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(The Lord High Admiral's Regiment.) 1664-1684

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THE SHEET ANCHOR

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The Royal Marines and Eastney

by Captain Derek Oakley MBE (RMHS)

The closing down of the Royal Marines Barracks at Eastney ends yet another era of Corps history. Of the original three (later four) Grand Divisions, we have seen the closing of Woolwich Division in 1869 and the Chatham Division in 1950. The Portsmouth Division RMLI at Forton Barracks, Gosport closed in 1923 on amalgamation of the Light Infantry and Artillery elements of the Corps. Now only Plymouth remains.

The first mention of Marines in the Portsmouth area was Captain Thomas Killigrew's Company in 1667, and in the ensuing 80 years there were often companies embarking and occasionally billeted in the area. But the first permanent garrison was set up in 1755, when an Order in Council of 5th April specified the raising of fifty companies of marines for direct service under the Admiralty to be based at the main naval bases of the fleet, Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth, and known as Grand Divisions. The Portsmouth Division had an initial establishment of 2,200 men of whom two thirds were likely to be at sea at any one time. According to a contemporary report these men were to be *'quartered in Inns, Livery Stables, Ale-Houses, Victualling Houses and all Houses of persons selling brandy, strong waters, cyder or metheglin. It would have been difficult to devise a better system to encourage drunkenness, indiscipline and desertion'*. Indeed Brigadier James Wolfe, of Quebec fame, whose first commission had been in the Marines, commented *'The condition of the troops that compose this garrison (or rather vagabonds that stroll about in dirty red clothes from one gin shop to another) exceeds all belief. They are dirty, drunken, insolent rascals not improved by the hellish nature of the place where every kind of corruption, immorality and looseness is carried to excess'*. Not the most impressive or auspicious start to the Marines presence in Portsmouth.

By 1802, when the Corps was designated Royal Marines, their total strength was 30,000 men, most of whom were at sea. The Marines took up quarters in Clarence Barracks, Old Portsmouth which had appropriately been built as the King's Cooperage and Brewery. The actual site was behind the the present Naval Club between Pembroke Road and Penny Street. It has been suggested that Portsmouth was the first Division to have a band, formed possibly in 1765. Certainly in 1776, the Colonel Commandant applied to the Admiralty for leave to buy a pair of French Horns, 'ours being nearly worn out.' The band then consisted of a mere six musicians who each received sixpence a day in addition to his normal pay.

The first mention of the Royal Marine Artillery in the vicinity of Eastney was an exercise at Fort Cumberland in 1817. The Fort, built by convict labour and completed in 1803, was part of the Duke of Richmond's plan for fortifying the coast. It soon became a focal point for the Royal Marines, and continued to be so for 150 years. In the early days many gruesome stories were told of prisoners trying to escape across the mud flats. On one occasion four escapees seized horses harnessed to the gravel carts. Two tried to swim across to Hayling Island, horses and men being drowned; one was thrown and recaptured; while the fourth forced his mount into the mud endeavouring to cross to Milton Common and the horse was slowly sucked under, the convict being rescued with the aid of ropes.

By 1859 it had been decided that the Royal Marine Artillery should set up home in Fort Cumberland and 16 companies were established. It was also decided to build a permanent barracks for the Royal Marine Artillery and Eastney was the chosen site. A contemporary description says *'that the Barracks will stand on an extensive piece of ground, and its front have a strong defensive work in line with the sea beach with a Fort at each end - Eastney Fort East and Fort West, each containing two guns in cavalier bastions and seven guns in embrasures'*. A critic of the time commenting on this new barracks which mounted guns of the largest calibre, said *'In case of attack, all shots missing the batteries will plump straight into the barracks'*. Work on the new barracks started in 1862. A year later the first detachments moved into quarters.



The Guardroom with Royal Marine Artillerymen pictured about 1900.



Colonel Commandant Sir George Schonberg and his family outside Eastney House, with the Water Tower in the background, before its conversion to a Clock Tower, in 1868.



The Officers Mess pictured in 1909, remains much the same today as the entrance to the Royal Marines Museum.

The building of the barracks took five years and included all the landmarks that have been so well known over the years; Teapot Row and the Commandants Office, the Barracks Block, the Divisional Schools, married quarters, drill shed, detention quarters and the officers stables. Teapot Row, the aptly named officers quarters overlooking the sea, had top floor flats usually allocated to junior officers on the staff, which went by the name of 'Scandal Alley'.

The building of the imposing Officers Mess, which now houses the Royal Marines Museum, is a fine example of the architecture of that period. The interior is particularly impressive, reputed to be the work of Italian craftsmen, and the mouldings, though periodically renovated, retain their original characteristics. It would seem that the Admiralty was unusually generous in the allocation of money for the building. One story suggests that an extra nought was added to the original estimate by an oversight on the part of some civil servant before being transmitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for approval. The mistake passed unnoticed and their Lordships were not subsequently prepared to admit their error, so the money had to be spent! In all events the Royal Marines were, and are still the ones who gained. Visitors to the museum may have noticed a number of chips on the steps leading to the entrance. These are the result of after dinner Guest Night escapades when two small field guns, which stood in the hall until the early 1950s, were rolled down the steps by enthusiastic, but well oiled, young officers in a race resembling the Field Gun Competition at the Royal Tournament. When they reached the lawn, lighted thunderflashes were slid down the barrel and the muzzle stuffed with toilet paper. This created a spectacular display, though the officers' mess bills suffered when they were charged for the chipped steps!

The Water Tower was built in 1871 with the clocks being added later. The tower was originally built to provide the necessary force of water for the fire mains. The clock, which was made in 1784, was formerly the Woolwich Dockyard Clock. An early photograph shows that a different time was displayed on two of the faces, a situation that often pertains today! During the next twenty years, several amenities were added, such as the 600 yards rifle range; the drill fields, now the sports fields, an area of 33 acres that

formerly belonged to Farmer Joliffe. The fields were only just above sea level and 40 tons of chalk was brought down from Paulsgrove to be laid under the centre of the cricket square. Squash courts were built, and on some spare ground at Fort Cumberland a nine hole golf course was laid out, the greens being described as 'never very good'. This had disappeared by 1903.

On 22nd July of that year, the Royal Naval School of Music was established at Eastney, this in addition to the Royal Marine Artillery Divisional Band. 34 musicians from the band of HMS *Impregnable* marched into Eastney to play at the opening ceremony and then become the first band of the Royal Naval School of Music. They were under the direction of Bandmaster H E Lidiard, known affectionately as the 'Father of the Band Service' and whose name is perpetuated in Lidiard Crescent a housing development of the 1970s on the original site of the school. The following year 1904, King Edward VII agreed to the appointment of the Royal Marine Artillery Band as the permanent Royal Yacht Band, a situation that continues today, although the band has changed its title more than once since.

In 1855 the Crinoline Church had been the main garrison church situated just west of where the the Officers Married Quarters - Teapot Row - were to be built later. It was originally built as a hospital for the Crimean War and was subsequently bought by the Admiralty and erected at Eastney, holding a congregation of 800. On 16 March 1904, the Prince of Wales, later King George V, inspected the Royal Marine Artillery on parade in the morning. After lunch, the Princess of Wales laid the foundation stone of the new St Andrew's Church, similar to others of that era and known as 'Admiralty Pattern Churches'. This was dedicated at a service on 17 November 1905 by the Lord Bishop of Winchester. As far as is known, the church was never consecrated.

With rumblings of war with Germany approaching, it is ironic that when the Kaiser visited Eastney in 1890, he made the prophetic remark that *'I consider the British Royal*



The Crinoline Church, which was originally built as a hospital for the Crimean War, was situated just west of Eastney Terrace.

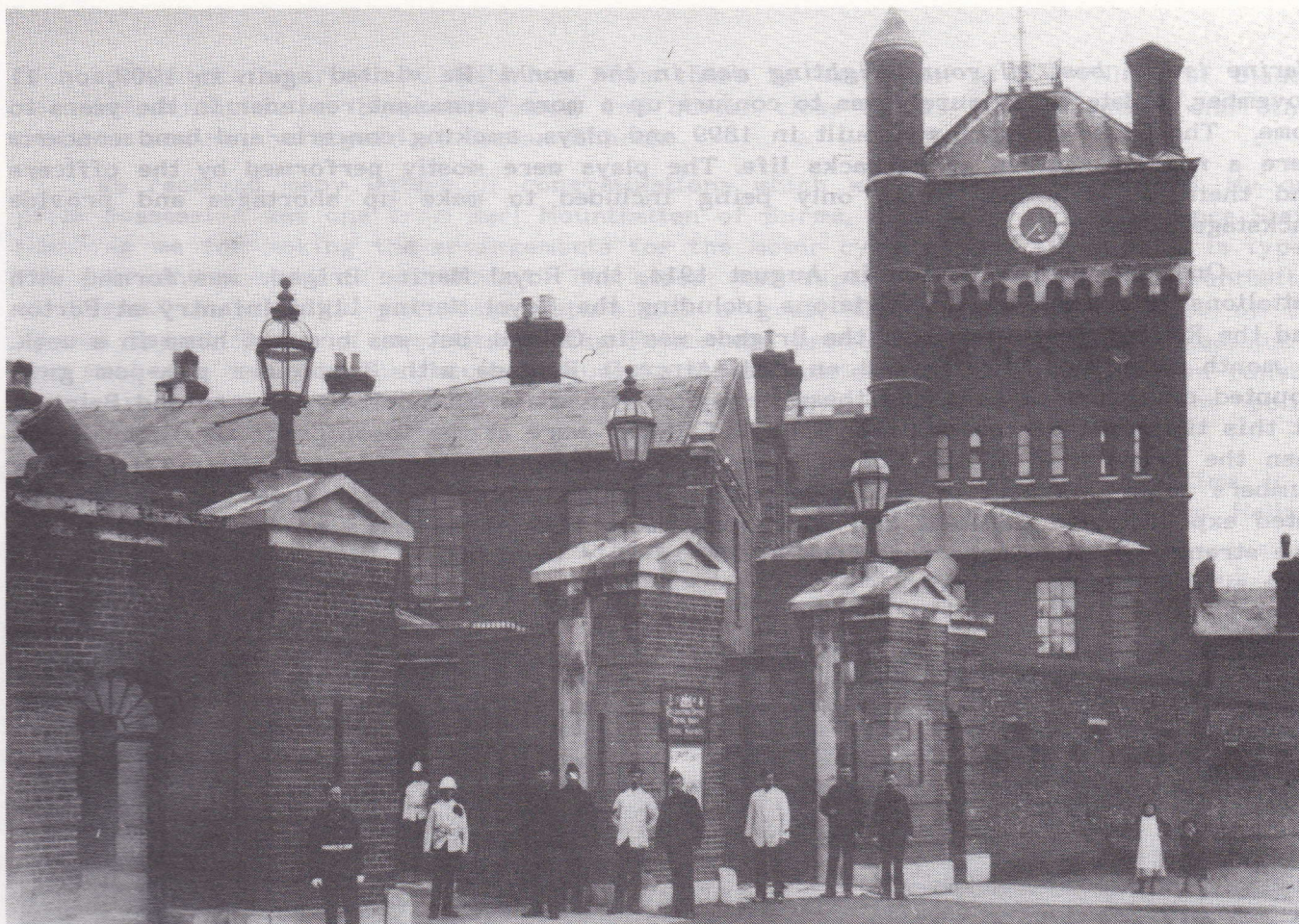


TOP ROW: Peverett, Leeder, Farndall, Beeden, Bedingham, Foster, Griffiths, Pinhorn, Edwards, Fowler.
CENTRE ROW: Gardenne, Barr, Sharpe, Chaffey, Roberts, Lavelle, Cheeswright, Yelton, Jenkins, Mead, Peverett, Vine.
BOTTOM ROW: Smith, Goodwin, Lawes, Greatwood, Maine, Mr Lidiard, Ferguson, Hammond, Boobier, Beech, Broadbent, Hickey, Averley

The first 34 musicians of the Royal Naval School of Music when it was formed at Eastney on 22nd July 1903. Chief Bandmaster (later Major) H E Lidiard came to the School with his band from HMS Impregnable. Major Lidiard was affectionately known as the 'Father of the Band Service'.



