have had to use spectacles for reading,) I realised that I had little chance of coming up to the very high standard set by the Royal Navy. However I had bluffed my way into the Territorial Army and I saw no reason why I should not employ the same technique again. Accordingly partly by memorising the letters and partly by "*obliquity of vision*" I managed to negotiate the eyesight test, and in due course found myself before the Adjutant General Royal Marines (as he was then called) General Alan Bourne. He was a most impressive figure, very good looking and beautifully turned out, and I remember thinking furiously that undressing and dressing for the medical examination would probably have done much to destroy the immaculate appearance which I had endeavoured to present on arrival for the interview. In fact General Bourne was extremely kind and at pains to put one immediately at ease. It seemed however that I had not bamboozled the medicos quite so effectively as I had imagined and the Adjutant General, looking at my papers, began to murmur something about "*... eyesight not being quite up to standard but glad to have you for base duties ...*". This, I felt, would not do at all and I at once turned on my maximum effort to convince General Bourne that my eyesight was in fact perfectly adequate, and only technically defective. He then told me to look out of the window and see if I could read what was written on the buses passing along Whitehall. This of course, I accomplished easily and I felt somewhat reassured, (but when I wrote to Admiral Bellairs to tell him of my interview I felt obliged to tell

him of my misgiving).

All was well however and shortly I received instructions telling me to report to the Depot Royal Marines, on 1st December. This was the threshold to a part of my life in which I found much happiness, a great and lasting pride and many valued and continuing friendships. Of course I was delighted, and I think my wife was almost as much relieved, as she said that to have lived with me since the outbreak of war had been like living with a bear with the sorest of sore heads.

On the eve of my departure for Deal, Tony Allpress arranged for me to meet Richard Darwall, who also was to join the Depot. Richard Darwall belonged to a family which had long and distinguished connections with the Corps but he was himself, (although he had been to Sandhurst,) one of the most unmilitary characters I had ever known. Richard had decided to motor to Deal and it was arranged that he would drive me down.

