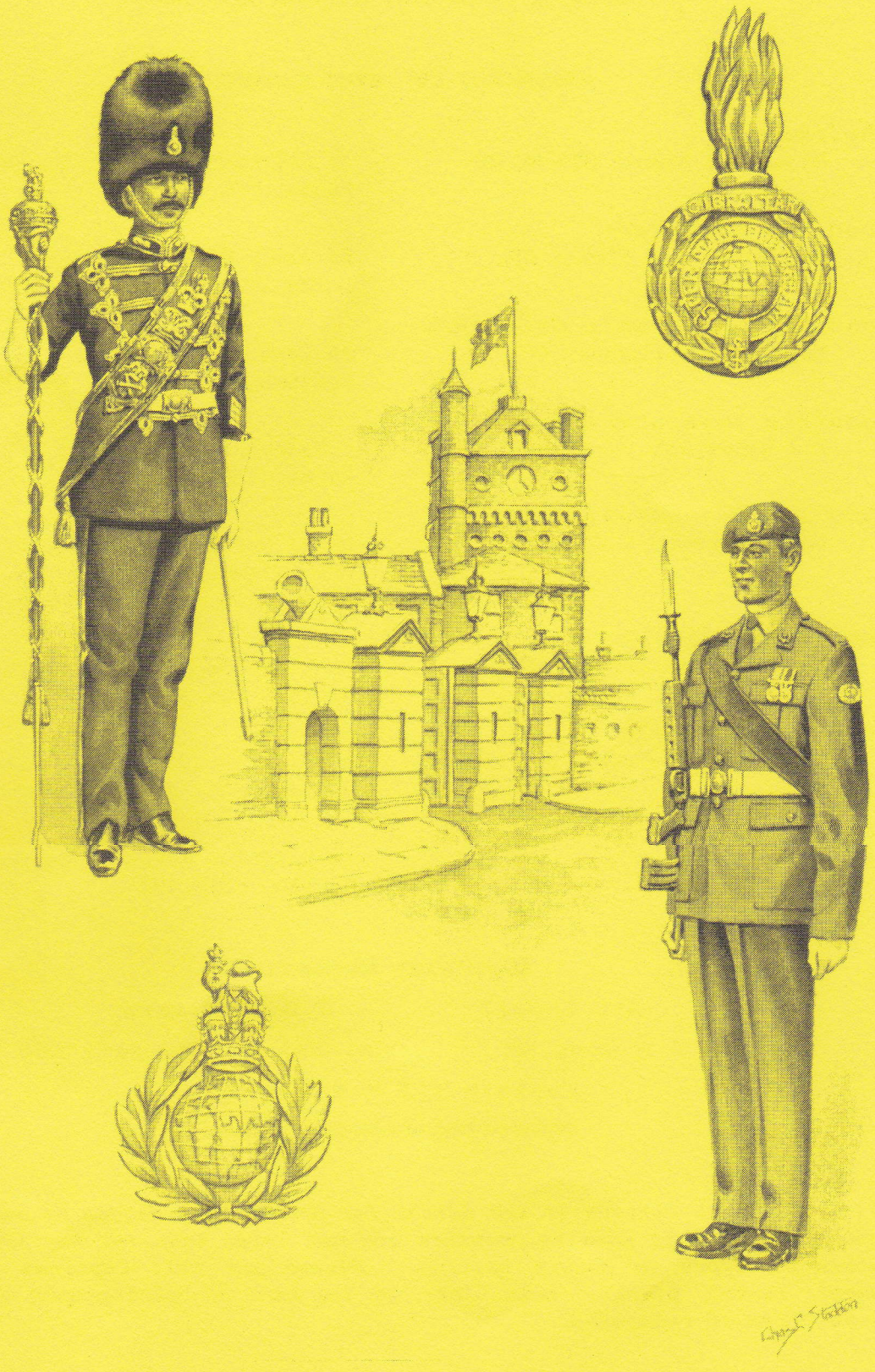
Royal Marines
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SHEET ANCHOR

Volume XVIII No. 1

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THE SHEET ANCHOR

Volume XVIII No. 1 *SUMMER 1993*

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Prostitute, Pawn Shop and Parliament

The Fate of a Group of Royal Marines Medals

by Captain K J Douglas-Morris DL, RN *(Member of RMHS)*

Man made rules and regulations are never perfect, and changes to them might sometimes stem from peculiar happenings; this is one such story.

On 8th November 1866 at a Magistrate's Court in Plymouth a woman was brought before the local Justices of the Peace. She was Eliza Bourne, a prostitute who resided at the Post Office Inn, St Andrew Street. Her crime was somewhat different to that normally associated with her professional work, for she was accused of:

> "Pawning three silver medals and clasps, the property of Robert Luscombe, a Private, Royal Marines, of 23 Company, contrary to Section 89 of the Marine Mutiny Act."

On the face of it, such a seemingly trivial and petty offence would not arouse a ripple of interest in the Court or elsewhere; but this misdemeanour was more of a rock than a pebble in the legal pond. Little did the two miscreants realise that their naughty venture would lead to a proposal to alter the Law of the land, and thus bring their names to this degree of prominence well over a century later. This curious case which escalated to an Act of Parliament came about in this manner.

In 1851, Robert Henry Luscombe lost his job as a Tinplate Worker when he was 20 years old, and unlike so many others seeking employment he found his height and physical bearing an attribute when applying for enlistment that same year in the Royal Marines. His subsequent service life was to include, ashore and afloat, combative action in the two successive wars in the Crimea and China, for which he was awarded three medals and a number of clasps commemorating various phases of those military operations. He was, however, constantly getting into trouble with authority, and knew his way round various gaols in differing parts of the country and ships; eleven times he was so incarcerated during his tenuous service in the Royal Corps.

In February 1866 he returned to the RM Barracks at Plymouth after spending the previous three years with the RM Battalion at Yokohama, Japan, where he took part in the destruction of Japanese batteries guarding the Straits on Simonoseki. By September of that year he was 'broke', having spent two more spells in confined circumstances totalling two months. It was at this time he devised a seemingly foolproof scheme to raise a little cash to sustain his desires.

His asset was his group of medals, but he was aware that he should not pawn his awards, which remained Government property as long as he still served actively in the Corps. He also seemed to know that pawnbrokers would not accept medals belonging to a marine, if he chose to break the former rule mentioned, since such dealers had no immediate wish to compound a felony, thereby subjecting themselves to possible

imprisonment. To overcome such a direct approach with a high probability of failure, he devised a scheme which had every prospect of becoming a marketing success.

His plan was based on the correct hearsay knowledge that sailors could pawn their medals with absolute 'civil' immunity, to themselves and dealers. He was also fully cognisant of the fact that his three medals were officially issued un-named, and therefore it was impossible for anyone to tell if the group had been awarded to a sailor or a marine. With all this in mind, he then enlisted the aid of his friend Eliza Bourne who was induced to pawn his medals as those belonging to a sailor.

The obedient Eliza did as she was told, and one fine day she walked down to her local pawn shop in Frankfort Street, Plymouth, owned and run by Mr Moses Lyons. She pledged the medals and took the proceeds back to her inamorata, Marine Luscombe - her Bob. Shortly afterwards his scheme was uncovered; the official records miss out the denouement of this erring 'Leather Neck' - could it have been another kit muster or a ceremonial parade? Whatever the event, the Marines authorities soon destroyed his thin cover story for the loss, and Luscombe came clean with the full saga of his sale. Whereupon the marine provost section enlisted the assistance of the local Constabulary.

The Police went to visit the Pawn Shop, where on this first occasion they were met by an employee of Mr Lyons. This young man, in answer to their demands, immediately fetched the group of three medals in apparent innocence, showed them to his uniformed visitors, who seemed quite satisfied and departed. The pledged articles were replaced in the shop, at least until Mr Lyons returned to hear the account of the recent visit by the 'law' to his premises.

A few days later the Police revisited Mr Lyon's establishment, and this time he was available in person to answer their queries. With an air of complete innocence he denied ever having had the three medals, and went on in strong terms that he had absolutely no knowledge whatsoever of the medals to which the Police were referring. A search warrant was then sought and issued to the infuriated officers of the law, and on this their third trip to the Pawn Shop, sought out the medals but to no avail. The 'cat and mouse' game between Pawbroker and Police was well underway, with Mr Lyons being the winner of this 'round'.

On the fourth and final visit by the Police they were conspicuously accompanied by Marine Luscombe and a Provost Sergeant RM. Luscombe had not forgotten his briefing, and the silence after entry to the premises was broken by his demand to see his medals and re-possess them. The wily pawnbroker acquiesced immediately to the first request, seeing it as the legal right of the owner. After a brief visit to his back parlour he re-appeared with the medallic trio consisting of a Crimea Medal with the clasps for Balaclava and Sebastopol, a Second China War Medal adorned by bars for action at Fatshan 1857, Canton 1857 and Taku Forts 1860, and finally the concomitant award given for the Crimean War by the Turkish Government. The errant marine identified the medals as the group, awarded to him, but to his insistent demands for re-possession the crafty pawnbroker gave equally forthright refusals, based on the belief that no-one could prove that the un-named medals belonged to anyone in particular, and that he had accepted them as being the property of a sailor which was certainly no crime. He won his point, and the Police and Military lost yet another skirmish when they retreated empty handed from territory distinguished by those three large balls hanging outside.

The scene was now set for legal action, with the Counsel for the Police posed with a difficult decision as to the tactics to be adopted in framing the 'charge'. His initial reaction was strongly to advise prosecution against Mr Moses Lyons for detaining the medals contrary to Section 89 of the Marine Mutiny Act, and no doubt as a revenge against a man who had seen fit to use his dubious rights in apparently obstructing Officers of the Law in the execution of their duty. The records show that this initial idea was discarded. A little time later, after more sober and less emotional reflection, Counsel thought that the Magistrates would not convict Moses, since he might honestly and properly state that he had received the articles in pledge as sailor's medals. Furthermore, if Moses was charged then Eliza Bourne could only aid his case if she as brought as a prosecution witness, and could not herself have been subsequently prosecuted if so employed.

Based on this logic, the 'charge' was brought against Luscombe's conspirator, the poor prostitute of the Post Office Inn, Eliza Bourne - and proved. Not only was Eliza found guilty, the medals were also proved to belong to Marine Luscombe, and the prosecution stressed this latter point to the Court. Application was made to the Magistrates for Mr Moses Lyon to be ordered to pass over the medals, and after considerable discussion by the Bench, which itself had found that Moses had more than a dubious case for retaining the group on two previous occasions, the request was eventually agreed. The three medals were then passed to the safe hands of Provost Sergeant Thorne RM in that courtroom.

