

SOLDIER

THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE

NINEPENCE

DECEMBER 1954

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Y4A



IT WAS A YEAR TO REMEMBER

TO schoolboys in AD 2000, the year 1954 will not rank with such famous dates as 1066, 1588 and 1815. Nevertheless, it was a year of some importance in the Army's history.

It was in this year that British troops began to evacuate Egypt after 72 years and re-deploy in the Middle East.

It was in this year that British troops evacuated Trieste, which then took its place along with Corfu, the Curragh and the Cape of Good Hope in the list of stations *once* occupied by the British Army.

It was in this year that Britain offered to keep troops in Europe as a permanent insurance for the peace of the West; a decision which means that generations still unborn are marked down for National Service. If that is not a momentous decision, what is?

This resolve was taken at a time when, oddly, there were no wars raging—a phenomenon rare enough in the lifetime of most of us. In the nineteen-thirties there were wars in Spain, Abyssinia and China. Then came World War Two. Next, after the first flush of pacification, wars in Indo-China and Korea.

Now there is one of history's rare breathing spells. True, shots are still being fired in anger, notably in Kenya, Malaya and Algeria, and in the China Sea. But, just at this moment, no sovereign powers are at each other's throats.

This is an admirable state, and one more likely to be preserved by keeping British divisions formed and fit than by breaking them up. In the past it was contempt for the size of Britain's forces and the knowledge that

SOLDIER to Soldier

there were no dependable alliances in the West that encouraged the aggressor. Both Britain's major political parties are behind the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; both concede the need for National Service.

* * *

NOW think, for a moment, of that gleaming white cloister recently opened by Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery in the desert at El Alamein. It is in honour of 11,945 Commonwealth Servicemen who died in

the Middle East battles and *who have no known grave*.

Try to picture just what that phrase means. In the old-fashioned, gentlemen's wars there was usually enough left of a man to be identifiable, or if not, to be worth burying. In the total wars of the twentieth century the numbers of unidentifiable dead—men who just vanished on land, in the air or under the sea—is formidably high. In nuclear wars the task of graves registration may turn out to be largely superfluous.

By the standards of Passchendaele, where men were drowned on land, then blown sky-high, the casualty roll of the Western Desert may seem low, but God forbid that Passchendaele should ever be taken as the standard of anything, except of incomparable bravery. The hope of avoiding future Alameins and Passchendaeles now lies with the great military command which links London and Istanbul, Washington and Paris, Naples and Oslo—with 380,000,000 people behind it.

Let it not be overlooked that the man who has toiled mightily to breathe life into that organisation, flying tirelessly from capital to capital, is the conqueror of Alamein: Field-Marshal Montgomery.

OVER

ONE FACT REMAINS SUPREME

WE meant to win outright. And we win we did. And why did we win? First, because we lived in faith and not in fear. We saw the goal ahead and never took our eyes from it. Second, because we did not deal in wishful thinking. We trained and disciplined ourselves to offer to the cause toughness of character, skill at our job, and willingness to die. We asked to win, not by miracle or favour; but by being better and doing

better than our foes. . . .

"Let us remember that one great fact, the greatest fact, remains supreme and unassailable. It is this. There are in this world things that are true and things that are false; there are ways that are right and ways that are wrong; men good, and bad. And on one side or the other we must take our stand; one, or the other, we must serve."

—Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery at the unveiling of the Alamein Memorial.





"... the Colonel saying his annual piece . . ."

SOLDIER to Soldier

continued

SOLDIER'S front cover this month shows a scene which would have brought apoplexy to the Horse Guards a hundred years ago. "What, officers *serve* food to their troops! Gad, sir, discipline would never be the same again!"

Just when, and how, the curious Christmas customs of the modern Army came in, **SOLDIER** does not profess to know. Can anyone name the first unit in which the NCOs carried tea to the troops in bed on Christmas morning? Who was the first commanding officer to carry a plate of pork to a private soldier? Who was the first subaltern to go round with the beer? How did it all come about?

For that matter, when did the comic football match between officers and serjeants become an institution?

There are, of course, still units

in which these practices have not yet taken root.

It is odd that while some of the oldest customs in the Army can be traced unerringly back, some of the newest—like these—are lost in the mists of modernity.

* * *

IN the files of the *Navy and Army Illustrated* and *The Regiment* of 50 and 60 years ago are plenty of jolly Christmas drawings and photographs, but there is no evidence that the officers did more than attend the Christmas dinner and perhaps drink a suitable toast (the Colonel, of course, saying his annual piece).

After dinner, however, the company officer, having made a speech, would be chaired from the room to the strains of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

In those times men ate in their

barrack-rooms, which were decorated on a most impressive scale. Adornments included arms and cleaning rods and a shining star formed from bayonets. Among popular mottoes were: "THE COLONEL AND MRS. P.—, GOD BLESS THEM!" "HEALTH, LONG LIFE AND SUCCESS TO OUR NCOs," "SWEETHEARTS AND WIVES," and "ABSENT FRIENDS." In one Army Service Corps barrack-room appeared the reminder: "IN OUR OWN PLEASURES, DON'T LET US FORGET OUR FRIENDS IN THE STABLES."

After dinner troops visited each other's barrack rooms, carrying drinks with them, one toast being "Sharp blades and true!"

In India, according to the *Navy and Army Illustrated*, a man was none the worse soldier because, at Christmas time, he hastily rubbed the cuff of his karki (repeat karki) jacket across his eyes when he thought of the old folks at home, "muttering to himself, though no one be near, 'Blarst that bloomin' sand!'"

Well, there's another stretch of bloomin' sand—in Egypt—that won't have to be blasted much longer.

THE continuing vogue for prisoner-of-war escape stories has been noticed before in these columns. A satirical commentary on the theme is to be seen in a London revue, which has a sketch about British officer captives whose escape plans are cruelly negated by the arrival of liberating troops at the gates.

It is healthy to remember that our late enemies also succeeded, by suitable audacities, in escaping from British prisoner-of-war camps. There was Felice Benuzzi, the Italian prisoner who slipped out of a camp in East

Africa, climbed Mount Kenya by an "impossible" route, and then reported back to the commandant. More recently has appeared the tale of Rolf Magener and Heins von Have, who eluded their captors at Dehra Dun and made their way to the Japanese lines in Burma.

Sooner or later, no doubt, will come a story about a German prisoner-of-war who escaped from a prison camp in Britain and dodged from Wigan to Widnes, from Acton to Auchen-shuffle, being given cups of tea and odd jobs by friendly natives. Such a story—if it comes—should make piquant and perhaps painful reading.

* * *

NOT so long ago **SOLDIER** passed on the information that a soldier who falls asleep in a train, then wakes up and pulls the emergency chain because he has travelled past his stop, is committing an offence.

Officially, the risk of being put on a charge for arriving late at camp does not merit emergency action.

Fair enough.

But the other day there was trouble in court because a party of Royal Air Force men, returning late to their unit, hired a bus to camp. The bus operator was prosecuted for allowing his vehicle to be chartered for a non-special occasion. Apparently, if the Servicemen had said they were going to a midnight ox-roasting no offence would have been committed.

No doubt the conscientious public servant who initiated this prosecution did so from the best of motives. Let us hope he never finds himself—even in a dream—posted to a camp ten miles from a railway station, arriving on a mid-winter midnight with full kit.

* * *

A TOPICALLY provocative question was thrown to a BBC panel of speakers in the television feature "In The News." It was inspired, without a doubt, by the successful wooings of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in British Guiana (the Black Watch, irresistible in war and love, have since taken over this station, accompanied by numerous German wives).