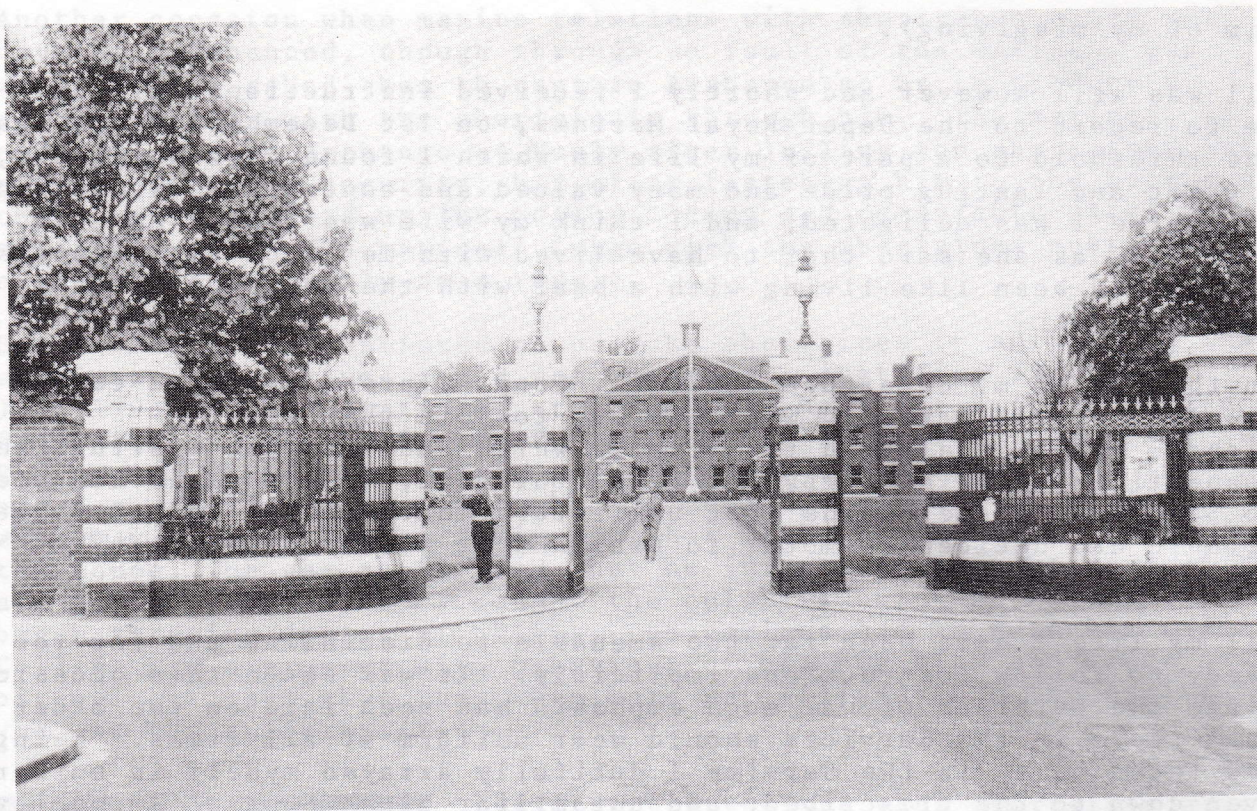
All my life I have been far too amenable to discipline and far too ready to follow instructions implicitly. It was so on this occasion. Since the outbreak of war much emphasis had been laid on the order that those in the Services should wear uniform at all times. Being now technically in the Service I dutifully arrayed myself in uniform even down to the prescribed, and unfamiliar black boots. Authority had also decreed that everyone must carry a gas mask, and that anyone joining the services must do so with his civilian gas mask which would then be exchanged for one of service pattern. Once more I dutifully conformed and with my civilian gas mask in its humiliating little cardboard box hung above my uniform by a piece of string, and accompanied by my uniform case and valise I duly presented myself to Richard's astonished gaze. His costume consisted of corduroy trousers, a tweed coat, a green felt hat, a red and white bandanna handkerchief round his neck and an enormous brown driving coat which must have been a survival from the coaching age. His uniform was contained in a cardboard box.

With some difficulty we managed to cram ourselves and our gear into Richard's tiny car, and, an oddly assorted pair, set out on this great adventure.

It was the custom in the Royal Marines, and a very good one too, for each batch of Second Lieutenants to be placed under the surveillance of a Senior Subaltern. He was known as their "nurse" and was responsible for the supervision, control, and guidance of his charges in almost every aspect - except when they were actually under instruction. Our "nurse" was Chips Grant,* but whether on account of our higher average age, or because we were expected to prove more than normally refractory Geoffrey Sherman, who was a Captain, was also detailed to be our mentor.

Our written instructions were to "report to Captain Sherman". As it was a Saturday afternoon when we arrived at the Depot and Geoffrey Sherman was married and lived out of barracks, he was not, of course, available. Again my determination blindly to obey the letter of the law asserted itself and it was only with the greatest difficulty that I was dissuaded by Chips Grant and Richard from setting off to locate the unfortunate Sherman and dig him out from the bosom of his family, in order that I might report to him!

*(now retired Major General F N Grant CB)