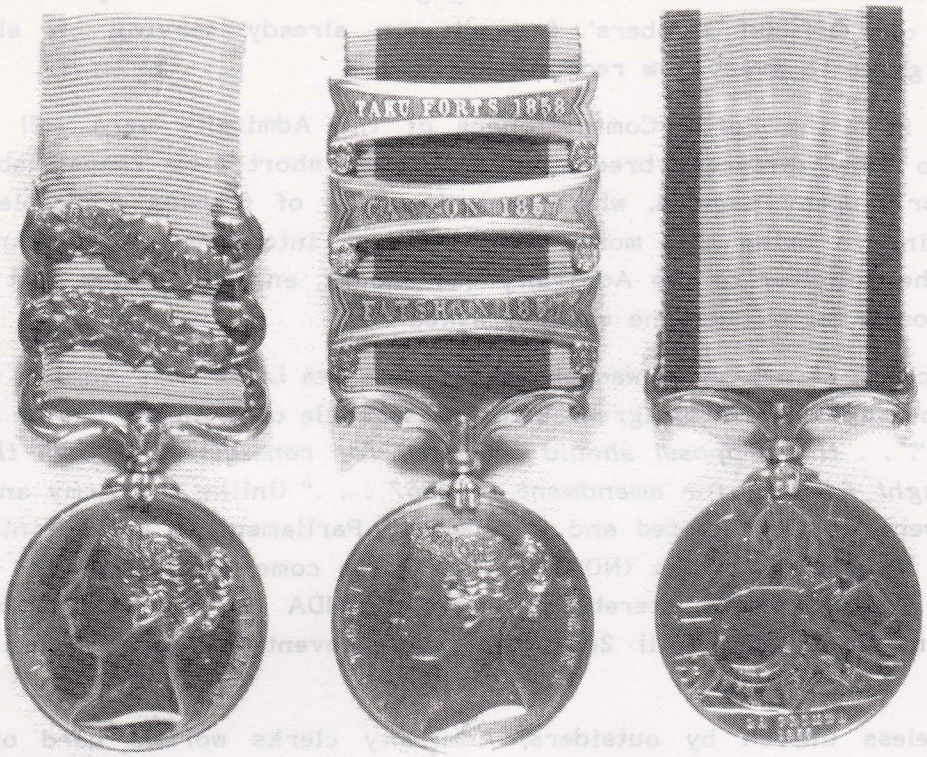
Luscombe continued to serve in the Royal Marines for another eight years, mostly at sea in HM Ships *Revenge, Invincible* and *Audacious*. He was invalided from the service whilst serving in the latter ship suffering from chronic ulcers and hepatitis on 10th April 1874. He died in Plymouth Hospital a little over six months later on 22nd November 1874. As to whether Luscombe ever got his medals back, or if he did, whether he lost or pawned them again, well that part of history must remain a mystery. What we do know for certain is that at the time of his disability discharge from the Marines, an officer wrote on his papers: *'No record obtainable by Discharge Board of whether he is in possession or not of Medals'* A somewhat sad but apt epitaph to this serviceman.

The effects of this naughty pawning episode did not lie dormant when the Courtroom closed that fateful day in November 1866. The 'case' had highlighted a legal nonsense as between Army and Royal Marines on the one hand, and the Royal Navy on the other. Shortly after conclusion of these events in the Court, the matter escalated to more exalted plains. This instance of 'case law', which had exposed the differing treatment of certain property of Sailors from that accorded to Marines, was written up at length by the the Colonel Commandant at Plymouth and sent to his Head Office, the Royal Marine Office in Spring Gardens, London. Colonel George Beatty had voiced his view that the Navy should adopt the robust rules prevailing in the Army and his Corps. We are left to guess whether or not he knew about the original reason for the Navy apparently scorning similar regulations, for which there were very justifiable reasons which will be exposed later in this text.

Upon receiving this letter, it is reasonable to assume that the Staff of the Deputy Adjutant General, Royal Marines, must have refreshed their memories of this subject and rare crime. Turning to Section 89 of the Marine Mutiny Act they would have seen the relevant passages were as follows:

Penalty of purchasing Soldier's necessaries, Stores, etc . . . .

Any person who shall knowingly detain, buy, exchange or receive from any soldier, deserter or any other person, . . . or shall be employed by any soldier to sell Arms,



Crimea Medal **Second China War Medal** **Turkish Government Concomitant Award**

Ammunition, Medals for Good Conduct or for distinguishment or other service, clothes, furniture, sheets or forage for any horses, etc . . . .

Conviction of such an offence attracting a fine not exceeding £20, together with treble to value of the articles possessed, with the additional prospect of being committed to the common Gaol or House of Correction, there to be imprisoned with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding six calendar months as the convicting Justice should think fit . . . .

The Royal Marine Office then put together all the facts and submitted them in a proposal to the Admiralty, where the subject was quickly recognised as inequitable treatment, due historically to the totally different method of employing sailors.

Up to 1853 sailors had been engaged to serve in the Navy on the 'hire and fire' principle, the personnel on the Lower Deck were in effect casual labour contracted to serve for a commission of three years' duration, at the end of which they were 'paid off' to shore as civilians. The laws of the Navy could only apply during the time the sailor was entered on the ship's books, and therefore any medal he received passed into his hands as his own possession when he was 'paid off', to do as he wished with as a civilian. Albeit he might well 'sign on' for another commission in a different ship within a few weeks and once again be subject to Naval rules, which certainly did not state that he must besport any medals he may have previously been awarded.

In 1853 sailors were given the option of serving continuously in the Navy for varying periods of time, as had been the case in the Army and Marines for nearly two centuries; but even now this more secure method of employment did not appeal to all sailors. A large number preferred to be 'hired and fired', since this gave them the opportunity to join the ship of their choice when they next went to sea - known 'flogging captains' could be

avoided! Not until 1st January 1873 was the Royal Navy manned completely by a permanent professional force committed to terms of engagement from 7 to 20 years or more, with the introduction of 'Official Numbers' for all men already serving on ship's books and subsequently given to every new recruit.

But in 1866 the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty were well aware that they possessed two very different breeds of men, some short term casual labour, and others signed on for lengthy periods, which made the task of framing equitable rules difficult, let alone trying to bring this motley 'body of men' into line with the Army and Marines. The aid of the Solicitor to the Admiralty was sought, and in no time that office produced detailed proposals to produce the equality asked for.

This package of new rules was placed before a Sea Lord, Rear Admiral G A Seymour CB, MP, who neither agreed nor disagreed with the schedule of changes, but he did pen a minute stating that *". . . the proposal should be noted for consideration when the Naval Defence Act was brought forward for amendment in 1867 . . ."* Unlike the Army and Marine Mutiny Acts which were usually debated and amended by Parliament at annual intervals, the more widely drawn Naval Defence Act (NDA) did not often come before members of the House of Commons for discussion and alteration. In fact the NDA was not brought before Parliament for debate and amendment until 28th July 1884, seventeen years later than the Admiral expected!

Nevertheless unseen by outsiders, Admiralty clerks worked hard on the Admiralty Solicitor's advice, and on 2nd August 1869 saw the result of their work in an Act of Parliament (22 & 33 Victoria, Ch 57) under the heading 'Protection of Seaman's Clothing and Property', to be cited as "The Seaman's Clothing Act". The effect of this Act did not extend beyond the Dockyard Towns, and only affected seamen who had 'signed on' as continuous service men since 1853 for the protection of their property meaning, 'any clothes, slops, medals and necessaries for sailors on board ships which belong to any seamen.'

The Act showed that it was an offence for both the seller and the buyer to 'detain, buy, exchange, take on pawn' any 'seaman's property' with a penalty upon conviction, of a £20 fine or three months term of imprisonment. It is surely no coincidence that this Act followed so closely the deeds of Marine Luscombe, Miss Eliza Bourne and Mr Moses Lyons three years earlier.

In 1879, when 'Queen's Rules and Admiralty Instructions' were first introduced, having been issued subsequent to the 'Queen's Instructions for Her Majesty's Service at Sea', the opportunity was taken to write in some mention of constraint upon men who were in possession of medals. The new punishment rule was concisely hidden away in Chapter 22, Article 680 which covered:

'Index of Offences and Maximum Summary Punishment.'

Section h (Headed) Hammocks, clothes and bedding

I. Selling or making away with Medals or Clasps. No 5. (Penalty)
(Punishment No 5 = Up to imprisonment for three months)

Editor's Note: It is with much regret that I heard of the death of Captain Kenneth Douglas-Morris since receiving this article. He has been a long and staunch member of the RMHS as well as a generous benefactor. At a recent Council meeting it was decided to set up 'The Douglas-Morris Bequest' with the £2,600 he bequeathed to the Society and use the interest for an an award for services to the Society.

Portsmouth - Gunwharf

Farewell and Return

by Anthony J Perrett *(RMHS)*

For many the 'Departure of the Royal Marines from Portsmouth' ceremony on 24 July 1991, held in the Guildhall Square, was disappointing as the men - a specially imported King's Squad from CTCRM - marched only from HMS *Nelson* (the Royal Naval Barracks) and not Eastney (the Royal Marines Barracks).

In fact a ceremonial 'march out' of RMB Eastney was executed on Sunday 6th May 1973 prior to the 'contraction' and fully reported in the Portsmouth "News" the following day. On that occasion about 400 marines paraded to march out of the barracks and around the surrounding streets 'with Colours unfurled and bayonets fixed'. The salute was taken by the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, our Life Colonel Commandant, who was accompanied by the Commandant General, Lieutenant General Sir Ian Gourlay and the Commanding Officer, Colonel A G H Jukes. It was a wet dull day similar to that of the 24th July 1991, yet on both parades the gloom was dispelled by the smartness and bearing of the marines.

Presumably HMS *Nelson* was chosen as an assembly point because of convenience and not from any historical significance, for this site has never been a Corps stronghold, although many have been quartered there and now the band of C-in-C Naval Home Command have their home there. Prior to the naval tenancy a previous barracks had been built partly on this ground (Anglesea) in 1847 and belonged to the Army. If the Corps had wanted a symbolic departure point they should have marched instead from the old HMS *Vernon*, which now, under the auspices of HMS *Nelson* has reverted to its original name - Gunwharf.

There have been Marines in Portsmouth almost since their formation in various billets - mostly inns! - but since our principal connection there is with the Royal Marine Artillery, for which Eastney Barracks was originally built, I shall concentrate on them. Following their evolution in 1804 when their Headquarters was based at Chatham and consisted of three Companies, a fourth being established at Woolwich a year later, it was not until 1817 that the RMA appeared on the Portsmouth scene looking for quarters, although some RMA may have called in from ships until 1816. On 6 July that year when the RMA ceased to serve in warships following an Admiralty letter which stated "No more parties of the RMA shall be allowed to Flagships in time of peace and those in ships with Lord Exmouth's Squadron will be sent home as soon as the expedition under his orders terminates."

At the end of that year their strength was increased to eight Companies (Order in Council dated 25 November 1816) and Chatham was becoming too crowded for comfort and training facilities, so, whilst one Company stayed there and an additional Company despatched to Woolwich, the remainder marched to Fort Monkton (near Haslar Hospital, Gosport) during the first week of June 1817 where one Company immediately embarked in the transport ship *Prometheus* bound for Plymouth. Within three months of hard work by all concerned the Fort was ready for its purpose as a naval artillery training establishment, and a mortar battery constructed with a ship-gun practice battery on Southsea Common. One

report gave their strength at Monkton as four Companies but the stay was short lived as a fever epedemic forced them back to Chatham in August 1822, the Fort being handed back to the Army from whom it had been leased. Bad sanitary conditions were blamed for the fever outbreak but Fort Monkton, which is still owned by the MOD, was no doubt mosquito infested being of 'submerged' earth covered brick construction. However, if the men were disappointed at moving out, the local farmers apparently were not, for on the Fort Orders dated 27 December 1817 was . . . 'The Lieut-Colonel, having received complaints that several men of the RMA are in the habit of cutting the hairs from the cows tails in the fields for the purpose of making brushes for their musket locks, it is his determination that any men found guilty of such an offence shall be delivered over to the Civil Power for trial at the Assizes.'

By then the sea-draft order had obviously been rescinded for both officers and men from the four Divisions were employed on board ships as gunnery instructors; then two years later, on 1 June 1824, the Royal Marine Artillery HQ Companies marched out of Chatham again for Portsmouth, calling at Kingston-upon-Thames at the request of HRH The Duke of Clarence who dined the officers at Bushey House. They proudly marched behind their newly formed band, recruited from 14 specially enlisted boys as sanctioned by the Colonel Commandant on 23 January the previous year.

On arrival at Old Portsmouth the officers were lodged in the premises of the late William Turner at 110 High Street, purchased by the Admiralty, and others in St Thomas Street on the opposite side of the church which later becme the cathedral. The men were quartered in the new Gunwharf Barracks converted from old victualling yards, and separated from the old Gunwharf Barracks on the eastern side of the basin by a wall, which was occupied by the Army - Royal Artillery. The Portsmouth Royal Marine (Infantry) Division had since 1783 been settled in nearby Clarence Barracks, formerly known as Four House Barracks, having been erected on the site of four Elizabethen brewhouses built over exceptionally pure fresh water springs; they were renamed in 1827. Here they remained until moving across the harbour to Forton Barracks, Gosport in 1848. Clarence Barracks was demolished in the 1880s when a whole new complex, Victoria Barracks, was built for the Army, later coming under Admiralty control, and mostly demolished in the 1960s to make way for an up-market housing complex known as Pembroke Park. However an example of the architecture can still be seen in the building housing the Portsmouth City Museum. Apart from the RN and RM the town, then encircled by ramparts with ornate gates, was bursting at the seams with military in other barracks such as Colwort, Cambridge, Mill Dam and Anglesea.