As the Royal Naval School of Music developed, civilian musical professors were engaged to teach the young musicians, a practice which perpetuates to this day. This photograph was taken in 1907.



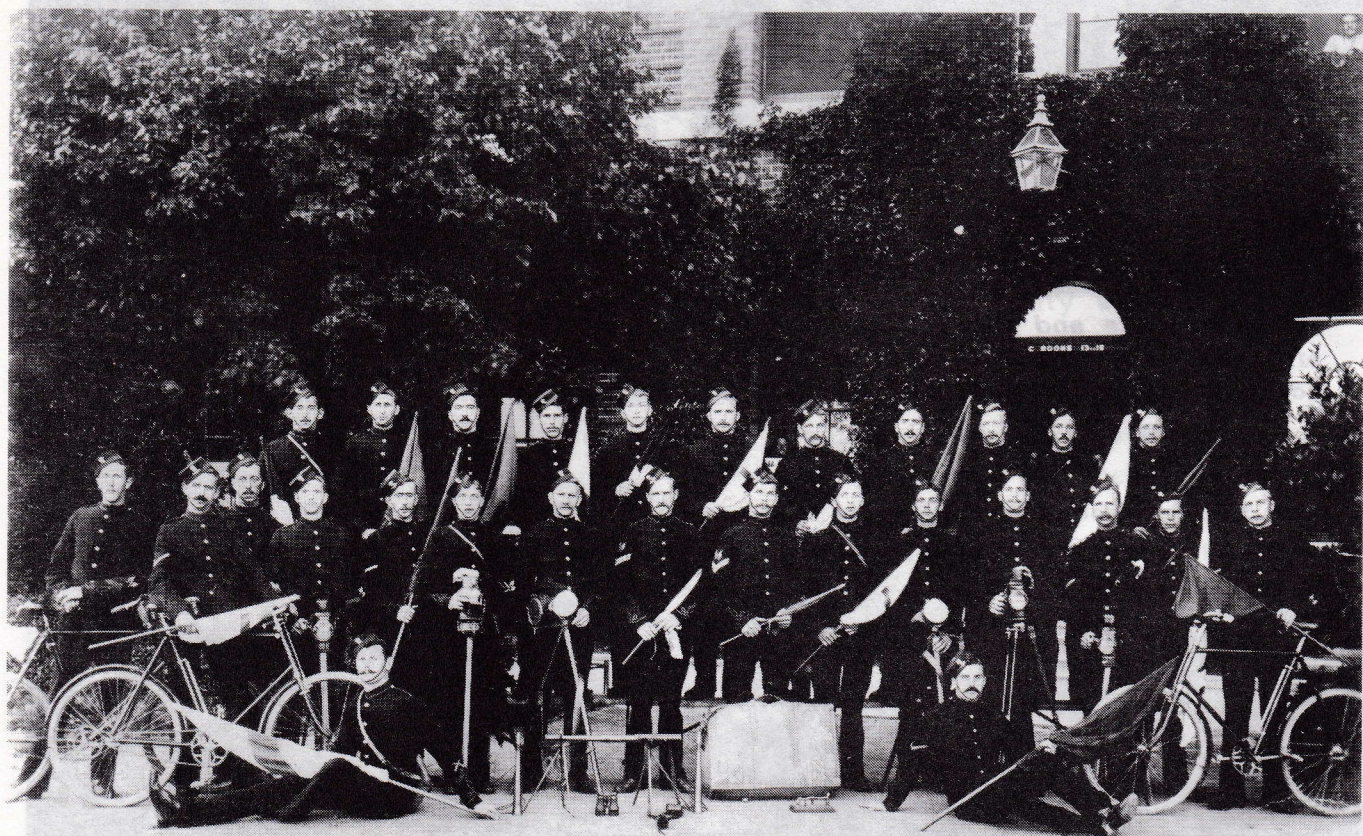
The Main Gate and Clock Tower at the turn of the century. Note the central pillar which is still to be seen on the pub sign of the RMA Tavern opposite. The notice on the gate reads 'Recruiting Office - Royal Navy and Royal Marines'.



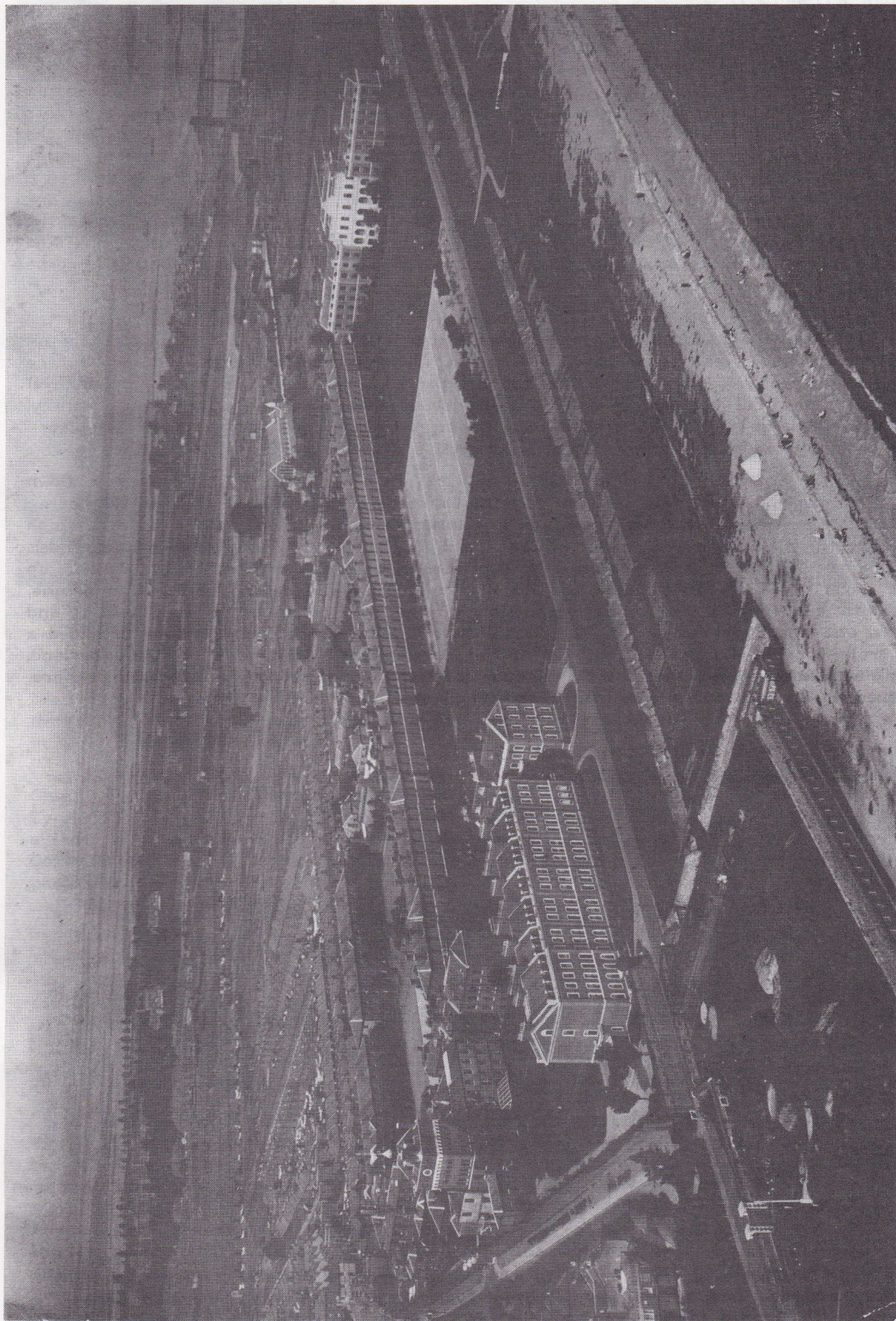
The Band of the Royal Marine Artillery leads the Parade to church along the Golden Mile about 1890. The parade normally returned via the Officers Mess where the salute was taken. Weekly church parades such as these continued until the 1950s.

Marine is the best all round fighting man in the world.' He visited again in 1907, on 11 November, a date which surely was to conjure up a more permanent reminder in the years to come. The Globe Theatre was built in 1899 and plays, smoking concerts and band concerts were a regular feature of barracks life. The plays were mostly performed by the officers and their wives, other ranks only being included to make up shortages and provide backstage support.

On general mobilisation in August 1914, the Royal Marine Brigade was formed with battalions from each of the Divisions including the Royal Marine Light Infantry at Forton and the RMA. A fortnight later the Brigade was in Ostend, but was brought home in a week. A month later the RMA formed an Anti-Aircraft Brigade with 2 pounder pom-pom guns mounted on armoured cars and these were soon in action in northern France and Belgium. At this time most of the marines, RMA and RMLI, were at sea in ships of the Grand Fleet, then the prime task of the Corps. However Portsmouth marines started serving in larger numbers ashore as part of the Royal Naval Division, which in 1915 took part in the ill-fated expedition to Gallipoli and later spent more than three years on the Western Front. The strength of the Corps rose from 18,000 in 1914 to 55,000 in 1918, and over 12,000 men were either killed or wounded.



A Group of Royal Marine Artillery signallers during their three months course in 1903. Note the variety of equipment including telescopes, lamps and heliographs.



An aerial view of the barracks in 1921. At that time there was no sea front road, little development in the Milton area, and association football was being played on Gunners Lawn.

What had happened was that the party had boarded the Royal Barge and were journeying to

The years after the Great War were unsettled and there were hints of national coal and rail strikes and even rebellion in the air. Royal Marines battalions were raised from time to time and Portsmouth marines took their fair share. In 1922 the 11th Battalion was raised for service in Asia Minor, where Greek and Turkish encroachments were causing problems, while an RMA company was sent to the Dardenelles. They manned the same heights that had seen the sacrifice of so many Royal Marines lives seven years earlier. But the Corps was facing a grave crisis of its own. The strength of the Corps had fallen from a wartime 55,000 to 15,000, and the Treasury was now demanding more cuts. They suggested a ceiling of 6,000, but the Corps fought to retaining 9,500. In order to achieve this, one Division would have to be given up, and the decision was made in 1923 to amalgamate the Royal Marine Artillery (the Blue Marines) with the Royal Marine Light Infantry (the Red Marines). Forton Barracks at Gosport was the Division to go. The Corps would in future be known as the Royal Marines.