Jubilee Gates and the Officers Mess

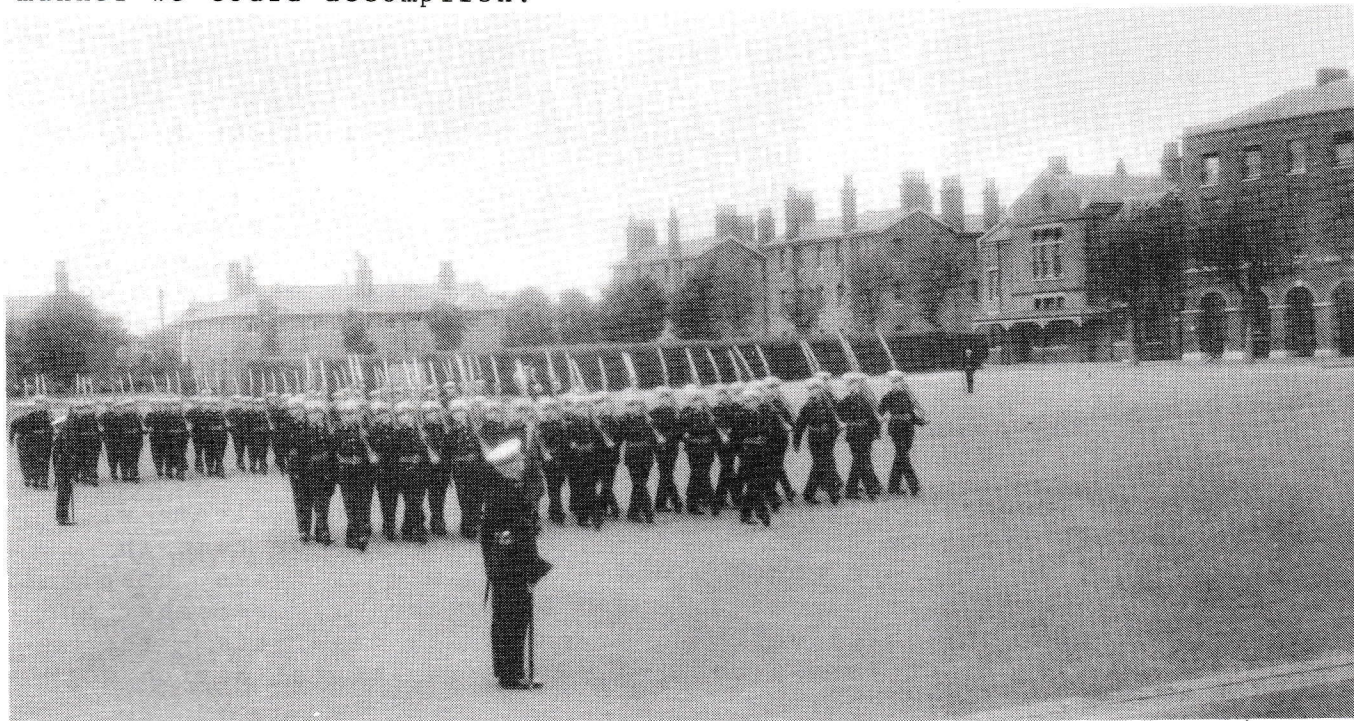
We had also been instructed to report by a certain time and in this I had insisted on having my own way, but when Richard and I made our rather remarkable entry I noticed that almost everyone except I was in plain clothes, (and many of our batch did not arrive until far later). In fact, of course, those in authority were far too busy to care what we wore, or to whom we reported or what time we arrived. In due course we were shown our quarters, the servants who had been detailed for us materialised, and the first thing I did was to change out of uniform into plain clothes.

The servant allotted to me was a smart and alert young man who had only recently passed out from his recruit squad. The rest of his squad had gone on to their Port Division for drafting, but he, for some reason had been left behind. At first I congratulated myself and thought that I was likely to be better off with Mne Kirke than with one of the elderly and dilapidated pensioners whom most of the others got. Had I known then what I do now I should have realised that a smart young regular Marine, but recently passed out, and who had never been to sea, or to a unit, was unlikely to be allotted to a brand new temporary Second Lieutenant unless there was a very big "If" to him!

On the evening of our arrival at the Depot there had been one of the not infrequent landslides at St Margaret's Bay - thus blocking the railway line between Dover and Deal. Quite a number of our batch of 18 were, therefore, delayed, but there were at all events enough of us present to receive "the detail" for the following day.