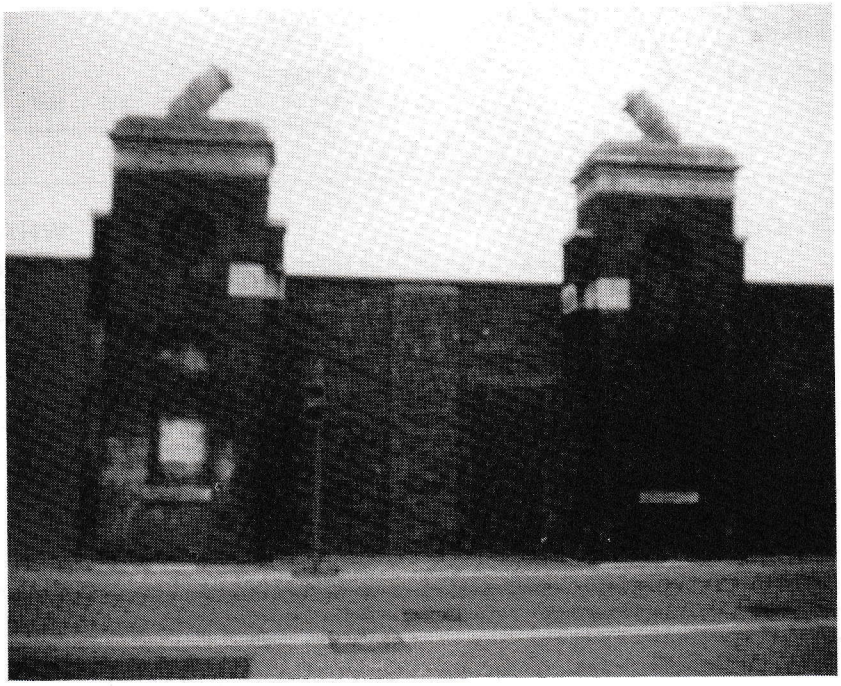
Royal Marines were joining ships bound for such diverse places as South America, West Africa, Syria, Borneo, India and China on expeditions or campaigns, whilst in Portsmouth a detachment of the RMA was sent in June to Fort Cumberland to lodge with the resident Regiment (53rd Foot) carrying out gunnery training and mortar exercises on the south shore of Hayling Island, known as the Burrens. When the Duke of Norfolk sold this land to a Mr Padwick the following April its use was withdrawn so they moved along to the 'Ferry Battery' at the entrance to Langstone Harbour for shell practise off shore. Others meantime were acting as convict guards on working parties at Fort Cumberland, Southsea Castle ramparts and new batteries being built at Eastney and Lumps Fort.

In 1827 HRH The Duke of Clarence, in his capacity of Lord High Admiral, came to Fort Cumberland to watch the RMA at mortar practice and carry out an inspection. He presented Colours to all four RM Divisions during 1827-8 and subsequently became King William IV three years later.

His successor Queen Victoria paid her second visit to the Port in August 1857, her first being on 28 February 1842, to review the troops returning from the Crimean War on Southsea Common. Gunwharf Barracks could not accommodate all its returning heroes of the RMA, and some were billetted locally while others went to Southsea Castle, Forton and Fort Elson, and it was this latter group who were to march across to Eastney on the 7 November 1864 to become the first residents of the new barracks. In 1855 the other part of the Corps had been designated Royal Marines, Light Infantry by an Admiralty Order of 31 January, though many thought that Fusiliers would have been a more suitable title, and indeed addressed them as such. They regretted, at the same time, that their March Past 'The British Grenadiers' - that of the Fusiliers - was exchanged for the music of 'some American pop-song of the day'! *(Col C F Field)*

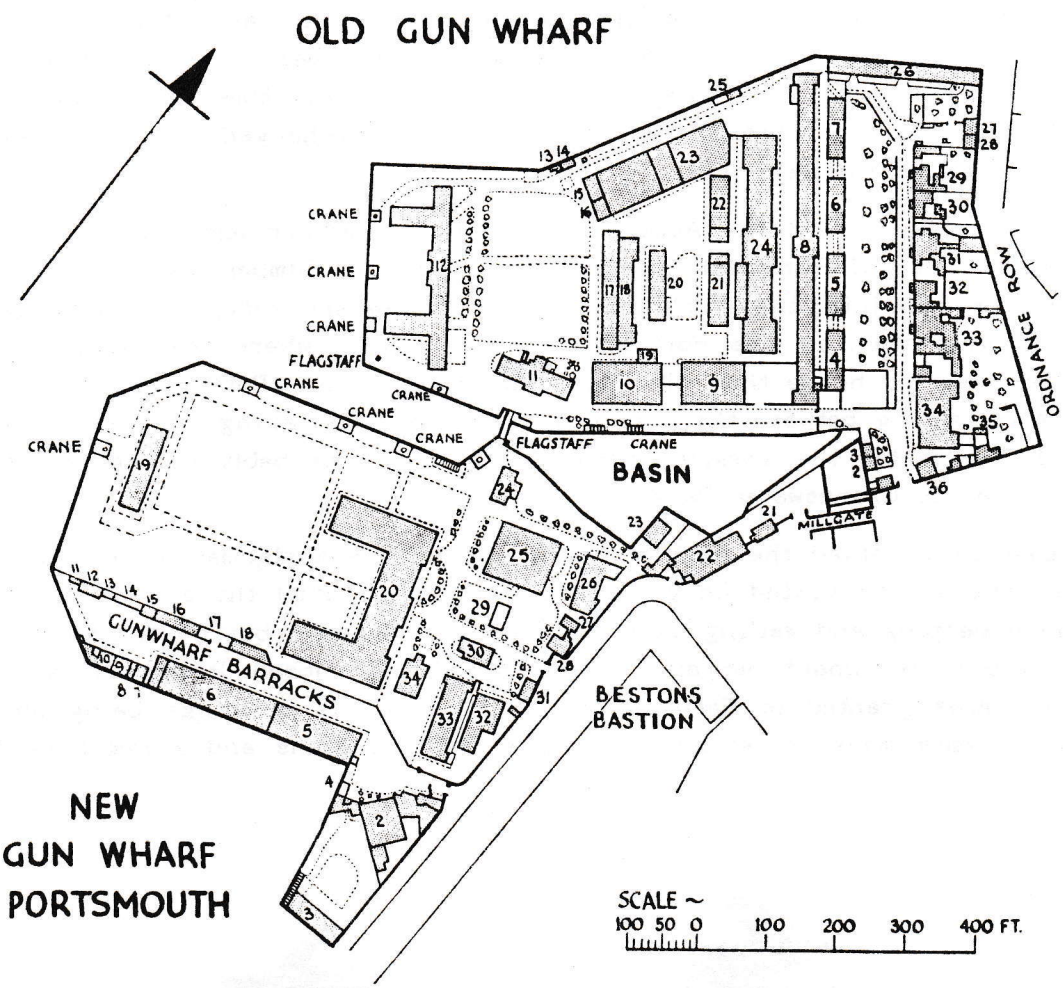
In the summer of 1858 the Admiralty decided on another exchange, by offering the Army the western half of Gunwharf (New) Barracks for Fort Cumberland; thus on 2 November the RMA HQ moved into the Fort and vacated Gunwharf (officially) although due to inadequate accommodation in the Fort some had to remain where they were until Eastney Barracks was ready to house them all. This explains why some RMA officers were reported to have been commuting between the Fort and Gunwharf daily taking guns with them to shoot cranes which frequented the marshy gound en route. . . . probably in the area near Canoe Lake known today as Craneswater Park.

RMB Eastney remained the RMA stronghold until the amalgamation in 1923, and after much bitter feuding the united Corps settled down there until the closure in 1991. There has been much weeping and wailing over the demise of Eastney, but no-one shed a tear over the similar fate of Gunwharf Barracks when HMS *Vernon* closed. It doesn't even enjoy the preservation status granted to Eastney, despite some of its buildings being older. Before the demolition teams move in let me lay before you the plans and a few brief details of some of them.



The old Main Gate of the RM Barracks, Gunwharf

(Now well inside the walls)



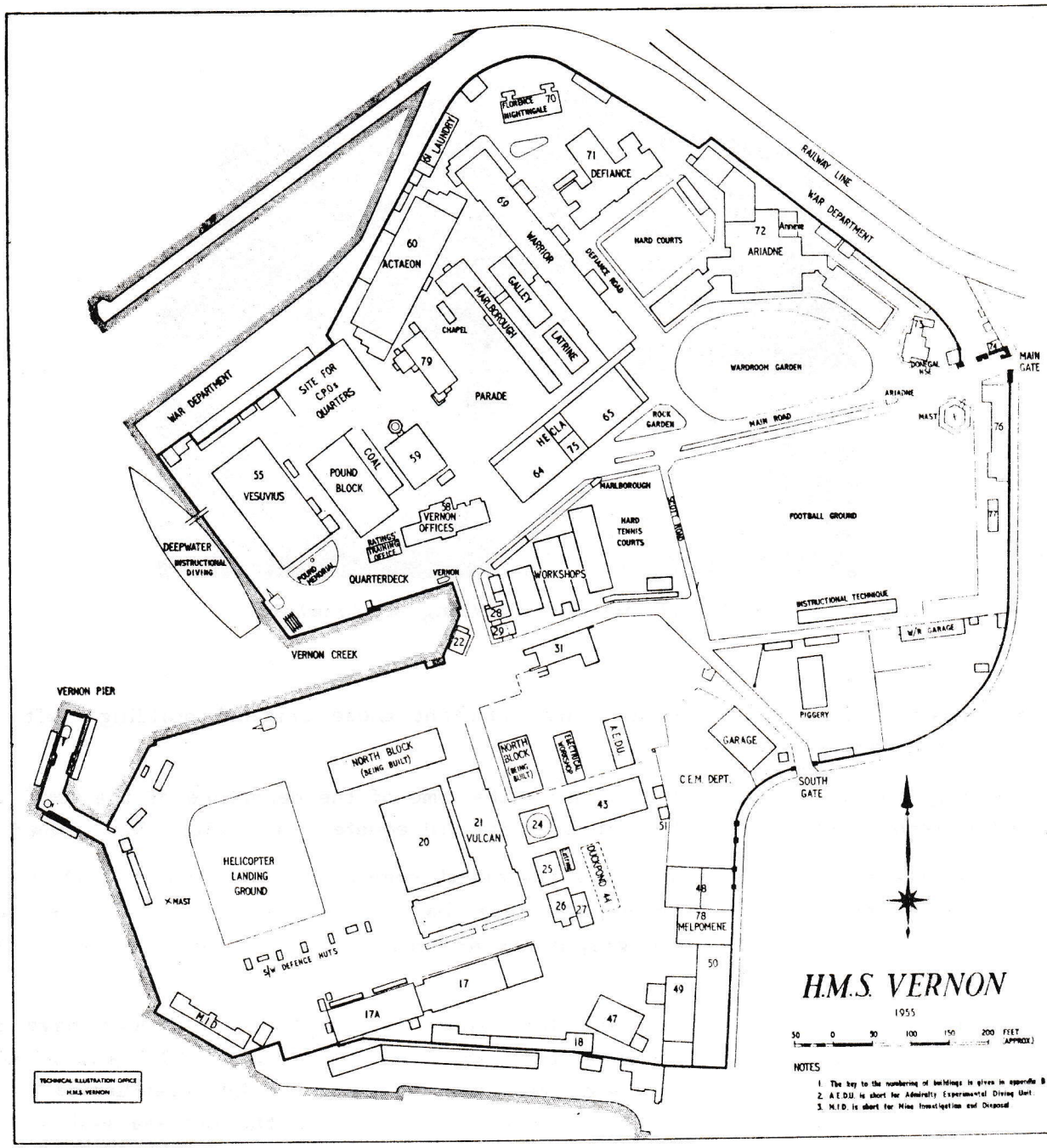
OLD GUN WHARF

1. LODGE
2. WATCH HOUSE
3. ENGINE HOUSE
4. GUN CARRIAGE STORE
5. Ditto
6. Ditto
7. Ditto
8. SEA SERVICE STORE
9. STORES
10. STORES
11. OFFICE
12. PAINTERS SHOP
13. STORE
14. OFFICE
15. PAINTERS SHOP
16. CART SHED
17. COOPERAGE
18. BLACKSMITHS SHOP
19. ENGINE ROOM
20. GUN SHED
21. GUN CARRIAGE STORE
22. Ditto
23. Ditto
24. SEA SERVICE STORE
25. SMITHY
26. NORTH STORE
27. STABLES
28. COACH HOUSE
29. DEPUTY STOREKEEPERS QRS.
30. 1ST CLASS CLERKS QRS.
31. 2ND CLASS CLERKS QRS.
32. 1ST CLASS CLERKS QRS.
33. STOREKEEPERS QRS.
34. ARMOURY
35. STABLES
36. LODGE.

