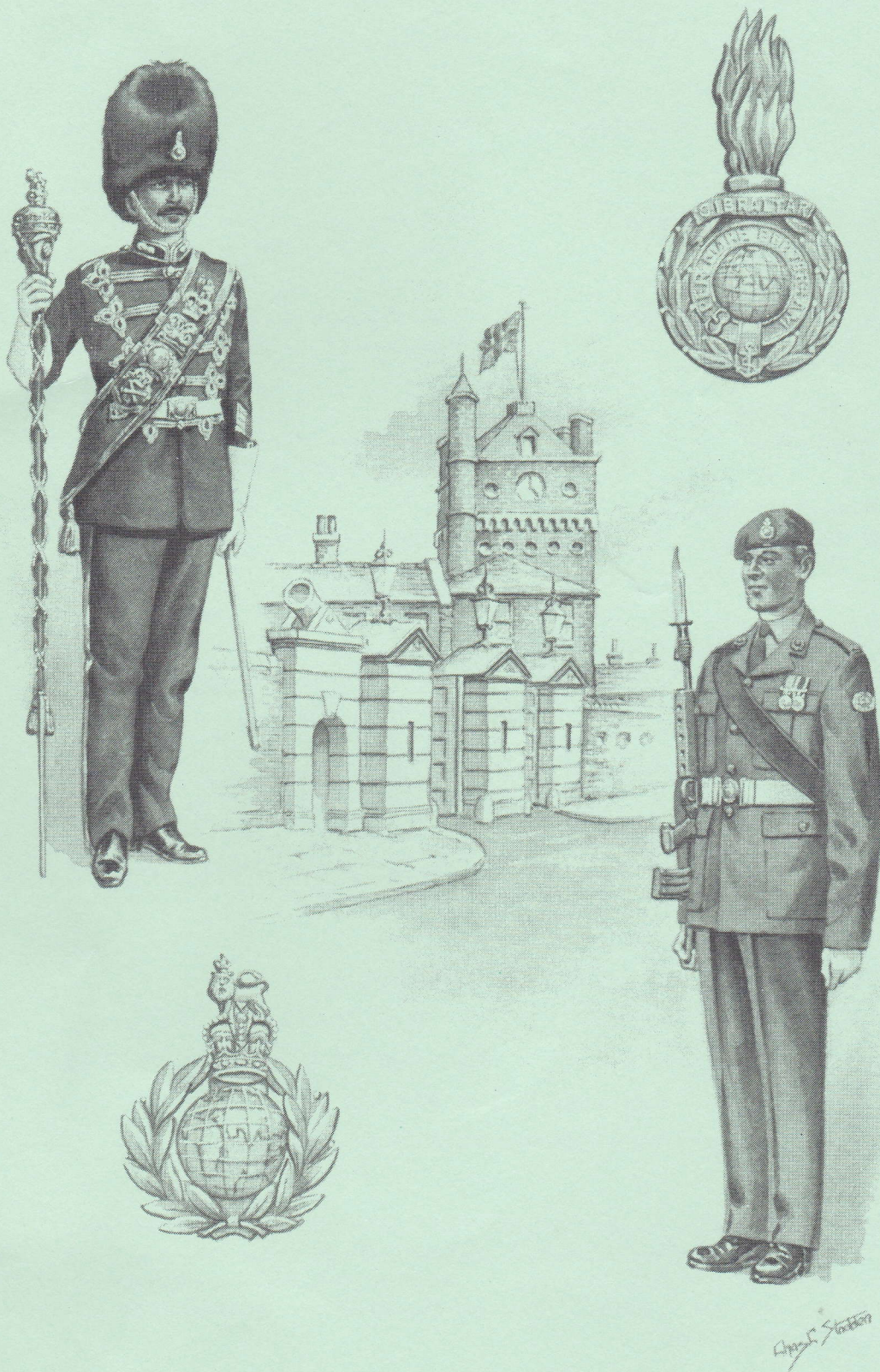




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THE SHEET ANCHOR

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WINTER 1992

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Operation "Kingfisher"

or How Grivas Got Away

by Lieutenant Colonel Peter Thomas RM (RMHS)

In 1958 I was serving in 40 Commando RM during the Cyprus Emergency. We were responsible for the Troodos mountain district where Grivas had organised and trained his guerilla groups at the start of the insurrection against British Rule. Most of the effort of the security forces was aimed at eliminating the terrorist leaders. George Grivas was the big prize. With his death or capture the campaign of terrorism waged by EOKA against the British would collapse.

Grivas had nearly been caught a number of times, notably in May and June 1956 when for two months he and his command group were trapped within a cordon of troops in the Troodos district. Operating amongst a sympathetic population, accompanied by only one aide, Grivas proved a frustratingly elusive quarry.

In May 1958 an informer told the authorities that Grivas was going to hold a conference of EOKA leaders in the country north of Limassol.

The reserve Brigade available to the Director of Operations was committed elsewhere. With less than 36 hours in which to react, drastic measures were needed to produce three major units to cordon and search the large area indicated by the informer. Despite the risks it was decided to pull out three infantry units from their areas of responsibility. And so Operation *Kingfisher*, initially a mere 48 hour cordon and search operation, started.

The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry were nearest in the Limassol area. 40 Commando had a 45-mile cross country journey along minor roads and forestry tracks. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders had a circuitous 80 mile journey from Polis in the far West of Cyprus. Transport ground its way across country throughout the night. Cordon troops debussed just before dawn and rapidly spread out to link up with neighbouring sub units.

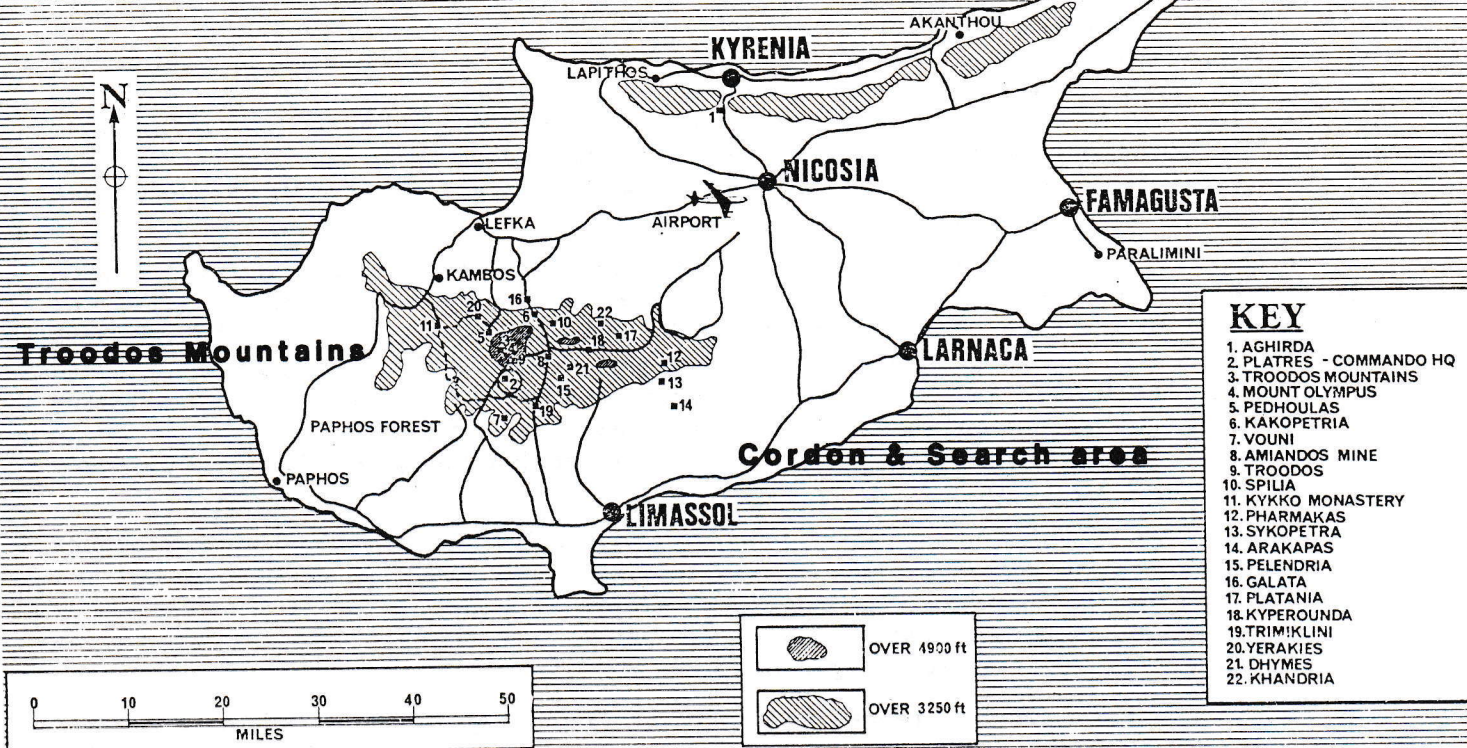
All that day we slowly closed in on the suspected area. The terrorists were experts at making cunningly concealed hides and every suspicious place had to be searched. The first excitement came just before midday when a message came through from the left of my Troop that someone had found a "terrorist haversack". Foolishly I passed the information to Commando Headquarters on the wireless before moving across to investigate. When I reached the place I found one of my innocent newly joined subalterns pointing to a bag I knew full well to be used by villagers to protect the udders of their goats from the ravages of thorn bushes. I rushed back to my wireless and tried desperately to laugh off the gaffe. Communications were bad and words like 'Truform' and 'brassiere' began to lose their humour after being spelt out for the umpteenth time.

In the late afternoon we formed a line of static positions for the night and settled down to ambush routine. Shortly before midnight I heard a burst of firing from the far side of the cordon about 1½ miles away. I learned later that some bandmen from the Argylls' pipe band had opened fire at the noise of stones being thrown from within the cordon. Not being very used to military matters, they declined to report the incident when there was no corpse to show for it.

Now it was a known technique of Grivas's when surrounded, to wait until dark and then advance cautiously towards the cordon throwing sticks and lumps of earth ahead of him. This would provoke a reaction from the cordon troops. Instead of retreating and trying to breakout somewhere else he would sidestep 10 or 15 yards and after a long wait, crawl out on a parallel course. He gambled on us never having sufficient troops to close the gaps.

Next day we slowly moved the cordon in, searching carefully as we did so. That evening the three units halted in the final cordon positions which, with a few minor adjustments, were to be occupied for the next six weeks. The cordon surrounded the whole of a deep valley which extended into a ridge of hills. It measured about 800 yards across by 1000 yards long. The cordon could now be thinned out to form search parties. My troop was

CYPRUS 1955-1958



Map by kind permission of 'Four Five' by David Young

withdrawn and we moved into a pleasant camp under some carob trees - much preferred to the tedium of cordon duties.

For days we searched sections of ground within the cordon area. After a week the search was concentrated on a narrow strip of hillside. The bottom was a steep sided wadi. At the top was a jumble of limestone rocks. In between were terraced fields. Relentlessly the search continued. Every terrace was torn down, the sides of the wadi were dug out and the limestone was shifted with crow bars. Then we found the "stench hole". It was a small fissure in the rocks from which came a powerful smell of ordure. It was too late to do anything about it that day so we were ordered to ambush the area with the whole Troop, less the Assault Engineers, during the night.

Assuming the stench hole to be the top vent of a hide I positioned my ambush line from the top to bottom of the hillside. Men lay in pairs, each man facing alternately left and right across the hill side. We lay there in silence throughout the night. At dawn we withdrew and I debriefed each pair. They had seen nothing but reported they had heard a great deal. There had been a constant thumping noise from underground. Scraping noises as of great sliding doors had been heard. All this was confirmed by several pairs who were debriefed independently.

The CO had come round to meet the ambush party as it withdrew. He was most impressed by what I had to tell him so after I had had a quick breakfast and a shave he took me round to give my report at the Brigadier's daily conference.

As we drove round in the Landrover a nagging doubt began to assail me. I had heard nothing of note during the night but I had been sitting with my back to a tree. Most of the rest of the ambush party had been lying belly down with nothing except their web pouches between them and the rocky soil. Could the thumping noise have been their hearts beating as they listened in hushed expectation? In which case could not the scraping noise have been the sound of their neighbours shifting position? Over 8 hours the imagination of men waiting keyed up for something to happen can play strange tricks. Remembering the terrorist haversack I told my story but voiced my reservations.

In the meantime the Assault Engineers had been laying charges to blow the stench hole open. We worked hard alternately blowing and clearing the rubble. The fissure went down about eight feet and then turned under a great slab of rock. A small, brave marine crawled in but found nothing. The stench had long since given way to the smell of explosive fumes. I suppose those dammed goats had been responsible for raising our hopes again.