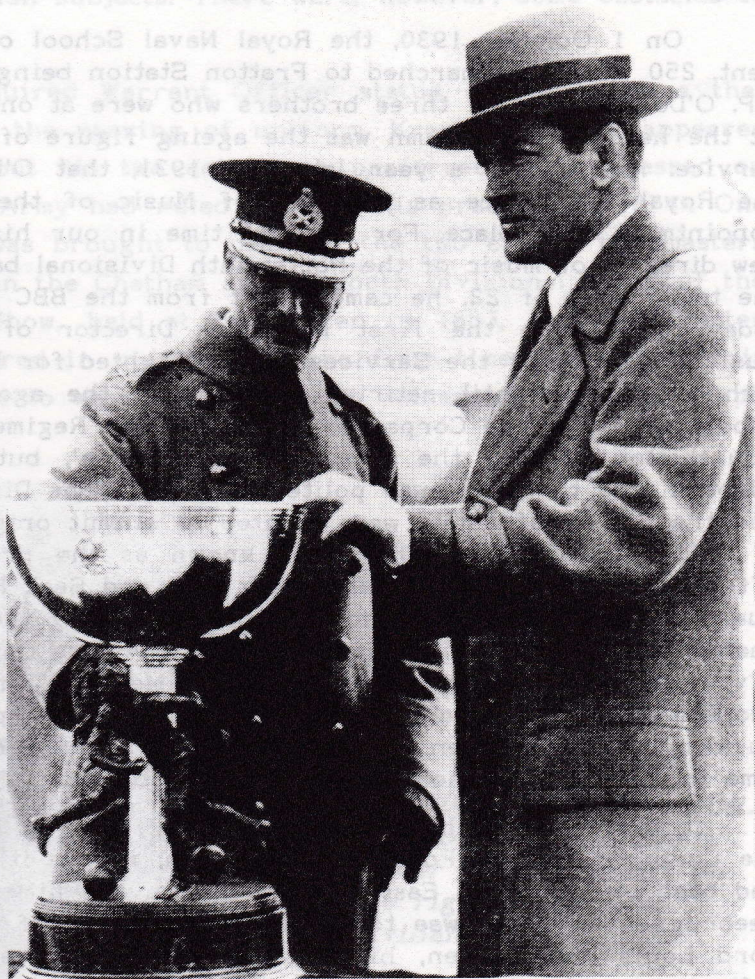
There had always been some rivalry between the two branches of the Corps with the Royal Marine Artillery considering themselves rather superior. Indeed a story concerning one very well known and respected Corps family, whose forebears had always been in the RMA, relates that a certain young man had not passed high enough to get into the Royal Marine Artillery, but had had to accept a commission in the Royal Marine Light Infantry. His father had, as a result, refused to give him anything but the minimum compulsory allowance until the amalgamation, when he relented!

After the amalgamation in 1923 the Corps was once again looking for a new role. Down at Fort Cumberland, the beginnings of amphibious warfare as we know it today were being formulated. There were trials of the first experimental landing craft in 1926, craft which look hilariously basic today, ferrying horses and men across to Hayling Island. In tandem with the development of these craft, was the formation of an organisation for setting up mobile naval bases abroad to allow the Royal Navy to use and defend ports. This became, along with sea service, the prime occupation of the Royal Marines in the twenties and thirties, and when war came again, the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisations provided a major role for the Corps. Most of the initial development was done at Fort Cumberland. They also experimented there with methods of landing guns over scaffolding piers, described as 'by extemporisation, brute force and guts'.



The early days of landing craft in Langstone Harbour. BMB No 1 disgorges a Morris-Martell tank on to the beach in 1929. Only eight of this version were ever built for the Experimental Mechanized Force.

**Lieutenant General Lewis
Halliday VC receives the United
States Marine Corps Trophy for
association football competition
within the Corps from the
former world heavyweight boxing
champion Capt Gene Tunney USMCR
at Eastney in 1928**



However there were more ceremonial events taking taking place at Eastney, one such occurring on a misty afternoon in December 1928 on the main parade ground in front of the a representative party of officers, NCOs and Marines from all the Divisions. The Royal Marines had always had strong ties with their American counterparts, the United States Marine Corps, since the defence of the Peking Legations at the turn of the century. The Major General Commandant of the USMC, John J Lejeune, had previously written to the Adjutant General wishing to perpetuate the bond of friendship between the two Corps by offering to the Royal Marines an Association Football Trophy for competition amongst Royal Marines only. It was therefore with much pleasure that Captain Gene Tunney, US Marine Corps Reserve, the former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, came to Eastney to present the magnificent trophy. It was received by Lieutenant General Lewis Halliday VC. Although officially known as the United States Marines Corps Challenge Trophy, it is always referred to within the Corps as the 'Tunney Cup'.

Disturbances abroad were once again to have an impact on Portsmouth Division, when the Shanghai Defence Force required reinforcement and the Royal Marines formed the 12th Battalion for that purpose. The army had said they would take several weeks to provide a force, whereas the Corps were able to offer a composite battalion within a matter of days. On 14 January 1927, 1000 marines embarked in the transport *Minnesota* and two months later were in the Whampo area of China. Their calming influence, much the same as that being shown by Royal Marines Commandos recently deployed to the Kurdish regions of Iraq, did much to restore the situation. They were relieved by the Army later that year and arrived

home after nearly 12 months away, reflecting once again on a job quietly and efficiently done.

On 1 October 1930, the Royal Naval School of Music moved to the Depot at Deal in Kent. 250 musicians marched to Fratton Station being led by the Divisional Band under Capt R.P. O'Donnell, one of three brothers who were at one time Directors of Music in the Corps. At the head of the column was the ageing figure of Major Lidiard, the Father of the Band Service. It was just a year later, in 1931, that O'Donnell left the Royal Marines to join the Royal Air Force as Director of Music of their Central Band, and a unique Corps appointment took place. For the last time in our history, a 'civilian' was appointed as the new director of music of the Portsmouth Divisional band. His name - Francis Vivian Dunn. At the tender age of 22, he came direct from the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and as is history today, he became the first Principal Director of Music Royal Marines, and the first musician in any of the Services to be knighted for his service to military music. He served with the Corps until retiring in 1968 at the age of 60. It was three years after his appointment that the Corps was seeking a new Regimental Slow March. Commander Lord Louis Mountbatten offered the 'Preobrajensky March', but the committee did not recommend its adoption and the offer was politely refused. The Directors of Music of the three Divisions and the School of Music were invited to submit original compositions for audition. Captain F J Ricketts of Plymouth, better known as the prolific march composer Kenneth Alford, offered a very fine slow march 'By Land and Sea'. However when performed on parade, the guard commander found great difficulty in giving the order 'Break into Quick Time' and the change was marred by indecisive drill. The Alford march was therefore dropped in favour of Vivian Dunn's arrangement of 'Early One Morning' under the title 'Globe & Laurel'. This was adopted as our Regimental Slow March and first performed at guard mounting duties of Buckingham Palace when the Royal Marines performed Public Duties in London for the first time in 1935. It remained our regimental slow march until 1964.

It was in 1936 that King Edward VIII, during his short reign, paid his only visit to the Corps to inspect Portsmouth Division; indeed it was the first time a reigning monarch had been on parade at Eastney. Accompanying him was Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes of Zeebrugge fame, who was to become the first Chief of Combined Operations and Commander Lord Louis Mountbatten, his successor in that post who was to have such an enormous influence on the Corps, particularly in the post war years.

In December 1939 King George VI visited Eastney and became the only reigning monarch ever to present the King's Badge personally. The King's Badge is awarded to the senior recruit of the senior squad, the King's Squad, if he is of a sufficiently high quality. It was on the parade ground at Eastney that Recruit F E Woods of 353 Squad received his badge from the monarch. In the next few years air raid shelters were built all round the parade ground, others on the greensward overlooking the sea front, whilst wooden huts were erected to house extra officers. The barracks became over-full and the first 400 Special Reservists arrived at Eastney on 12 October 1939 for training. They were later transferred to the new Royal Marines camp being built at Exton, now Lymington, the Commando Training Centre.

But other, more unusual Royal Marines parties were being housed privately in Portsmouth. One of these was the innocuously named Royal Marines Boom Patrol Detachment, a misleading title that hid the true identity of the Special Boats Section, or 'Cockleshell Heroes' as they became popularly known. Under Major 'Blondie' Hasler, specially selected Royal Marines trained in the Eastney and Fort Cumberland areas, pounding the sea front, using the assault course and firing on the rifle range. Their job was kept secret from others at Eastney, but their task was clear in their minds. One November evening in 1942 twelve of them left their billets along the Southsea seafront to embark in the submarine *Tuna* to carry out a most daring raid on German shipping 70 miles up the Gironde river at Bordeaux, where they sunk four large merchant ships. The story is now part of Corps history, but it is pertinent to say that only two returned home alive, four being drowned



The only visit King Edward VIII made to the Corps during his short reign. It is probable that it was the first visit by Lord Mountbatten to Eastney.



The only occasion a reigning monarch has personally presented the King's Badge was at Eastney on 19 December 1939 when King George VI presented it to Recruit F E Woods of 353 Squad.



Eight members of the RM Boom Patrol Detachment boat-pulling off Eastney beach. Amongst them are Sgt S Wallace, Cpls G J Sheard and A F Laver, Mnes W E Sparkes, R Ewart and J Conway who took part in Operation Frankton, the Cockleshell Heroes raid on German shipping up the Gironde river.

and six were captured executed by the Germans. It was the beginning of the Special Boats Service as we know it today.

The barracks escaped the war comparatively unscathed by a sudden enemy air attack, though several bombs fell on Fort Cumberland on 26th August 1940 killing seven officers and men in one of the casemates. It was ironic that most of those at Fort Cumberland were outside the Fort digging trenches. If there had been enough warning they would have taken shelter in the casemates, the only place hit. A plaque outside the Museum records this unfortunate incident. The barracks was always full and many marines had to be billeted in local houses. This may account for the fact that in 1945 there were 29 pubs within 400 yards of the main gate! Mostly the men were between drafts to HM Ships and it was always a sad day when a Portsmouth ship was sunk, as, in those days, ships were manned by marines from individual Divisions. Such losses as the battleship *Royal Oak*, sunk in Scapa Flow a month after the outbreak of war when 92 Royal Marines were lost; the battleship *Barham* when 136 Royal Marines were lost; the battlecruiser *Hood* when 164 Royal Marines went down including the whole of the Royal Marine Band. Other Portsmouth ships lost during World War 2 included *Aurora*, *Fiji*, *Berwick*, *Cairo*, *Dunedin*, *Indomitable*, *Manchester*, *Penelope* and *Suffolk*. At action stations the Royal Marines band worked in the bowels of the ship in the transmitting station, and were thus more liable to suffer than the upper deck crew. Indeed the Royal Marines Band Service suffered the highest percentage of casualties of any other individual branch of the three Services, 225 musicians.