NEW GUN WHARF

1. GUARD HOUSE
2. ROYAL MARINE INFIRMARY
3. PRACTICE BATTERY
4. ENGINE SHED
5. OFFICERS QRS.
6. SOLDIERS QRS
7. ORDERLY ROOM
8. BARBERS SHOP
9. COOK HOUSE.
10. ABLUTION ROOM
11. WOMANS WASH HOUSE
12. SERJTS. MESS
13. COOK HOUSE
14. STORES
15. BK. SERJTS. QRS.
16. REGIMENTAL CELLS.
17. COAL YARD.
18. CANTEEN
19. NEW SEA SERVICE STORE
20. LAND SERVICE STORE.
21. GUARD HOUSE
22. KINGS MILL (CORN)
23. BOAT HOUSE
24. GUARD HOUSE
25. BLACKSMITHS SHOP
26. ARMOURY
27. STORE
28. LODGE
29. GUN SHED
30. SHELL MAGAZINE
31. STORE
32. SHELL MAGAZINE
33. ARMOURY
34. SHELL MAGAZINE

TRACED FROM "PLANS OF THE BARRACKS IN THE SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICT OF ENGLAND. ~ 1859."



Gunwharf Barracks

Until 1960 the basin, which separated the old and new sites, extended into a Mill Pond, which covered the area now occupied by sports fields, almost up to the Guildhall. What with this and all the stagnant water lying around the moats of the ramparts, it made a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and it is not surprising that in 1849 the Naval Hospital reported that 'recruits of the Royal Marines doing drill on Southsea Common would suddenly be seized with ague (a malarial type fever) and their firelocks would fall from their uncertain grasp.' Since the RMA had to move out of Fort Monkton twenty five years earlier for the same reason it would seem that the Portsmouth area was not a healthy place.

At the outset of World War 1 the Navy began to take over part of Gunwharf for their mine-warfare activities, operating from the old ship HMS *Vernon* (plus others), then took complete charge of the barracks in 1919, transferring the ship's name; but through many ensuing years, due to fire, the World War 2 blitz and operational requirements, many



The old RM Infirmary building at Gunwharf

alterations have taken place, so I will only highlight those original buildings left that the RMA might recognise even now.

Comparing the Gunwharf 1859 plan (about the time of the departure of the RMA) with that of HMS *Vernon* 1955, the numbers in brackets will equate to the latter. New Gunwharf:-

No 2 (47)(see photograph) is probably the oldest remaining building (1800). Originally the Royal Marines Infirmary, it has had a variety of uses since naval occupation, including photographic department, dining hall (workmen) and sports stores.

Nos 5 & 6 (17 & 17A) Also built around 1800 these original barrack blocks have been greatly rebuilt since fire swept through 17A on 18 January 1935 and 17 which escaped the fire but was destroyed later in the blitz by incendiaries on the night of 10/11 January 1941. During the rebuilding the old sea wall of huge granite blocks was uncovered.

No 20 (21) 'Vulcan Building' had its foundation stone laid by the Duke of Clarence in 1811 but much of its grandeur was ruined by the blitz on the same night, when the north wing including a clock tower, was destroyed. Its use during RMA occupation is uncertain but it was a storehouse when the Navy took over in 1919, then later turned into offices.

No 24 (29) Built about 1800, but much altered since, it acted as guardhouse for the swing bridge between the old and new gunwharves, then in 1914 it became the wharf foreman's office and later a staff officer's maintenance office.

No 30 (25) Built in 1856 as a shell magazine, it has walls four feet thick; it later became an oil store.

Near to No 31 (51) still stands the original boundary wall of 1803 with the now

bricked-in old gateway to New Gunwharf clearly visible with two stone mortars on top of the piers, similar to those at Eastney Barracks. This is a short distance from the new gateway into the site as the road turns left.

Conclusion

Perhaps it was the ghosts of old Royal Marine Artillerymen who haunted the Department of the Commandant General when they were planning to move the Headquarters of the Royal Marines to Portsmouth in April 1993. Although ultimately destined to move to Whale Island when their new buildings are completed, they have now taken up residence in Gunwharf as a temporary measure some 150 years after the first marines occupied the site. Anyway Portsmouth, a city which granted its Freedom to the Corps in 1959, is pleased and proud to have the Corps back in its fold. Welcome home!

H.M.S. Royal Sovereign - 1934

The trombonist dropped his slide in about 14 feet of very cold water when returning to the ship after playing ashore, and had to choose between pneumonia and paying for a new slide. Anyway the Band rallied round and proceeded in force to the spot marked 'X', where the body could be seen reposing, with the fish playing 'touch-me-best' in and out of its glittering tubes. With a gasp and a splash a body cleaved the water and forged its way to the murky depths, the hero being not the trombonist, but Musician S B Bennett, who richly deserved his night off afterwards. *"Greater love hath no man . . . . ."*

From the Detachment notes by Bandmster S C Low. (It is sad to note that Musician Bennett was killed when H.M.S. Trinidad was bombed in the Barents Sea on 29th March 1942. Twenty other musicians and buglers were lost in the ship during the next six weeks and she was finally sunk on 15th May)

To Be Buried For Nothing

Sir George Rooke, one of Portmouth's most famous Freemen, before he was made an Admiral, had served as Captain of Marines, and being quartered upon the coast of Essex, the ague made great havoc amongst his men; the Minister of the village where he lay was so harrassed with his duty that he refused to bury any more of them without being paid his accustomed fees. The Captain made no words; but the next that died, he ordered the body to be conveyed to the Minister's house, and laid upon the table in his great hall; this greatly embarrassed the poor clergyman, who in the fullness of his heart, sent the Captain word, "that if he would cause the dead man to be taken away, he would never more dispute it with him, but would readily bury him and his whole company for nothing."

Extract from the Globe & Laurel - 1935

The Diary from which these extracts are taken belongs to Mr Geoffrey Knapton, son of Marine Benjamin Knapton. It was written in a small, thick book and kept whilst he was a Prisoner of War. We are indebted to RMHS member Raymond Mitchell for negotiating the use of this. The total narrative is about 6,000 words mostly concerning his first 15 months of captivity.

Diary of Marine Knapton - D.E.M.S.

Gunner, SS Natice, sunk by a German Raider on 8 October 1940

22 September 1940

SS *Natice*, a meat carrying boat of 10,000 tons belonging to the Royal Mail Line heaves her massive anchor and proceeds silently from one of England's secret harbours under a dull, and dreary looking sky with me, its sole protector, on board. This dull sky immediately gave me a presentiment; in my mind there came a perfect picture of my wife and children. 'Shall I see them again?' By three o'clock the last sight of land disappeared from view - we are now at sea. All men on board were busily putting the final adjustments to the ship to combat any misfortune whilst our Naval and Air escort kept a watchful eye over the ocean.

The masts and funnels of a convoy consisting of some 100 fully laden ships of food for Britain were sighted off the West coast, presumably bound for Liverpool. Thank God England still rules the waves.

25 September - 8.30 am

A light German bomber attacks our convoy and releases two small bombs which fell approximately 20 yards from the stern of the ship - our ship; why he picked on us, don't ask me. The saucy blighter actually descended to just above the height of our mast. Passing the ship he splattered the deck with cannon and .303, fortunately wounding only one man, our 2nd Engineer, Bryant. This brought to my notice that a war must be on some place; a more vigilant watch must be kept after this. One does not get let off a second time as a rule. This incident was certainly a 'let off'. One cannon was fired definitely at me, and why me, but be praised it was an 'outer low'. Just think of it, six inches from my foot was a cannon shot, buried in the deck, unexploded. I am July babe, born under the planet of 'Satan'. After that lot I guess 'Satan' is not a bad chap after all.

26 September - pm

We are now going full speed; our escort having left us to the perils of the deep. Other ships of the convoy speeding away to their ordered route. We commenced to dodge those slimy, sneaking enemy submarines by zigging and zagging. The sky is clear and the sea running good, all looks favourable for a good trip

Got news we were due home again December 7th so arranged with the Chief Steward to store in the refrigerator some dainties, hams and turkeys, etc; which can be bought at our destination at moderate prices. A pleasant surprise for the wife.

8 October - pm. - 33°West 1°North

At 2 o'clock today we were due to Cross the Line without the ceremonies of Father Neptune but we failed to see Mr Neptune or cross the Line. At 1.45 I left my Mess Room in search of the Gun Crew, ascending the saloon deck I encountered the Second Radio Officer who remarked there is a ship astern and the Captain does not appear to be doing what you told me this morning; zig, zag. Looking aft sure enough

there was a ship, she appeared like some small harmless 'tramp'. Being curious and knowing Jerry had ships on the ocean in search of prey like us I told the Radio Officer to report it while I ran to the gun platform; a man named Chaffey, one of our firemen, trained round whilst I lay my telescope on this 'Lone Wolf'. The Captain of this vessel evidently objected to this hostile act, he immediately bellowed away a salvo of guns. Chaffey, peering through his telescope, said, "I can see some lights". I said "You fool, they are not lights" - and away at the run went Chaffey.

One of the shells penetrated through the deck under the muzzle of the Gun into the steering chamber. Fortunately it did not penetrate the next compartment which was the magazine. I was standing on top of it - 'How near I was of making a date with the Angels.' During the next hour the ship was in a state of excitement - men running here and there. Finally the Captain decided to abandon the ship, she was of no use to anyone now anyway. It was tough luck, he had done his best. That first shell jamming our rudder had sealed our Fate. What was to happen to us now? 6,000 miles from home and 600 miles to the nearest point of land, Pernambuco, NE coast of Brazil. The boys started to lower the boats, while I, like that staunch and faithful servant 'Mne Hogg' carried out my duties. 'Nothing of importance must fall into enemy hands'. I was the last rating left, the Captain and Chief Officer were still carrying out their responsible duties, destroying all documents. Nothing more could be done so to my home on the sea and all my belongings I said 'cheerio'. Splash went I into the briny, a couple of breast strokes and I was clambering into a lifeboat completely filled with water; we must have looked a wonderful picture, but we did not think so. What a stunt. 50 men sitting side by side in a lifeboat completely submerged - only the air tanks keeping us up.

The Germans signalled us to come aboard. I lit the Port lights (red) informing them we could not make it. At 3.45 we finally got alongside this harmless looking tramp. I scrambled up the Jacob's ladder like a drowned rat. We were searched for firearms, etc; and then thrust below into the interior to places like dungeons. Oh dear, oh dear, what was I thinking? The picture of my wife and children reappeared, how would they know and what a shock when they did. Those turkeys and hams I was to enjoy at Christmas and my Freedom vanished. That man 'Churchill' said there was nothing to fear. For me now the war is over. I am a Prisoner of War and so ends the thrilling episode of 8 October 1940 never to be forgotten.

The *Natice* dived to her ocean bed at 4.15 pm. German report.