The next day was Sunday and as at that stage none of us had blue uniform, it was unthinkable that we should appear on church parade in khaki: at the same time it was clearly undesirable that we should be left to our own devices. It was therefore decreed that we should be inspected outside the Mess by Geoffrey Sherman and then proceed under our own arrangements to church in the most alert and soldierly

manner we could accomplish.



"March past at RM Depot, Deal (1939)"

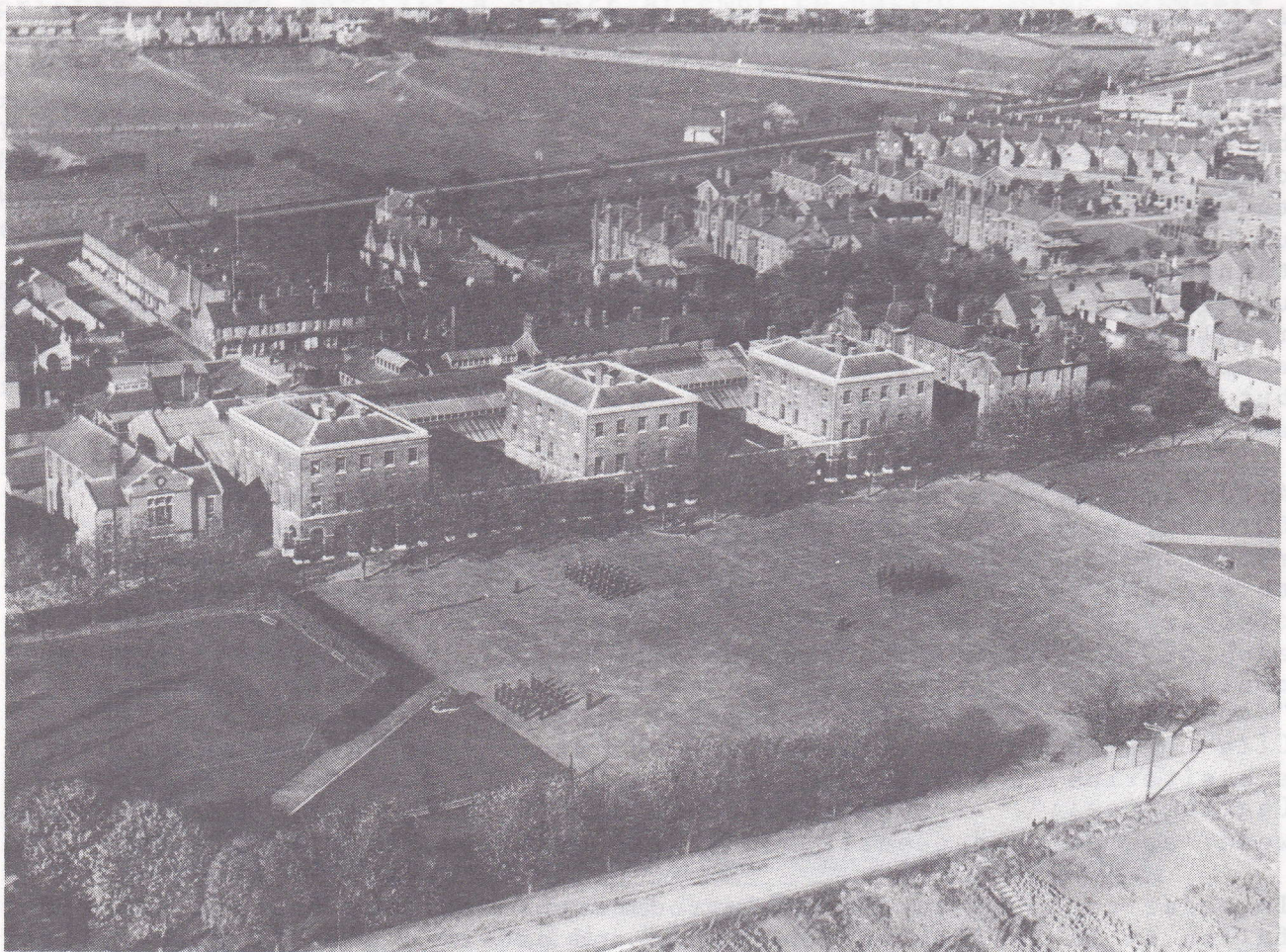
Accordingly after breakfast we assembled. This was the first opportunity we all had of looking at each other, and a pretty motley collection we must have been. We ranged in ages from 18 to 38. I at 28 was in the middle. Although we had all presumably been to one of the prescribed regimental tailors there was a good deal of diversity in their products - particularly in the cut of the collars of the greatcoats and in the shapes of caps. Some of us had the usual parade pattern ankle boots, others wore enormous things which looked more suitable for mountaineering. One unfortunate had even been supplied with brass buttons instead of the regulation bronze: Richard Darwall - though he had got his kit from a well-known military tailor - had not got service buttons at all, but little brown things which he, quite unabashed, aptly described as jujubes.