The question was: "Should the authorities take steps to prevent marriages between British troops overseas and girls who are natives of territories in which they are stationed?" It was a good question, if only because it gave no scope for political prejudice.

The Army takes a young man in his late 'teens and, inevitably, subjects him to certain risks. On active service he may be stalked by a cunning adversary and receive a bullet in the heart; that is a long chance. On local leave he may be stalked by an equally cunning adversary—of the opposite sex—and receive a Cupid's



arrow in the same place. This is not such a long chance. The results of a skirmish of this type may conceivably mar the rest of his life. Is it the Army's responsibility to save him from such entanglements, bearing in mind that he is lonely and far from home, and therefore peculiarly susceptible to the glint in a female eye? And bearing in mind, too, that if he wished to marry in England under the age of 21 he would require his parents' consent? (The Argylls who married Guianese girls had to produce their parents' permission in writing.)

The BBC's speakers seemed agreed that soldiers' marriages should not be blocked simply because they are mixed marriages. They agreed that a commanding officer should give the best possible advice and point out the inevitable difficulties of marrying women accustomed to a totally different way of life. But if the young man still wanted to marry, the only answer—as one speaker put it—was: "If he is old enough to be sent abroad to defend his country, he is old enough as a citizen to decide whom he wants to marry."

One member thought it would be an admirable thing if a man could be given home leave between applying to marry and taking the fateful step. This caused laughter and a cry of "What a wangle!"—doubtless from someone who could picture the rush of romances likely

to materialise once the news got around that a home posting would be forthcoming.

Another speaker said that a six months' period of waiting should be imposed (that was the period fixed in the early days of "frat" in Germany). Another held that if the object of a Serviceman's affections was clearly an undesirable character the authorities were justified in posting him elsewhere. Occasionally that has been done.

The debate might well have been more piquant if the commanding officer of an overseas battalion had been invited to take part, along with a representative of the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen's Families Association, fresh from the job of tidying up Servicemen's marriages. Hard facts in this field are hard to come by. After all, who really knows whether his neighbour is happily married? Some marriages with foreign women are doomed from the start; others appear to work out successfully (though the children of mixed marriages may find life tougher than their parents do).

Essentially, a man's marriage is his own business. If, sometimes, regimental officers seem to raise difficulties, no one should suppose that they do so for the sake of officiousness. A commanding officer, after all, is father to his regiment. The national newspaper which described the Argylls' marriages as a triumph over the "brass hats" was off target.



Mr. Fitzroy Maclean: he is vice-president of the Army Council.

The Soldier Who HAD To Go In For Politics

IT is a curious twist of events which has brought Mr. Fitzroy Maclean to the War Office as the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War and Financial Secretary

About 13 years ago, Mr. Maclean took up politics so that he might join the Army. Now a political career has brought him back to the Army.

It happened like this. When World War Two broke out, Mr. Maclean tried to resign from the diplomatic service in order to join the Army. He was told that if he did so he would be brought back "in irons, if necessary." So Mr. Maclean told his chief he was taking up politics—and that brought him release from the Foreign Office. He became a private in the Cameron Highlanders.

Then came rumours that the Foreign Office was trying to get him back again. Only early election to Parliament could save him. Second-Lieutenant Fitzroy Maclean was adopted Conservative candidate in a by-election in Lancaster, where he told the voters that if he was elected his military duties would come first. Somewhat to his surprise, he was elected.

For the next four years, the Member for Lancaster did not speak in Parliament. He was raiding with the Special Air Service in the Western Desert, kidnapping a Persian general in Isfahan, parachuting into Yugoslavia at the head of a mission to Marshal Tito's Partisans. Not until June 1945 does *Hansard* report a question by Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean (it concerns the withdrawal of British troops from Persia). From then on, the

name occurs more and more frequently. In 1948, he was pressing for raiding forces to be included in the peace-time Army (see page eight) and for compensation for ex-prisoners-of-war of the Japanese.

One of the new Under-Secretary's first moves at the War Office was to issue an instruction that he was to be known as Mr. Maclean. In this he followed the example of his chief, Mr. Antony Head (a Regular brigadier) and his predecessor, Mr. J. R. H. Hutchison (a Territorial colonel who, like Mr. Maclean, has a history of unorthodox soldiering).

As Under-Secretary, Mr. Maclean becomes vice-president of the Army Council and deputy to the Secretary of State for War. His other responsibilities are not laid down, but are assigned to him by the Secretary of State.

One important duty Mr. Maclean has taken over is dealing with the scores of letters which are sent to the War Office by Members of Parliament on behalf of their constituents. Another is the chairmanship of the War Department Industrial Council, which deals with a complicated variety of problems affecting War Office civilian employees.



"Right—file past smartly, only one wish per man."

Do We Need a New Shock Force?

IS the British Army prepared for an unorthodox war?

Does it need a strategic assault corps—a force trained for tasks of exceptional hazard and delicacy, a corps d'élite of saboteurs and kidnappers ready to operate far behind the enemy's lines (or anybody else's lines)?

The case for such a corps is vigorously and eloquently argued in a new book describing the exploits of Otto Skorzeny, who at the close of World War Two occupied a post in Germany roughly corresponding to that of Major-General Sir Robert Laycock, then Chief of Combined Operations. Its title is "Commando Extraordinary" (Longmans, 15s) and its author is Charles Foley, who has had many long talks with Skorzeny. Mr. Foley's arguments are strongly supported in a foreword by General Laycock, now Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta.

Now what does General Laycock say? Endorsing Mr. Foley's view that "no army welcomes the freebooter," he recalls that the Commandos were maintained "in spite of the War Office . . . the early units owed their existence to the goading of Sir Winston Churchill and the persistence of Sir John Dill." Later brilliant use was made of Commandos by far-seeing high commanders; but after the war, "most of our military authorities were openly delighted to see the disbandment of the Army Commandos."

Though partial amends have since been made (Commandos are now a Royal Marines responsibility) it is time, General Laycock says, for another step forward in the realm of strategic shock attack.

The introduction of nuclear

The case for a strategic assault corps, as a permanent part of the British Army, is put by the author of a book on Otto Skorzeny, once hailed as "the most dangerous man in Europe"

This regiment is now turning away volunteers. A second Special Air Service Regiment was later raised to fight in Malaya. But Mr. Foley and ex-Colonel David Stirling, whom he has consulted, are not satisfied. The new Special Air Service, they feel, is but a shadow of what it might have been.

A strategic assault corps, Mr. Foley emphasises, would differ from the Commandos, whose rôle is tactical—"they provide the spearhead of conventional attack on enemy coastlines." Strategic troops, intended for feats of audacity, bluff and unpredictability far behind the enemy lines, would be wasted in this rôle, runs his argument.

After telling of the exploits of Otto Skorzeny, Mr. Foley reminds his readers of the dazzling feats performed in the late war by the Special Air Service ("Stirling and Stirling"), in many theatres. "At paltry cost the nation had acquired a weapon which destroyed hundreds of aircraft and thousands of vehicles and earned an incalculable profit in demoralising the enemy." Those benefits would have been much higher, Mr. Foley says, if the proper use of the Special Air Service had been understood from the start.

Yet, as soon as the war was over, the Special Air Service was disbanded. In 1950 a phoenix rose from the ashes in the shape of a Territorial regiment, which inherited its traditions along with those of the Artists Rifles.

explosives makes surprise assaults all too likely. Small numbers of picked men "may find ways of introducing atomic weapons, among others, into their enemy's stronghold, even in advance of the outbreak of war."