The Raider's name is VER

9 October

After a miserable night with no sleep the Jerrys roused us at 6 am with their ship's loud-speakers blaring out 'The Girl I Left Behind Me'. I call that rubbing it in. At 6.30 they brought us our first meal consisting of a dark brown bread and margarine and some dark fluid representing coffee. We could not eat or drink either so we went hungry. The day was passed away lounging around and surveying our new surroundings. We discovered we were on top of the oil tanks due to the unpleasant smell and the heat was terrific.

We were informed by one of the crew that a Canadian was killed outright in yesterday's episode and went down with the ship. A seaman named Palmer from London died from his wounds this morning. At 6 pm this evening he was buried with German Naval honours.

10 October

Was allowed on deck this morning for half an hour's fresh air and exercise. Was told as opportunities occur would be allowed this privilege; 'aren't they kind'. Some of the boys managed to save a few smokes, 'bless 'em' which were shared around. The Sentries were called 'Postens', we had enough with us to fight a major battle and each one was armed to the teeth with a massive Mauser revolver and hand grenade. They certainly did not intend taking any chances.

After our return to the dungeons was able to watch at intervals of half an hour through cracks in the bulkhead more men go for exercise. Later we discovered they were crews from *Delambre, Wendover* and *Gracefield* (English), *Tela* (Dutch), *Bruges* (Belgian) and *Kosmos II* (Norwegian). This Raider have sure done some good work for Germany. We also learnt it was this same 'Lone Wolf' that fought our armed cruiser *Alcantara.*

8 November

Rattlers sounded this morning throughout the ship, we thought to ourselves, another poor merchant ship about to meet her doom. In the evening we observed provisions were passing through the decks. It was a supply ship. Was not allowed up on deck today.

We are beginning to feel a little grubby, with 1 pint of distilled water daily to wash our body and clothes, one could not expect much else. The first month of being a Prisoner of War was not going down too well, yet we kept our Spirits up remarkably good. Every evening we had Community Singing.

We have now got used to the German food but we shall never like it. To me now fish and bacon was not palitable *(sic).* They say it is Pickled.

15 October *(sic - ? November ?)*

Yesterday evening was thrust into Ship's Hospital with acute pain in my groin, causing my left foot to swell twice its original size. Had a good night on a spring bed. The Ship's doctor arrived about 9 o'clock this morning, he informs me my Comrades are leaving the Ship for Germany (That supply ship was taking them) and I am to remain on board as Steward to the Captains of Merchant Ships for the duration of the war. What a tonic first thing in the morning. I guess that is my lot, an 'iron coffin' for me, no British warship will allow this 'Wolf' to prowl the ocean long. I protested but it was hopeless. At 5.30 pm the sirens blared out and the lads were on their way and here I was till the end of the war; what an outlook.

The Germans said it wouldn't be long, 'Drei wochen England Caput'. Three weeks England finished. What would I give for a smoke.

5th December

This morning at 5 am the rattlers blared out furiously, could hear the rush of German sailors everywhere. Dear, dear, our little family thought, soon we shall have company. We wondered what ship it could be. At 7 am 'Bang' went the first salvo of guns from this Raider. We knew now one of our ships was in the vicinity. The Captains and I sat round the table, jotting down the number of times the guns threw their fiendish missiles. After 100, I remarked, this unknown ship was giving the Raider a good run, they definitely did not want to be Prisoners with Xmas so near. We counted 200: I said to Captain Pratt "This is no Merchant Ship but a British Warship". He immediately wanted to do something which, by the way, he duly done.

My thoughts ran high, soon we shall be released from this Hell. Smoke began to creep through the cracks of our door, I guess we have been hit somewhere. On the dot of 8 o'clock the guns ceased firing, a few minutes later the door opened, not by an English Officer as we had hoped, but by the German Prison Officer. Our hearts went into our boots. He said "We have just had a fight with the *Carnarvon Castle* and sent her home with a headache". This remark we could not believe. The Raider was now going all out, full speed, she sure is a fly guy. The look upon the German faces who peered in at us defintely showed traces of nervousness. Fortunately for them their ship was faster than the *Carnarvon Castle.*

6 December

The Raider was still going full speed; away for a spell of solitude, like a fox.

During the forenoon we were allowed on deck for 4 hours, during which time our eyes were everyhere - not a scratch from yesterday's episode could we see. A Belgian Engineer living with us could understand German fluently and he heard on the Ship's

wireless that the *Carnarvon Castle* entered Montevideo badly knocked about with ? dead on board and the Raider was so badly damaged was impossible to reach port. The German sailors laughed and cheered.

25 December - Xmas Day

It is Xmas Day; the German Captain sent to each one of us a small parcel containing a Tin of Milk, Tin of Peaches, a small Ship's made Cake, a packet of 'Lucky Strike' cigarettes. It was certainly good of him to think of us. But where did it all come from? This evening he also sent us a ½ pint of German beer and a bottle of Haig Whisky, so we all had a better Xmas Day than we anticipated.

Midday Meal

Sweet Soup
Pork Chops
Roast Potatoes
Spinach

The whole day my thoughts were Home, thinking of wife and children wondering if they knew what had happened to me; how I wish I knew. God Bless Them.

25 January 1941

10.30 am. The Prison Officer informs us to pack our few belongings, we are to be transferred immediately to another ship: the *Nordmark*. What a shock we had going on deck before our final leaving. Around us was two more Raiders and the Pocket Battleship *Admiral Sheer*, three captured ships fully laden; two were Norwegian tankers, the other a meat carrying boat the *Duquesia*. The German Captain told us that the High Command had decided we should be sent to Germany and hoped we would not commit sabotage; also hoped we were satisfied with the treatment under such circumstances. To get out of this Hell, this Iron Coffin, was a relief to us all. We got aboard the *Nordmark* just before noon. After the Captain had dealt with us, taking down our names and addresses of next of kin we were sent down to our quarters which were far worse than we had left. In these quarters were the crews of the *Port Obert* and *Duquesia*. We have a litle more freedom on this ship but the sleeping quarters are terrible; presumably at sometime or another it was an ammunition room. Tonight for the first time since October 8 I saw the natural darkness of the heavens. The stars appeared so wonderful, I gazed at them for over an hour, when the German sentry ordered us down to another dungeon.

28 January

9 am. A Norwegian oiler full of crude oil and benzine came alongside and we were ordered to board her, our quarters aboard this vessel was the worst yet, down in the Fo'c'stle Oil Tank, recently full of oil. This was to be our Home until we reach Germany, if we get there. These Germans sure don't care where they put us.

5 pm. We are now once again sailing on the High Seas; the Raiders are gradually disappearing from view. The SS *Duquesia* was fully loaded with 8 million eggs, corned mutton beef. A Lovely Larder

26 February

After a terrible journey with no luck of being picked up by one of our warships we find ourselves being escorted by two German Destroyers into Bordeaux. The sky was black, the rain teemed down and it was very cold.

We were still Prisoners of War and our lives spared. The past week has been really a trying time, for none of us expeted to reach Port knowing that our submarines operate around the Bay. I think we have to thank the bad weather.

To be Continued

A Toast Unto Her Majesty

The Installation of HM The Queen Mother as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

Wednesday 1st August 1979.

"Back to 1940 with Con Mahoney, then a Lieutenant in the Royal Marines"

It was a year when distances were shortening dramatically - and hourly. Great Allied armies were in retreat and enemy tanks had reached the French coast just twenty odd miles away and, on a clear day, within sight of Walmer Castle. The castle is some three or four miles up the coast from the great Dover Castle and two thousand or so yards south of the more modest castle at Deal. Shipping had been almost driven from the Straights of Dover by German dive-bombers and very heavy shellfire was exchanged daily between the carefully prepared and concealed positions on either coast. The Press called the area Hellfire Corner. Badly mauled bombers were caught, some at sea level, as they attempted to make the safety of the freshly captured French airfields. Marines away from their traditional role were hastily deployed along this coast with the Dunkirk disaster still to be made good by the Army; and regrouping the utmost priority before redeployment of the thousands evacuated through Dunkirk. A body of Royal Marines from Portsmouth Command earmarked for Crete in the Eastern Mediterranean were dispatched to Deal and thinly spread along this sector. Later that summer my platoon from 'C' Company of the 11th Battalion entered Walmer Castle and took up defensive positions. Arms were simple and conventional; Bren guns, Lee Enfield rifles, some grenades and .45 revolver which lay beside my pillow at night. The all essential gas-mask augmented the pillow of cushions taken from garden chairs used by Lord and Lady Willingdon, home now from India, where they had occupied the Viceroy's Palace, Lord Willingdon being the Lord Warden at this time. . . . . .

The Marines lived in cottages to the right of the entrance to the Castle on the seaward side and for a time I had a room with a camp bed in an adjacent cottage. This struck me as being a tucked away position and so I reconnoitred the parapet of the castle and took a fancy to a glass and wood-framed conservatory that stands today to the left of the main entrance bridge above the grass covered moat. It was from this vantage point that I could observe the field of fire and watch over the broad sweep of water along my sector. Invasion of our shores was imminent and the next logical step in the grand strategy of the German war-lords under Adolph Hitler. Mines had been laid - a hazard not met by Caesar when he landed on this very beach by Deal Castle in 55 BC. Neither were they carried in the armoury of that great Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington who died here in Walmer Castle in 1852.

I spent seven months on this coastline and about two months in the castle. A few months back I joined a small party making a tour of the Castle and when our guide revealed that Queen Victoria had slept there I was tempted to say ". . and so have I - but fitfully!"

Editor's Note: When HM The Queen Mother was installed as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports the BBC commissioned a light hearted piece from Con Mahoney (RMHS) , then a BBC executive, for use as standby material on the live Outside Broadcast. The above is taken from his written script.

Journey to Quebec - 1943

by William J Kitchingham *(RMHS)*

Towards the end of July 1943, I was one of a small group of Royal Marines from Stonehouse Barracks who had been selected to make up a special detachment to be known as 'Party Med'. We were given a general briefing and warned not to discuss it with anyone. The duties of the Royal Marine Detachment were to provide orderlies for the Prime Minister and Chiefs of Staff, and during moves to handle and guard the secret documents, and assist with the personal luggage of the Special Party. Sentries and armed guards were to be provided as necessary.

We travelled by rail from Plymouth to London and upon our arrival we split up into small working parties to collect sensitive stores from Government offices, and VIP baggage from certain addresses in London. I was required to go to Chartwell in a chaffeur driven armoured, black ministerial car to collect baggage marked Col. Warden, the name under which Mr Churchill was travelling. It was quite late in the evening and dark when we headed back to London. As soon as the special train was loaded with its passenger and baggage, and a final check made that all was well, it left London for the overnight journey to Scotland with Royal Marines on guard.

We embarked in the giant Cunard liner *Queen Mary*, 81,000 tons, and sailed from the Clyde p.m. on the 5 August 1943. The *Queen Mary* soon picked up her normal speed, and anti U-boat zigzag course, for the four day crossing of the North Atlantic to Halifax, Canada.

Once at sea we were given a further briefing and informed of our tasks. I was assigned, with three other lance corporals, to the Prime Minister's office. During the sea passage we soon got to know the Prime Minister's staff. There was Mr John Martin the Principal Private Secretary, Mr Leslie Rowan a Private Secretary, Mr Patrick Kinna the PM's clerk, and other Private and Personal Secretaries. There was also Commander C.R. Thompson RN ADC, Inspector W.H. Thompson (ex Special Branch Scotland Yard), the PM's shadow/bodyguard, and Mr Frank Sawyers the PM's butler. Another essential person to know of was Captain R.P. Pim RNVR who was in charge of the PM's Map Room.

Very important staff meetings took place as we crossed the Atlantic. On one occasion, I was on duty outside the PM's cabin where he was having a meeting with the Chiefs of Staff and other senior officers, when a very senior naval officer opened the cabin door and said to me, "Put a few inches of cold water in the bath and let me know when it is ready," which I did. A number of curious looking models were then taken into the bathroom and placed on the surface of the water. The PM and his staff then continued their meeting in an over-crowded bathroom. I was later to learn that, in that bathroom, a discussion on the Mulberry project took place. This was the creation of artificial harbours which were to be ferried acrss the English Channel and located close to the Normandy beaches to enable supply ships to unload essential war materials for the Allied armies.