After church we were all lined up outside to be presented to Lord Birdwood - then Captain of Deal Castle. I felt that it was all rather reminiscent of childhood, but instead of: "Come to the Zoo, to see the bears fed" - it was "Come to church, to see our temporary officers". Dear old Lord Birdwood had a kindly word and enquiry for each of us, and individuals answered him as intelligently as they could, one saying that he had "come from South Africa", another "from the Artists Rifles", another from "the University" or "the City" and so forth. Alan Evans, who stood next to me and who has a hesitation in his speech, replied "I c-c-c-came from Ch-Ch-Ch-Charing Cross". If words were not Alan's strong suit, deeds certainly were, and he subsequently won a well deserved MC for gallantry.

In order to carry out these introductions Geoffrey Sherman had wisely fallen us in in alphabetical order and provided himself with a list of our names beginning on the right with Anderson and ending on the left with Woolley. This manoeuvre served him better on this occasion that it did me several years later when, as DAAG of the Royal Marines Division, it devolved upon me to introduce the staff to an inspecting General. For this ceremony numerous individuals turned up of whose very existence I had previously been completely ignorant.

Officers whose lives revolved round mail bags, mobile laundries, petrol and canteen stores materialised had to be presented and I therefore provided myself with a list of names and ranged my flock in due order. Some clown quite clearly in the line managed to get into the wrong place thus disrupting the whole sequence: it was not until we came in front of someone whom I knew perfectly well and whose name did not fit the list that I realised something was wrong. Even then people played up splendidly and all might have been well had not the General come across an officer whom he knew. Name, rank, appointment, regiment, appearance - all were wrong on the list, and detection could no longer be avoided. Fortunately the General's sufficiency of humour and unsufficiency of time saved me from being required to go through the whole rigmarole again.

It would be impossible to overstate the kindness and welcome with which we were received at Deal. Everyone with whom we came in contact gave us help and encouragement and, in many cases, hospitality. The Mess was extremely comfortable and I particularly remember the beautiful port, and excellent hand-made Turkish cigarettes - the flavour of the latter losing nothing by the regimental device with which they were impressed.



"North Barracks"

On one of our first mornings at Deal we were crossing the barracks to the parade when I saw a very smart soldierly figure in red hunting coat, white breeches and green felt hat entering the Staff Office. This proved to be Colonel R G Sturges, the Second Commandant, and to me, and several of the others, it proved a most encouraging sight: if this were the attitude adopted-with France only just across the water - we had clearly come to the right place, and where people had the right ideas. At the time Colonel Sturges hunted the West Street Harriers (who of course hunted not hares but foxes) and anyone keen on field sports, and especially hunting, was cordially welcomed by him.