Mr. Foley's book appears just as a war-time ex-raider (with a kidnapping to his credit) is appointed to the War Office as Financial Secretary: Mr. Fitzroy Maclean (see page 7). A look at Hansard reveals that since the war he has more than once argued the need for permanent raiding forces. He reminded Mr. Shinwell in 1948 that one of his brother officers, drawing captain's pay, destroyed with his own hands "and a certain amount of high explosive" over 100 enemy aircraft—good value for money, Mr. Maclean thought. In 1952 he pointed out that modern armies and their weapons, for all their destructive power, were highly vulnerable to well-planned and well-executed attacks. "Small-scale raiding is

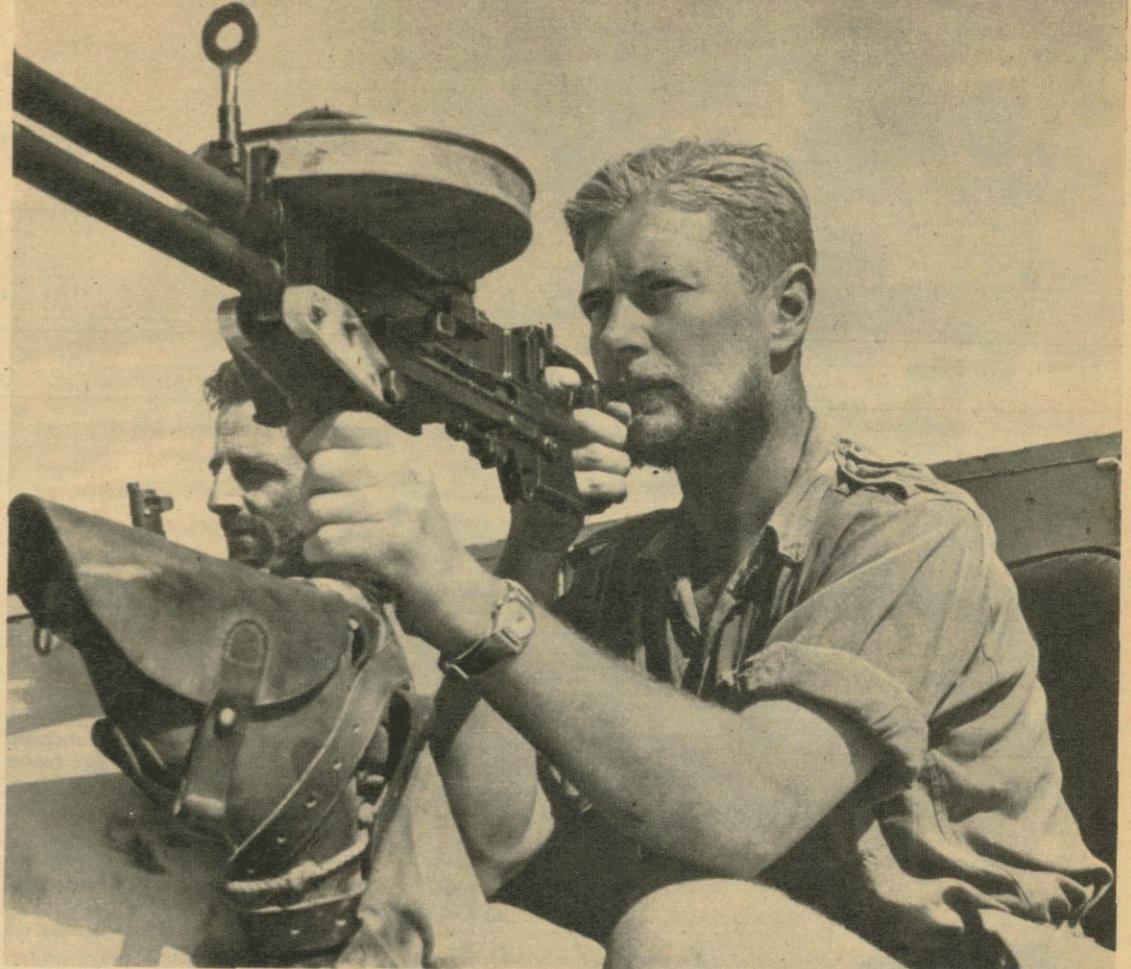
a very important job for which, I am sure, there will be very great scope in any future war."

Those are the arguments for the shock force. Now for practical difficulties. Many will wonder how such a force is to be kept in training in years of peace. Usually the daring, unconventional spirits demobilise themselves when a war is over. How can they be retained? How can they practise coups in peacetime? Whom can they kidnap?

Mr. Foley argues that a strategic corps would "earn its keep by dashing off to meet 'emergencies' in different parts of the world," smothering trouble at its source. He thinks that daring spirits might be recruited by offering them "the remote but alluring hobbies of the rich: flying, mountaineering, skiing, yachting, foreign travel—such bait as no recruiting poster ever dangled." The more intellectual soldiers could research into the minds and methods of potential enemies.

These proposals can be relied on to create controversy. Would the recent "Battle Royal" exercise in Rhine Army have been made more realistic by allowing a strategic shock corps to "carve out the brains" of the opposing side? The answer that hopeless confusion would have been caused will not do, for the whole purpose of the Skorzeny-Stirling-Popski school is to create hopeless confusion and profit by it. Yet it is no secret that in Army exercises of the past officers resorting to "smash and grab" tactics have been informed that their superiors were not amused.

Opposition to the creation of special forces has also been voiced on the grounds that recruiting for them means a creaming-off of adventurous spirits from regular battalions. No commanding officer likes to see his best men being lured away by the offer of green (or even red) berets. But the shape of war has changed, and the case for maintaining a permanent shock force cannot be dismissed out of hand. Mr. Foley is to be thanked for so ably bringing the subject into prominence.



One of the adventurers of the Long Range Desert Group, who helped the Special Air Service to bring off many a daring coup far behind the enemy lines in the Western Desert.

THE ASTONISHING

O TTO SKORZENY became an unorthodox soldier only by chance, after being invalided home from the Russian front. His subsequent adventures are absorbingly told in "Commando Extraordinary."

In 1943 he was appointed Germany's Chief of Special Troops ("existing or to be created in the future") with the modest rank of captain. They handed him a dossier on the exploits of British Commandos at St. Nazaire, Lofoten and elsewhere. To the German High Command these were the "work of amateurs."

Skorzeny's aircraft was shot into the sea by British fighters. Finally, the Duce was traced to a winter sports hotel 6000 feet up on a crag, to which the only means of access was a funicular railway. Against expert advice he decided to land his troops in gliders on the small strip of ground beside the hotel.

The gliders duly crash-landed, and a handful of men stormed the hotel and forced the surrender of the garrison, some 250 strong. Confusion was perhaps their biggest asset. Now Mussolini had to be removed from the crag, and he could not go by glider. A Storch aircraft was summoned and Skorzeny tried to persuade the pilot to take off with the burly Mussolini and the much burlier Skorzeny. For a long while the pilot refused, but finally consented. Skorzeny's men held on to the

Then, out of the blue, came the order from Hitler to rescue

Otto Skorzeny read a dossier about the feats of British Commandos. He decided that the real secret weapon was—Man.

FEATS OF SKORZENY

aircraft until the engine reached full throttle—then let go. The Storch hurtled across the scree and all but nose-dived over the crag. Skorzeny's lieutenant fainted as he watched.