The *Queen Mary* arrived at Halifax p.m. on the 9 August 1943. The Conference delegation soon disembarked and, with their baggage, boarded a special train provided by the Canadian National Railways.

Whilst the special stores were being transferred from ship to train the area was placed under armed guard. I was armed with a naval sub-machine - a Lanchester, loaded with a 50 round magazine of 9mm ammunition - and posted out on the railway sidings. A number of red coated Mounties were also in the area. There was a moment when, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed Mr Churchill, who was not many yards

away walking up and down for exercise before getting on the train, gazing thoughtfully past me into the distance.

Later in the afternoon the train started out on its 500 mile journey through the Canadian Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and into Quebec where we arrived p.m. on 10 August. The evening meal, for us young servicemen who were used to austerity, was a delight, and we spent a very comfortable night in sleeping berths prepared by the coach attendants. There were official photographers onboard the train and a group of us were photographed in a coach, all looking very pleased with ourselves.

At Quebec, the Prime Minister stayed at the Citadel, to be joined later by the American President, Mr Roosevelt. The Conference delegations of both sides were accommodated in a Canadian Pacific Hotel, the picturesque Château Frontenac. I remember their advertising slogan, 'Snow's Right, Sun's Bright, Ski in Friendly old Quebec.' We orderlies and some of the Royal Marine sentries were housed in outbuildings within the battlements of the Citadel. It was here that we came in full contact with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They were in charge of the security arrangements for the Conference and the Red Coats were on duty within the Citadel and the hotel.

One day I was watching a small, four legged animal with a bushy tail scurrying across the lawns at the Citadel when one of the Mounties came out of a doorway and very quickly said, "Keep away from that! it's a skunk!"

On the 13th, I was paired up with one of the other lance corporals for a trip away from the main body. We were to take some dispatches to the Prime Minister who had gone to visit Mr Roosevelt, the President of the United States of America, at his home at Hyde Park, near Poughkeepsie, New York State. We flew the 400 miles in a twin engined airplane made available by the Governor General of Canada, from Quebec to an American airfield near Hyde Park. On arrival, we were met by United States officials and taken by car to the President's home, where we handed the pouch to the PM's Principal Private Secretary. Whilst we were in the President's home, I noticed gently sloping ramps which had been fitted at the changes of levels in the corridor for the President's wheel chair. We had a pleasant surprise when Mrs Roosevelt came upon us and enquired how we were after the flight. We replied that we were fine, and she said that if there was anything we wanted just please ask. The PM's Principal Private Secretary informed us that we would have to stay the night and take a pouch back to Quebec next morning. So an American escort drove us to the nearby town of Poughkeepsie where reservations had been made for us at the Nelson House Hotel.

After a meal we took a walk along Main Street to stretch our legs. It was now dark and we remarked on the street lights and window displays. The evening was quite warm so we went into a drug store and had a Coke each before returning to the Hotel.

Our return journey was not going to be as straight forward as the flight from Quebec. We were picked up after breakfast by car from the Nelson House Hotel and taken to Hyde Park where we collected the bag from the PM's Principal Private Secretary. US officials then escorted us back to the airfield and we boarded the same plane that brought us.

During the take off along the runway there was an engine failure in one of the planes engines which caused immediate concern to all on board. However, the pilot did a magnificent job in aborting the take off at the end of the runway. As the aircraft came to rest there was a rapid evacuation, fire being a real possibility. A car rushed out to meet us and took us all back to the airfield control offices. After some discussion, the Americans arranged for one of their airplanes, I think it was a Dakota, to fly us back to Canada. On nearing Quebec, the pilot received a radio report that there was fog at Quebec and that we were to divert to Montreal.

Canadian officials met us when we landed, and whilst driving us into the city explained that reservations had been made for us on the overnight train from Montreal to Quebec. As the train was not due to leave for a few hours it was

suggested that, if we were feeling hungry, we could have a meal in a restaurant near the station. The Canadian officials, who were dressed in civilian clothing said that we need not worry about anything, they would be close-by whilst we ate our meal, and they would see us onto the train in good time. We were dressed in our normal blue uniforms and peaked caps.

My colleague, Ken, said "OK then." When we got into the city he looked around and, indicating a restaurant, said, "Let's go in there and see what they've got." We went in and a waitress took our orders. I asked for crayfish as I had never tasted one before. As we ate our food we discussed the events of the past few hours. There were few customers in the place, nevertheless, we kept the pouch, which had to be guarded at all times, out of view as best we could. We finished our meal paid the bill and left the restaurant. I had been very hungry and enjoyed the crayfish.

We walked along the pavement, which was quite wide, towards the Montreal railway station, a few hundred yards away. We looked at shop window displays as we passed making remarks such as, 'You can't get that back home' or 'Look at that'. Then, in the reflection of a shop window I saw some men closing in on us from behind. Their manner of approach alerted me and I said to my colleague, who at this time was on my right and carrying the pouch in his left hand, "Look out Ken, something's happening!" He replied, "Yes! I've seen them." I slipped my right hand down and also took hold of the handle of the pouch. Three men closed in on us and one tried to snatch the pouch away. I exclaimed, "What do you think you're doing? Leave our music case alone, we're bandsmen." At that moment the three strangers and ourselves were surrounded by a group of our plain clothes Canadian friends, who had been keeping an eye on us. The Officer in Charge told us everything was under control and that we should carry on to the the railway station.

As I looked back, I saw the three men being bundled into some waiting cars. We entered the station, boarded the train for Quebec and found our sleeping berths. We could not undress and turn in, so we had to take it in turns to snatch some sleep. One of us simply had to be awake to guard the pouch.

On our arrival at Quebec early next morning a car was waiting and took us back to the Citadel where we handed the pouch to the duty private secretary in the PM's office. Back in our quarters we were greeted by the off duty RM Guards with, "What happened to you two, get lost, eh?" Our Colour Sergeant in charge ordered us to get cleaned up, and have some breakfast. There would be another briefing about the Conference duties later in the afternoon.

The 26 August 1943 saw me taking dispatches from the PM's base office at the Citadel to Snow Lake - Lac des Neiges - up in the mountains of Laurentian Park, about sixty five miles from Quebec. The Prime Minister was resting at a fishing camp following the end of the

Quebec Conference. A Canadian Army driver with a staff car drove me into the Park area. As we went deeper into the forest I kept a lookout for wild life amongst the trees and tall scrub, but nothing was seen. Eventually we came to a landing stage on the edge of a lake. It was nearing dusk as a small motorboat took me the rest of the journey along the lake to the camp, which was a small group of traditional Canadian log cabins where I handed the pouch to the PM's Secretary. The weather up there was a little chilly, but I had a good meal and a comfortable night's sleep in a bunk bed in one of the log cabins.

Next morning, the 27th, Inspector W.H. Thompson, the PM's shadow, said to me that he was in need of a second person to go out on the lake with him to accompany the VIP fishing party, so I found myself paddling a Canadian canoe. I knew nothing about the technique required tp paddle one. Although I had seen films of Red Indians in their canoes I never thought the time would come when I would be in one. The other important personalities were out on the lake in boats - not canoes - casting their fishing lines. All was peaceful and quiet.

We paddled away from the shore a short distance and the Inspector started to fish. After a few casts his line became entangled in some underwater debris so, to free it, we paddled over to the spot and I put my hand over the side into the water but the

canoe capsized and both of us were tipped into the lake. The Prime Minister, who was casting his line nearby, saw what happened and drily remarked, "What are you doing Thompson, trying to kill yourself?" I started to swim for the shore but someone dashed over to us in a boat and fished us out of the cold water. The Inspector, who was not a young man, glowered at me. He was most unhappy about the event, however, nothing more than wet clothing and hurt pride was done. When we got back to the cabin a kind member of staff produced trousers and jumpers for us to wear while our wet clothing was taken away and dried. Later that evening I had to return to Quebec with a pouch, and was sent on my way with comments about Royal Marines floating about in lakes dressed in their blue uniforms.

The Quebec Conference ended, and it was time for the main party to pack up for the journey home. Most of the two hundred members of the UK Delegation would be catching the train to Halifax to join the many thousands of Canadian troops on board *Queen Mary*. However, I was with a small group of Royal Marines who left Quebec pm 31 August 1943 on the special train accompanying the Prime Minister's party to Washington DC.

(Footnote: L/Cpl R.D. Emerson also fell into the lake when he was delivering a pouch of papers for the PM. He hung onto the pouch and the papers were not lost, but very wet. Note the reference to falling into lakes in the copy of the Downing Street Letter dated 20 October 1943.)

10 Downing Street
Whitehall
20th October 1943

Dear Simpson,

I have been meaning to write, to you about the Marine Orderlies who were detailed for the Prime Minister during his recent visit to Canada, but as their names were mislaid I had to wait til I got them from Plymouth.

They were:-

Ply.X.2693	L/Cpl	R.D. Emerson
Ply.X.4130	"	W.J. Kitchingham
Ply.X.4153	"	K.N. Wright
Ply.X.4317	"	John Ward

I thought you would be interested to know that they did a remarkably good job. Their duties were varied as in addition to what might be expected from a personal orderly, as a kind of bellhop, they were also required to travel all over parts of Canada and the United States on their own as couriers by air, by car and by boat, not to say train. They always turned up on time and often having surmounted considerable difficulties. I really think they were a remarkable quartette and I am glad that they also had a certain amount of fun, fishing and falling into lakes and other exciting experiences.

I can assure you that the Prime Minister was very well satisfied with their services.

Buckley was in charge of all the Marines for the whole mission for most of the time, and so I did not have much to do with him until after the departure of the main party. He then worked with us and he was the greatest assistance taking any odd job that wanted doing, and I personally can say that I was most grateful for his help.

Yours sincerely

signed C.R. Thompson

P.S. I understand the oldest of the L/Cpls was 19½ yrs. What a Corps!

Major General H.W. Simpson D.S.O. R.M.

Reminiscences of a Wartime Officer

Part XI

by Major Patrick G A Ennor *(RMHS)*

Amongst my brother officers at Richborough, near Sandwich, Kent, was Bill Sanderson. He was a good deal younger than I but we had been at the same school and so struck up quite a friendship. He had recently been in HMS *King George V* and as he was an entertaining individual he had a number of amusing anecdotes about the life of a junior RM Subaltern in the Fleet Flagship with twelve non-executive naval captains in the wardroom. Bill Sanderson was to derive much entertainment from Mne Sign's solicitous care of me. He would say to an audience: "You ought to see the performance in the mornings. Sign wakes Pat up, pours a cup of tea down his throat, gets him shaved and dressed, and gives him his breakfast and then he turns him out into the cold and hostile world to fend for himself."

One evening Col Bill Farrier invited Norman Tailyour and me over to his house at Kingsdown and told us that an RM officer with experience on the staff and in Landing Craft was required for duty in the Department of the Director of Combined Operations Personnel. Not many people happened to have these two qualifications so the lot fell on me and I was soon back in London again.

The turn of the year 1943/44 found me taking the familiar route to Richmond Terrace, but instead of turning left to Montagu House on arrival I was conducted to a sort of hut which housed the Directorate of Combined Operations Personnel. This had hitherto been a branch of the staff of the Chief of Combined Operations, but when I arrived was in the process of being metamorphosed into an Admiralty Department within the portfolio of the Second Sea Lord. For this reason several of the naval officers, such as the Captain's Secretary, were being replaced by civil servants. The Director, a most kindly and courteous man, was Captain Roden Buxton, and his deputy was Commander Wade, a retired officer re-employed.