The Assault Engineers expended much hard work and explosives laying charges in every likely and unlikely hiding place. To help carry the tools and explosives in and out we requisitioned a donkey train. One evening when we came to leave before blowing the charges, the donkeys were missing. It transpired that the Lancashire Fusiliers had kidnapped them and were demanding a ransom. I decided that one good turn deserved another and after redeeming our donkeys, the Fusiliers camp was raided. Next morning the donkeys plodded into the hills each with a yellow hackle between its ears. Bertram Mills would have approved even if the gallant XXth did not !

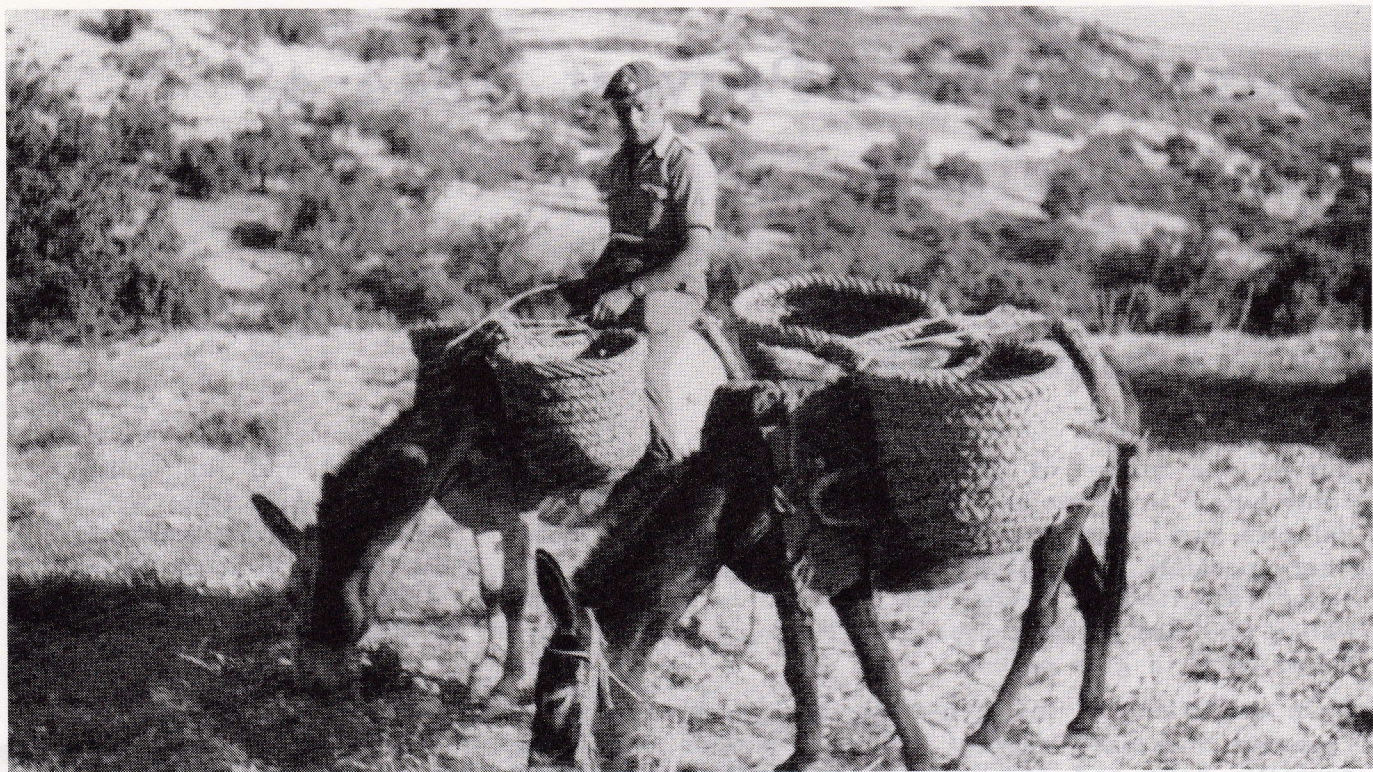
On another day one of the AEs had the misfortune to loose off his rifle by mistake. Quite correctly negligent discharges are taken very seriously and I had to drive the offender round to the CO's orderly room where he was awarded the statutory 28 days loss of pay. On return to our camp we found the AE section fallen in. The miscreant was grabbed and marched in front. They presented arms and presented him with a medal on a ribbon made from a Kiwi boot polish tin on which was etched crossed muskets each with a puff of smoke coming from the muzzle. Beneath was the motto "Where did that one go?" This was probably a far more salutary lesson than the loss of pay.

Every night throughout this period of blasting and digging we had been laying ambushes inside the cordon. Thus any attempt by Grivas to dig himself out of a damaged hide could be dealt with. It had been made clear to me what we were expected to do if we encountered the terrorist leader. Although most of his henchmen could be charged with murder, Grivas could only have been deported for illegal entry.

One day some long awaited infra-red equipment arrived. A sniperscope, which is a night scope for a rifle, was given to the ambush party who were to lie up in the Argylls' sector on their side of the valley. I had the driverscope. This was an Aldis lamp with a thick plate of red glass over the lens, a very large pair of binoculars and a heavy 12 volt battery. All this had to be lugged into the ambush position. The result was the ability to see about 25 yards of green tinted landscape.

'S' Troop camp under the carob tree





TSM Barnes brings up the rations

When I first scanned our arc I noticed a bright light across the valley. When I looked in its direction without the glasses I could see nothing. Obviously it was the light source of the Argylls' sniperscope. I flashed my Aldis in acknowledgement and continued to scan my area. At intervals throughout the night we saw the other light in our glasses.

At dawn we broke radio silence. We had nothing to report but were amazed to hear an excited Scots voice report from the other ambush position that "... they had seen someone moving around on the hillside opposite with a torch." They had aimed at the light but the rifle would not fire. They had tried without success to fit the scope to another rifle. I asked if they had seen the light only when looking through the receiver. "Yes" said the Scots voice. Tersely I explained that it was my light they had seen.

On several occasions a small pi-dog was noticed inside the cordon and some bright spark suggested that Grivas was using it as a courier to get messages through to EOKA. Consequently the island was scoured for bitches in season which were then trailed through the cordoned area by embarrassed marines. Either the pi-dog's sense of duty was more highly developed than his natural instincts or he had gone back to his village, for nothing came of this ploy either.

Intelligence sources seemed to indicate that Grivas might be pinned down somewhere. No proclamations signed "Dighenis" had been issued since the start of our operation. Sporadic incidents had occurred which might have been EOKA diversions to ease pressure on the *Kingfisher* area but there had been no concerted campaign in the districts from which the troops for the cordon had been withdrawn - surely a sign that Grivas was not in control of his forces.

My Troop had done all it could with the lightweight equipment we carried. We were moved back into the cordon. A Field Squadron of sappers made a road onto the hillside and moved in heavy plant to continue the search. The rest we watched from afar.

After six weeks the cordon closed right in to surround the spot where the sappers were working. 40 Commando went back to the Troodos mountains. I cannot remember how or when Operation *Kingfisher* ended. Grivas was certainly not caught because he was still alive to embarrass Archbishop Makarios and the Greek Government years later. If he was inside the cordon I believe that he slipped out that first night through the band and drums. However we cannot be too critical. If they had not been there to plug the gap perhaps no one would have given him the fright which kept him quiet for so long.

Royal Marines Provost 1944-48

Part 2

by Les Coote (RMHS)

During the winter of 1945/6 there was a severe shortage of food and fuel which contributed to a violent crime wave, food and fuel stores were broken into, often vehicles and sometimes trains were stopped and looted. This necessitated escorts where possible. This situation was not helped by the VIPs from the UK visiting on so called fact finding studies, escorts had to be provided for them. The Army Military Police who had a full Company in Hamburg bore the brunt of this but we were often called upon to give backup.

On the lifting of the 'non-fraternize' ban and curfew the number of V.D. cases being reported increased rapidly. Where treatment was being given in the hospitals the contact's name and address was obtained and reported back to military police for investigation. So that individual sections would not be bogged down with the follow up enquiries a vice squad was formed, based at the Army MP HQ in the centre of Hamburg and a full Corporal and Lance Corporal were detached from our strength on permanent loan to this unit which worked in co-operation with the German Police Vice Squad. This arrangement was very successful and RM Provost was involved all the time we were active in Hamburg.

Hamburg, with the Crusader Club and other NAAFI Establishments, became the mecca for units in the surrounding area to visit. They normally arrived in unit transport which had to be parked in guarded parks under RASC control; any vehicle which did not comply with this, but was left unattended in any other area, would be minus wheels and any other movable parts in next to no time. There was a ready market for any of these items, not only in Germany but the whole of Europe. A lot of our time was spent by the patrols in picking up vehicles at risk and taking them to the impound parks for safe keeping, plus the paperwork of the charge sheets. As well as the WD vehicles, this regulation also covered civilian vehicles which had been requisitioned and were on Form 85. These were even more at risk as, for instance, a BMW would fetch a nice price in any of the liberated countries, but a vehicle displaying Form 85 in the windscreen would stand little chance of being stopped and could be driven anywhere.

There was no shortage of incidents to keep us fully occupied, most nights it was after midnight before there was any respite. The day report book for the previous 24 hours had to be made up by 0800 hours with all incidents and other remarks entered. This day book was the bible and it was required to make up the weekly incident report, one copy being sent to No 3 Provost HQ and another copy to Rhine Army HQ BAOR.

During 1946/7 we started to lose the HO members of our happy band on being discharged to civvy street. We kept up to strength, however, with replacements on the close down of the sections and sub sections which were operating in Italy and Yugoslavia, also replacements from the UK on the closedown of No 1 Provost Company RM.

The Headquarters of No 3 Company moved from the centre of Hamburg to a house on the opposite side of the road to where the Section was based and during this period Major S Hill RM took over as NPM in place of Lt Col Nicholson.



The author, Sergeant Les Coote writing up the day book

Another change that took place was the introduction of the Control Commission Germany, which began taking over administration and other duties from the Armed Forces. In quite a number of cases the personnel who entered the service of the CCG were discharged HO service personnel who, being adrift from the discipline of the armed forces, took advantage of their favoured position and took liberties which necessitated a change in tactics. We had previously been lenient with the armed forces and still retained respect, but we found that a firmer approach now became necessary. With this civilian influence entering into the every day running of things, changes were taking place, not always for the better.

A simple example of the change would be to quote an incident in which a British service person and a German national could be involved. Up to about the middle of 1946 the British service personnel would be dealt with by the Commanding Officer

Hamburg Detachment of the Royal Marines Police being inspected by the Naval Provost

Marshal, Major S Hill RM



with evidence provided by the Military Police. The German national would be dealt with by the German authorities with evidence and written statements passed through the Military Police. This would be accepted by the German court and dealt with without involving the British personnel, as it was accepted that he had been dealt with by the Allied Authorities. There was provision to introduce evidence under oath for more serious cases and there were other safeguards. When the CCG moved into this area, introducing watching briefs and magistrates into the German courts, they complicated the matter by sometimes disputing the CO's ruling in respect of British service personnel and often demanded that they be present in the German court. There was no firm ruling on this procedure and it did promote a lot of resentment, particularly as there was no higher authority we could go to for a ruling, whereas with cases involving the armed forces the situation was cut and dried at all times.

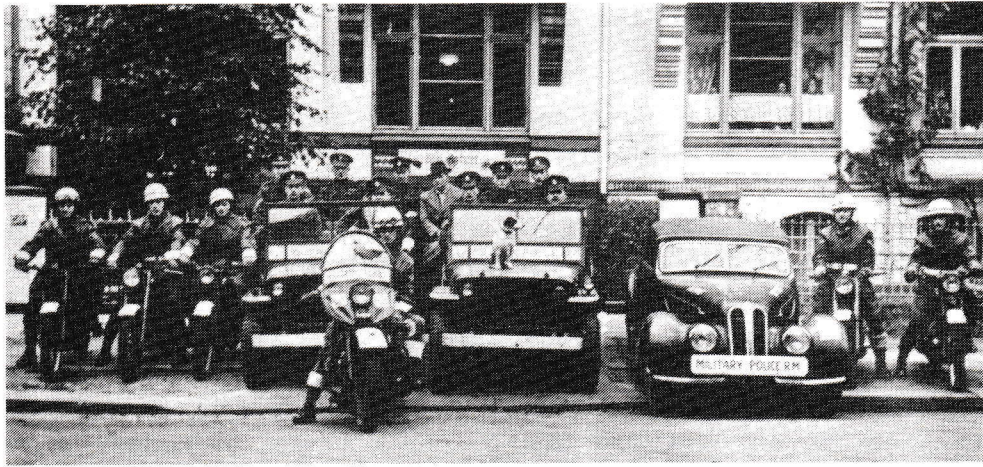
To the north and west of Hamburg in Schleswig Holstein there were a number of Displaced Persons camps which necessitated visits for different reasons. They were controlled by the Allied Forces and any incident which required attention was referred to the Military Police for action. It was bad policy to involve the German police, even though many of the occupants of the camps were German nationals.