It was in September 1944 that the officers of 45 Commando, fresh from the Normandy landings and advance inland, descended on Eastney Officers Mess for a Guest Night, the commando being based at Bexhill. It was a customary staid dinner with appropriate light music being played by the orchestra in the Minstrel's Gallery. At the end of dinner, the musicians came down to the Mess room to play some 'extras', usually serious solos. The Commando Officers, mostly Hostilities Only and attending their first ever formal guest night, became restless and demanded music more in keeping with the times. It so happened that amongst the band was Musician Albert Marland, who had been Henry Hall's arranger

before the war. The Mess room suddenly exploded to the previously unheard sounds of Glen Miller's 'In The Mood', with Bert Marland tinkling the ivories and other members of the band giving fine support, though there were not enough saxophones and trombones!

The end of the war saw the barracks return to comparative normality and numbers soon decreased. The war had seen the Corps take on a number of new roles, not the least the Landing Craft or Amphibious role. In the late 1940s the annual Exercise *Runaground* found a small amphibious task force assembling off Eastney and landing craft packed with commandos storming the beaches. The Amphibious School was based at Fort Cumberland, later moving to Poole. Sharing the Fort was the Technical Training Wing, training men in more than 20 trades varying from mechanics to coach-trimmers, artificers to carpenters and painters. In the northern part of the barracks was the Signals Training Wing, while detachments for sea service would form up and train in G Company. Indeed Eastney was a hive of training schools.

The closing down of Chatham Division in 1950 had its knock-on effect, the Royal Marines Drafting, Pay and Records Office from Chatham spending 13 years in the old Portsmouth Gun Battery and Hutment Camp, later named Melville Camp, from 1960. On 14th July 1959, the Corps was honoured when the City of Portsmouth granted the Freedom of the City to the Royal Marines. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, the Captain General received it on



The Freedom of the City of Portsmouth is received by the Captain General, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, on behalf of the Corps from the Lord Mayor, Lt Col (now Sir) Alfred Blake on 14th July 1959.

behalf of the Corps on the main parade. Appropriately the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth who presented it was a former Royal Marines Officer, Councillor (later Sir Alfred) Blake, who had commanded 45 Commando for a short time in North West Europe.

Another formal occasion took place on 27th October 1965 when Admiral of the Fleet, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma was installed as the first Life Colonel Commandant of the Royal Marines, being welcomed into the Corps by his nephew, the Captain General. It was on that day that Earl Mountbatten said 'I'm proud indeed today that the Royal Marines should feel I measure up to them and have admitted me to their ranks. Of all the honours that have befallen me, this is the one I appreciate the most and can now share in your 300 years traditions. I look forward to basking in your reflected glory of what the young marines will achieve in the future'. It was in this Royal Marines Tercentenary Year that Earl Mountbatten finally managed to persuade the Corps to accept the 'Preobrajensky March' as their regimental slow march, 30 years after the original offer!

One of the first barracks stanchions to disappear was the central pillar of the main gate. The inability of new modern coaches to negotiate turning into the barracks and

The Captain General welcomed his uncle into the Corps when Earl Mountbatten of Burma was made Life Colonel Commandant on 27th October 1965.

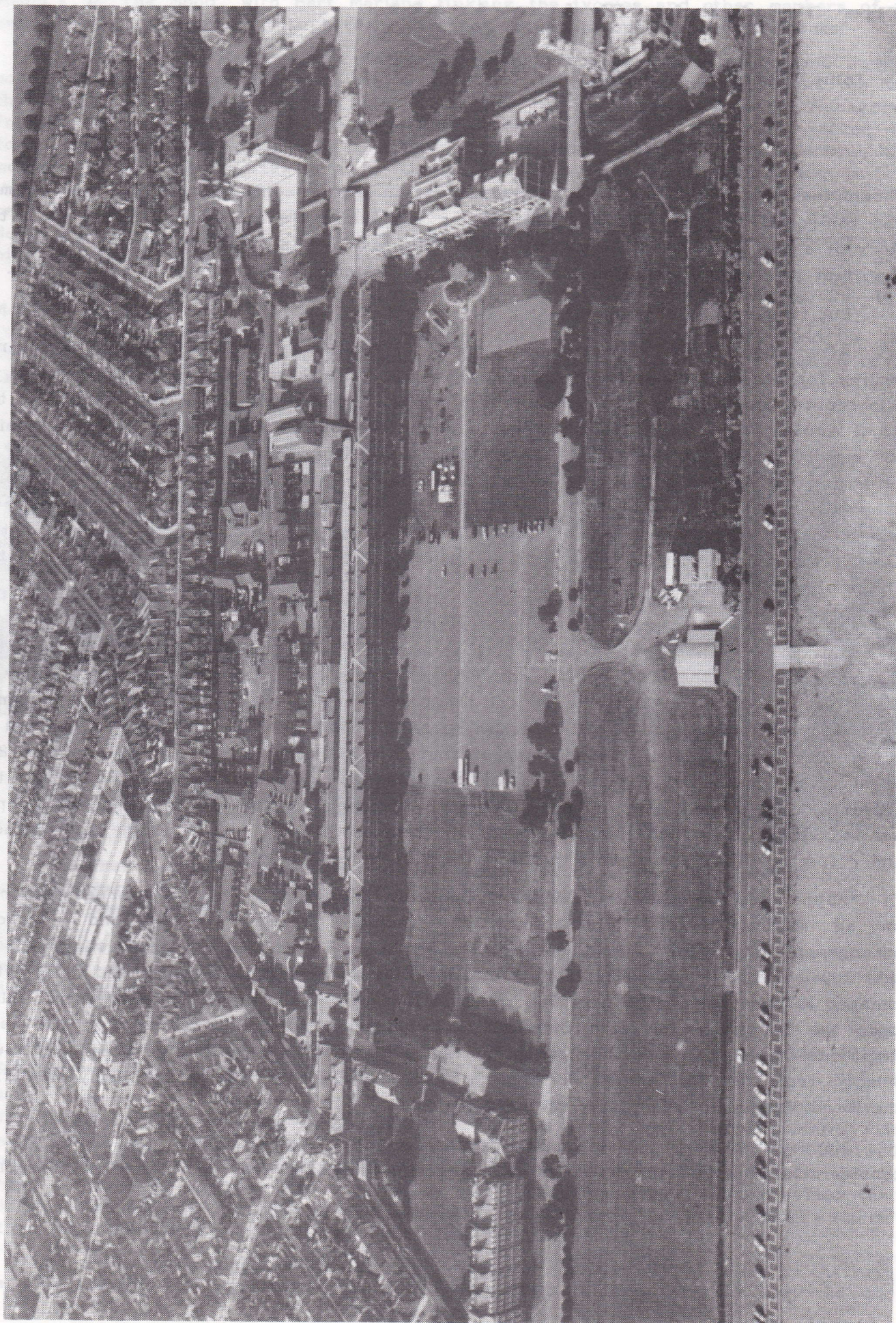


the continual stream of Royal Marines learner drivers, complete with three ton trucks, who battered that pillar necessitated its removal in 1966. The second in command of the barracks had the bright idea of selling the bricks at £1 a piece in aid of the Museum Fund, but how much money was raised is not recorded - not much I would guess. The withdrawal of British Troops from the Far East in the late 60s and early 70s, particularly 3rd Commando Brigade who had been continually abroad in trouble spots since 1945, found the Corps looking for another new role. The demise of major ships of the fleet, the new role covering the flanks of NATO in Europe, and the assumption of the Arctic Warfare role, meant that a new emphasis must be placed on where the Corps would train and operate.

43 Commando spent just over a year at Eastney in the old Hutment Camp area, renamed Comacchio Camp, but they were slowly run down and finally disbanded in 1968.

Eastney was suffering. The final run down started in 1971 when the Signals and Technical Training Wings moved to Lympstone and Poole, Fort Cumberland was closed and parts of the barracks pulled down and sold off. Only the Headquarters of Royal Marines Training, Reserve and Special Forces remained, even the band of the Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command were lodgers, albeit very welcome ones. No longer did the parade ground ring to the commands of drill instructors nor the sports fields pound to the feet of fit young men. With increased internal security the barracks became a fortress once more. One bright light in the dark tunnel came with the enlargement of the Royal Marines Museum and its official opening by the Captain General in the old Officers Mess on 1st August 1975. Rumours and counter-rumours that the Royal Marines School of Music would once again return to Eastney were finally scotched and the decision was made to move all the serving elements out of Eastney Barracks.

For 240 years there has been a continuous Royal Marines presence in the Portsmouth area, 130 of them at Eastney, and both the Corps and the City of Portsmouth will be sorry that the links have now been broken. There will still be a few elements left in Portsmouth and Gosport, while the band will also remain within the city walls, so the ghosts of the past will not be forgotten. The plans for the future development and improvement of the Royal Marines Museum are now being laid and it is this that will remain a permanent memorial to the Royal Marines considerable contribution to the great naval port of Portsmouth.



Royal Marines Barracks Eastney 1990

The Teutonic Triumvirate

by John Trendell (RMHS)

Should the title of this article give the impression that it concerns three of the evil men who controlled the Third Reich, then nothing could be more misleading. It is in fact the story of a peaceful trio of German musicians who, just over a hundred years ago, played an important part in the evolution of the highly professional Royal Marines bands of today.

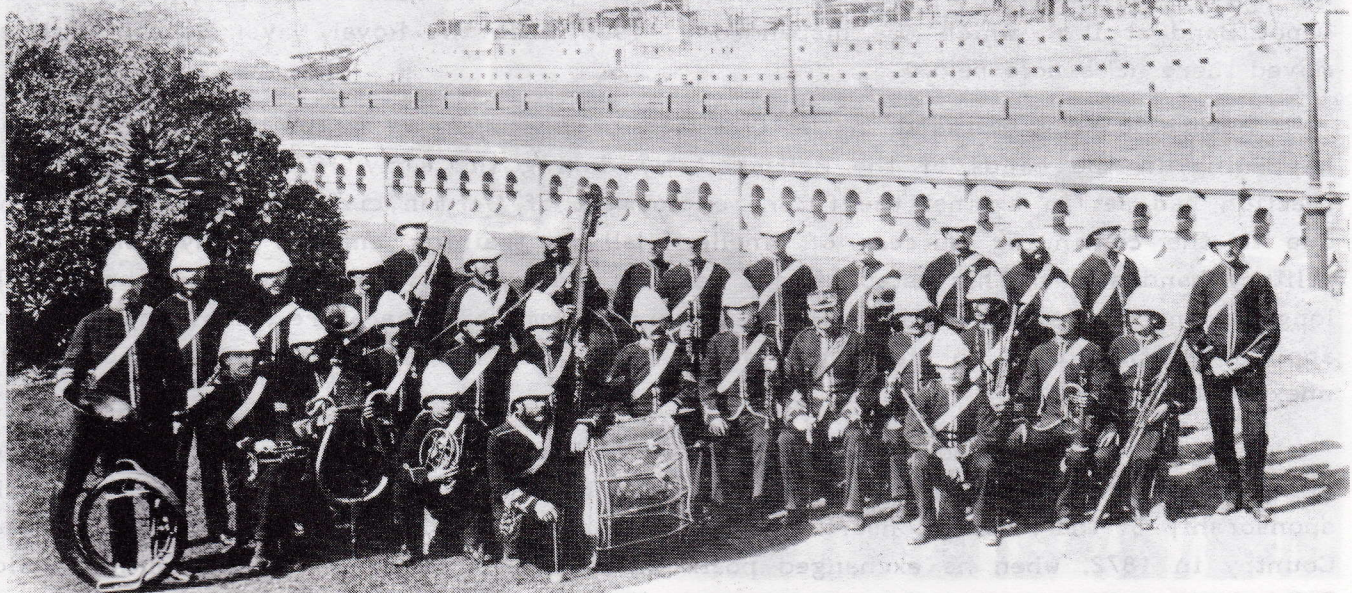
But first some background:

After the death of Henry Purcell in 1695, English music and musicians went into decline for almost 200 years. This was to have such a marked effect on military music in this country that during the eighteenth century the prestigious Coldstream Guards and the Royal Artillery both found it necessary to recruit in the German States, 'Bands of musick for service within the regiment'. In the 1830s one Wilhelm Wiepracht was given the task of reforming the bands of the highly efficient Prussian military machine, the results of which impressed the hierarchy of the British Army to such an extent that within a few years it became almost fashionable for British regiments to employ a German civilian bandmaster. The Germanic influences of the Prince Consort in official and musical circles had the effect of encouraging the policy.