Germany—and Hitler—went mad over this exploit. Skorzeny was now on his way to becoming "the most dangerous man in Europe." He was ordered to prepare plans for kidnapping Marshal Petain in Vichy, but the plot was called off at the last moment. He went to Yugoslavia to kidnap Marshal Tito, driving his Mercedes unescorted for hundreds of miles over enemy-held roads; but a German general was also busy trying to kidnap the Marshal, and Skorzeny was frozen out. Then he was sent to Budapest to storm the Castle and "deal with" Admiral Horthy, who was suspected of being about to betray the Axis. In a singularly daring coup, Skorzeny kidnapped the Regent's son, who was carried from the Castle rolled in a Persian rug, and the Regent abdicated. The result: Hungary remained fighting the Allies till the last day of the war.

Skorzeny had many other assignments. One of the last and most successful was the operation of a force of English-

speaking Germans, in American uniform, behind the American lines in the Ardennes battle. The men practised the mannerisms and slang of American soldiers, even to the method of flicking a cigarette from a packet. They caused astonishing confusion.

The rumour spread that Skorzeny was out to kidnap General Eisenhower, who—much to his grief—was at once surrounded by strong security forces. The Americans even began arresting their own men; to test the bona fides of suspects they had to fall back on questions based on American folklore—even comic strips.

After the war Skorzeny was accused of—among other things—operating a force in Allied uniform. The case against him collapsed when Wing-Commander Yeo-Thomas (of "White Rabbit" fame) gave evidence that British saboteurs had used similar tricks. When Skorzeny was first arrested a number of British officers had protested, saying that if he was to be tried for war "crimes" so should they.



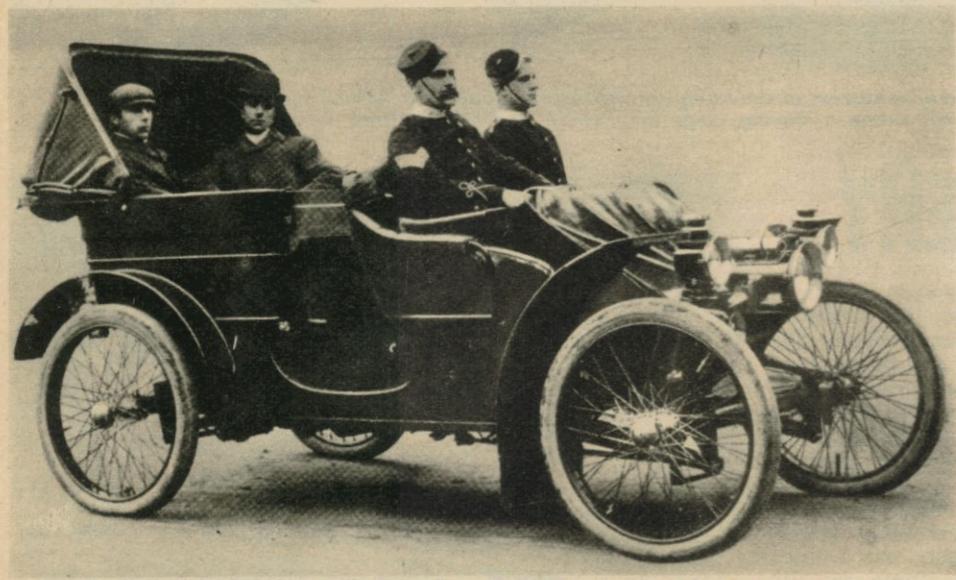
Una información especial

La liberación de Mussolini

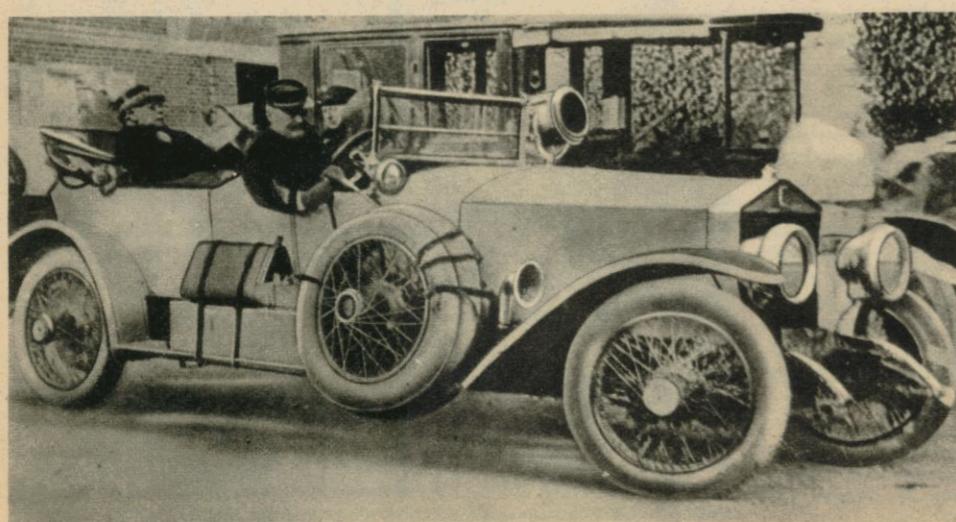
Skorzeny hits the front page of Dr. Goebbels' magazine *Signal* with his rescue of Mussolini. From "Commando Extraordinary"



Complete with plumed hat, General Sir John French tries out the first staff car.



In 1903, this Lanchester was supplied to the Army. Two of the Lanchester family are seen in the back. Below: M. Poincaré, President of France, sets off on a visit to French front-line troops in World War One. The car: a Rolls-Royce.



PAGE 10

Vintage cars never lack fascination. The British Army sampled some curious and distinguished vintages in its search for the ideal staff car a generation ago

A CAR for the GENERAL

THE idea that a high Army commander could ride in one of those new-fangled horseless carriages without loss of dignity took a long time to be established.

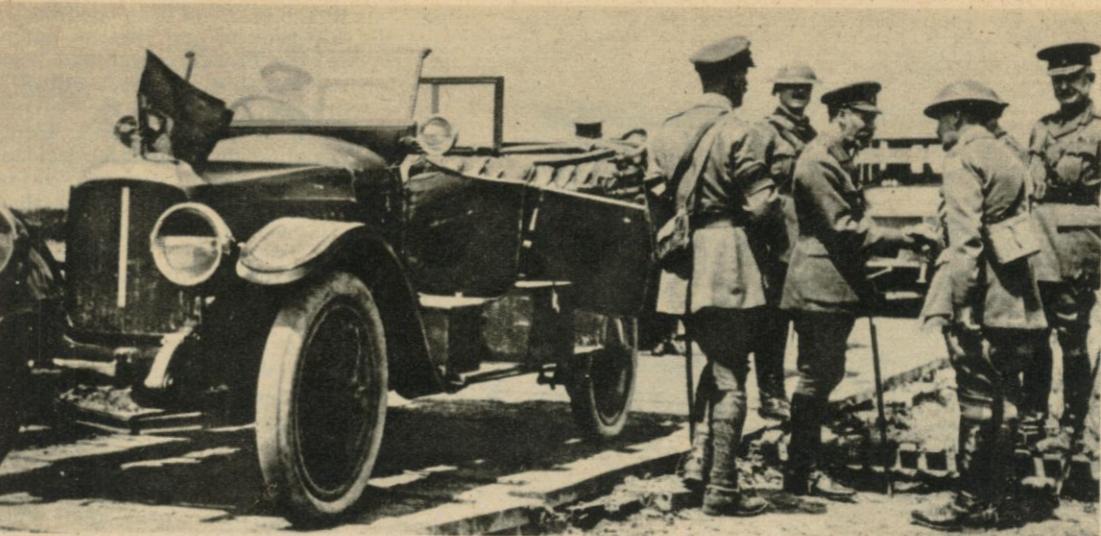
A general's place was on a horse. Yet, in 1902, a distinguished cavalryman—Sir John French—allowed himself to be photographed at Aldershot sitting in what is generally conceded to be the first staff car. What he felt about the occasion is not on record. Not till ten years later, however, was the first luxury staff car (high commanders, for the use of) "passed out" on Brooklands race-track.