One camp at Stadt Park, with a large number of ex-concentration camp men and women occupants being screened for resettlement, was used as a cover to set up a printing unit producing forged documents, ration books, etc. The camp residents, with their background were scared to inform on the activities of the people operating this press, so that it was only spasmodic checks taken by the Military Police which could uncover its activity. We had not sufficient manpower to patrol the DP camps but random checks were carried out whenever possible.

The German police operated a number of motor launches to patrol the waterside of the dock area and we often supplied a patrol to operate with them, mainly from midnight to early morning, this being the period when there was most activity in the black market trade between ship and shore. This commitment had a higher priority when ships with Jewish immigrants attempting to enter Palestine were returned and held in Hamburg docks. We had an occasion when it was necessary to deter underwater activity in one of the enclosed docks which meant that during the hours of darkness it was necessary to drop grenades over the stern of the police launch. To carry out this operation throughout the dark hours necessitated the supervision of a Senior NCO. Being the only Senior NCO in the section did raise the question of how to undertake this extra commitment and the rest of the duties. However Major Hill and RSM Ron Yates came to the rescue and we took it in turns for the couple of weeks of this scare. The day to day running of the police section in Hamburg was similar to the other sections of No 3 Provost Company RM operating in north west Europe. There was the set routine of foot and mobile patrols which committed an average sixteen Cpls and L/Cpls each day, seven days a week. It was advisable to retain at least four L/Cpls on standby for any call out duty. Any extra NCOs available could always be used to mount backup patrols and increase the leave time. There were no complaints about the shortage of time off, chiefly because the work was interesting. We were doing a useful duty and could see things moving quite rapidly and there was the excitement of being part of this change. However it was important to have time off and longer periods of 24 hours plus between duties was more acceptable than a watch keeping system.

The successful operating of the Hamburg detachment was helped to a great degree by the self discipline of all the NCOs. Their pride in good dress turnout at all times was a credit to them and this, coupled with the fact that the duties they were called upon to perform were constructive, made for a very high morale. The image of 'LURKING AROUND PUBS AT CLOSING TIME' was never part of our operation. We obviously did have to deal with drunks, large numbers in fact, but our policy was to enlist the help of their mates, either Pongo, Matelot or Brylcreem Boy to load them onto the leave transport back to their unit for them to deal with; we very rarely forwarded charges for these cases.

Unfortunately drink encouraged the illicit production of alcohol which caused quite a number of deaths through wood alcohol poisoning. By co-operating with the German



A typical turnout for a mobile check, such as a Displaced Persons camp.

police we were responsible in putting out of action a good number of the illicit stills which we located, mainly in the dock area. With the introduction of a beer and spirits ration obtainable via the NAAFI, the illicit production died a natural death.

It is the order of things that when one door closes another opens, so with the NAAFI feeding money and goods into the system, other problems were created. Money and goods were ghosted away on good number of occasions but, with the close co-operation we had with 88 SIB, I am pleased to relate that we were successful in apprehending nearly everyone who committed this shabby type of crime against their own colleagues.

Any incident concerning money or any valuable item was handled with a strict routine and documentation so that there could be no repercussion at a later date. The safeguards taken by us proved their worth when on a routine check at the Harburg bridge over the Elbe, two cars showing Form 85 were stopped and the suitcases being carried as baggage were found to contain American and British currency; they were obviously detained and brought back to the Section Office. It transpired that the total amount in various currencies was in excess of two million pounds sterling and the involvement was with Yugoslav Royalist Forces. The conclusion, after most of the night in contact with numerous other sources, was to escort the people, cars and contents to the airport north of Hamburg where they were handed over to another authority with all documentation confirmed and accepted.

The activities with which we became involved were numerous and covered a wide spectrum. As time passed most things in general improved and became more organised, which also applied to people breaking the law. They became more ambitious, for instance, acting on information received we were able to arrange with the Cuxhaven RMP to stop and detain a large yacht on the way to the UK sailing from the Hamburg Sailing Club. This was a private yacht which had been requisitioned for recreational purposes by the allied forces. The owners, who were well known, had given their consent for this purpose, so if it had gone missing there would have been serious repercussions.

It is worth noting that for recreation near to us at Kellinhauser there was a gymnasium with all facilities which became a second home to off duty NCOs. We also had access to the German police pistol and rifle ranges and this activity also became a great favourite. We ran a monthly sweepstake on the scoring, which obviously improved our marksmanship with competitive incentive.

We were not receiving any replacements as the training facilities in Exmouth had been closed down with the disbandment of No 1 Company RMP and with the discharge from the service of the HO and NS NCOs, No 3 Company RMP was having to contract. Berlin, Travemunde and Bremerhaven were closed down leaving Hamburg, Cuxhaven and Kiel but with the steady reduction of manpower Cuxhaven and Kiel were reduced to subsections, so as to retain Hamburg as near as possible to the 20/30 NCOs we needed to operate efficiently. We could operate with the 20 NCOs for a limited period only,

after which we could not offer the cover required and would therefore become inoperative.

Cuxhaven and Kiel were closed down early in 1948 and the shortage of manpower forced the closure of Hamburg with the final demise of No 3 Provost Company RM by the 26th January.

Finally to give my own personal remarks on the RM Provost, my first thoughts were that they were formed at the right time, and putting aside one's loyalty to a successful unit, they were also disbanded at about the right time.

On their formation as a unit in their own right in early 1944, the duties in the UK by their very nature created an image which was not in keeping with the calibre of the NCOs who belonged to it. They had nearly all been drafted in, having seen active service either at sea or on land, and just to check passes at railway stations and similar mundane tasks was not in keeping with their experience and training. The use of RM Provost did not change a great deal in the UK but overseas in the theatres of war the individual nature of the NCOs with their Royal Marines background rapidly



*Cpl Joe Forgeham (centre)
one of the original
members of the Royal
Marines Police from
Lympstone Grange 1943.
The 15cwt truck across
the road stands outside
No 3 Provost HQ.*

became a force which was in the forefront to overcome the new and quite unexpected requirements which were encountered. The times were unusual, requiring attitudes and solutions for which there had been no previous experience to draw on. This prevailed during the war and for a considerable period of time afterwards, particularly in Europe.

By the end of 1947 NW Europe was starting to get back to normal and in consequence the role of the RM Provost was becoming more mundane, hence the reason I give for my statement that we were disbanded at the correct time. We could not have willingly accepted the ignominy of a move to such routine duties after our previous experience of making such a useful contribution to the winning of the war and peace. At the height of their activity No 1 RM Provost operating in the UK and No 3 RM Provost operating in Europe had a strength in excess of 350 NCOs; I had no contact with 35 RM Provost which was active in the Far East so cannot offer any information regarding strength or extent of their duties which obviously must have been quite different from those in Europe.

A very high percentage of the NCOs serving in the Provost were Hostilities Only and on discharge found their way into the UK police forces and the Colonial Police Service, such as Palestine, Kenya, Hong Kong, etc.

Owing to the nature of the duties they were asked to perform the very small intake of Continuous Service marines understood that if the unit was disbanded they would be given the option of transferring to the Army Military Police or Colonial Police Service. There being no firm ruling on this the small number of NCOs left with the unit on disbandment were transferred to general duties.

The Egyptian Campaign of 1882

Part 3.

The Journal of Lieut W H Palmer RMLI

It was now pretty well certain that a general movement would soon take place and many were the surmises as to what we were going to do. Some said we should pass Tel-el-Kebir without attacking it, others said that we should attack it openly, etc, so no-one really knew (except a chosen few) what was to be our next movement.

We were greatly afraid that we should be left to guard the camp when the advance should take place as we had been in every action and so we shouldn't grumble. I am glad to say that this annoying work fell not to us but the 50th Regiment.

The camp presented a very gay scene now, all day long Generals and their staffs were hurrying about and more activity than usual was displayed, convincing everyone that soon the decisive battle would take place. Every evening when off duty, I remember, we all used to assemble and talk over affairs, only to arrive at no ultimate conclusion. It is wonderful how welcome news from home is at a time like this, the mails were always anxiously looked forward to and as the Post Officer Corps was attached to us we got our letters before any other regiment.

On Tuesday 12 September we rose as usual and went on with the ordinary routine of the camp. Rumours were afloat all day that there was to be a general advance in the evening, but it was not until late in the afternoon that we received the actual order for the advance. Really I believe we were all glad, as we were heartily sick of the long weary days of waiting at Kassassin, but at the same time we knew that there was hard work before us. Every sick man was sent down to Ismailia in the morning amongst them being Raitt and Colvin of ours.

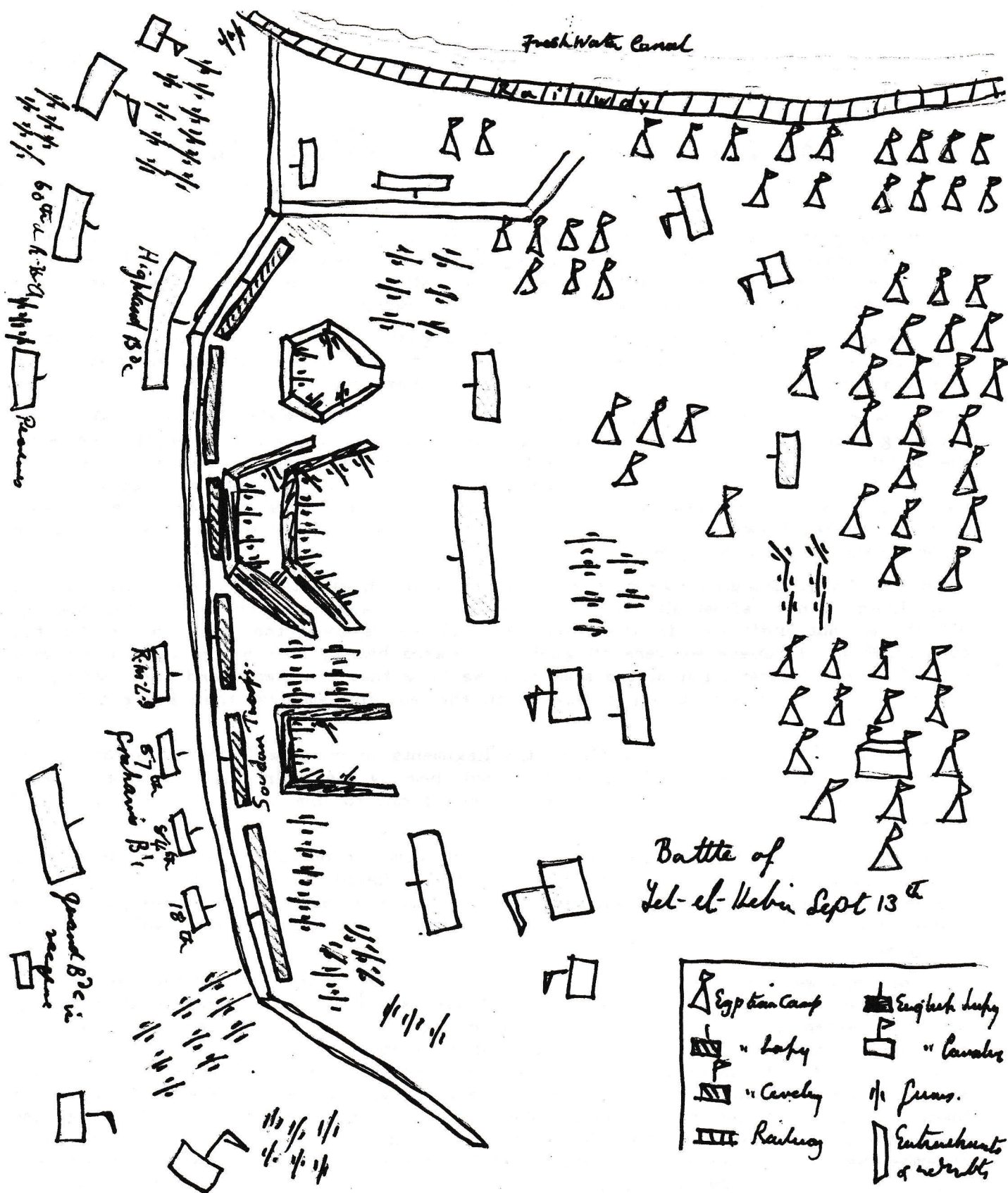
As soon as it was dusk the whole of the Regiments in camp, with the exception of the guard remaining behind, struck tents and piled them by the railroad. We all then fell in and each officer and man had some biscuit served out to him and also a full bottle of water.