There were quite a lot of chargers available for us to ride, and we were even excused from some of the instruction on Saturday mornings in order to get to the meets. Although I had hunted in far better counties than the West Street and jumped far bigger obstacles than those generally encountered there, I must confess that I was much alarmed at their practice of jumping solid timber - not when hounds were running but merely moving from draw to draw. However the horse which was usually allotted to me proved to be a big and bold jumper so I just tried to sit still and remain confident.

The Adjutant at the Depot at that time was "Tigger" Phillipps. He was extremely efficient and as smart as pain; when he was killed commanding a Commando at Dieppe the service lost a most valuable officer. Before going to Deal I think I should have said that no one could have frightened me just by his look, and bearing. I should have been wrong. I fancy we were all terrified of "Tigger". In fact he was most kindly and was at great pains to give us all the help and encouragement he could, after we had been at Deal for a while and got to know him better we became rather less scared of him - off parade.

Much importance was rightly attached to drill and "Tigger" Phillips had laid it down that our squad was invariably to be instructed by the First Drill*, and by no-one else. Every morning at 8 o'clock, facing the rigours of a North East wind in December we would assemble near the parade and after a drummer had sounded the Fall in the recruit squads would march on and we would form up under whichever one of our number was detailed to be in charge for the day. We were then inspected by the Adjutant - generally mounted, I remember that once when Richard Darwell was in charge he was very erratic in his movements as he marched down the ranks at the Adjutant's side. This unsteadiness was too much for "Tigger" Phillips to tolerate but even his gravity was shaken when Richard explained: *"I am dodging about like this, Sir, because your horse bit me!"* One morning Richard was ordered to have his hair cut, "by this afternoon's parade". When the time came of course he hadn't had his hair cut, and offered as an explanation that he could only have his hair cut in London, and had been unable to get leave to go there for the purpose!

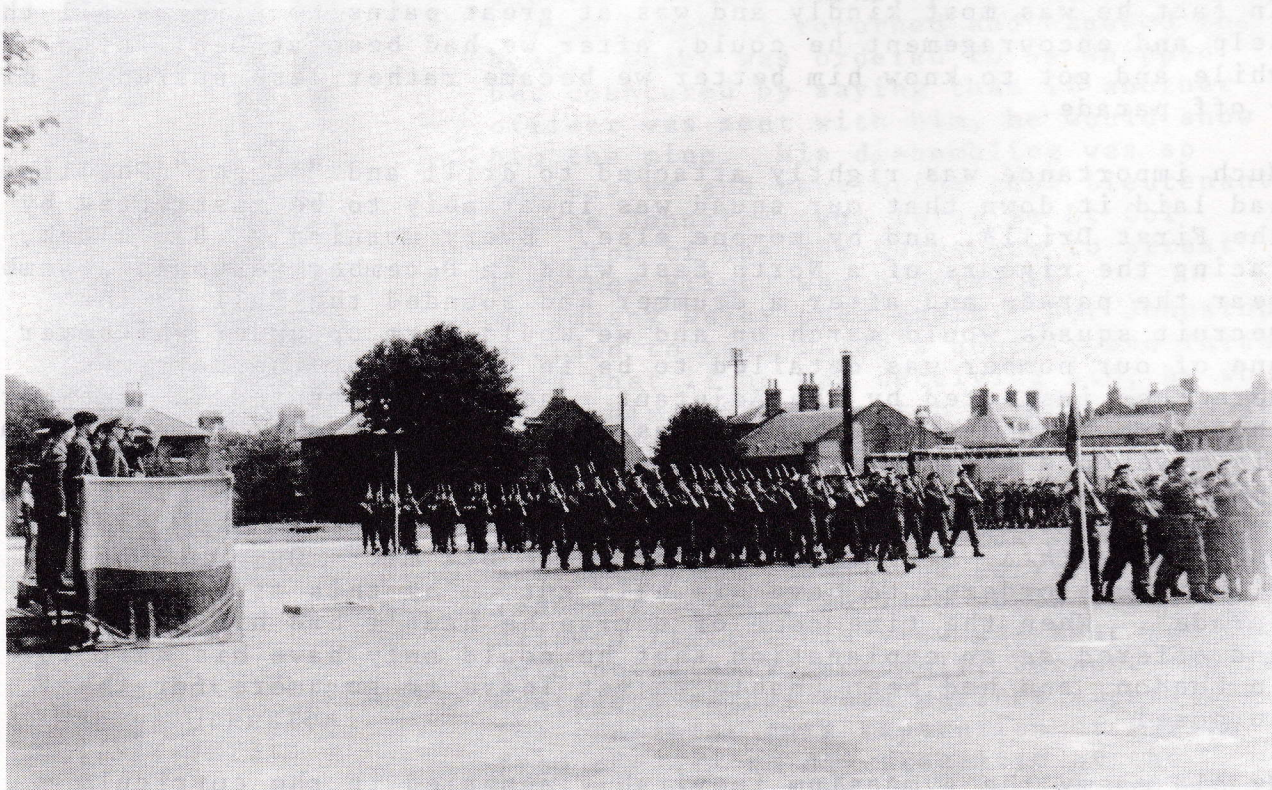
My old enemy the gymnasium inevitably appeared in the curriculum - but fortunately the apparatus used was confined to the beams and the wall bars. Although I have always had considerable strength in my shoulders and legs, my arms are not very muscular and they are also short. To hoist myself up so as to be supported upright from the beam by my arms was a fearful struggle for me, but I did once achieve it, making a three on a beam with Richard and Michael Pravite.