Having set the military music scene of mid-Victorian times, it will now come as no great surprise to those unfamiliar with this facet of Corps history to learn that when the bandmastership of the Chatham Division RMLI became vacant in 1857, Jacob A Kappey, a native of the Rhineland, was selected for the post from more than one hundred applicants. After serving as a musician in the German Army for four years, Kappey came to England in 1848 to become the civilian bandmaster of the 89th Regiment of Foot (later known as 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers). The officers of the Chatham Division, whilst adhering to the contemporary custom of appointing a German bandmaster, certainly chose wisely for Kappey was to become, during the second half of the nineteenth century, one of the most eminent and respected military musicians in the country of his adoption.

Kappey was the complete musician - conductor, composer, teacher and learned authority on all musical matters. His compositions included operas, cantatas and numerous arrangements for military band, but most of all he is remembered for his arrangement of the 'Royals' signature tune. Prior to 1883 each Division had its own march and these often changed as new Commandans were appointed. In that year the Deputy Adjutant General called upon the Bandmaster of each Division to arrange or compose a march for use as a Regimental March. Kappey's arrangement of Henry Russell's 'A Life On The Ocean Wave' was selected from the four entries. For over a hundred years this tune has musically identified the Royal Marines in every part of the globe.

Kappey's highly professional direction of the Chatham Band was to result in considerable acclaim being won for the musicians wherever they went. No less a musical



The Royal Marine Light Infantry Band of Portsmouth Division from Forton Barracks Gosport who accompanied HRH The Prince of Wales on a visit to India and Burma in 1875/6. In the centre is Bandmaster Johann F C Kreyer.

authority than Sir Arthur Sullivan, after hearing the band at a London event, commented "*It is without exception the finest military band I have ever heard*". Kappey was also to make his name in the musical world outside the Corps; in 1869 he was made editor of 'Boosey's Military and Brass Band Journal' and in 1889 the Royal Military School of Music (Kneller Hall) appointed him as the external examiner of student Army bandmasters. The results of his years of research into musical history together with his extensive library of wind music have been preserved for posterity in the British Museum.

On Kappey's retirement in 1892, a presentation was made to him by his fellow bandmasters of the leading Army and Marine bands in recognition of his great contribution to British military music. The officers of the Division also marked the event by presenting Bandmaster Kappey with the ceremonial sword given to the Chatham Divisional Band by the Tsar of Russia when the band visited Moscow in 1826. Although very much regarded as an alien when he took over the band thirty five years earlier, Jacob Kappey was to retire from the Corps as one of the most popular figures to have served in the Chatham Division.

Possibly in an endeavour to 'keep up with the Jones's' at Chatham, the officers of the Portsmouth Division RMLI followed suit in 1865 by appointing Johann F C Kreyer, a native of Hanover, to fill the vacant post of Bandmaster of the Division. Although not such a prolific writer as Kappey, Kreyer was the composer of a number of songs and military band works. Undoubtedly the highlight of his nineteen years at Portsmouth was when the

Divisional Band accompanied HRH The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) in HMS *Serapis* on a visit to India and Burma during 1875/6. In acknowledgement of the service given by Bandmaster Kreyer and his musicians to the Prince on this tour, the Portsmouth Division RMLI was awarded the Prince of Wales' plume for wearing as an additional badge on the head-dress of its members. This distinctive badge was worn by the Portsmouth Band until the 1923 amalgamation, then for a further seven years the custom was perpetuated by the Depot Band at Deal, which was disbanded in 1930 when the Royal Naval School of Music moved there. (See note below)

Before looking eastward in the direction of Plymouth, we ought to examine what was happening in the bands of the British Army during the early 1870s. A strong official reaction had set in against the future employment of German civilian bandmasters, mainly due to the continuing success of Kneller Hall in training enlisted Army bandsmen as military bandmasters. This establishment was the brainchild of the Duke of Cambridge, the long serving Commander-in-Chief of the Victorian Army, and therefore the official pressure applied at this time to regiments still having civilian bandmasters was not totally unexpected.

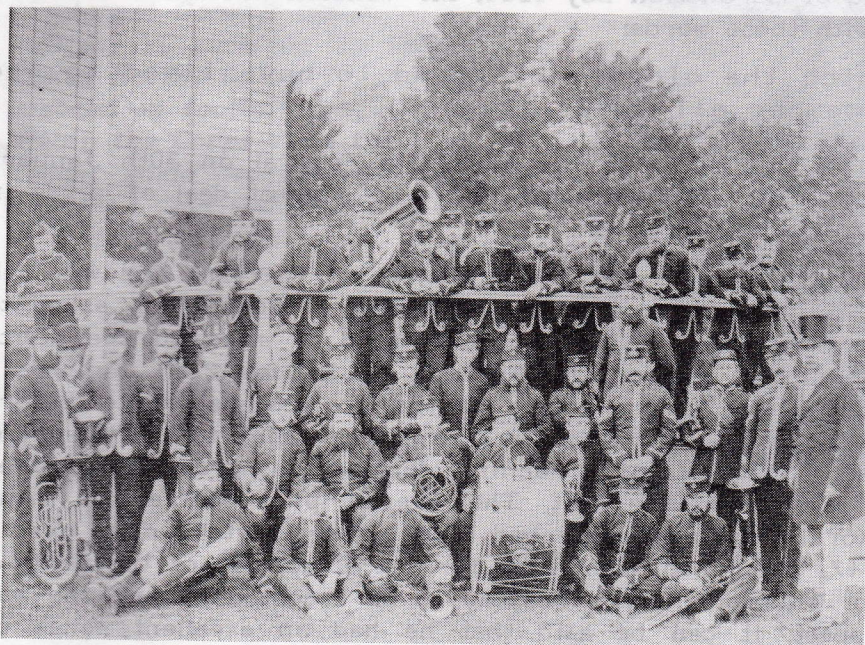
Embarrassingly placed in this unfavourable climate was Carl F H Froehnert, Bandmaster of the 2nd Life Guards. Born in Saxony, Froehnert came to England in 1856 under the sponsorship of the Prince Consort. The reason for him leaving the Metropolis for the West Country in 1872, when he exchanged posts with the Bandmaster of the Plymouth Division RMLI, William Winterbottom, is not absolutely clear; it could well have been connected with the feeling in the Army against the employment of foreign bandmasters. Whatever the reason for his departure from the Household Cavalry, Carl Froehnert's appointment as Bandmaster of the Plymouth Division was an outstanding success. He founded an orchestra and took the band on numerous concert tours in the West of England.

Froehnert occasionally visited his homeland, then still the mecca of military music, and would bring back with him the latest in military band publications for subsequent presentation by the Plymouth Division Band. One of these works 'The Turkish Patrol', which became a universal favourite with concert goers throughout the world, was first performed in this country by the Plymouth band. The stone-laying ceremony of Truro Cathedral in May 1880 was an event which attracted the attendance of several members of the Royal Family for which the Plymouth Band under the direction of Bandmaster Froehnert was engaged to play, both at the ceremony itself and at the week-long programme of associated social events held at the home of Lord Falmouth. The Band later participated in the consecration service of the new building at the invitation of the Dean and Chapter; on this occasion the musicians 'rigged up' in the choir stalls and in the interests of ecclesiastical propriety were asked to wear choristers' surplices over their ceremonial uniforms. Although he spoke very poor English, Froehnert became fully integrated into the Plymouth musical scene, both military and civilian, and for many years acted as Inspecting Bandmaster of the Devonport based training ships. He died in 1890 whilst still in harness and was buried with full military honours in Plymouth Cemetery.

Without wearying the reader with too much background which would include a reference to the Cardwell reforms, the War Office decided that there should be more tangible recognition for the responsibilities and qualifications of Army bandmasters. Accordingly a General Order dated 1st July 1881 granted Warrant Officer status on all qualified bandmasters of the Army. Resulting from this directive, the three RMLI bandmasters and the bandmaster of the RMA were similarly elevated at the end of 1881, but with effect from

the same date as that applicable to the Army. By this time each of our three 'alien' bandmasters had become naturalised British subjects. There were, however, some obstacles to negotiate.

By virtue of the trio's newly acquired Warrant Officer status, it was obvious that something would have to be done about the wearing of uniform. Kreyer normally appeared with the Portsmouth Band in uniform but his two colleagues preferred to be dressed on such occasions in civilian clothes (the Army had ruled against this practice in 1874). One can only guess that official pressure was brought to bear on the two erring bandmasters for it is subsequently recorded that when the Chatham and Plymouth Divisional Bands of the RMLI appeared at the Bath and West Show, held at Bridgwater in 1883, both Bandmaster Kappey and Bandmaster Froehnert appeared in uniform for the first time. Even after this event, Froehnert was known to be averse to wearing uniform, as witnessed in a photograph



The Plymouth Division RMLI Band in 1888 with Bandmaster Carl Froehnert on the right in his usual civilian dress.

of the Plymouth Band taken in 1888. On this occasion the rig of the day for Bandmaster Froehnert was a tailed coat and billy-cock hat. Included, rather ironically, among the much prized uniform exhibits on display in the Corps Museum are those belonging to Bandmaster Froehnert.

Much of the criticism directed at German Bandmasters in the Army concerned the impermanence of their employment. Such criticism could not be levelled at the Marines' three German bandmasters for collectively they were to serve the Corps for 72 years. During the period from 1872 to 1884 all three RMLI Divisional Bands were directed by native Germans, which must have made John Winterbottom, bandmaster of the RMA at that time, feel quite a foreigner in such company. Kappey, Kreyer and Froehnert were musicians trained in the classical style, a characteristic which each was able to inject into the performances of the bands and orchestras they directed, a tradition still maintained by Royal Marines Bands a century later.