The Army had been flirting with mechanical transport for some time before the staff car came on the scene. The Royal Engineers ordered their first traction engine, "Steam Sapper," in 1868 and a second in 1872. The second "Steam Sapper" went off to war in the Ashanti campaign of 1873, was landed at Cape Coast Castle, but could not operate over the West African tracks and confined its activities to sawing timber. The success of Royal Engineers steam transport in South Africa in 1899 led to the setting up of the Mechanical Transport Committee.

Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, then Adjutant-General, gave a lead by writing: "I advocate that the Committee should not aim at finality of perfection in the vehicles for adoption by the War Department. To do so would be to defer to the Greek Kalends the prospect of getting motor-transport for Army purposes." ("Greek Kalends" = never.)

Others were also looking ahead in 1900. A Lieutenant-Colonel Otfried Layriz of the German Army, in a book translated into English, suggested that light motor-cars which were used for motor-racing, achieving average speeds of 14-15 miles an hour and top speeds of 27-28 miles an hour, might be employed for setting up a courier service. He was dubious, however, whether they would achieve good results over roads encumbered with troops, and went on: "There should be no illusion that map studying and taking one's bearings can be done without stopping, for the high speed makes it impossible to read a map or use field glasses, even if one is not occupied in guiding the car. All the same, the motor will, in the long run, get over more ground in the day than the horse-rider or the cyclist can."

This was the period in which the steam motor-car rivalled the petrol-engined vehicle. The Army tended to favour the steam-car, or one with an internal combustion engine running on paraffin, since it was thought—with some justice



At Vimy Ridge, King George V rode in one of the famous Vauxhall staff cars. The year: 1917.

can was bowled over once or twice and bullets passed through it, but the petrol did not catch fire.

The lists of vehicles purchased in these years are a delight to the connoisseurs of ancient motor-cars: Arrol-Johnston, Swift, Vulcan, Armstrong-Whitworth, Crossley, Wolseley, Thornycroft were among them, besides those makes already mentioned. A Brush car went to 77 Company, Army Service Corps, the first mechanical transport company, formed in 1903 with 12 traction engines.

There were various exercises to test cars operationally. In 1908, some standard 30 horse-power Sheffield Simplex cars towed guns 80 miles to repulse an "enemy" near Grimsby, and averaged 21 miles an hour. On arrival, Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Plumer and his staff gave the guns a stiff examination and pronounced them none the worse for their experience.

Soon the Brooklands motor-racing track became second home to members of the Mechanical Transport Committee. There, in 1912, they watched critically as a two-and-a-half ton limousine thundered round the circuit. It was a 32.4 horse-power Maudslay, and had already travelled the 123 miles from Coventry at an average of 20 miles an hour, and 13 miles to the gallon.

Now it was undergoing its final acceptance test for the Army. Over a half-mile stretch, the

OVER

for the GENERAL

—that in war-time petrol supplies could not be guaranteed.

None the less, in its first report, in 1902, the Mechanical Transport Committee said that two petrol-driven motor-cars were being built for use in Aldershot and Ireland, "to assist the GOC's Commanding 1st and 3rd Corps in inspection duty and also for the use of Staff Officers at manoeuvres, for which service it is anticipated they will prove very efficient." It was in one of these vehicles that Sir John French (later Field-Marshal the Earl of Ypres), posed for the historic photograph.

In fact, the officer who received the Army's first light motor-car was probably Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Crompton, Royal Engineers. Colonel Crompton, a member of the Committee, was busy designing a steam traction engine for the Army, and a small steam motor-car was bought for his experiments.

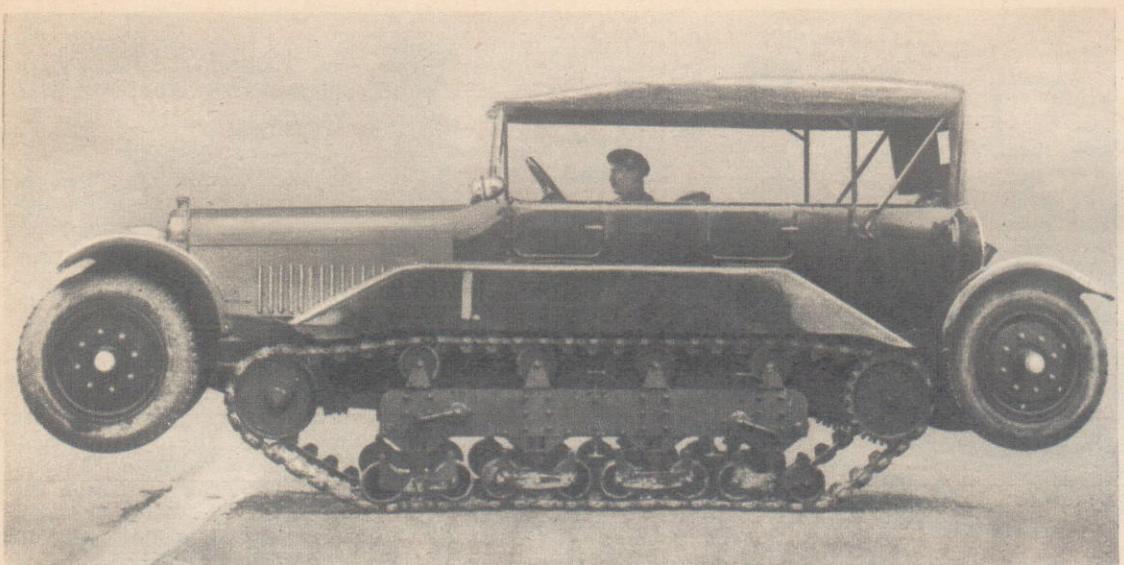
There were, as yet, few civilian cars on the roads, and the Army decided that what there were

should be organised for war. The Army Motor Reserve came into being, composed of enthusiasts with their own vehicles. It performed in the 1903 manoeuvres but no two of its cars were of exactly the same pattern, which imposed an insoluble maintenance problem. In time, fleets of hire-cars of the same pattern were built up. By 1913 the Army Motor Reserve had been disbanded and hire-cars were used for the manoeuvres.

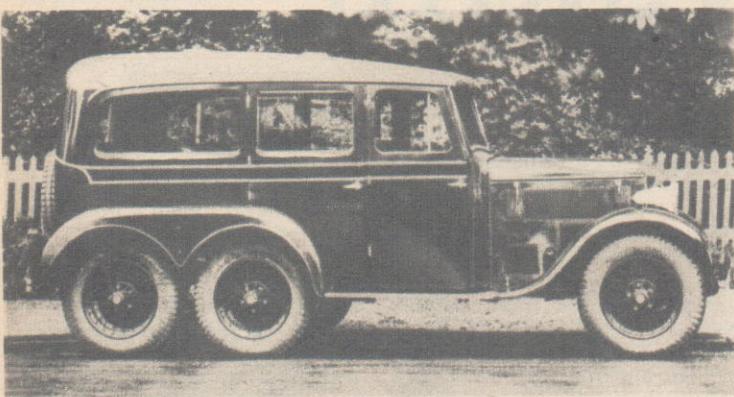
The Mechanical Transport Committee was becoming increasingly technical in its reports. In 1907 it pronounced that "governors to control road speed would be too complicated for practical work," a statement which will evoke a hollow laugh from speed-minded Army drivers of the 1950's. The committee's report for 1912-13 contains a solemn account of an experiment in which rifle bullets were fired at a can containing petrol. The



World War One over, another Vauxhall bears Field-Marshal Lord Allenby into Constantinople.