As soon as everything was ready we all marched from our private parades to our brigade parades. We marched off and joined the 18th and 87th Regiments which formed our Brigade and as K Company was leading I was the leading guide and had to direct. I was pointed out a star as a mark to march on and had to keep my eyes on it the whole time, which was very trying work.

On our left were the Highland Brigade, the 46th and 60th Regiments and the Royal Marine Artillery, besides artillery and cavalry on both flanks, but we saw nothing of them during the march except now and then a solitary orderly going from one brigade to another. The guards were in reserve behind us. We marched until about 1 am, I should think, and then the command to halt was given, and at once the order was carried out in whispers and the whole Brigade was halted. Several Companies were thrown out as outposts K being one of them, so while most men got an hour's sleep we in the outposts had none. When we rose again at 2am then, and only then, did we know for certain what was the task before us. I remember well all the Commanding Officers of Regiments were called up by the General and told of the plan for the attack, and then they came back and told us that "We were to advance silently, if possible without firing a shot and take the enemy at the point of the bayonet."

I caught a glimpse of Sir Garnet, his staff and several other Generals as they rode past me to the next Brigade.

Silently once more we advanced and had an Egyptian vedette been there he would have been startled - for a few minutes before there was not a sign of this moving mass of



The author's sketch map of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir



The death of Captain Wardell RMLI at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir

soldiers because they were lying perfectly motionless on the sand, and now there was a small army advancing in the darkness; not a word was spoken, no lights were allowed and no bugles were sounded; we all knew now we had a tough job before us, and I believe there were few in that silent and weary night march who did not think of home, for none of us could tell but that in a few hours he might be a corpse. My own thoughts I well remember; all my past life came back to my memory and many things that were forgotten, quiet thoughts of home, old faces, old scenes mingled themselves together. Many I know were the prayers offered up that night by men who rarely if ever thought of prayer.

What an age that night seemed, on and on we marched, our nerves were strung to such a pitch that we simply longed for the whistle of the first bullet to relieve us. At last a few cavalry, who were in advance of us, were withdrawn and we knew that we were nearing the trenches, which some would never leave. Suddenly the crack of a single rifle rang out in the air, followed by two more and then the whole air was swarming with bullets and shell. Before us we could see simply a red line formed by the flashes of the rifles. Dawn now just began to break. We halted for a few minutes whilst the Battalion formed for attack, K, H and G Companies being in the fighting line, the remainder supports and reserve.

Again we advanced with shot and shell screaming round us like hail, but still on we went. Men fell on my right, left and all around me, but I was not (*sic*) to be one of the lucky ones, and how anyone escaped is a marvel to me, as there was not an atom of cover. When within about 150 yards of the entrenchment the order 'Charge' was given. With a hearty cheer the men rushed on with bayonets fixed. Before I reached the trench there had fallen within 20 yards of me Major Strong (killed), Captain Wardell (killed), Lieutenant McCausland (severely wounded in the thigh); four men killed and sixteen wounded and these all out of 72 men in my one Company - never to my dying day shall I forget climbing up with the men under the enemy's fire. I managed to jump the trench and as several men had fallen in it, I gave them a hand up. As soon as there were a good number over, we formed and attacked a large body of the enemy who were still in the trenches on our left. We had soon either killed or wounded nearly all of them, and the remaining few soon retired.

Poor Strong was shot right through the heart as he was close to me, he never uttered a word but fell on his face quite dead, poor fellow; and only a few minutes before I saw him encouraging the men quite cool and collected. A minute after Strong fell, I saw Wardell throw up his arms and fall on his face; he was shot through the head and died immediately. Well in advance of his men, he was leading them on quite gallantly. I remember him saying



The R.M.L.I. storming the lines of Tel-el-Kebir - 13th September 1882

to some of us before we started from Kassassin "I hope to get my name in the paper - it will please my wife so much". Poor chap, his name appeared in the paper in a far different way from which he hoped. At the same moment as Wardell fell I saw McCausland fall and heard him calling for a stretcher, as I of course was unable to go to him. He was in charge of K Company and as this happened about 100 yards from the trenches, I was virtually in command of 'K' when we got over the trenches.

Our Battalion alone killed five or six hundred, whilst our loss was about 20 killed and 60 wounded of whom 20 were in my Company. The enemy's loss was estimated at some 2,000 or 5,000 besides prisoners. About 60 guns were captured as well as enormous quantities of stores, ammunition, some trains and Arabi's whole camp.

In reality our losses were 2 officers killed, 1 officer wounded, 9 men killed and 52 wounded. I remember well one of my company - a man called Murray - fine soldier, was shattered tremendously by a shell - saying to me "Oh sir, I am not fit to die - God have mercy on me." These were, I believe the last words he spoke.

All the officers and men who were killed were buried close to the Fresh Water Canal soon after the battle; poor fellows there were many brave hearts among them. Almost immediately after we had reformed General Graham rode by, the men greeting him with a loud cheer.

Poor Wardell we buried the day after the battle under a palm tree close to the railway - Colonel Jones read the services and we were much affected - and so were all the men and officers present. As Colonel Jones said in a private letter home "men who the day before had fought like lions, wept like children." Everyone was buried as he fell and no useless coffin enclosed their corpses.

Our men, I believe, behaved splendidly and suffered most severely. After surmounting the trenches we drove the enemy back at the point of the bayonet for two or three miles and then the cavalry got in amongst them and cut them up. We took many prisoners whom we discovered hiding in the many trenches.

On arriving at the Fresh Water Canal in the centre of the Arabi's camp all the infantry were halted, but most of the cavalry and artillery followed Arabi on to Zagazig and almost succeeded in capturing them.

Later on in the day the Highland Brigade went on to Zagazig by train whilst some more

artillery and cavalry started to march there. We formed up by the Fresh Water Canal at Tel-el-Kebir at about 8.30am and having breakfasted off biscuit washed down with muddy water we took possession of some tents, which had been occupied by the Egyptian Cavalry, and made ourselves as comfortable as possible.

We were all beginning to feel the pangs of hunger and it was with great joy that at about 11am we saw the transport coming, as well as our servants - my servant throughout the campaign was Pte Louis Greety, a most excellent servant, who was very willing and worked uncommonly hard; I am glad to say that he is still with me.

Several of us had the luck to capture either a mule or a donkey which we used as private transport and McCausland and myself had a very useful little donkey throughout the campaign. This little animal used to carry any spare things that we happened to have, such as a camp kettle and other cooking utensils; we managed to loot a couple of excellent saddle bags for him and these we filled with anything that we thought might be useful. I must say, for so small an animal, it was astonishing the amount of trouble that he gave our servants who looked after him; two or three times a day he broke loose and gave them an exciting chase and at night he used to revel in disturbing the camp by perpetually braying; "Nicawver" (as we called him) with all thy faults I love thee still" - and I was really sorry when I left him at Tel-el-Kebir as he was a faithful servant. I forgot to mention that when we marched from Kassassin all the transport and servants were left behind - orders being given to them to start at 4am the following morning.

We spent most of the day in sleeping as we were pretty well fagged out, a few fellows went looting, but got very little for their trouble. In fact I heard none who secured anything valuable. I myself looted two rifles, some swords, of which there were thousands lying about, and a few other odds and ends.

From the front lines of Tel-el-Kebir to the rear of the camp the distance I should say was about four miles, and the whole of these four miles were strewn with arms, etc. Evidently Arabi expected to hold out for a long time as there were supplies of all sorts sufficient to last an army of 20,000 men for six months.

The number of British troops engaged was I believe about 15,000 whilst the Egyptians were supposed to have had 25,000. Hardly any of our Reserve came under fire and the guards lost but two or three men.

In the evening at 5pm we paraded again and shifted camp as the place where we had encamped in the morning was not as sweet as it might have been. We all turned in very early as we were thoroughly fagged out. There were two alarms during the night - but we were glad to find them false - one I believe was occasioned by some mules breaking loose.

Up to this date the following casualties had occurred amongst the officers: two killed, one wounded and eight invalided. There had been four officers in my Company since leaving England, and of those one was wounded and the other two invalided, and out of a tent of seven of us there were only two left. My Company had left England 112 strong, it now mustered barely 60 men. It suffered more severely than any other company as throughout the campaign it was always in the fighting line.

Much has been written and said as regards a fellow's feeling the first time he comes under fire, and many of the greatest Generals have said that no man can help funk a bit the first time he comes under fire. For my own part I remember well the first time I came under fire although the shells were passing some way over my head I couldn't help ducking but after half an hour or so I became accustomed to them. In the rush at Tel-el-Kebir, after the first few minutes of thoughts of death, I entirely forgot everything except the enemy in front. This may seem as if I was blowing my own trumpet, but I believe that any fellow - I don't care who he is - after a few minutes entirely forgets his own danger.

The next day, the 14th, we had to remain encamped - whilst we saw the Guards, Rifles and other troops proceeding by rail to Cairo. It was rather hard on us in the Second or Fighting Brigade - the 18th, 84th and 87th and ourselves having to stay behind as without doubt we had the hardest work throughout the campaign. There remained behind with us two or three batteries of artillery and the 4th Dragoons.

The day was spent in destroying ammunition and other stores of which there was an enormous quantity lying about. Some of the Regiments were sent out to bury the dead.

In the evening I took a stroll round the camp and counted 45 guns captured at Tel-el-Kebir. I also saw Arabi's tents, a most magnificent structure. I visited the Egyptian prisoners and wounded who were being tended by our doctors. We sat up late talking of different subjects, chiefly of the last fight. We were very merry as we had managed to obtain some whisky from Ismailia, and we had quite a large gathering from the Regiments in camp, who soon smelt out the excellent spirit. Colvin arrived from Ismailia.

The next morning at 5am I went on guard at some springs of fresh water - I had orders 'to allow no-one to draw water unless a pass was produced signed by a certain officer.' All day long I was beseiged by men and water parties with passes signed by all sorts of officers; all of these I had to refuse permission to draw water. I even had to refuse a man permission who had a pass signed by a Colonel in the Guards. It was very hard as all these officers and men were down on me as if it was my fault. I don't believe I had five minutes rest the whole day, and there I remained until 5am the next morning.

There were a number of dead camels lying about and the stench was something awful. The flies also were worse than I had ever seen them before. I hadn't a minute's rest all day on account of them and at night the mosquitoes began to show me attention - it was altogether a very hard day's work as my orders were so vague, and I had mounted officers at me nearly all day long. I got no sleep, and heartily glad I was to hand over to my relieving number.

News arrived that Arabi's army had surrendered unconditionally, and we were all very thankful as we had had quite enough of fighting. Several hundred prisoners were released during the day and they very soon made tracks for their respective homes. Of the surrender at Cairo I know no more than I have read in the papers but doubtless everyone has read of the march of the Cavalry and their entry into Cairo. It was a plucky thing that General Drury-Lowe did - when with but a few Cavalry he ordered the Garrison of Cairo to surrender, which they did unconditionally.

I arrived back in camp at 6am on Saturday morning 16th September, very tired as I had had no sleep on guard the night before - I hoped to get a day off but I was disappointed as at 2pm, 200 of the men were ordered to proceed to the lines at Tel-el-Kebir for the purpose of burying the dead - and I was one of the officers detailed to go with them.

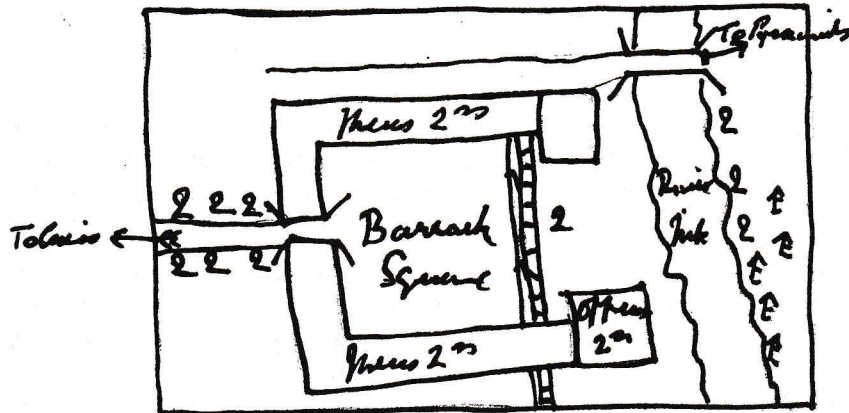
Accordingly at 2pm we started, most of the men being provided with shovels but 50 of them carried rifles as the Bedouins had fired at one or two unarmed parties. We also took about 100 prisoners to assist us in the work. After a hot march of about four miles we arrived at the trenches, and never in my life have I smelt or seen anything so sickening. There all along the trenches mingled together lay dead Egyptians, camels and horses. The men often three or four deep. It was simply a revolting sight to see these dead after they had been exposed to the sun for about three days. The dead Egyptians were lying in some places five or six deep and I must say it was rather a fearful sight.