*Senior DI - QMS - today W02

The vibration set up by the arrival of my wobbling weight, and their own laughter at my antics caused them both to fall to the ground where they were spotted by the Instructor and suitably reprimanded. I, in my temporary security and the cause of their downfall, was of course, highly delighted at their discomfiture.

A peculiarly exasperating trick amongst PT Instructors was to order the squad to move from sitting on the floor to standing up in a breathless succession of quick fire orders. "*Sit-down, stand-up, sit-down, stand-up, sit-down etc.*" This was, I suppose, intended to inculcate a degree of mental and physical alertness into recruits, but it was curiously irritating, and Richard finally could bear it no longer and urged the Instructor to "*make up your mind what you do want*".

Mostly our PT consisted of exercise and these we performed wearing shorts, but nothing above the waist. Sometimes we ran round the barracks - I remember doing so in deep snow, thus attired - while the Wrens grinned at us from windows and doorways. Most of these girls were regimental sisters and daughters with whom we used to go out dancing and they were not backward at letting us know in the evenings of the amusement which they had derived from our capers in the mornings.



"A wartime morning parade."
(Note married quarters visible
then before the drill shed was built)

We realised that we had to cram into six months most of what a regular subaltern was taught in 18 months, and took it all very seriously. We were intensely proud and anxious to acquit ourselves well, and we did in fact cover quite a large range of subjects. In addition to drill and PT we did musketry, minor tactics, military law, map reading, regimental history and interior economy. We were attached to one of the Companies in order to learn something about Company administration and orderly room.

Major Edwin Bowling - Uncle Edwin as he was affectionately called - was my Company Commander and in addition to the Adjutant and our nurse, others who guided our early footsteps were Major Reggie Bullock, Dickie Griffiths, (PT Officer), Captain Ryder (Musketry Instructor), Colonel VCC Brown (Chief Instructor) and of course the First Drill QMSI LA Band. Band was a splendid person and it would have been impossible to find a more suitable instructor for a squad of officers, always absolutely punctilious in his attitude towards us. He insisted on, and generally obtained, a very high standard of turn out, deportment and enthusiasm. One method used to achieve this was to put us alternately between the front rank men of a squad of regular recruits and the competitive atmosphere which this engendered was really quite overwhelming. I shall never forget the muttered advice given through the sides of their mouths by my neighbouring recruits, nor their stentorous breathing by which we were surrounded.