Note: The Prince of Wales' Plumes awarded to the Portsmouth Band are not to be confused with a similar award to the Plymouth Division Band as a result of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) world tour in HMS Renown in 1920.

AN HISTORICAL MOMENT RECALLED

The Funeral of Sir Winston Churchill

by Edgar Maybanks (RMHS)

Sir Winston Churchill had been in ill health for some time but on Friday 15th January 1965 he became gravely ill after a stroke. Whilst many people waited in respectful silence near his home in Hyde Park Gate, the authorities concerned turned their thoughts to that operation which they hoped would not happen, but knew was now inevitable - *Operation 'Hope Not'*. Sir Winston was in his 91st year and could look back at an unequalled and magnificent part in the history of our country. A politician, statesman, author, painter, raconteur - a man with so many talents - who had been Prime Minister on three separate occasions. I recall that at the end of Coronation Day 1954, Sir Winston had introduced Her Majesty's address to her people with these words:

"We have had a day which the oldest are proud to have lived to see and the young will remember all their lives"

It was a remark that could equally apply to his own State Funeral on 30th January 1965. It is certainly an occasion I will always remember and with a great deal of pride in having been a small part of that historic scene.

I was serving as an Inspector at Kensington Police Station at the time and was well aware of the grave illness of Sir Winston, and as the situation worsened, was asked to stand by in readiness to join a small team at New Scotland Yard to make all the police arrangements. I was eventually summoned and on the morning of Sunday 24th January, I joined a convoy of cars and officials to make a recce of the processional route. Before departure from the Palace of Westminster, the person in charge was called to the telephone to receive the news that Sir Winston had died that morning. Our careful preparations over the past years were about to be put to the test. The overall plan centred on many functions following upon D-Day (or Death Day). These had been planned to take place over a number of days culminating in D+7, which had been fixed for the actual day of the funeral. By his death on that Sunday Sir Winston allowed the plan to be executed in just the way he intended. Without any disrespect, it can be said that he had an excellent sense of timing. It certainly allowed everything to fit into place and provide a fitting tribute to one of the most outstanding men of our times.

Being a State occasion it was the Earl Marshal and members of his office who were to be responsible for the event and act as coordinators of the hectic activity in the week ahead. Having completed the initial recce, it was instantly recognised that we would be unable to carry out all our tasks without being permanently based at the Yard and available throughout the 24 hours. Beds were erected in a room alongside the Conference Room in the North Extension of the old Yard (now the Headquarters of No 8 Area of the Metropolitan Police), and we quickly turned our energies to the problems ahead. The days were long when we were up with the crack of dawn and the nights were fairly short because there was always something to be done through the evenings, making an early night virtually impossible.

One of the first tasks was the removal of Sir Winston's body from his home in Hyde Park to Westminster Hall where it was to lay in state. It was essential this movement was carried out with care and several 'dummy runs' were made over the route to ensure the escorting cars travelled at the right speed and arrived at Westminster Hall at the correct time to fit in with the receiving arrangements. Timing was of the essence because, to



The funeral cortege of Sir Winston Churchill and the Guard of Honour provided by 41 Commando RM outside the Tower of London on 30th January 1965.

ensure everything works smoothly, every movement needs to work like clockwork. Hence a need for meticulous attention to detail even with the smallest of movements without becoming obsessive. My experience over the years has proved that such concern will usually produce the desired results.

There were many meetings to attend and briefings and recces to plan. David Hall (now Chief Constable of Humberside) and I shared these tasks, with Sergeants David Morehen and Cyril Gibbons giving great support. The Assistant Commissioner in charge of 'A' Department at that time was John Lovegrove Waldron (later to become Sir John Waldron KCVO and Commissioner of the Metropolis). He took a great interest in our planning and two particular memories come to mind.

I recall that he wanted to look round the route and particularly wished to see St Paul's Cathedral where the funeral service was to take place. I foolishly thought this would mean a ride in his official car so it was with some surprise that he announced that we would walk the route. So we set off along Whitehall starting from the Palace of Westminster, along the Strand and Fleet Street and up Ludgate Hill to St Paul's. After that we continued along to Tower Pier where the body of Sir Winston was to be taken and carried on the Royal barge by river to Festival Hall Pier, to Waterloo Station and thence to Bladon in Oxfordshire for burial. Having completed our walk Mr Waldron announced we would return to the Yard by underground. My bonus was that my fare was paid!

The final recce was a grand affair in itself. A convoy of some 12 cars set off from Westminster Hall with the car conveying the Earl Marshal of England at its head. We went over the route arriving at St Paul's and viewing the arrangements. We then went down to Tower Pier where Mr Waldron decided he did not wish to go onto the Pier itself with the other dignitaries and asked me to brief him on the latest developments with the police arrangements. We returned to his car for this purpose which was positioned right at the end of the convoy. So engrossed were we in this briefing that it was only after a few minutes I realised the convoy was on the move with the police motor cyclist escorts at front and rear. I assumed it had been a short meeting on the Pier and it was not until the convoy reached Festival Hall Pier that I realised that all the cars except ours was empty. What had happened was that the party had boarded the Royal Barge and were journeying to

Festival Hall Pier by river. I told Mr Waldron fully expecting an almighty rocket for not paying attention to detail. Not so - he expressed the view that it was a very cold day and we should have been very uncomfortable on board the boat. We simply joined the group as they progressed on foot to Waterloo Station. It did not appear we had been missed and were on hand with our views and those of the British Transport Police were sought on the final stages of the ceremonial.

Catering at major police events had always been a problem and you usually ended up with a cup of tea and perhaps a sandwich if you were lucky. When I first joined, you had to take your own refreshments with you on these occasions. Shortly before this event the Force had appointed Colonel Reginald Owens OBE (a former Commandant of the Army Catering Corps) as Director of Catering for the Metropolitan Police. Reg was to revolutionise catering in the Force. Bulk feeding arrangements were unheard of but Reg had experimented with this at Epsom races where those on duty welcomed the opportunity of having a cooked meal prior to duty. The State Funeral was an occasion when a large number of police officers were to be on duty, and one which called for some very detailed planning to coordinate feeding arrangements with parading times and the many movements which would require a police presence at all times. It was obvious we would not have sufficient police premises in Central London to accommodate police on duty and it was necessary to seek alternative venues like the Nuffield Centre (then at the back of St Martins-in-the-Fields Church), Shell Mex House, Cable and Wireless (then off the Embankment) and the Shell Centre on South Bank where Reg was very persuasive in encouraging officials to assist us. In the final event it went very smoothly and we managed to feed everyone without any disruption to the police arrangements. A great tribute to the expertise of Reg and his colleagues of the Catering Branch.

There were many rehearsals to attend, many elements of the planning to be tested and woven into the rich tapestry of the ceremonial occasion. One early morning rehearsal saw us on duty at Tower Hill on a very cold January morning. I was met there by Major Ian Ferguson whom I had met earlier. He was part of the military team from Headquarters London District responsible for the military planning on behalf of the GOC London District. He has subsequently used his expertise in planning to good effect because now in retirement he is Director of the Royal Tournament. He also represented a link with the police as his father, Sir John Ferguson, had been Chief Constable of Kent.

The great day dawned. All the planning was complete and only a fine tuning was required. Now was the time to test our efforts. One particular concern was the convoy of VIPs from Buckingham Place to St Paul's. It had been the subject of careful timing and some detailed rehearsal with motor cycle escorts, and David Morehen had used his undoubted mathematical skills in ensuring movements were timed to the second. The problem was that immediately the rear of the main procession had passed Horse Guards Gate, the leading car of the VIP convoy was to cross Whitehall and proceed via Embankment to reach St Paul's ahead of the procession. The funeral procession was very long and there was not much time to spare. Rehearsals had indicated it was possible, but on the day something conspired to give us cause for concern.

There was a large number of guests attending the service by car and vehicles were still nose to tail from St Paul's back to the Strand by the time the funeral procession was formed up awaiting the cortege to emerge from Westminster Hall. The main procession stretched all the way down Whitehall and Embankment to the Tate Gallery, with a gap at the entrance to the Palace of Westminster to allow the gun carriage bearing the body of Sir Winston to join. There was still a little time before the signal would be given to march off but the cars and guests looked like a never ending tide.

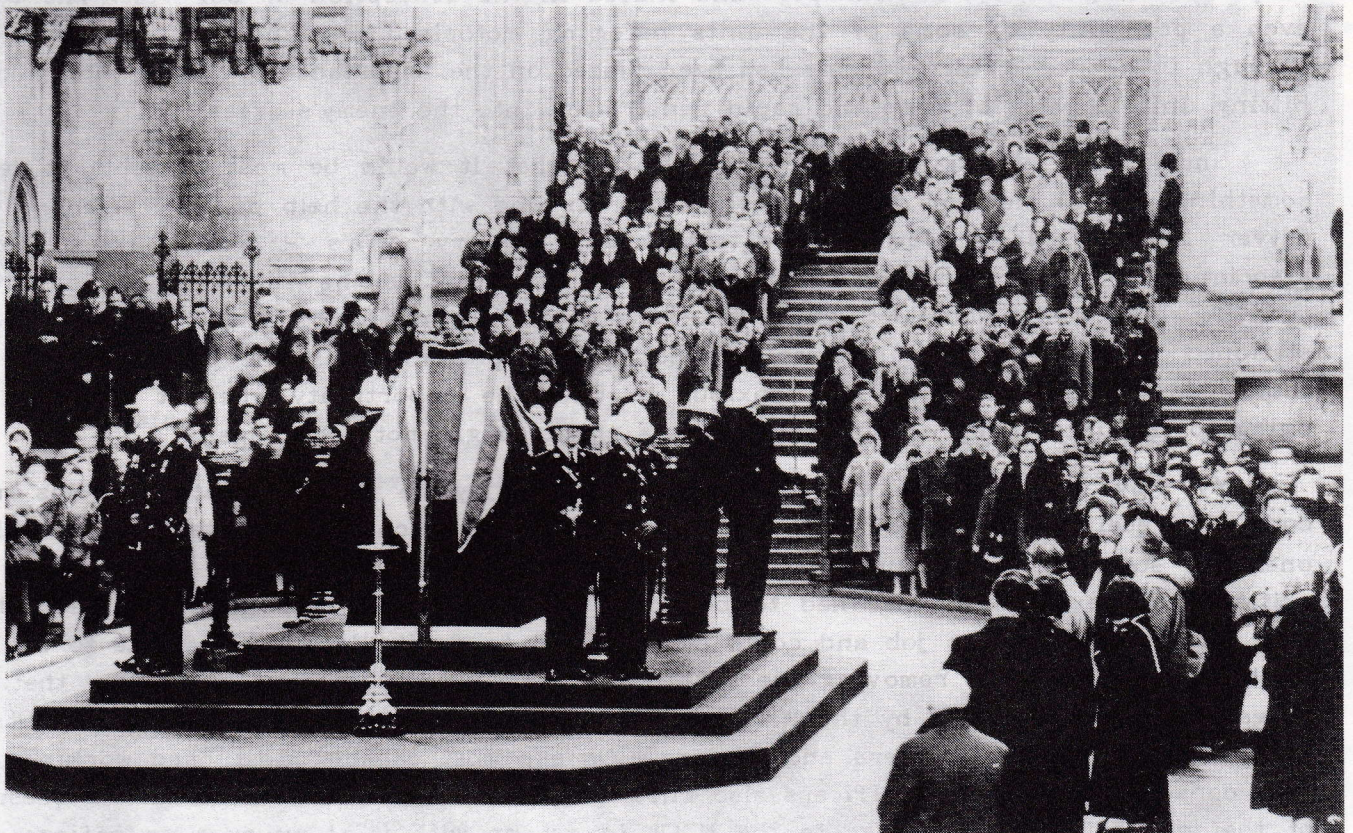
The City of London police did a marvellous job in parking these vehicles and by the time the crucial moment came, all had been cleared. The procession started and at the appropriate moment the VIP convoy cleared the rear of it, arrived at St Paul's and disembarked its passengers well before the head of the procession reached Ludgate Circus. Overall everything worked well. Doubtless there were other hitches but these have been lost in the annals of time. In any case they were completely overshadowed by the magnificence of the occasion which made one proud to be British.