An experimental staff car of the 1920's. It could change from track to wheel drive (or the other way about) by engine power in one minute. It was hoped to use the same system for armoured cars or light tanks.



Another experiment of the 1920's. It was fitted as an office. Below: In 1909, a battalion of Guards was driven to Hastings and back by members of the Automobile Association anxious to show what cars could do.



THE ARMY CAR

(continued)

Maudslay averaged 52.85 miles an hour. Up Brooklands Hill, which had defeated some of the Committee's earlier purchases, it clocked 8.29 miles an hour.

The Maudslay was "in," the first of the long line of luxury motor-cars for high-ranking officers which is today represented by the Rolls-Royces, Daimlers and Humbers which carry members of the Army Council and senior commanders.

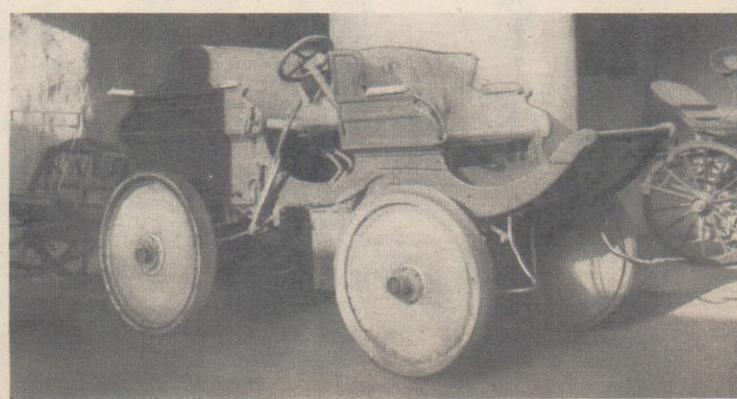
It had been a problem car. The specifications stated that it must carry four passengers inside, facing in the same direction as the driver, and be able to maintain a high average speed on cross-country journeys. The chassis, as a result, was longer than usual and this resulted in drumming.

By 1913, the Army had 42 motor-cars, apart from lorries and traction engines. London District had three of them, Aldershot 14, other home commands one each. Overseas, there was one motor-car in South Africa and one in Malta.

As World War One broke out, the Mechanical Transport Committee was reporting (the report did not get beyond the proof stage): "So far no cars have been purchased with self-starters."

The Committee reported without enthusiasm that propeller-

SOLDIER found this one in Omdurman—the first car in the Sudan. It was an Arrol-Johnston used by General Sir Reginald Wingate in 1902.



driven cars had been tried out at Brooklands, and that an enterprising French officer had been using such a car, made out of a crashed aircraft, in the Sahara. Cars for General Officers Commanding, the Committee decided, must be totally enclosed, owing to the nature of the work they were called upon to perform. In the Tsar's army, the Committee had learned, "the transport cars are never seen in use, but the staffs make full use of the passenger cars."

In World War One, seven varieties of British light motor-cars were standard for military use — Sunbeams, Vauxhalls, Wolseleys, Austins, Daimlers, Singers and Siddeley-Deasys. Maintenance problems were created by patriots who presented motor-cars of other makes (mostly as ambulances) to the Army instead of the money to buy one of the standard make. British-manufactured cars were supplemented by American makes, but for some time only ambulances could be bought from the Ford works, owing to the pacifist views of Henry Ford.

The Army took over the entire production of Vauxhall cars—seven a week in 1915, stepped up to more than eight in 1917 (today's figure: 560 cars and trucks a day). These were the famous 25 horse-power Vauxhall staff cars which served from Russia to Portugal. In Petrograd special workshops were set up to deal with Vauxhall casualties on the Russian front. In France, five Vauxhalls operated a no-speed-limit King's Messenger service between Paris and Boulogne.

In 1916, Lady Londonderry formed "a section of female motor-drivers" to operate motor-cars, box-vans and motor-cycles and sidecars, and the grandmothers of today's Women's Royal Army Corps drivers began taking an interest in gears and sparking-plugs.

In World War One, the Army established the staff car as one of the essentials of modern war. Military demands also brought about great expansion in the car factories and paved the way for the great commercial development of the motor-car in the 1920's. Thus the Army, which gave up its own horses with such reluctance, was largely instrumental in supplanting the horse in civilian life.

RICHARD ELEY



GOODBYE TRIESTE!

Trieste crowds surge round the first Italian troops to enter the city. The handing-over ceremony was abandoned.

The plumes of the Bersaglieri replace the hackles of the Fusiliers in the cooled-off hot-spot of the Adriatic

IT was a strange address: "Headquarters, British Element Trieste Force, Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire."

BETFOR had come home from the Adriatic to be disbanded.

The 1st Battalion The Loyals and the 2nd Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers, last of the nine British battalions which have done duty in Trieste since 1947, sailed for Malta in ships of the Royal Navy on their way to Barnard Castle and Lichfield. Trains and convoys of lorries evacuated the remainder of the British garrison and its stores. The plumed hats of Bersaglieri troops of the Italian Ariete Division—once Eighth

OVER ➤

Men of the Somerset Light Infantry patrol the unmarked boundary with Jugo-Slavia. Those were the days of "incidents" which often made headlines.

1947



A British officer, Major P. Williams, of the Royal Engineers, leads a Jugo-Slav colonel over the boundary in a once disputed area.

1954



GOODBYE TRIESTE!

continued



Sailing on the Adriatic was fine sport—and exciting when the borine blew up.

Left: Trieste has been over-run and liberated many times. This war memorial shows soldiers tending a wounded comrade

Right: In the early days there was often tension on the boundary between Zones "A" and "B". On this occasion a Jugo-Slav soldier was quite willing to be photographed.

Army's adversaries in the Western Desert—replaced the hacked berets of the Fusiliers.

The long stint in Trieste is over, nearly nine and a half years after the Germans surrendered the city. Withdrawal was, in fact, begun a year ago, but had to be called off because of an Italian-Jugo-Slav flare-up.

This time, there was to have been a military handing-over ceremony attended by British, American and Italian troops, but the ever-exitable Triestini crowds forced police cordons and swamped the sea-front area set apart for the parade. When Royal Navy warships, bearing the last of the British garrison, sailed from the harbour a hostile crowd—not representative of the Triestini at large—whistled, shook fists and catcalled at one of the vessels. The task of garrisoning Trieste was always a thankless one, and appropriately, it was thankless at the end.

Yet, despite the tumult and the catcalls of the last day, many British soldiers were sorry to look their last on the Adriatic. Trieste was an attractive city. It was modern, yet ancient (the headquarters of Allied Military Government stood across the road from a Roman amphitheatre). The city was laid out with imagination. It had the attractions of a port visited by navies. Its shops had goods to buy when windows were bare in other European cities.

True, Trieste had the bora (which could overturn your tram) and the borine (which could capsize your yacht). True, it was a small territory in which to be confined, but so are Gibraltar and Aden. And Venice was not far away.