I saw the place in the trench where our Battalion crossed and we were certainly marvellously lucky for just to our left had been the strongest battery of all. I also saw many traces of our brave fellows in the shape of helmets, belts, etc.

We buried several hundred men, camels and horses during the afternoon. The work was so awful, totally unfit for human beings, that we simply threw men and animals, arms and ammunition in all together and covered them with sand. That afternoon's work was the worst I had throughout the campaign. How it was no men were ill after it I cannot tell, for it was simply revolting.

We arrived back in camp about 7pm very done up and hungry, and then I had a good glass of raw brandy I felt so queer. This was really the first time I felt seedy, and I couldn't sleep at all until the morning. Sunday the 17th we spent much as usual in destroying ammunition, etc., the only difference being there was a service in the morning. I ate the sweetest piece of food that I have ever tasted in my life on this day; never do I remember tasting anything which seemed to me half so delicious as did a piece of brunch fried in beef fat. This shows how poorly we had fared as regards provisions. I stayed in my tent all day until 5pm when my Company went on outpost duty, Colvin and myself with them. We had a very large space to cover that night and the stench which came from the trenches was awful. It was, besides, very cold and it was only by, the aid of much raw brandy that Colvin and myself managed to keep warm.

Kasr el Nil



At 4am on Monday morning, the 18th, we were joyfully surprised at receiving an order to return to camp and prepare to start for Cairo at 5.30. We hastened back into camp, had a little breakfast and struck our tents.

At 5.30 the whole battalion paraded and marched down to the railway. There the RMA Battalion and our Battalion were soon entrained in open cattle trucks and we started for Cairo. All the officers were in one open truck. At the further end of the camp our General, General Graham, was waiting on horseback to see the last of us. We all, as we went by, gave him a hearty cheer, which he answered by wishing us luck and raising his hat. I think he was really fond of our battalion. After a fearfully hot and dusty journey we arrived at Cairo at 4pm and the work of detraining commenced.

The men were soon all ready and were marched off, whilst I was left in charge of the baggage with half of K Company. No-one came to assist me in any way and I as I could not procure transport for the baggage by fair means, I had recourse to force, and at last managed to get it all loaded on to 20 wagons of various shapes and sizes, drawn by oxen, mules, horses and donkeys.

Sending two or three men to look after each cart I started from the station not knowing in the least where to go. I chose however what seemed to me the most frequented streets and as luck would have it, met a brother officer who told me where the Battalion was. I found that we had taken up quarters in the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks - very large building close to the Hill.

The Officers Quarters were in the Minister of War's house - I was unable to go into the city that night, but managed to secure some food consisting of hard boiled eggs and bread. I slept very comfortably that night on my valise which had turned up and awoke next morning much refreshed, but fearfully bitten by insects of every description. The insects were so bad in the men's quarters that they all turned out to sleep in the barracks square. The barracks, I must say, were simply filthy, uninhabitable by anyone but Egyptian troops I should think.

After breakfast, having obtained leave, three of us (Luke, Bernard and myself) started for the city - and having had a really good meal of beef-steak, eggs, etc, washed down with excellent coffee, we had a look at the principal sights.

I will not endeavour to give any description of Cairo as it is altogether beyond my powers. It seemed to me a large and dirty city - inhabited by all nations - all of whom were swindlers. We remained at Kasr-el-Nil until the 21st September when we all marched to a spot called Ghizera (about two miles out) and encamped - it was far worse being under canvas at Ghizera than in the desert - as we were encamped on very fine dust, which blew about in every direction.

Usually accompanied by Luke and Bernard, I paid a daily visit to Cairo and we three, I must say, were as merry as crickets and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. We visited everything of interest, and money slipped (*sic*) through our fingers in a marvellous way. A good allowance of it being spent on food at the different hotels.

We remained under canvas at Ghizera until 9th October when we started for Alexandria. Sir Garnet paid several visits to us during our encampment at Ghizera and so also did our

popular general, General Graham. The ordinary routine was parade at 5.30am, then breakfast, smoke and read until about 1pm, then dinner, after that most of us went into Cairo and came out about 10pm. The men went sick more rapidly here than they had anywhere else and several of the officers were sent home - viz - Lieutenants Kennedy, Field, Colvin and Colonel Graham.

At night now we found it was very cold and I used to wake up shivering every morning. The number of officers one met in various hotels, etc., was simply wonderful. I should imagine that the hotel keepers made a great deal of money during the stay of the British army in Cairo.

There are two modes of locomotion - either in a carriage and pair or on donkey back. It was simply ridiculous to see an old colonel fully booted and spurred riding a donkey; in England such a sight would have caused a fearful excitement. Carriages and donkeys were both very cheap and the latter are uncommonly sturdy and fast little beasts. We paid a visit to the Turkish Bazaar which is really worth seeing, but there is a great temptation to spend money, and I fear we gave way to it.

Rumours were afloat that we were to return to England soon and longingly we looked forward to home, sweet home.

On 24th September at 9am five of us started for the Pyramids distant from the camp about 9 miles, mounted on donkeys; we arrived at the Pyramids about 11am and were immediately surrounded by a crowd of Bedouins all anxious to run us up. At last we started up, I myself being seen up by three men, one holding each hand and one pushing behind, whilst a little boy followed with water. It was very hard work as some of the steps were five feet high and my guides allowed me but little rest, so on arriving at the top I was dead beat. The Pyramid we ascended was the largest called King Cheops and is 470 feet high. At the top we met several other fellows who had made their way up. Directly I arrived at the top all three of my guides began tormenting me to buy coins, etc., and as I wanted quiet I was foolish enough to purchase some. I also had my name carved for the moderate (?) charge of 2/6d. We remained at the top about 15 minutes and then descended. The descent is if anything worse than the ascent as one man winds a towel round you and jerks you violently back every now and then.

After a good deal of parleying regarding the price of candles, etc., we started for the interior of the pyramid, the entrance to which is about 4 feet square. With one guide in front holding a candle I commenced the task. The entrance for the first 50 yards or so was a steep decline with a floor like glass - the consequence was that I slipped and slid for about 20 yards; after this I had to ascend a similar incline for about 30 yards and then a sort of chasm had to be surmounted. At length we reached a sort of clear space and were shewn all the galleries and tombs. As it was very musty we were soon tired of the interior and hastened back again accomplishing the perilous task pretty well. We arrived outside perfectly white with our hats battered in, and altogether presenting a most dissipated appearance. We were so awfully fagged out that we had to rest for an hour and during that time we despatched luncheon after which we inspected the Sphinx and the ruins of an ancient temple.

There were a great number of visitors to the Pyramids that day, among them being the Duke of Connaught. Having seen everything we started at 3.30pm for home and arrived back about 5pm very tired and stiff after our ride and excursions. I was so stiff for three days afterwards that I could hardly move.

News of Coke's death arrived - he was a young subaltern of about 18 months service - with whom I had served in Ireland; he died at Alexandria of fever.

On Monday the 25th all the troops paraded at 1.30pm in review order and lined the streets to receive the Khedive. Our Battalion lined the streets near the Abdin Palace and we waited there from about 2 until 3.30 in the hot sun with little or no shade, the consequence being that many men fell out. All the harem drove down to the station to meet the Khedive and at last he came. In front of his carriage were about a dozen Life Guardsmen who towered above all the Egyptian cavalry; his carriage was drawn by six horses and in the carriage were Sir Garnet, the Duke of Connaught and the Khedive. His escort was composed of various detachments of cavalry all richly dressed. As he went by we presented arms. I cannot say that his reception was very warm from what I saw.

In the evening there were grand fireworks and illuminations in the Gardens, which were very prettily arranged. These illuminations lasted three nights. All the harem were veiled so that it was impossible to see much of them, but they all regarded us with great curiosity.

I may mention here, as I have forgotten to do so before, that we were known to the Egyptians as the 'Blue Devils' as we were the only Regiment in blue, and they hated us because we seemed to be present everywhere.

Nothing out of the usual daily routine occurred until Saturday 30th September when a grand review was held at the Abdin Palace. All the troops paraded at 4pm in review order. Our men looking remarkably well in their tunics and white trousers - better I think than any other regiment as the others were mostly in their old fighting dress cleaned for the occasion.

The weather in the daytime now was perceptibly cooler and the nights cold. For the next three weeks things went on as usual, most of our time being spent in the city. The last of my tent mates, Colvin, was taken very ill and left for England on 7th October - poor fellow I never saw him alive again. For the first time I began to feel knocked up and waited anxiously for the order to return home, rumours of which were flying about every day.

Great was our joy when on Sunday the 8th we received actual orders to start for England the next day - we believed it was too good to be true; however the next morning all doubts were set at rest. At 6am we struck tents, then with my usual luck I was sent on first in charge of all the baggage. I arrived at the station about 12 noon and then had to wait for an hour for the Battalion to arrive. The 46th Regiment kindly lent their band to play the Battalion to the station.

At 3.30 we slowly steamed out of the station amid much cheering from all parties. We had a very pleasant journey to Alexandria arriving there at about 2am, passing Banha, Kafr Dowar and Mahala. We slept in the train until 5.30 the next morning when we fell in once more first having despatched the remains of a hamper which we had bought the day before.

The work of getting the men and the baggage on board No 19 Transport the '*City of Paris*' was soon got through and at 5pm we started, the band playing 'Auld Land Syne' and the men on the ships in the harbour cheering us heartily. I think we were all glad to see the last of Alexandria as we felt pretty safe from recall then.

On board were several fellows from the Army Transport Corps who had been our companions before in the *Dacca*. Of the voyage home I know little or nothing as I knocked up altogether the day after leaving and was ill all the way home.

We reached Malta at 4.30pm on the 13th October and there we met the old *Dacca* once again. Gibraltar we passed on the 17th but did not stop there, and on the 21st (Saturday) we arrived at Plymouth. Men left for the shore in a tug, the cheering from all the men being long and hearty. Both my constant companions, Luke and Bernard, throughout the campaign left me here. The Plymouth men were most enthusiastically received by the people and were fêted for a long time.

All our officers except Captain Barrows and myself went on shore at Plymouth to a large dinner given by the officers of the Division. We left again on Sunday at 2.30 and arrived off Spithead on Monday morning quite early. How glad I was to see old Portsmouth again as it seemed years since I left. The very sight of the old town made me feel quite fresh and something like myself again. At 10am we commenced steaming into the harbour and at 11 were alongside in the Dockyard. As we passed the ships they all manned their yards and cheered us heartily, and the people who simply crowded the shores cheered us as well.

As we came alongside the wharf all the bands of which there were about four struck up and the cheering was louder than ever. How eagerly we all gazed among the crowd to catch the first glimpse of some familiar face. What a contrast between these happy faces now and when we last saw them - now they were all smiling and happy - then they were all sad and cast down.

Soon communications with the shore were established and friends began to troop on board. Many were the shaking of hands and many were the congratulations we received on our safe return. Yet our return was not without sorrow for many were the brave souls whom we had

left behind and whose absence that day caused grief in many a heart. A great many old friends of mine I saw, among them being my brother officers.

Soon all the Portsmouth men were disembarked and having heartily cheered the Chatham men left on board we started for the barracks at 12.30 to the tune of 'Home Sweet Home'. The whole route to the floating bridge at Portsmouth was simply thronged and many were the decorations in our honour. As we marched along we were greeted by many old friends - in fact I saw nearly everyone I knew.

The floating bridge was simply crammed and on our arrival at Gosport the crowd was something awful. We reached (Forton) Barracks about 2.30 pm and were enthusiastically received by our brother officers and the men. A large banquet had been provided for us and I am sure we all did justice to it. Speeches followed and then the men chaired us all. I verily believe I shook hands with at least 200 men that day - my wrist was perfectly sore.

Our reception was, I must say, the most enthusiastic one I have ever witnessed; everyone seemed glad to see us return and I can assure you we were only too glad to return to our comfortable barracks and mess.

The Chatham men went on in the *Assistance* and on their arrival had also a hearty welcome.