The reason for my appointment was that after the negotiations for the transfer of large numbers of Royal Marines to Landing Craft were well advanced, it was discovered that their postings, appointments, drafting and promotion were expected to conform to the procedure formerly adopted for naval officers and ratings and fall within the jurisdiction of the DCOP. This did not chime at all with the ideas of the Adjutant General Royal Marines, who in accordance with established practice, was quite unprepared to relinquish the ultimate control of members of the Corps to any other authority. Clearly it was out of the question to abandon the quite adequate machinery - established by Combined Operations - and a compromise was effected. Jock Wilson was superimposed to handle the drafting of Royal Marines other ranks and I was nominally in charge of the affairs of officers. In the event I was nothing more than a Post Office through which the recommendations of the Military Secretary at the RMO were transmitted to DCOP who duly concurred and published the appointments in the 'Supplement to the Commissions and Warrants List' which was issued

daily by his department. Although I had official status in the matter I was in a position to make suggestions regarding appointments to the Assistant Military Secretary, 'Franco' Jackson at the Royal Marines Office, and in fact the system worked quite well. There are many who decry the 'old boy net' and are vociferous with charges of nepotism and influence in matters of postings and appointments. To my mind this is a very wrong and foolish attitude. Provided the staff officers are above suspicion - and if they are not they should not be in such posts - and provided that the applicant for a certain post is competent to fill it, I see no harm whatever in falling in with expressed requests. If a man is in a job he wants the likelihood is that he will do it well and conscientiously; if a commander is given the men he wants, and knows and likes, the likelihood is that he will weld a more efficient and homogenous team than if he was just given the people, who to some pundit in a Whitehall Office, appear on paper to be the best qualified.

Rather curiously my responsibilities did not extend to Royal Marines officers in Major Landing Craft. For this I was sorry. I have always felt that inadequate consideration was paid to this important service, which in my view provided the most valuable opportunities for wartime officers and men, but which was in fact very little regarded. I think an attempt to develop rather than reduce this commitment, which was in fact the exposition of the traditional RM role in miniature, would have been beneficial and stimulating. Certainly the officers and detachments in Major Landing Craft acquitted themselves well, and earned high praise wherever they went. Despite little official interest, and virtually no RM staff organisation to support them, they worthily maintained the standards of the Corps.

The Directorate of Combined Operations was quite extensive. There was an engineer officer who represented the Engineer-in-Chief and filled a similar role vis-a-vis the engineers office as I did in the Marines. Lieutenant Commander Vere was responsible for appointments to Major Landing Craft and Paymaster Captain Totton handled all matters of supply and secretariat.

I shared my office with my naval opposite number, David Gosschalk - a most delightful person, and entertaining companion and a helpful colleague. Although only about 30 years of age at that time he was almost quite bald, and we had an amusing incident one afternoon when a messenger came to tell David that a Lieutenant Clarkson had come to see him. 'Gossy' exclaimed "What ever can he want?" and he pretended never to forgive me for my suggestion "probably to sell you a wig!"

Although according to regulations we were supposed to have civil servants in all posts which they could fill we did in fact have a large number of wren ratings as typists and clerks. Jean McCarthy and Megan Thomas worked for Gossy and me, and Megan subsequently did so in business after the war. As she was engaged on RM duties we got her a red flash and Globe and Laurel for her cap but, to her annoyance and mine, she was not allowed to wear it for long, the Superintendent WRNS saying that this was only allowed to WRNS serving in RM establishments.

I have always been rather intrigued that a service such as the WRNS managed to exist, as in fact it did, without any sort of disciplinary code. Complete reliance was placed on the quality and enthusiasm of the girls recruited, and usually with complete justification. I remember discussing this once and it emerged that the worst thing that could happen to an offender would be to be 'sent home to Mum'. It is perhaps fortunate that this principle did not apply throughout the armed forces. Had it done so, some areas would have been thinly manned! An amusing incident did once occur when a Wren rating was refused weekend leave to go home to be a bridesmaid to her sister, She duly appeared before her officer and

enquired "Well Ma'am, what will you do to me if I defy you?" "I shall take a most serious view and send you home." Which was, of course, exactly what she wanted!

In addition to my functions in connection with officers appointments I was also supposed to be adviser to my Director in Royal Marines matters. Such few of these as there were used to arrive in dockets duly 'marked' to the various departments or individuals. I have always had quite a good command over the written word, and having learned in COXD how to play the game of dockets this duty held no horrors for me. It was not so with Gossy, but between us we usually managed to think of something for him to say and how to say it. Once however we were both defeated by a docket, which we punted to and fro from one to the other until we had had it so long that clearly we did not dare 'mark it on' to anyone else. Accordingly one winter night we stayed late in the office and when all was quiet descended to the stoke hole, and when the stoker's back as turned we hurled this embarrassing document into the fiery furnace. So that the responsibility for this heinous crime should be shared equally between us I insisted that we each hold one end of the file - rather like two boys throwing another, holding his arms and legs, into a swimming pool. I don't think this particular subject could have had much bearing on the war effort. At all events we never heard of it again.

I was however less fortunate with another paper which defeated my verbal ingenuity. In the end I suggested that the matter be 'referred to the Commander-in-Chief East Indies'. It was, and that I thought is the last I shall see of that. But I was wrong. Shortly afterwards I was appointed to the East Indies staff and, on arrival, there on my table, waiting for me, was the problem child again!

To one whose experience of staff duties had been chiefly military the cavalier manner in which certain senior naval officers treated orders emanating from the Admiralty was both astonishing and infuriating. Our Directorate was supposed to be the authority for all appointments, transfers and postings and the supplement to the C and W List which we issued daily, was supposed to be a document of considerable importance. Local commanders however quite often disregarded its orders entirely or substituted postings of their own, and from time to time individuals would appear in our offices and reveal that they had for weeks been serving in units and places quite different from those ordered by us. In extreme cases we would discover that an officer whom we had supposed to be in the Clyde estuary was in fact in the Mediterranean. Clearly this made an important feature of our business farcical, and although my naval colleagues accepted this unlawfully assumed authority with equanimity, I resolved to bring this matter to a head. Accordingly when a further instance of the disregard of the Department's orders was revealed I made a signal to the Admiral concerned: ' . . . . Admiralty orders will be obeyed'. The following morning when the file containing copies of signals appeared before my Deputy Director pandemonium reigned, and I was taken roundly to task for 'censuring a Flag Officer'. I said that I considered the officer concerned fully deserved censuring and that it was ludicrous that the orders of the ultimate authority, the Admiralty, should be disregarded at whim. I continued that I had always been taught that as a pre-requisite to giving orders it was essential to obey them, and that if my signal gave offence I wondered what would have been thought of some of those which a Divisional HQ habitually sent to its Brigadiers. But my protests were of no avail, and the Deputy Director insisted on sending the most servile expression of regret; so I abandoned my efforts in this direction.

A subsequent incident made me wonder if, in fact, my offending signal had ever been seen by its intended recipient, or any person of rank in his HQ at all. Shortly after this

episode arrangements were made for the officers and men of some LC Flotillas whose location made such a proceeding possible, to go into RM Barracks for a period of drill, and interior economy and administration. All Royal Marines serving in Landing Craft were borne on the books of one of HM Ships and were therefore under the Naval Discipline Act. It was however clearly desirable that whilst in barracks these Marines should be under the Army Act, and there is a KR & AI clause which allows the Royal Marines 'whilst temporarily disembarked' to be placed on orders from their Captain, under the Army Act. This regulation does not require the men's names to be removed from the books of their ships and clearly was admirably suited to meet the situation. I therefore made a signal to all the Landing Craft bases concerned asking for the appropriate order to be made, and I sat back well pleased, feeling that I had done something to justify my existence, and to help my friend, the Flotilla Commanders. Judge therefore my fury and despair, when some weeks later one of the Flotilla Commanders in reply to a question from me said "Oh yes, we got on well enough in barracks: but it was fearful nuisance having to take defaulters all the way back to our LC Base to be weighed off. I can't imagine why you chaps sitting up in London didn't think of putting the flotillas under the Army Act, while in barracks. It would have been such a help to us if you had done so." I am forced to conclude that my carefully intended signals got no further than the desks of some junior ratings in the base signals office.

One day in the spring of 1944 Captain Buxton sent for me and said that Admiral Horan, the Rear Admiral, Combined Operations Bases, in Scotland was proposing to make a round of visits to the bases in Admiral Mountbatten's yacht, the *Sister Anne*. As these bases were now largely populated by Royal Marines, Captain Buxton wished me to go. A little sea-time in a luxurious yacht, and the chance to meet many of my friends was an agreeable prospect and on the following Sunday I duly travelled up to Glasgow by the night train. The arrangements were very efficient and I was met at St Enoch's station by an attractive Wren driver who took me on to Wemyss Bay, where the ship was lying alongside. On coming over the side I was met by the OOW and promptly taken in charge by an obvious peace-time manservant now thinly disguised as a Petty Officer Steward, who ushered me below and told me that breakfast would be ready in ten minutes.

The *Sister Anne* had been lent to Admiral Mountbatten by Mrs Reggie Fellowes and the ship was the last word in luxury. Each cabin and its attendant bathroom were decorated in a pastel shade with bed linen, towels, tiles all matching and the decks were closely carpeted. The Commander Officer of the *Sister Anne*, Lieutenant Teacher RNVR, was an excellent officer and seaman and no doubt his appointment was due to these qualities, and the circumstances that he was also Chairman of Teacher's Whisky Distillery was entirely coincidental. Nonetheless the ample stocks of whisky which, despite a general shortage, were always available in the *Sister Anne*, must have been very welcome to the grandees (and others) who sailed in her.

During the afternon the Admiral came on board and at seven bells we started a heavy gin drinking engagement in the saloon. Admiral Horan was excellent company, but would allow no flinching from the liquor, and as the gin was followed by an excellent luncheon, I soon felt the urgent summons of my bunk for an afternoon's 'zizz'. It never occored to me that, after this symposium, the Admiral intended to land that afternoon but he did, and instead of turning in I was able merely to visit my cabin to collect my belt and cap, before we were alongside the jetty at one of the bases, and I found myself trying to answer the Admiral's numerous questions on RM matters as he inspected the guard which had been

mounted in his honour. This performance was repeated every day, and so far from being refreshed from my cruise I was almost exhausted by the end of it.

On the first day I remember the Admiral said to me "I want you to realise that these camps are built with the Navy's money, by the Navy, for the Navy." As he repeated this at each base we visited, I had, by the end of the cruise, managed to get the hang of it.

I am reminded by this episode of a story concerning the wartime loan of a luxurious yacht to a distinguished Admiral. On the first evening on which he had been flying his flag in this yacht, the Admiral, being rather tired, had turned in early and was reading in his bunk. Feeling that he would like a nightcap he pressed one of a row of little buttons near his head, but instead of the appearance of his steward, the result was a rumbling noise and the disappearance of the bulkhead, and the Admiral, to his dismay, found himself gazing into the astonished eyes of his Flag Lieutenant reclining on his bunk in the adjacent cabin.

As will be generally agreed the security maintained regarding the opening of the Second Front was quite excellent. Even my Director who was the head of an Admiralty department did not, I think, know the full details and timings and we, who were certainly quite close to the nerve centre of the war were, of course, even more in ignorance. Inevitably there was a certain amount of speculation as to when D-Day would be and although this in itself was regarded as dangerous to security and could only be indulged in in the most covert manner, Gossy, in his forecast, got extraordinarily close to the actual day; and there was an extraordinary sensation of excitement and suspense when the first reports of the launching of *Overlord* began to arrive. We were all summoned to the Director's office when he explained the situation on the maps and charts, mentioning especially the great successes achieved at not being participants in this historic occasion, and were anxious to know how all our friends and comrades had fared.

The first news I received was of Michael Previte who had been in command of a flotilla of LCAs which carried French troops to the beaches. Apparently during the run in they had encountered little opposition and the troops had made a very successful landing. On going astern to make an offing however the boats came under heavy mortar fire from the shore. This was too much for Michael who had been prepared for bombardment coming in, but thought this fusilade when they were drawing off was intolerable. He accordingly jumped on to the little quarterdeck of his LCA and proceeded to shake his fist at the place where he supposed the enemy to be at the same time treating them to a fine flow of invective - in German. He was subsequently awarded the Croix de Guerre by our gallant allies.

Soon after D-Day came the first of the V1 missiles. My first experience of these was being awakened one night by what appeared to be the sound of a car being driven by some drunkard and waited for the inevitable crash which would occur when the car reached the road junctions and islands at Gloucester Gate. Sure enough I heard the engine stop, but there was an appreciable interval before the expected crash and as there were no cries, no sound of breaking glass or running footsteps I concluded that no great damage had been done, and fell asleep once more. The following morning the real explanation was forthcoming and I believe that this particular flying bomb had fallen in the neighbourhood of London.