True, again, the population had a passion for political demonstrations, which caused periodical flaps. Communist and anti-Communist newspapers



Major-General Sir John Winter, British commander of the Anglo-American occupation forces, receives the Italian Major-General Rienzi in Duino Castle.

were printed on the same machines, and (it is said) rival make-up men helped each other with headlines which would not fit. But the British soldier was rarely conscious of sitting on a volcano, though the home newspapers sometimes told him he was. British-trained police handled the mobs. Soldiers were there only to frustrate any major threat to the peace of the Free Territory.

Although the Triestini from time to time shouted to the British and Americans to go home, the individual British soldier was by no means unpopular. Not a few young women thought he was worth marrying.

The Germans seized the much-sacked, much-conquered city of Trieste in 1943, when Italy surrendered. Two years later New Zealand tanks and Jugo-Slav Infantry combined to expel the invaders (there was a





Beer is best: A picture from the days when Stalin's face adorned the walls.

Left: A view over Trieste harbour.

combined operation against the Law Courts). Fraternal feelings among the relieving troops did not last long, though some Maoris and Slavs found a common "language." Obviously the Free Territory, which both Italy and Jugo-Slavia claimed, was to be "hot" for many years. The United Nations directed that 10,000 troops (half British, half American) should keep the peace in Zone "A" of the City, while 5000 Jugo-Slavs held Zone "B" behind the Morgan Line. Now Zone "A," less about six square miles, has been taken over by the Italians. The Jugo-Slavs have the rest.

Although few major troubles

occurred, Trieste was a tax on the Army. Often there were times when those three battalions of Infantry could have been more vigorously employed elsewhere.

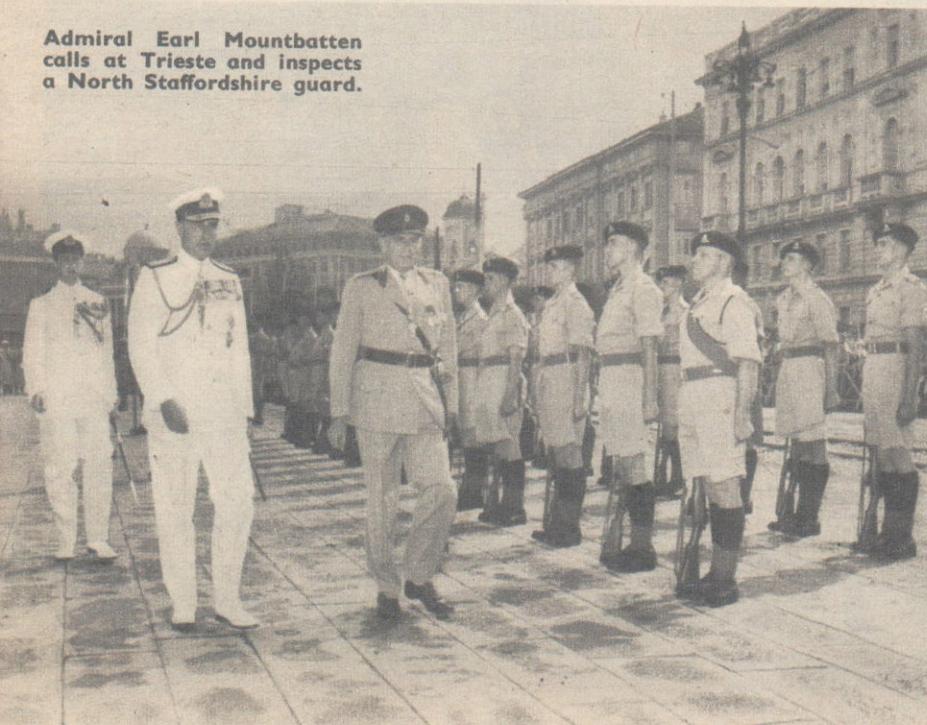
Tension on the Zone boundaries, where British and Jugo-Slav troops faced each other, was frequently high in the early years of the occupation. An Allied soldier who inadvertently crossed the line could find himself making headlines all over the world. Latterly the tension died, and some Allied soldiers even spent leaves in Jugo-Slavia. Families came out from Britain, and new quarters were built for them.

These briefly oc- **OVER**



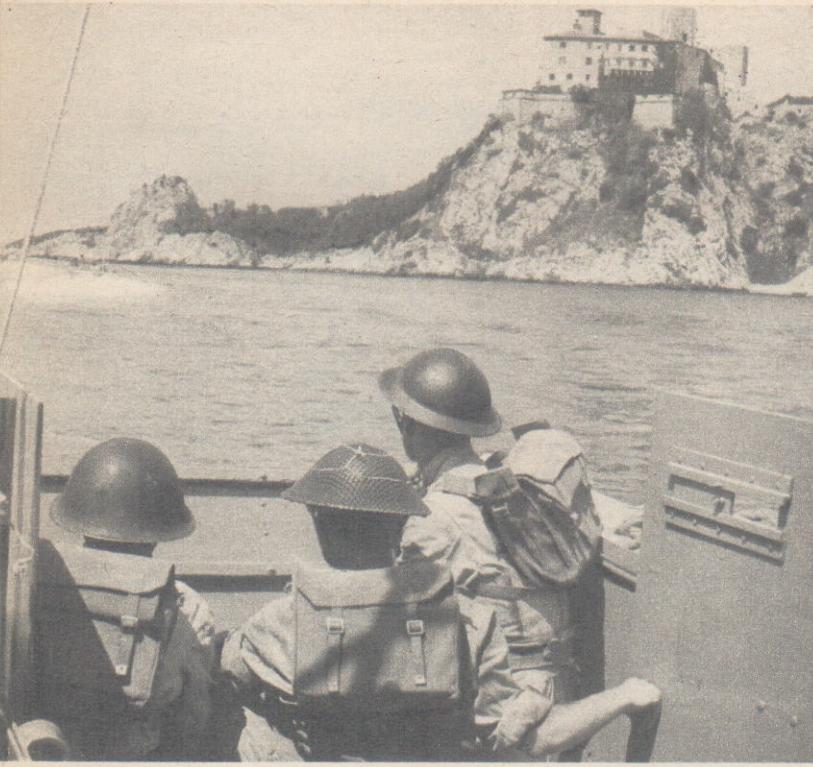
Trieste claimed to have the post-war Army's first fish-and-chip shop, thanks to Welfare enterprise.

Below: Much admired in the Free City were the smart turn-outs of the United States military police.



Admiral Earl Mountbatten calls at Trieste and inspects a North Staffordshire guard.





Troops exercised in the Adriatic off Duino Castle. What British commander-in-chief had a more attractive official residence?