One historic moment was the presence of Her Majesty The Queen at the funeral service, an honour not normally accorded to a commoner, being joined on the steps of the cathedral by other members of the Royal Family as Sir Winston was borne away to Tower

Pier and thence by river to Waterloo. From there he was taken to the village of Bladon, near his birthplace at Blenheim Palace, and buried close to his mother, father and other relatives in the churchyard of Bladon Church.

We received many letters of congratulations which were greatly appreciated. My own prize possession was one from Earl Mountbatten of Burma, then Chief of the Defence Staff, thanking me for making the arrangements for the motor cycle escort. Although it is typed, the last sentence was in manuscript "The escort was superb. Yours sincerely, Mountbatten of Burma." A typically generous gesture and a great tribute to the expertise of the Special Escort Group of the Metropolitan Police who provide escorts on such occasions. It also marked a link with the future because Lord Mountbatten also approved his own funeral plans in advance and in 1979 I was recalled from a course to oversee the police arrangements on that occasion.

I will finish by reflecting the feelings of many people at that particular time. It is encapsulated in the scene of the Lying-in-State of Sir Winston in Westminster Hall; a



The lying in state of Sir Winston Churchill in Westminster Hall. This was the first time the Corps had provided officers for such duties on a state occasion, 17 in total. It is interesting to note that three present members of the RMHS Council, Majors Jeff Beadle, Alastair Donald and Captain Derek Oakley were amongst them, as was Major Tony Brown, the former Director of the Royal Marines Museum, who died recently.

historic place outside which over 300,000 people queued to pay their last respects to the great man. We were invited to see this historic sight and as we emerged into the Hall from a side door a breath-taking scene met our eyes. In the middle of the Hall lay the coffin, draped with the Union Flag and mounted on a purple catafalque with officers of the Household Cavalry in full ceremonial uniform mounting guard at each of the four corners. Passing by in respectful silence were members of the public who had been waiting hours in the cold January air to say farewell to "Winnie". There were many wet eyes and the atmosphere produced a tingling sensation that you were watching history in the making. I think the words of the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson are a fitting epitaph:

"He is now at peace after a life in which he created history and it will be remembered as long as history is read"

In a very small way I was proud to be part of that history.

In the late summer of 1941 we went into our winter quarters in the lovely border town of Kelso which stands on the confluence of the Tweed and Teviot. C Company, with D Company, commanded by Tyndall Biscoe, whose post as Adjutant had been taken over by George Belbin, was billeted on the Kelso race course - about a mile out of town. This was very good arrangement and we all lived and trained very happily and harmoniously together although the officers' sleeping accommodation was very limited.

For some time there had been indications that Royal Marines formations and units were to be brought in line with the standard army pattern especially in the way of heavier weapons, a larger scale of transport and indeed in the conception of our role. There was even a possibility of some of the units becoming motorised as, since the German break through in France, great emphasis had been placed on the importance of highly mobile hard hitting units capable of deep and rapid penetration into the enemy's areas.

Under such circumstances it seemed to me that it would be most valuable to learn something of this new art of motorised soldiering and with the help of Major General Sir Oliver Leese - whose family were old friends of my wife's - and inter-regimental associations - it was arranged for me to go on attachment to the 4th Battalion Coldstream Guards, which was a motorised Battalion of the newly formed Guards Armoured Division and stationed at Elstree. My visit was in fact rather premature as the Coldstreamers had indicated it would be, but I was anxious to take the opportunity when it occurred as, owing to the uncertainty of our move, such a chance might not occur again.

My stay with the 4th Coldstreams was most enjoyable and interesting. I was most cordially received and lived in the battalion HQ Mess which was inevitably an excellent one. The standard of the unit was extremely high in every way. There was no fuss or agitation but everything that had to be done was done at the appointed time, and done well. Everybody knew his job and could be relied on to do it. Here I would like to add my humble comment towards removing the myth - which still exists in some quarters - that the Brigade of Guards is run by the Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs. This is quite untrue. Certainly the Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs are most capable, most hard working and most conscientious; but the officers also know and do their duty and there was no question of the unit being 'turned over to the NCOs to get on with it'. I am sure no officer who contemplated such a method would be tolerated.

The Foot Guards did, of course, possess one enormous advantage. That was in their reserve of other ranks, the result of the short service system of a minimum of three years with the Colours. In the Marines, the minimum engagement was for 12 years, the theory being that a marine's training was so long and expensive that it was not economic to release him earlier. As a result our pensioners when recalled for duty were generally quite old men, at any rate by modern military standards.

My MOA, Marine Sign, too I fancy very much enjoyed our stay with 4th Coldstreams. There was a good deal of Brigade of Guards stuff - special procedures and customs, special methods of doing things, even special forms of speech; but Sign was in no way intimidated or overwhelmed but came back with special Royal Marines customs, such as keeping his hat

on at every possible opportunity and indulging in a good deal of esoteric phraseology - which was either incomprehensible or infuriating to the uninitiated.

One of the Company Commanders, Pilkington, said to me one day "Don't think you're going to come here without us making some use of you. I've put you down to give a lecture to the Company on landings". This I was very pleased to do and my audience seemed to find it interesting. At all event there were a lot of questions afterwards. At that time very few soldiers had had any experience of landings or landing craft.

I enjoyed my stay with the 4th Coldstreams but in due course returned to Scotland. We received much hospitality from the people who lived in and around Kelso, and in particular from Jim Hepburn Scott and Lady Isobel. He was Chamberlain to the Duke of Roxburgh and soon after our arrival organised a shooting party in which several of us were included. During shooting one day, Tigger Phillipps was unfortunately peppered in the wrist by another gun. He was keen and experienced and very correct about shooting procedure, and not caring about the treatment he held out his arm towards the man in the next butt pointing to his bleeding wrist. The man, entirely misunderstanding the gesture thought that Tigger Phillipps was asking the time, and he blithely replied *"Twenty to one. Nearly lunch time!"*

Inevitably we were required to provide parties of men to help with the harvest, and this was most welcomed, particularly by the countrymen, not only as a change from soldiering, but also for the spoils of harvest which provided welcome additions for the cookhouse pot. David Miller was determined that we should not be cold in our grandstand mess during the coming winter and organised parties to collect and saw up fallen timber. This activity was combined with running driving classes for the orderlies and MOAs and thus served two practical purposes, as we felt that the use of petrol and vehicles was justified.

Quite a number of the wives of both officers and other ranks had taken the opportunity of our fairly protracted stay at Kelso to join their husbands and largely due to the energy and enterprise of Jane Palmer, the wife of Major Eric Palmer, a wives club had been formed to provided social and welfare amenities. At Christmas 1941, a party for the children of the battalion was organised and almost inevitably I was nominated for the role of Father Christmas. When the time came for the distribution of presents all went well until the turn came of one little boy who refused to come near despite all the cajolings and blandishments. The red hood and cloak, the false, hot and uncomfortable beard, the attempt to disguise my voice failed utterly with him and exhortations *"Come and get your nice present from Father Christmas"*. *"That's not Father Christmas - that's that nasty Captain Ennor who gave my Daddy 7 days CB!"*

Many changes took place about this time. Freddie Pym, Cuttles and Peter Picton-Phillipps had departed - all, I think, to commands. Charles Spencer had gone to the Holding Battalion. John Biggs-Davison to the Burma Civil Service. We all welcomed Eric Palmer, who had come to us as second-in-command and Michael Previte who had rejoined. Now we were to lose our Commanding Officer on his promotion to Brigadier. There is always a grave danger that if a unit is commanded by an individual of exceptional character and enthusiasm and ability, it will suffer very considerably when that commander's guiding hand and leadership are removed. Col Nick Williams had made his battalion such a manifestation of himself, he had been so much the driving force behind every enterprise and activity, that 2RM suffered

from his departure very much more than it would have done from the loss of a mediocre commanding officer. Had there been a higher proportion of senior long service officers and NCOs no doubt the situation could have been more easily sustained, but Col Williams was succeeded by an officer of lesser ability. For a time the battalion went through what was undoubtedly a bad period.

At this time I began to notice for the first time some deterioration in the quality of the men we were receiving from the Training Battalion. No doubt the original standard of our men had been extremely high, and no doubt the manpower shortage and widespread conscription were beginning to make their impact upon our recruiting. This falling off in quality was evidenced by a certain increase in 'crime'. Not very serious crime - it was nearly all absence over leave and that sort of thing, but there was more of it than before. As in the case of civilian offences, it was generally a matter of *cherchez-la-femme*. Almost invariably investigation revealed that a man had been put under pressure by his wife or girl friend to forget his duty. The very phrases "*You put the service before me*" and "*If you go back I shall know you don't really love me*" were employed by some women to divert a man from his allegiance. Such women had clearly no conception of this first duty towards their menfolk, that of being a support and strength and inspiration, but were concerned only with their own personal feelings and vanities. I know that a trained and disciplined man of good character should not succumb to such temptations, but I can also visualise how hard it must have been for some men, possibly with no tradition of service or duty, no experience of discipline, no sense of loyalty save to himself to resist the appeals, threats or blandishments which were offered to him by those who most of all should have been trying to help him. I remember once when a man was before me charged with absence saying "I wish the women could be made to do the punishment - it is mostly their fault". I meant it then and I mean it now.

Some time early in 1942, Noel Beale joined my Company. He was a regular subaltern and had lately been Assistant Adjutant at Chatham. He was a very smart and efficient young officer, but brought with him his servant Bridges, who was a regular old sweat. I had had some advance information - presumably from the orderly room - about what to expect, but was not quite prepared for the positive volumes of conduct sheets which arrived with Marine Bridges. I at once got hold of Noel Beale and explained to him that we really could not put up with Bridges if he were going to be a continual nuisance and that he must be made to realise that he must behave himself. As a matter of fact he did. We had no trouble with him except that he was strongly suspected of stealing the stair carpet from the Divisional HQ Mess when his master went there on an attachment.