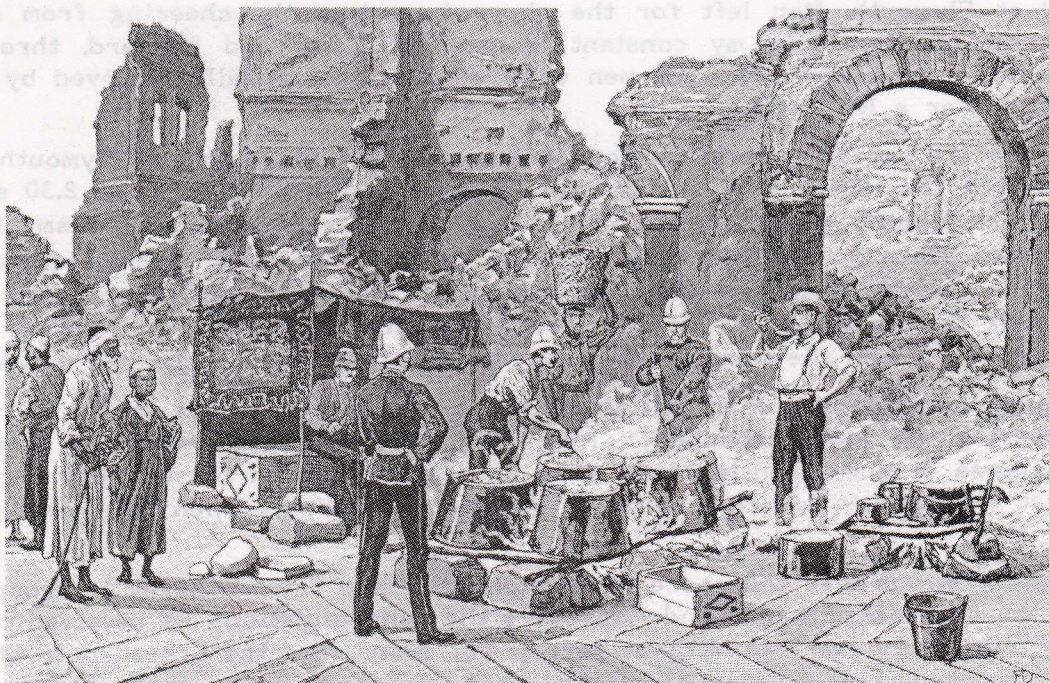
As I look back on that day, I do so with pride for our reception shows that the country appreciated the work that we did. This diary I will now draw to a close as my narrative, as well as my paper, is finished, and I have returned again to the place from whence I started for which I am very thankful. I often look back on the days past in the desert and although undoubtedly we had very hard times during the campaign, we were pretty merry as every evening the fellows off duty congregated together and told yarns, etc. Although the Battalion is now dispersed and the men composing it all over the world - I shall always meet my old comrades in the field with the greatest pleasure.

There is no doubt that when on active service the metal of a fellow shows itself and the men can judge better of the worth of their officers - a good maxim for officers on active service is 'think first of your men, horses and then of yourself'.

My task is over - in the plainest and maybe in ungrammatical English - I have endeavoured to describe the late campaign as I myself saw it. If I have succeeded - well if not why? I have done my best and no man can do more. I have my fate in the hands of those who may chance to peruse this - so with this the end of all I lay down my pen.

The kitchen of the Royal Marines among the ruins of Alexandria

From the 'Illustrated London News' - 12 August 1882



by Major Patrick G A Ennor (RMHS)

HQ Combined Operations had already expanded into something of the size of a small ministry and had spread far beyond the confines of Richmond Terrace to Montagu House to which it was connected by a covered way. The Experimental Division which I joined was concerned with examining and reporting on all sorts of proposals, projects and inventions which were submitted to it as potential aids to Combined Operations. The Division's Director was Captain Tom Hussey RN, the Deputy Director was Colonel Langley, there were two GIs, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Talbot and another marine Lieutenant Colonel Cosmo Salter, and a number of Grade 2 and 3 staff officers of whom I was one. There were also two civilians, Scientific Professors, who became I believe leading members of the Communist Party.

The post which I was to fill temporarily was as G2 to Dennis Talbot, a distinguished officer of the Royal West Kent Regiment, who had been Brigade Major to Brigadier Nicholson at Calais in 1940, where he was taken prisoner. He subsequently escaped and was later awarded the DSO and MC.

Most of the projects with which we were concerned were of a highly technical and specialised nature; there were very few in connection with which my fairly extensive experience of landings and landing craft were of much advantage, and I don't think I really was of any great assistance to Col Talbot. Much of the work was extremely interesting and we attended a good many trials and demonstrations. The trials of various infantry carrying out landings which took place on the Thames Estuary were particularly interesting to me and we also went to Appledore in North Devon to see the first efforts at teaching tanks to swim. I have always thought it requires considerable bravery to go in a tank or a submarine. The combination of both these hazards - which seemed a probable feature of this evolution - struck me as being extremely alarming and I was glad that I was required to be only a spectator and not a participant in this exercise.

One of my colleagues in the Experimental Division was Sir Malcolm Campbell. He had been experimenting with some bullet proof shields and kindly took me down to his house at Headley to see a test of these. Malcolm Campbell was undoubtedly a fine driver of a powerful racing car. He was not similarly proficient with the small 10hp saloon in which we drove to Headley. Having got into top gear there it remained and the little car grunted and lurched along in the most painful manner. We finally struggled up Sutton High Street through the thick of Saturday morning shopping traffic and staggered to a standstill outside a fishmonger's shop where Malcolm Campbell bought an excellent salmon on which he hospitably regaled me at luncheon, after which we went into his park and fired rifles at the steel shields.

One Saturday afternoon I was sitting alone in the room which I normally shared with Dennis Talbot who was having one of his rare afternoons off duty. An officer from the Secretarial Department, Paymaster Lieutenant Commander Jacobs, I think, put his head round the door and warned me to stand by as "CCO is coming round shortly to look at the accommodation". 'Shortly' was the right word as this officer had scarcely withdrawn when Admiral Mountbatten and some of his entourage appeared in the doorway. I sprang to my feet and Lord Louis, looking at the room in which there was really adequate space for four people, said "Well, at all events, you seem to have plenty of space here". I had known nothing of the projected investigation, but I knew enough that at any enquiry into accommodation the

principle is always to insist that it is too small. I therefore said "Oh well, sir, Colonel Talbot is in this room too." Admiral Mountbatten laughed and said "Oh is he? I don't see him", and making a show of looking under the table, moved on. I never heard what, if anything finally eventuated from this, as my period of attachment was soon finished and I went off to join my master at the Depot at Deal.

In the spring and early summer of 1943 the Depot was a curious place. With boarded windows and flaking paint it presented a very different appearance from what I had known before. There were very few officers, apart from those attached to the NCOs school in North Barracks, under the direction of Colonel George Hawkins. The horses had, of course, been moved to safer places in the West Country, but we had drums and a small band, and periodically this, with small detachments of Marines and WRNS used to take part in local war week parades and so forth.

The catering was very well run by one of the RNVR Medical Officers Mike Hunt, but the Mess itself was less comfortable than of yore and the room which I was first given was very much inferior to that which I had had originally as a Second Lieutenant. In order to provide extra accommodation the double room 'Captains Quarters' had been converted into single rooms, which was not really necessary as it was only infrequently that a large number of officers had to be accommodated.

It was interesting that recruit training, which had been transferred to South Devon, should be resumed at Deal, and there were a few recruit squads, but the Depot seemed to be chiefly used as a forming up place for large drafts. At one time I had something like 300 men under my nominal command, but this was not very laborious as these drafts all had with them young officers as draft conducting officers and their own Senior NCO, and they and the permanent staff NCOs scarcely let the men out of their sight for a moment. So there was not much opportunity for crime.

We did have one instance of a man in arrest escaping from custody and the poor old Pensioner Colour Sergeant who was Commander of the Guard, and had years of unblemished service to his credit had to be charged with 'letting his prisoner escape'. Defaulters 'for disposal' by so high an authority as the Commandant were extremely rare in Royal Marines establishments, but there were two traditional stories of these rare occurrences in the Depot. One involved a Commandant who, having been prompted on the importance of cautioning an accused man about giving evidence, entirely forgot the proper form of words and said instead "Marine Blank, I must caution you that you don't have to say anything if you don't wish, but if you do it will be the worse for you".

The other relates to an occasion when there were two men to be brought before the Commandant. One an elderly and highly respectable NCO to receive the LS and GC Medal. The other a man charged with a serious offence likely to lead to a Court Martial. It was the custom in the Royal Marines to form up the men in such a way that the Requestmen were seen first and the Defaulters afterwards. This procedure, unlike that in the Army where large numbers of men are frequently kept hanging about until the conclusion of 'orders' was designed so that respectable characters could be disposed of quickly and promptly sent about their lawful avocations. As a formality the Sergeant Major used to enquire from the Commandant "Which will you see first, sir, Requestmen or Defaulters?" but the answer was invariably the same "Requestmen first" and the men always formed up in appropriate order outside.

On this occasion the Commandant himself claimed that he said "Defaulters first" but the Sergeant Major either didn't hear or didn't listen, and assuming the normal routine marched in the blameless requestman. Before anyone could stop him the Commandant gave this

unfortunate the most fearful wiggling, and told him he was a disgrace to the service, a disgrace to the Corps, and a disgrace to himself, and that he had studied the Company Commander's investigation and concluded by saying "Remanded for summary of evidence for Court Martial - march out Sergeant Major".

The NCO on the door, seeing one customer emerge promptly, ushered in the next one, and a low-browed hang dog slovenly individual appeared on the mat, whereupon the Commandant leapt to his feet, congratulated the scoundrel, shook him warmly by the hand, and told him "It gives me great pleasure to present you with the LS and GC Medal and a cheque for £20". The little affair took a great deal of subsequent straightening out.

Amongst the officers at the Depot I was pleased to find Bill Lloyd, who had been in my batch, Desmond Vowden, Peter Howes Dufton, who was later killed, and the Quartermaster, Bill Tunnicliffe. There were games, dances, entertainments in the Globe Theatre, but Deal itself was a complete backwater, and having been for some time quite near the heart of affairs I found it all rather stultifying. Transport was non-existent and Major General Robin Campbell and I used to go out for afternoon exercise on bicycles: one local resident with whom I was glad to renew acquaintance was Dr Davies who had become a dining member of our Mess - which simplified house-keeping for him and was agreeable for us. Having started as a Welsh Guardsman, Doctor Davies subsequently became Medical Officer to the Middlesex Yeomanry and he and I used to indulge in a good many reminiscences of pre-war Territorial camps. There was so little to be done at Deal that I gladly took on the duties of Staff Officer - which in fact meant most of the paper work as the Adjutant was really supposed to be concerned only with the parade. In the staff office I found a splendid character, Corporal A. The story of his rise to fame well illustrates the value of education. It appears that shortly before the war Tunnicliffe, the Quartermaster, found himself in sore straits as one of his clerks was sick at a time, Christmas or something of that sort, when though many men were out of the barracks, a good deal of quartermastering was involved in caring for those who remained. Crossing the barracks one day Tunnicliffe saw a man following the usual peacetime occupation of sweeping up leaves; him he accosted with the enquiry "Can you write?" to which the man replied "Well, sir, I can sign for my pay". He was promptly enrolled as a clerk in the QM's Department and from this was progressively translated to higher spheres until, by the time I met him, he was a Corporal in the Staff Office. We were at that time fairly regularly tormented with orders from the Royal Marines Office, which were often difficult and sometimes impossible to carry out. Protest by letter, impassioned telephone calls and the like proving fruitless. Cpl A would appear and say "Never mind, sir. I'll get on to the Superintending Clerk and I'll fix it": and he did. Cpl A was possessed of two inestimable advantages; he was quite confident in his own abilities and he was quite indifferent to the opinions or criticism of others. It was credibly reported that having, for once, failed to 'fix it' with the Superintending Clerk, he insisted on being passed on to progressively higher levels, till he finally did 'fix it' with the Adjutant General himself! Dear, good Cpl A. I learned later that he finally retired full of honour and glory with a Colour Sergeant's crown and stripes upon his sleeves. I hope this is true - for no-one did more to make the wheels of service life go round than he.

When I first went down to Deal we flirted with the idea of taking over one of the many vacant officers houses and Phyllis did indeed come down one weekend to have a look round and discuss the idea. But General Campbell with his usual wisdom advised against it pointing out particularly the extreme uncertainty of tenure of any wartime appointment and we might go to all the trouble and expense of shutting up Griffin Cottage and moving down to Deal only to find that I was shortly to be posted away elsewhere.

Meanwhile throughout the first half of 1943 great things were happening in the world. General Sir Thomas Hutton who had become Adjutant General had realised that there was little prospect of the Royal Marines Division ever being given a worthwhile role. The bold and far-reaching decisions were therefore taken to break up the Division and both Naval Base Defence Organisations, and from them form Royal Marines Commandos, and large drafts of officers and men for service in minor landing craft.