The flying bombs caused me to worry a good deal about Phyllis and the children and the next night I induced them and Lazarus (the dog) to sleep for the first and only time, in the air raid shelter which our predecessors had excavated in the garden. I gallantly remained in my comfortable bed in the house. Fortunately it was summer and the weather

was good so they were not as uncomfortable as they would have been in winter: however during the night I felt that I should go down to see how they were and in the entrance to the shelter I managed to dislodge a positive avalanche of sand and grit which descended on their faces waking them all up. As Phyllis and the children had only just got to sleep my nocturnal solicitude was not appreciated.

In the department we had a rule which required us all to take one day off per week; it did not matter which day, but in fact most of us chose Saturday or Sunday. This arrangement was, I think, a relic from the early days in HQ Combined Operations when there had been so much work that people tended to work seven days a week and finally crack up under the strain. So far as I was concerned there was not enough work in DCOP to occupy me even five days a week; but I had become a sufficiently old soldier to realise that there is no point in trying to set the world to rights single-handed, and to accept existing arrangements.

As a result of this I was on duty on the Sunday when a flying bomb fell on the Guards Chapel during morning service and caused very heavy casualties. I was in fact in the Royal Marines Office in Queen Anne's Mansions when the bomb fell and afterwards walked back to Richmond Terrace. There I met Captain Buxton who asked me if I knew where the bomb had fallen. The command and self control he displayed when I told him were splendid; he just said to me without the least variation from his very ordinary tone "Thank you. This is bad news for me as my mother and sister had both gone to church there this morning." Clearly there was nothing more that I could say or do, and mercifully we later discovered that they had not in fact gone to the Guards Chapel but finding the long walk on a hot morning too much for Mrs Buxton, they had turned into St Peter's, Eaton Square, instead.

During the war many Clubs generously extended honorary membership to officers of the Allied Nations serving in London. One of these was the RAC and Gossy, another RNVR officer named Crabb and I used often to lunch there, frequently at the snack bar, on the side of the swimming pool. Crabb was a wine merchant and would sometimes prevail on us to have a post-prandial glass of port after which we were sufficiently heartened to look out of the office windows on to the little yard to watch the Wrens being drilled, and sometimes compelled to command the squads themselves. This used to infuriate our Wrens who would complain bitterly but I would retaliate by saying that I was only getting my own back for what had been done to me by the Depot Wrens when I was a Second Lieutenant at Deal.

One evening towards the end of the summer Jean Moir, Gossy and I had all been dining at the RAC. Standing in Pall Mall afterwards, waiting for a cab, we heard a tremendous explosion - apparently away to the west. Next day it was - possibly officially - put about that this explosion had been caused by the internal combustion of a gasometer: in fact it was the first appearance of the V2 missile, which being inaudible, was far more terrifying than the V1. Fortunately the advancing armies on the continent secured the launching sites of these rockets which had caused appalling damage and were without doubt most valuable weapons to the enemy.

One amusing story concerning a Dominion officer who became a wartime member of a London Club. One afternoon he was sitting in the smoking room of which the only other occupant was an elderly member reading The Times. In the forthcoming manner, which is perhaps more characteristic of people from the Dominions than of Englishmen, this officer approached the old gentleman and asked him if he would care to join him in a cup of tea. The reply came "Oh no thank you. No thank you, I don't care for tea; tried it once but didn't like it." Both returned to their reading and after an interval of about two hours the officer tried again.

"Would you care for a whisky and soda?" "Oh no thank you. No thank you. I tried drinking whisky once, but I don't care for it." After a further interval a third attempt at sociability was essayed: "Would you join me in a game of billiards? Play a hundred up?" Back came the answer "Oh no thank you. Played once, but I didn't like it. But that's my son there, who has just come in. He'll give you a game I'm sure." "Your son - your son did you say, sir? Your only child I presume?"

Meanwhile the months were slipping by. Summer emerged into autumn and autumn into winter, and the build-up for the prosecution of the war in the Far East and the Pacific was steadily going forward. It was evident that there would be an enormous force of Royal Marines in the east and "Here" I thought, "perhaps at last an opportunity to play some part in great events." Thanks in part to the good offices of my friend Franco Jackson, I succeeded in getting myself appointed to the staff of General George Newman who was to go out to the east as Senior Royal Marines Officer in that theatre.

To be continued

Ashore or Afloat?

From: Dep. Adj. General, Royal Marine Office

To: Colonel Suther, CB,
Commandant, Royal Marines, PLYMOUTH

1st August 1871

The power of a Commanding Officer, Naval or Marine, to summarily reduce Non-Commissioned Officers to the ranks, with or without Good Conduct Badges, is clearly laid down in Art. 21 of the Revised Good Conduct Regulations - without any reference to the "judgement of a Court Martial".

Private Robert Ayres, having been sentenced (while serving as a Sergeant on board HMS Iron Duke) to be reduced to the ranks without a Badge, therefore forfeiting a part of the Good Conduct Pay accruing from his former service; is not entitled to reckon his former time as a Non-Commissioned Officer towards Good Conduct Pay, or to be allowed. . . . etc, etc.

Had this Non-Commissioned Officer been serving ashore under the Mutiny Act, and summarily reduced by order of his Commanding Officer, he might have appealed to the judgment of a Court Martial; in which case the Court would, at their discretion, have made deprivation of badges a part of their sentence.

As, however, he was reduced when serving afloat under the Naval Discipline Act, and in accordance with Naval Practice; the reduction with all its consequences, becomes final.

An article in the May/June issue of 'The Globe & Laurel' entitled "Look Up, Royal!" discusses the possibility of changing to Naval Badges of Rank, whilst retaining Army titles. It prompts me to publish the following Royal Marines Office circular issued nearly 70 years ago.

What's in a Rank?

The following circular was issued by the Adjutant General Royal Marines from his office at the Admiralty, 54 Victoria Street, London, SW1 on 26th March 1925.

RELATIVE RANK

A decision has recently been reached that Commissioned Officers of the Royal Marines shall rank, according to seniority, with Officers of the Army of the same titles. As a result of this the higher relative rank granted to Royal Marine Officers serving afloat will disappear. Pay and allowances are at present largely based on this higher relative rank.

2. In these circumstances it seems to be desirable to review the general position of Officers, R.M., having regard to their ages as compared with Naval Officers, and to consider the question of introducing new titles for Royal Marine Officers which will not, in future, act to their detriment.

3. The effect of any such new titles, introduced on the administration of the Corps by its own officers when serving under the Army Act, and the position of R.M. Officers on Army Courts Martial must also be carefully considered; also their position when working with Army Officers in the field.

4. The attached schedule has been drawn up to assist in deciding upon suitable titles

5. As Captains R.N. will in future rank with Colonels of the Army from date of promotion, it would seem to be best to fuse the ranks of Lieut Colonel and Colonel 2nd Commandant R.M.

6. It is possible that it may not be essential to alter the titles of Colonels Commandant and higher ranks.

7. Colonels Commandant are requested to give the matter careful consideration, and forward any proposals on the question as early as possible.

A R H Hutchinson

Adjutant General

Copies to:-

Colonels Comandant R.M.

Supt. R.N.S of M.

ENCLOSURE TO R.M.O. CIRCULAR of 27/3/25*(sic)*

ALTERNATIVE TITLES

(a) PROBATIONARY 2nd LIEUT

Probationary 2nd Lieut (M), Probationary 2nd Lieut (N), Sub-Lieut (M), Marine Sub-Lieut, Ensign, Marine Officer, Probationary Officer.

(b) LIEUTENANT

Lieut (M), Lieut (N), Marine Lieut, Platoon Commander, Detachment Officer (M)

Note - Ranks (a) and (b) to be held -

(a) for four years

(b) for eight years

so as to agree with naval period before promotion to Lieut Commander. Promotion to be by service, and not also in vacancies as at present.

(c) CAPTAIN

Captain (M), Captain (N), Lieut Commdr (M), Marine Lieut Commdr, Group Commdr, Company Commdr 2nd Class, Squadron Lieut, Squadron Officer (M), Detachment Commdr.

(d) MAJOR

Major (M), Major (N), Commdr (M), Marine Commdr, Wing Commdr, Company Commdr 1st Class, Fleet Officer, Fleet Officer (M), Lieut Commdt, Commdt, Sub-Commdt,

(e) LIEUTENANT COLONEL AND COLONEL 2nd COMMANDANT

Lieut Colonel (M), Colonel (M), Lieut Colonel (N), Colonel (N), Captain (M), Marine Captain, Battalion Commdr, Brigade Commdr 2nd Class, Chief Fleet Officer, Marine Colonel, Deputy Director (M), Director (M), Commdt (if not used for (d)), Major Commdt.

(f) COLONEL COMMANDANT

Colonel Commandant, Colonel Commdt (M), Colonel Commdt (N), Commodore (M), Marine Commodore, Brigade Commdr 1st Class, Marine Colonel Commdt, Staff Colonel.

(g) MAJOR GENERAL

Major General, Major General (M), Major General (N), Rear Admiral (M), Marine Rear Admiral, Divisional Commdr, Marine Major General.

(h) LIEUTENANT GENERAL

Lieut General, Lieut General (M), Lieut General (N), Vice Admiral (M), Marine Vice Admiral, Assistant Director of Marine, Marine Lieut General.

(h) GENERAL

General, General (M), General (N), Admiral (M), Marine Admiral, Director of Marine, Marine General.

Note: The paper goes on to suggest redesignation of many other officer ranks including Headmasters, Schoolmasters, Commissioned RM Gunners, Superintending Clerks, Sergeants Major, Bandmasters and Directors of Music; and appointments such as 1st and 2nd Quartermasters, Barrackmasters, etc.

Book Review

Nothing Much To Lose by Michael McConville

A History of the 2nd Battalion Royal Marines and 43 (Royal Marines) Commando

Another gap in our Corps history has been filled by this excellent and highly readable book by Mike McConville. One could not wish for a better combination than a professional author and one who served as an officer in 43 Commando during World War 2 to write this story.

The Second Battalion was raised in April 1940 and a month later saw active service in the occupation of Iceland. Soon after its return it was sent to Freetown in West Africa as part of 102 RM Brigade for the ill-fated Dakar Operation. Then a long period of enforced quiet. In August 1943 most of the unit reformed as 43 (RM) Commando and subsequently saw considerable active serice in the Mediterranean.

The author has an easy narrative style and recounts individual stories and achievements as seen from the men on the battlefield. From 43 Commando's first encounter with the enemy at Anzio in January 1944 to their year in Yugoslavia operating off the coast among the small islands, the history is full of action. Then the return to the 'line' and the battle of Lake Comacchio in north east Italy, where Cpl Tom Hunter won the Corps only World War 2 VC. Their last major action was at Argenta, where, at the tender age of 20, Lieutenant Bill Jenkins was the youngest World War 2 Royal Marine officer to win the DSO. These exploits, and those of many others, are described without heroics but with great sincerity and, in the quieter times, much humour.

43 Commando had what can best be described as a busy war. Mike McConville, as befits someone who served with distinction in the unit and then spent many post war years working in Yugoslavia has an intimate feeling for the region and must surely feel bitter about the sad events of today.

In his book he has done full justice to 43 Commando and its marines and helped to add another unit history to the bookshelves, leaving only 41 and 42 Commandos without comprehensive coverage of their exploits.

There are a number of new photographs and a plentiful selection of maps to guide you through the story. Although the book is dedicated to those in the two units who fought and died in the service of their country, it is a pity that there is no appendix in the book to record their names, forty-five of them, including Cpl Tom Hunter, to complement the appendix which lists the fifty who received awards. The details, published by the Royal Marines Historical Society in 'Bid Them Rest in Peace', were so easy to use.

Published by 43 RM Commando Reunion - £10 (plus £2 p & p) (ISBN 0-9521241-0-6))

Available from Desmond Clark, Westmead, Moor Road, Ashover, Chesterfield, S45 0AQ or from the Royal Marines Museum.