In my career I have had a good deal to do with welfare, and I think it can be dangerous and undesirable especially when it receives too much official recognition and is administered at any level higher than the unit. The same objections to welfare in the State applies to welfare in the unit, if it removes from individuals the sense of their own responsibilities and their own capacity for resourcefulness. There is a dangerous tendency for the Welfare Services to be claimed as of right. Welfare organised on a voluntary basis within a unit in the way of Wives Clubs, help with clothes, children, private troubles, and in cases of distress is a very different matter. It is the privilege and right of regimental officers (and wives) to care for their men (and their families) in this way, but welfare without the personal touch and when its funds and directions are controlled by some remote authority is not, in my view, satisfactory. There is a real danger of welfare

being developed as a political cry and if the impression that it is an officially recognised right through which higher authority may be invoked, the proper voluntary help and interest of regimental officers and their wives can become an unreasonable burden, and unwarranted interference may well ensue.

In the early part of 1942 I fell into one of the very few 'square numbers' that came my way during the war. This was attendance at an MT course at York. It was designated a 'Senior Officers MT Course' and was designed for Brigadiers and Commanding Officers of units. However the Brigadiers and Colonels did not realise what a good thing they were on to and the course 'failed to fill'. It was therefore extended downwards to include Captains, and finally I think no-one above that rank actually appeared.

We were instructed to assemble on a Sunday evening and I, dutiful and punctual as ever, allowed sufficient time to reconnoitre the route from our hotel to the Territorial Drill Hall where the course was to be held. We were accommodated at the best hotel in York at the (then high) daily rate of 25/-. Our board and lodging was supposed to be at public expense, but representations were made to us that we should contribute 2/6 per day, a sum we would be paying in our unit messes. That did not seem to be a very heavy tribute in return for excellent accommodation and food, so we were graciously pleased to concur.

I, enthusiastic and anxious to oblige, had brought with me a suit of blue overalls which had been issued to me at Deal, thinking there might be some crawling under vehicles and similar dirty work. I need not have worried and could have attended in a tail coat and white waistcoat without the slightest risk of getting a speck of dirt or a spot of oil on my clothes. Clearly there was to be no change in the syllabus for us humble mortals from that planned for our august seniors. Clearly the Commandant had prepared an opening address which he considered suitable for Brigadiers and Colonels, and he was not going to alter this either.

Accordingly on the first morning we assembled to hear the opening address of the Commandant, who dressed as a full colonel, was presumably in peace-time a tycoon in the motor industry. In his first sentence he expressed his regret at "having to invite you senior officers to assemble so early in the morning as 9am". He went on to explain that this was because he had another appointment to keep, but that in future the starting time would be 9.30 which he hoped would be acceptable to us. As most of us were in the habit of arriving at our company offices not later than 8.15 daily we felt we might be able to manage the proposed arrangement without undue strain!

The opening address was scarcely over when an NCO popped his head round the door and shouted the word 'Break'. This clearly was some sort of a talisman; I thought it might be a code word for an air raid warning; the instructor stopped in mid-sentence, everyone leapt to his feet and charged through the door to the next room, where a magnificent spread of buns, cakes, biscuits, tea and coffee was laid out. This no doubt was designed to fill the aching void which might develop in the stomach of the hypothetical senior officers between an ample breakfast and a heavy luncheon, and we tucked in accordingly. This banquet appeared twice daily, morning and afternoon, and we were never asked to contribute a penny.

Instruction continued until 12 o'clock although the time on the programme was 12.30, but the instructor explained that he presumed this meant 12.30 at the hotel. The half hour thus allowed enabled us to negotiate the ten minutes walk back to our hotel without

having to hurry. Having enjoyed a few drinks and an excellent luncheon in pleasant company, we returned to the drill hall in a comatose state. Very sensibly the first period in the afternoon was invariably devoted to an instructional film. There were not many available on our subject, so the fact that the same film might make more than one appearance did not matter as sleep, not study, was the object of the exercise. The afternoon's tea and buns and one more period of instruction followed and by 4.30 our labours were over for the day.

Of the actual instruction I only remember one item. The question was asked: "*If you have no inspection pit how do you lubricate the undercarriage of a tank?*" The answer given was: "*Obtain another tank and a tow rope. With this pull the first tank onto its side and it is then simple to go round the grease points with a grease gun*". I think this was the 'wrong' rather than the 'right' solution.

All too soon this course came to an end and it was time to return to our units. One entertaining officer from, I think, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment kept asking "*What on earth shall I tell my battalion? They thought they were sending me on a battle course.*" What he did tell his battalion I know not but there must have been a good deal of telling because it was not long before the course was abolished; it had, I fancy, achieved such fame, or perhaps notoriety, that 'questions had been asked in the House'. Concurrently with this course had been one for junior officers. This was a truly terrible affair; the students lived in extreme discomfort, they were constantly busy greasing and crawling under muddy vehicles, or washing them with ice cold water, and there was an examination at the end. Our carrier platoon officer went on that and I can only have escaped it by the spin of a coin as he was only junior to me in a very nominal sense.

We had one interesting experience during one of our landing exercises. We were embarked with the 8th Bn Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in the *Winchester Castle*, and in turning this big ship in Loch Fyne she just went aground. Everyone was summoned on deck and by moving a large number of men back and fro from the port side to the starboard, the ship was rocked off. The flood tide was just beginning to make and no doubt the ship would have come off by herself without much difficulty or delay, but it was interesting to take part in what was apparently quite a recognised naval evolution.

In March 1942 we said goodbye to our kind friends in Kelso and moved to Dunblane and soon after our arrival I left the battalion. Before my story diverges from that of 2RM in which I had served since the early days of the war, I would like to make reference to a particular category of men - our Marine Servants - or MOAs (Marine Officers Attendants). There has always been a great and respected tradition of this service in the Corps, and rightly so. I cannot too strongly deplore the attitude which was allowed to develop - indeed to some extent by official regulations fostered during the war - of regarding the soldier servant merely as a man to clean one's kit, to perform stereotyped duties in the field, and to have no more personal bond or alliance with his officer than is required for the performance of these duties. With the right officer and the right man the proper relationship is very much more than this: it is of value and importance not only to the two individuals themselves but also to their units efficiency and morale, and it should not, in my view, be lightly disregarded just to facilitate problems of drafting and administration. Fortunately in the Marines the principle was generally accepted that master and man should not be separated, although I was told on one occasion that this principle should correctly only apply to regulars. To my simple question "Why?" there was no answer.

At all events Marine Sign came to me in 1940 and despite regulations he stayed with me until the end of the war. Provided the right combination of determination and tact was employed, those in charge of drafting and postings were generally understanding and sympathetic, but it did require quite a lot of application and resolution to get one's way.

The measure of the qualities of our MOAs and the impact they made on us, is perhaps shown in the fact that now, after many years, I should quite clearly remember the names of so many of them in the battalion. Many of the MOAs identified themselves so closely with their masters that the word 'we' was substituted for you (or I) and a very communal attitude to inter-changeable items of clothing adopted.

It is related that before some great parade, and this on a foreign station, perhaps Malta, the great functionary involved had said *"I wish this to be a full proper parade with nobody absent, and without numbers of men skulking out of sight."* Mr Harden and his servant were able to muster between them sufficient to enable one but not both of them to appear on parade. It was decided that the officer's absence would be more noticeable than that of the man. Came the great day and the grandee, accompanied by his glittering entourage, rode along the tree lined approach to the parade. Something made him look up and through the plumage of his cocked hat he espied pendant from the branches of a tree a pair of somewhat grubby feet emerging from a pair of blue red-striped trousers.

The procession halted and the feet were addressed thus: *"Come down!"* No answer. *"Come down!"* *"No sir!"* *"Come down at once. I am giving you a direct order."* *"Can't sir!"* *"Can't? What do you mean?"* *"I can't, sir, Mr 'Arden's got our boots on!"*

To Be Continued

Book Review

Uniforms & Insignia of the Navies of World War II

Compiled by US Naval Intelligence. Introduction by Andrew Mollo

This book of 112 pages is based on the United States *Joint Army and Navy Publication No One* mostly published in 1943 and 1944, which Andrew Mollo describes as "the most comprehensive intelligence manual on military uniform to have been produced during World War 2." He confines this book, a facsimile of JAN 1, to the naval sections and covers fifteen different navies. It is entirely in colour and covers not only uniforms and badges of rank, but also specialist insignia and buttons in some detail.

It will appeal to the uniform specialists and model makers for its very comprehensive coverage, though the colour and styling of some of the uniforms in the twelve pages devoted to the Royal and Commonwealth Navies may be open to interpretation. It certainly reminds us of the branch colours once worn by naval officers, when you could tell who was who at a glance. This is the largest section except for the United States Navy which also includes Decorations and Medals. The American section is the only one which includes mention of any of the world's Marines Corps, these particular illustrations being taken from the National Geographic Magazine. At £25 this is a fairly expensive book for all but the devoted specialist and military library.

(Published by Greenhill Books at £25 - ISBN: 1-85367-097-9)

SPECIAL PUBLICATION No 13

FIDELITY WILL HAUNT ME TILL I DIE

by Peter Kingswell

During 1940/1941, Claude Peri, a Corsican seafarer, sailed his ship *Le Rhin* around the Mediterranean in a series of clandestine operations under the direction of SOE (Special Operations Executive). She became a blockade runner, landing and taking off agents and escaped allied personnel. These exploits are well documented in other books.

Early in 1942 the ship, now renamed HMS *Fidelity* came under the control of Combined Operations Headquarters in London. Her crew assumed *noms de guerre*, Claude Peri being granted the rank of Commander RN and taking the name of Jacques Langlais.

This book tells the story of the last eight months of the ship, which was fitted out as a 'Q' ship with two seaplanes, an MTB, two landing craft, torpedo tubes and 4" guns. It follows the extraordinary persuasive powers of Langlais, a self confessed pirate, to get the authorities to refit his tramp steamer, to provide him with a company of the toughest Royal Marines Commandos in the world, allow him to take a 1st Officer WRNS as his cypher officer and obtain the services of the most experienced Royal Naval Officer in landing troops on foreign shores as his First Lieutenant.

Langlais obtained the backing of Winston Churchill, Lord Louis Mountbatten and Admiral Somerville for his secret mission to the Far East behind Japanese lines. He trained his commandos in the village of Chale in the Isle of Wight under bizarre conditions, disrupting the village life for the summer of 1942. The eccentric commander told his men that he would "lead them to a glorious death; he could offer them no more". The thoughts and misgivings of many of the sailors and marines, through their letters home, form a potent memorial to an enterprise that was ill-fated from the day it was conceived. No doubt the authorities were too embarrassed after the war to issue more than the barest details.

Peter Kingswell spent many years patiently researching this remarkable story, interviewing the only two survivors he could trace, talking to next of kin and the villagers of Chale. When HMS *Fidelity* was sent to the bottom of the the North Atlantic on 31st December 1942, 406 souls went with her. No official account has previously been published and the Royal Marines Historical Society is delighted to bring this previously unrecorded piece of Royal Naval and Royal Marines history to a wider audience.

Copies may be obtained from the Major Jeff Beadle MBE, MC, Royal Marines Historical Society, 18 Clarence Parade, Southsea, Hants, PO5 3NU at £4.50 (plus £1 p & p) (128pp with 20 photographs and diagrams).