There not being enough work to occupy those of us who were already at the Depot the RMO in its infinite wisdom sent down Colonel Valentine Clayton from the Home Fleet to become second-in-command and Geoffrey Burnett as Staff Officer, or as it was, in fact, rather curiously called, Brigade Major. So I returned to my Company. It was now evident that there was little prospect of further active employment for General Campbell who was appointed to command the Training Brigade in South Devon and Brigadier Jolly came to command the Depot in his place. I had therefore to do some pretty hard thinking about my own future. I had no intention of drifting on at the Depot for the rest of the war, and still entertained some hopes of getting in on the act. But while I had been getting older the age limit for service as a Company Officer in a field unit had been getting lower. There seemed very little chance that I would be accepted for a Commando, and as there were all the staff of the RM Division as well as experienced Army Commando officers to be absorbed, the prospect of getting on to the staff of the Special Service Brigade as it was now called were very slender. The best course seemed to be to get into landing craft. Accordingly I presented my request to Brigadier Jolly. I did not know him at all well, nor did I know till much later that he suffered from a chronic and agonising complaint that never left him free from pain. He never showed this by word or sign. Brigadier Jolly was immediately understanding and sympathetic and forwarded my request, and in July 1943, after a few days in London, I presented myself at a Landing Craft base on Hayling Island. Here I found many old chums - Michael Previte, John Goldie, John Fletcher, Lawrence Podmore and others, and embarked on a course of training in seamanship, boatwork, signalling, navigation, pilotage and simple engineering. On the first day, a fairly junior RM Officer asked me "Are they going to teach you chaps meteorology?" I replied that I did not know but would look into the syllabus to which he replied as it seemed to me rather querulously "There is no syllabus". I thought that he, as a member of the staff, should really be better placed than I, a student, to supply the answer to his question and remedy the deficiency of the syllabus.

Landing Craft bases were, rather understandably, not very popular with some elements of the Navy but one thing that must be admitted is that they were generally well administered. There were efficient permanent staffs of officers and ratings, good accommodation and catering and excellent service by troops of handsome young WRNS.

Most of our time was spent sailing about in the Solent practising boatwork and signalling. In order to do the latter, the custom developed of standing on the gunwales or catwalks of the landing craft, and on one occasion John Fletcher was so intent on a message that he was sending by semaphore that he failed to notice the boats were about to turn 90° to starboard. As the boats turned he overbalanced and signalled himself straight into the water. Signalling was not my strong suit but I managed to memorise one or two ribald messages and so got by.

After about a month we separated into two contingents - one went to Britannia and the other to Brightlingsea. I opted for the latter as it was nearer to London, but most of my intimates chose to go to Dartmouth. At Brightlingsea our activities continued in much the same way but here there was a syllabus. It was exactly the same as that used for the young naval Sub Lieutenants straight out of HMS *King Alfred* (Hove), and in some ways was

not very suitable for us, most of us having a fair amount of service and some had commanded Companies in various units. This nonsense reached its zenith when we were taken to drill and instructed in fixing bayonets by young Sub Lieutenants RNVR.

At the beginning of the Landing Craft Training, Mne Sign and I had had to separate as the officers training took place at different places from that of the men. Sign was by now quite senior as a wartime Marine, and being smart and alert was tantalised with proposals for promotion. These however he resisted and after some difficulty clawed his way back to me. It had been a very disagreeable period without him and I welcomed him back. My fellow officers claimed that the improvement both in my appearance and in my morale was most noticeable after Sign's return. Had Sign been a regular it would not of course have been right to stand in the way of his promotion but he was only in for the war and I naturally raised my contribution to cover the extra pay he would have received as a Corporal.

At Brightlingsea I received the news of the birth of our elder daughter Annabella and fairly soon was able to get up to London to see my wife and the new baby.

From Brightlingsea I moved the Flotilla - which I discovered meant the men and not the boats - which I had been appointed to command to a large Landing Craft base at Westcliffe. This was a satisfying period as we were able to do a good deal of drill and give careful attention to kit, pay and other matters of administration. Each Flotilla had two officers and my second-in-command was a very capable young officer Lew Jenkins, ex 3rd Battalion. He was a keen sailing man and was a great asset to me. Each Flotilla also had a regular NCO - generally a Corporal who was made a Sergeant and became the detachment's Sergeant Major. There might be one or two experienced junior NCOs as well but for the most part we had to rely for Corporals on men found in the ranks who were often little more than recruits themselves. By comparison with the battalions the quality of NCOs in the flotillas was not high and this was more worrying as the general quality of the men was inevitably lower than it had been earlier in the war. However we worked very hard to build up discipline and loyalty and morale and the right spirit, and soon achieved a marked improvement.

Most of the men were new recruits having been passed from one training establishment to another, and until now they had never had their own officers to whom they could turn, nor any unit to which they could feel they belonged. As Englishmen do when they are properly led they responded readily and we had very little trouble in my flotilla though Westcliffe had acquired an unenviable reputation. We did however have one really bad hat whom I was anxious to get rid of. Just before we were due to move on from Westcliffe all leave was stopped so as to ensure there would be no absentees when the flotilla marched out. No exception might be made to this rule except by the Captain of the Base himself. On the Friday this man presented himself before me with the usual hard luck story of an ailing wife, far advanced in pregnancy, domestic trouble, debts and quarrels with his landlord. He begged to be allowed to go home for the weekend, and here I thought was my opportunity to get rid of this characterless character for ever. He would undoubtedly desert, and eventually end up doing a long spell in a detention barracks which was just where he ought to be.

So I did succeed in getting him leave. He thanked me with tears in his eyes and said that he 'appreciated being looked after by his own officer and one who was a real gentleman, and he would certainly be back in time and not let me down'. So he took himself off and that I said to myself is the last we shall see of him. On the Monday morning the flotilla was duly fallen in in embarkation order ready to march out and duly reported to me by the Sergeant Major as 'all present'. I said in astonishment "Not surely Marine " But he was there. And I thought, 'Well we have redeemed one brand from the burning'. His character

was such that in fact he was beyond complete redemption and he continued to get into trouble, but he did in fact acquit himself quite well subsequently and this story may well serve to show that some good can be extracted from even the most unpromising material.

Service in Landing Craft was very rightly regarded as Sea Service and it was a stroke of genius (on the part I think of Col Bill Farrier, then a G1 at the Royal Marines Office) to insist that the men should be issued with blue uniform and the officers with an allowance for its purchase. This matter of blue uniform was one of far greater importance than those at the top of the hierarchy could ever be made to realise. Nearly all the wartime officers and men had joined because they wanted to serve in HM Ships, and were disappointed when they found that the vast majority of them would not do so. When the difficulties involved in long dual-role training were explained, most of them took their disappointment with a good grace but a blue uniform would have softened the blow considerably and would, I am certain, have been an impetus to recruiting and morale. The official view that blue was the dress for sea and khaki for shore, while perfectly tenable, was not accepted. The men wanted to be marines, they wanted to look like the marines on the poster. They wanted to wear a blue uniform while walking out with their girls. The wartime officers while they did not worry so much about the day time, wanted to have a blue uniform to wear at night. Territorials, Guardsmen, wartime Army officers had their blue serges, and it was ludicrous for the only khaki-clad member of a party in a London restaurant to be a marine.

Periodically attempts were made to indicate that this rigid adherence to khaki only was solely on grounds of economising material. But they carried little conviction. Many of the men somehow got hold of a 'suit of blues' and many of the officers bought it readily at their own expense. To discourage a man in this enthusiasm for the dress of his Corps for whatever plausible reasons, seems to be absolutely crazy and I commend these observations to those who may have the direction of our Royal Corps in the next conflict.

Having received this very tangible encouragement in the matter of blue uniforms the officers of Landing Craft Flotillas invariably made a determined effort to achieve a really high standard of turn-out and drill. Before leaving Westcliffe each flotilla was inspected by the Senior Officer Royal Marines, and the objective was for the Flotilla to present as good an appearance as that of a detachment embarking in one of HM Ships. Maybe this very high standard was not achieved but at all events it was a laudable aim, and generally the turn-out, both on parade and walking out, was very high indeed.

Our move from Westcliffe took place in November 1943 and we were destined for Richborough near Sandwich. I was rather anxious about crossing the City, as I believed that if the traditional right of marching with fixed bayonets is not exercised it is assumed to be abrogated. But I need not have worried as our coaches were shunted around London via Willesden Junction and Addison Road and we did not have to change trains.

We had quite a good camp at Richborough, which had been an ammunition supply point for France in World War 1, and the craft were moored in the estuary which necessitated a long haul before reaching open water.

Landing Craft bases must have been welcomed by the second Sea Lord's Department as providing places of employment for a large number of retired recalled Naval Officers. One of these had to be appointed to command as each base was theoretically a ship - and he would have as well a small number of officers and ratings and a detachment of WRNS. With the advent of large number of Royal Marines in these establishments it was clearly desirable to have a Senior Officer Royal Marines at each base and Norman Tailyour held this appointment at Richborough. Norman Tailyour asked me to take over duties as Adjutant

and for a while we had a rather peculiar dual set-up of a Naval Commander with his First Lieutenant, Secretary, Master-at-Arms and other staff and a Senior Royal Marines officer with his Adjutant and RSM that from the outset it was clear that this arrangement was unlikely to prove satisfactory.

The arrival of large numbers of Marines at these Landing Craft bases was usually welcomed by the Naval Commanding Officers. I suspect that their enthusiasm was to some extent conditioned by the reflection that there would now be plenty of marines available to provide guards and working parties, mess attendants, keyboard sentries and messengers, and for all the one hundred and one duties which the Navy had come to regard as Royal Marines commitments. When it was explained that the Royal Marines would of course take their share of the duties but there was still a good deal of boat training to be done to get the flotillas ready for action, the query came back "But surely these are already trained men?" It was really most difficult to make it understood that the flotillas had come to these bases to continue specialised training and it was necessary to remind the Commanding Officers that even in a ship the Royal Marines did not spend all their time in the performance of routine duties but, like the men in other parts of the ship were regularly exercised in their various drills and evolutions.

The Commanding Officer at Richborough proved particularly intractable in this matter and was also remarkably unpunctual. He was also quite frequently for days at a stretch invisible. On Sunday mornings he liked to have Divisions followed by Church, but could never be relied upon to appear at the appointed time, and to our men accustomed to rigid RM punctuality these Sunday morning performances were particularly infuriating. Sometimes he never appeared at all but after a three-quarter hour delay a message would be sent to dismiss the parade.

Another of this officer's less attractive traits in times of shortage (which were frequent) was to appropriate to his own 'cabin' the entire mess allocation of gin and whisky. Remonstrance was met with the reply that under King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions it was within a Captain's discretion to determine what liquor supplies should be available in the Wardroom Mess, and indeed to prohibit supplies altogether, and it was indicated that any further complaints would be met by the application of this ferocious sanction.

From time to time work and training were interrupted in order to muster as many men as possible to hear the reading of the warrant for a trial by Court Martial under the Naval Discipline Act. This was of course perfectly correct, and in accordance with custom and regulation but our requests that these readings should not take place in the middle of the day went unheeded.

Norman Tailyour was a most charming and agreeable person and it required much determination to quarrel with him, but his position was quite untenable. He was responsible to the Royal Marines Office for the progress of training but the attitude and dicta of the Captain of the base made his task almost impossible. Clearly such a situation could not be allowed to continue, and eventually official intervention was sought, and the disputants were summoned to appear before the Admiral Commanding at Dover. As the restrictions on the use of transport were, at that time, very stringent only one vehicle could be used, so plaintiff and defendant had to repair together to the seat of justice, crammed side by side in a small 10 hp car. I am glad to be able to record that Norman Tailyour emerged the victor: shortly afterwards the Commander took his departure and greater harmony and efficiency prevailed.

To Be Continued

The Marine Who Never Was

William Macawber Esquire, late Royal Marine Artillery

by Captain John Coleby (RMHS)

"I cannot satisfy myself whether (his wife) told me that Mr Micawber had been an officer in the Royal Marines, or whether I have imagined it. I only know that I believe to this hour that he was in the Marines, without knowing why."

When David Copperfield first meets Mr Micawber in London, he is described as 'a stoutish middle aged person in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one and very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirt collar on. He carried a jaunty sort of a stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it; and a quizzing glass hung outside his coat - for ornament. as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.'