During our time at the Depot we wore 1908 pattern equipment and carried a stand of arms which had been issued to us on our first day by Colour Sergeant Richards, the Armourer Sergeant. He was an enormous ex-Blue Marine* and stood no nonsense from anybody. When I returned to Deal several years later there was a wonderful story current about CSgt Richards, a recruit, mistaking the reversed stripe on his forearm for good conduct badges, imagined that he was not an NCO at all but merely an "old sweat" Marine and addressed him as "Troop". The recruit did not long remain in ignorance!

*Royal Marine Artillery

(To be Continued)

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WILLIAMSON'S LIVERPOOL ADVERTISER AND MERCANTILE REGISTER
FRIDAY APRIL 1ST 1757

COUNTRY NEWS

GOSPORT MARCH 22

Yesterday morning a young woman who came from BUSSELDON on the evening before was found near five Elms about a mile from this town, stark naked, except one stocking on, with her thighs and arms tied up with a ribbon; when she was unbound and came to herself, she said she was met the evening before, about seven o'clock, as she was coming to town, by two men dressed as Marines, and two women with them, who robbed her of two guineas and some silver, then stripped and bound her, the women would fain have had her murdered, they carried away her clothes.

WILLIAMSON'S LIVERPOOL ADVERTISER AND MERCANTILE REGISTER
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 16 1757

Deserted on Saturday the 20th August last from His Majesty's 37th Company of Marines quartered at Portsmouth in the first Division commanded by Colonel Dury, and now recruiting at Liverpool THOMAS KELLY, born in Nantwich, in the Parish of Great Budworth in the County of Chester, about 5 feet 4 inches and a quarter high brown complexion, dark hair, but wears a wig, has tender grey eyes and by occupation a glass-maker.

Whoever will secure the said Thomas Kelly in any of His Majesty's Jails in Great Britain, so that he may be brought to before a Justice, shall have a guinea reward, besides what is allowed by Act of Parliament for apprehending Deserters, by Colonel Dury or Lieut Risdale.

FRIDAY JAN 11 to FRIDAY JAN 18 1760

Extract of a letter from an officer on board the MAGNANIME dated Portsmouth Dec 27th 1759.

"It would be doing much injustice to the Irish were I not to mention that the following extraordinary and almost incredible circumstance in our late engagement with M de Conflans and his fleet. Our crew consisted chiefly the Irishmen. A draught of 30 Marines taken in about a month ago, and who very lately come from Ireland behaved with uncommon bravery and resolution in such a scene of horror, for so it must appear to them who never saw a gun fired before; several of them have lost a leg or an arm (for our worthy good friends the French fired bars of iron two feet long and square. Iron langrage, and several other things contrary to the Articles of war).

I have the pleasure to assure you that seven soil of Frend Men of War which got up the river villaine are rendered for ever unserviceable.

The officer who wrote the above letter seems indignant at the fact that the French used double headed shot and longrage in the action and says it was contrary to the articles of war, but quite frankly I always thought one fired with anything that could inflict the maximum damage on the enemy and disable both the ship and her crew, but it seems that there was a set of "Queensbury Rules" governing the use of projectiles at this period.

FRIDAY JUNE 19 to FRIDAY JUNE 27 1761

"In a letter from Belleisle we are told of the following wonderful escapes viz that in the morning of May 13th as Lieutenant WHITE of the Marines was lying in his tent in a cot, a shell fell near him and burst, which overturned him and wrapt him all up in the tent, but he was not hurt tho' his cot was blown to pieces. A little after, another shell fell into a Serjeants Tent, where were three men, three woman and a child or two, but not a person was hurt. One woman who was big with child slept over the shell while the fuze was burning, this is affirmed by many of good credit.