Charles Dickens said that Copperfield (published in parts in 1849-50) was his own favourite of his fourteen major novels and that for it he had drawn extensively on his own early life. In fact much of the autobiographical material that appears in the first chapters had not been known to his wife and family as some experiences had traumatically shamed him and he had suppressed them till then. He was born in 1812 in Portsmouth where his father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Naval Pay Office; shortly afterwards moving in the same capacity to Chatham, where young Charles passed his childhood. By about 1820 Mr Dickens was seeking work in London, and was in financial straits. Presumably the Pay Office had dispensed with his services during the run down of the Fleet and its bases following the Napoleonic Wars. He was by all accounts a florid and grandiloquent character and an incurable optimist. Eventually he was arrested for debt and committed to Marshalsea Prison for four months, being let out upon declaration as an insolvent debtor and with the consent of his creditors. At this time young Charles was put to work in a blacking factory, labelling the bottles the product was sold in. This unhappy and, to Dickens, degrading episode is used, thinly disguised, in the novel. More significantly, Dickens père is reckoned to have been a model for Mr Micawber, who shares many of his characteristics and experiences, including naval service.

In his earliest years Charles Dickens was brought up in close contact with the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. He knew the Corps, the men who were serving in it and the context of that service. When therefore he introduces a major character in his most biographical novel as an ex-Marine, he is telling us something about the Corps in those days. We can take comfort from the fact that, despite his follies, over confidence and lack of acumen, Mr Micawber's heart is in the right place. When his chance comes - to defeat the schemes of the appalling Uriah Heep - he rises to it and succeeds. We last see him making good in Australia. His oft expressed expectation that "something will turn up!" and his axiom about income, expenditure and happiness have gone into the language; Micawber is a household name to many who have never opened the book. His connection with the Corps, so lightly sketched, is very often overlooked. Royal Marines can take a modest pride in one of the most celebrated fictional characters ever drawn being one of their own.

Historical sources are many and various. Increasingly today, historians are prepared to deduce historical truth from contemporary documents and accounts over and beyond dry official records. Novels with a serious purpose, not intended to be polemic or propaganda, by authors of talent can vividly illuminate the times in which they are written. If we take Mr Micawber as Dickens describes him we may deduce that Royal Marines of the Napoleonic Wars were popularly seen as cheerful, brave, resilient, kindly and tough. They could also be thought pretentious, silly and inept - and not overburdened with brains.

One should not of course build too much on this connection. The full complexity, richness and resonances of Mr Micawber's character and his adventures during his acquaintance with David Copperfield are developed in terms of the novel and owe nothing to the exigencies of the service. He emerges as a brilliantly imaginative comic creation, a leading member of the splendid gallery of characters Dickens assembled to inhabit his novels and give life to his tales. G K Chesterton described them as "creatures who cling to us and tyrannise over us, creatures who we could not forget if we could, creatures whom we could not forget if we would, creatures who are more actual than the man who made them."

What is important is that when he set out to create Mr Micawber, Dickens, who knew what he wanted and what he was talking about, used Royal Marines to 'place' him, to set up certain expectations and images in the reader's mind's eye on first meeting him. And that, I believe is to be to the credit of the Corps.

The Hampshire Hogs



The origin of this name seems to have evolved from the extraordinary intelligence of which the Hampshire folk firmly believed their pigs to be possessed of Music, Art & Literature. Music came an easy first and whenever the military bands from Portsmouth passed along the highway, there was instant commotion among the good county folk. The pigs must hear the band. - A race for the stys! The pigs were dragged, driven or carried to the best vantage point. That they fully appreciated the Music, their good-hearted owners had no doubt whatever, and we can imagine the good old soul on the left of the picture saying "Oh! Listen to the band".

This copy of postcard was submitted by Colin Bowden (RMHS) who writes 'I love the thoughts of an audience of pigs - better than some people for whom I have performed!'

Royal Marine Lodges - Some Origins.

by

W O 2 F C Bryson-Bassett RM

(Secretary of The Globe & Laurel)

Having read the most interesting article referring to Royal Marines and Freemasonry in the recent addition of the Sheet Anchor, I wondered if any of your readers would be interested in being brought up to date with Royal Marines Masonic Lodges.

Mention was made of the now defunct Amphibious Lodge and its furniture ending up in Yorkshire. My research would indicate that its warrant and number were transferred to Hightown, Yorkshire where a new Amphibious Lodge was opened (as a Civilian Lodge) on 2nd May 1803 and is still in existence to this day.

As a footnote to the article the Globe and Laurel Lodge, No 4657 was mentioned. This Lodge was consecrated on 10th October 1924 at the Church of St Michael and All Angels, The Depot Royal Marines, Deal, Kent, by Colonel F S W Cornwallis, the Provincial Grand Master. The moving spirit behind the formation of this Lodge was Major General Douglas Farquharson who became the first Master. There were 26 founder members comprising:

Major Generals	-	2
Colonels	-	1
Lieutenant Colonels	-	2
Majors	-	1
Captains	-	3
Lieutenants	-	3
Warrant Officers/SNCOs	-	10
Pensioner SNCOs	-	5

The Lodge still thrives, meeting regularly at Sondes Road, Deal.

An older Corps Lodge is the Per Mare Per Terram Lodge No 3609 at the Masonic Hall, Manor Road, Chatham. The Lodge was consecrated on 4th September 1912 and is an offshoot of the Lord Charles Beresford Lodge NO 2404. Charles Lane, described as a Licensed Victualler but lately a Staff Sergeant of the Royal Marines Light Infantry, was the first master and in his petition to the Grand Lodge stated that the lodge was for the exclusive benefit of members of the Royal Marines (past and present). He further stated that when the idea was first mooted, all the members of the Craft serving in the Corps connected with the Chatham Division Royal Marines, were circulated as to the desirability or otherwise of the proposal. The result of this correspondence revealed a strong desire for a Corps Lodge and consequently a committee was formed to take the necessary steps to petition the Grand Master. The petition to the Grand Lodge was signed by 28 Masons all of whom were serving or ex-serving members of the Corps and the majority were Sergeants.

The Lord Charles Beresford Lodge No 2404 was formed on 7th June 1891. The Lodge was formed by members of the craft belonging to the Chatham Division of Royal Marines for the convenience of members of the Corps and the Royal Navy at that port. It was thought appropriate to name the Lodge after one of the gallant and most popular members of the Royal Navy and at that time an opinion was expressed that "it was hoped that the Lodge would become as popular as the gallant officer whose name it bears." The following answer was received from Brother Lord Charles Beresford, HMS *Undaunted*, Alexandria, on being asked permission to name the Lodge after him:-

"I am much flattered by the request you make to allow a new Lodge you are forming to be called "The Lord Charles Beresford Lodge". I shall be very pleased to accede to the request. I take such a deep interest in the splendid Corps, Royal Marines, I am very glad to be associated with them in any way whatsoever."

and on being informed that HRH The Prince of Wales had been pleased to grant a charter for the Lord Charles Beresford Lodge he said,

"I am very proud of the compliment which that renowned Corps the Royal Marines, has paid me, wishing to name a Lodge after myself. I shall certainly give myself the pleasure of visiting the lodge on my return to England."

The first master was Brother, Lieutenant and Quartermaster Francis Powell who was also the first Master of Lodge of Hope from which the next Lodge sprang.

On 23rd April 1947 at the Masonic Hall, Highbury Street, Portsmouth, The Royal Marines Portsmouth Lodge No 6423 was consecrated by the Earl of Malmesbury, assisted by Lieutenant Colonel F W Phillips acting as Director of Ceremonies. The Lodge was sponsored by the Lodge of Hope No 2153 and amongst the founding brethren were the late Lieutenant N A Finch VC, Mac Macaulay, well known stalwart of the Sergeants' Mess at Eastney Barracks during World War II and Major F V Dunn. Interestingly, on the day of its consecration a telegram was received from the Admiralty offering no objection to the Lodge using the Royal Marines Corps badge within its crest. The Lodge is proud of its crest showing a Lion, Crown, Gibraltar, Laurel Wreath and the Globe.

Ten years later in December 1957, Per Mare Per Terram Lodge sponsored a petition to Grand Lodge resulting in the formation on 8th June 1958 of the Bexley Marine Lodge No 7546. The founders had all served in the Royal Marines and with one exception were members of the Per Mare Per Terram Lodge.

On two occasions the Royal Marine Portsmouth Lodge has organised combined meetings. The first occasion was that of the Corps Tercentenary. The meeting was held on 6th July 1964 and officers from the Royal Marines Portsmouth Lodge, Per Mare Per Terram (Chatham), Globe and Laurel (Deal) and Bexley Marine took part in the ceremony. Twenty years later on 16th June 1984, a second combined meeting was held.

Finally, a lodge has recently opened in Exmouth, Devon sharing the title Per Mare Per Terram and numbered 9355 and I am informed that a new Royal Marines lodge is planned in the Plymouth area.

Marine's Last Drop

Since its first publication in 1955 The Guinness Book of Records has carried a gruesome entry about the last naval execution of hanging from the yard-arm. It is one of the Corps records of which we are perhaps not so proud as it concerns Private John Dalliger of the Royal Marines. Until recently I had been unaware of the story behind it but the following, published many years ago in a book "Michael Bray" by 'Taffrail', has now reached my eyes.

'On 6 July 1860 the gun vessel HMS *Leven* was anchored close to HMS *Acteon* in Hula Shan Bay, about 60 miles north of Port Arthur. Lieutenant Arthur, after whom the Port Arthur was named, was in command of the *Leven*. As he was sitting at breakfast with the second master a pistol shot was fired at him through the skylight by his servant, a marine, who was in trouble owing to some irregularity in connection with the Commanding Officer's wine. The following extracts come from a contemporary journal kept by an officer:

'July 9th, 8.30am - Lieutenant Commander dangerously wounded, and second master wounded, by pistol shots fired by a Marine. Sent to *Acteon* for assistance. 10.45am - weighed and proceeded under steam. 7pm rounded Liao-ti-Shan.

July 10th, 2.15am - anchored in Ta-Liau-Wan (Dalny).

July 12th, 8am - sent ship's company to attend a court martial; 2.30pm court martial concluded --- prisoner condemned to death.

July 13th, 1pm - boats of all ships assembled round to witness execution; 1.30pm - prisoner executed by hanging by the neck from the fore yard-arm starboard side; 2pm - lowered the body; enclosed same in two hammocks.

July 14th, 4.30 am - weighed and proceeded out of Ta-Liau-Wan; 6.40am - committed the remains of the late Private John Dalliger to the deep, Cape Rock bearing S.E. 1½ miles. Expended hammocks 2, round shot 10.'

Book Review

From Artic Snow to Dust of Normandy

by Patrick Dalzel-Job

Foreword by Charles Wheeler

This is a quite remarkable book by a wartime naval officer who some people have said that Ian Fleming based 'James Bond' upon. Particular Royal Marines interest lies in the second half of the book which covers the exploits of 30 Assault Unit, a 'hush-hush' outfit on which little has been written previously. The first half deals with areas of Norway familiar to present day Royal Marines.

It is astonishing that it has taken 50 years for Patrick Dalzel-Job to tell his story, a man in whose vocabulary the word 'fear' does not seem to appear. He begins by describing his pre-war experience of sailing the coast of Norway with an aged mother and a pretty young 14 year old Norwegian girl. When World War 2 broke out his comprehensive knowledge of Norwegian waters complete with updated charts was 'not required by the Admiralty'; in contrast to Major Ewan Southby-Tailyour's similar coverage of the Falklands waters by which time the lesson had been learned and his knowledge was eagerly exploited.

As a junior Lieutenant and with his knowledge of Norwegian, Dalzel-Job landed in the north of the country and moved over 10,000 soldiers of the expeditionary force in small boats. He later collated a vast amount of intelligence of the west coast of Norway for possible Commando raids; and had a special rapport with King Haakon, who saved him from a court martial for disobedience of orders, presenting him personally with the Knight's Cross of St Olav. The author describes vividly his lonely vigil on a Norwegian island reporting and taking photographs of German shipping movements. Later his adventurous spirit led him to be one of the few naval officers to complete the parachute course.

The second half of the book is even more interesting to the Corps as he became involved with 30 Commando or 30 Assault Unit as it was later known. This was a combined force of naval officers and Royal Marines whose job was to obtain sources of enemy intelligence ahead of advancing Allied troops in north-west Europe, as it had already done successfully in the Mediterranean. The unit aimed to capture enemy documents and equipment, mainly but not always of naval interest, before they could be destroyed either by the enemy or by our own troops.

He describes how this very independent unit moved across the Cherbourg peninsular, France and into Germany. The Royal Marines mainly provided the wheels and the protection for 30 AU, and the author's bodyguard Mne Bill Wright and his driver Mne Lofty Fraser figure large in his adventures. His particular companion was Capt Charles Wheeler RM, still one of the BBC's respected foreign correspondents, who writes the foreword to this book.

Behind all the adventures is a poignant love story - that of his undying love for the young Norwegian girl whom he did not see for six years and whom he subsequently married. There is far more than this in a thoroughly enthralling book which has at last revealed yet another important slice of Corps history.

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