GOODBYE TRIESTE!

continued



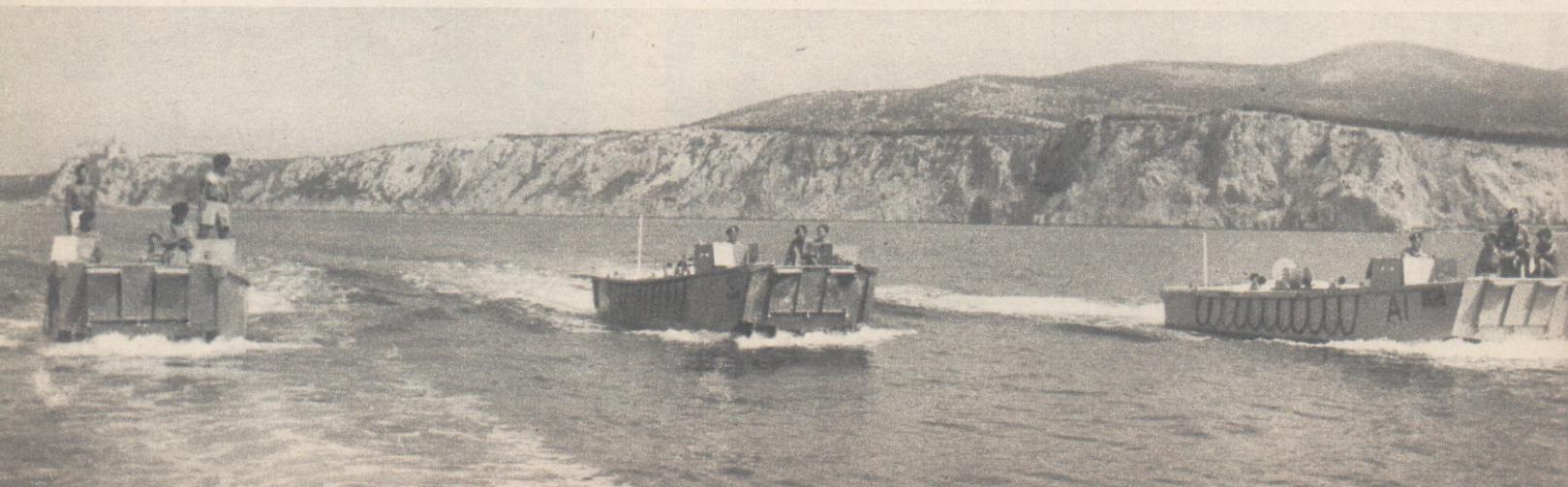
Left: Troops liked to patronise this bar-keeper. His face reminded them of somebody or other.

Right: Much-conquered Trieste has many relics of ancient and forgotten wars.

Adriatic patrol: Infantry battalions trained hard by land and sea. The Royal Navy co-operated.



The gate to Duino, once a rest home for tired S.S. men.



A Cypriot farmer, with a disinterested donkey, watches a Green Howards' patrol pass by.

For one battalion, the move from Suez to Cyprus was an amphibious exercise. They stormed the island



GREEN HOWARDS WENT THE HARD WAY

WHEN the 2nd Battalion The Green Howards moved from the Canal Zone to Cyprus they scorned the easy way by troopship.

Instead they went by landing craft as the spearhead of a mock invasion force and fought their way ashore at dead of night. They were taking part in a combined Navy, Army and Air Force exercise.

On their 240 miles voyage from Port Said across the Mediterranean they helped to fight off air and submarine attacks. Under heavy fire they landed in the light of "enemy" mortar flares on the beaches near Polis and led the assault on an airfield held by the 2nd Battalion The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and a battery of 49 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. Then they re-embarked for another amphibious landing farther along the coast. Here they overran a coastal battery and opened up the road for tanks.

Once more the Green Howards went back to the beaches, this time to load their kit bags on to waiting lorries. Then the battalion set off along the mountain road for Nine Mile Camp at Dhekelia to their new quarters.

The Green Howards are the first unit to be re-deployed in Middle East since the evacuation of British troops in Egypt began. Many families have already been re-united.



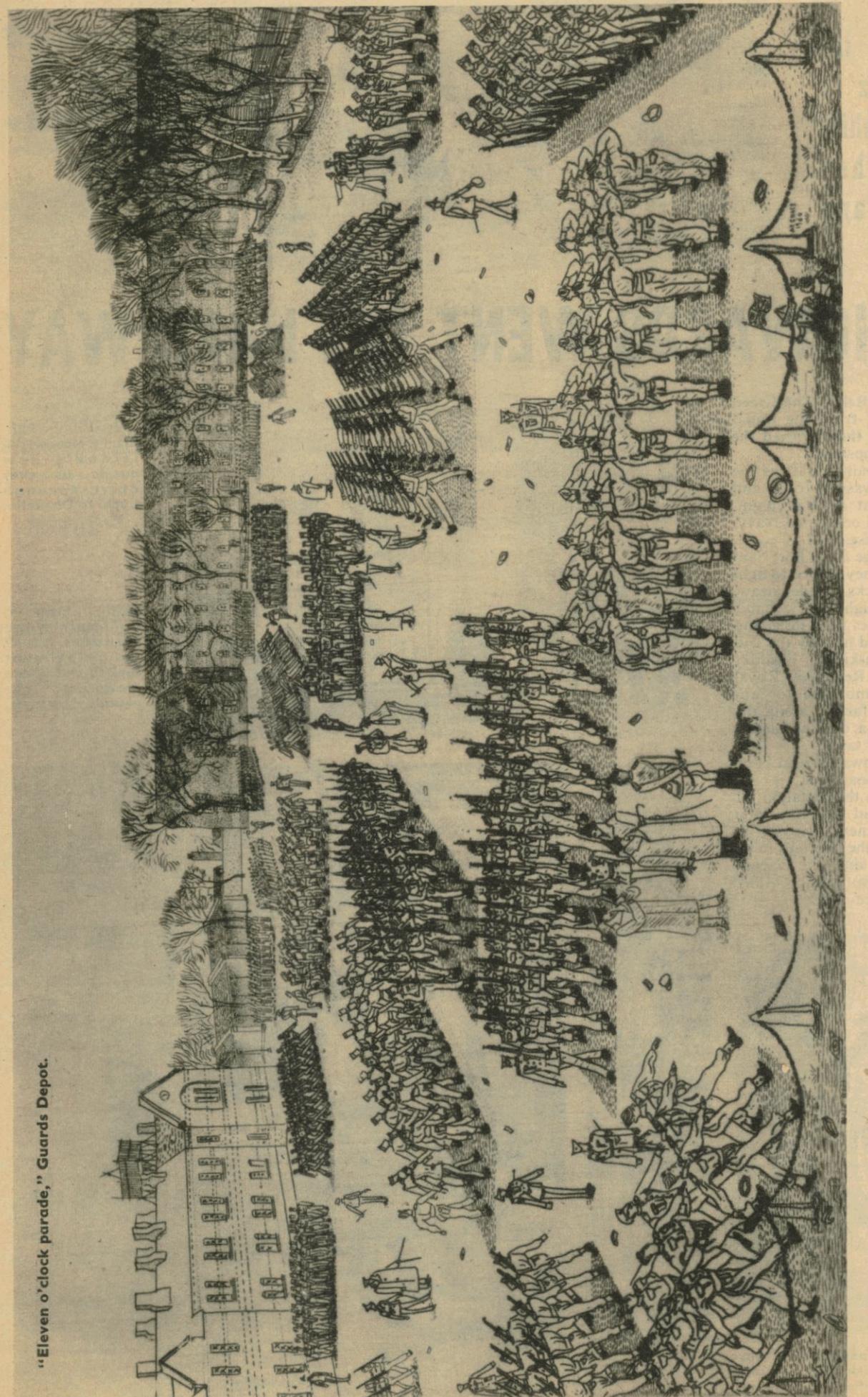
Left: Village children welcome the island's new guests as they drive through Lachi to Dhekelia.



Cypriot children were fascinated when they found men of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers stripping their Brens and rifles for cleaning.

The works of a war artist who skilfully caught the moods of 1939-1945 have been put on exhibition in London

ANTHONY GROSS



"Eleven o'clock Parade," Guards Depot.

Of the 200 official war artists in World War Two, one of the widest-travelled, Anthony Gross, has just come in for some well-merited publicity.

A collection of his drawings was put on display at the Imperial War Museum. Among those who journeyed to Lambeth to view them were the BBC's panel of Critics.

As a war artist Anthony Gross concentrated on the scenes of waiting which are ninety-nine per cent of war: the potato peeling session, the shining parade, that first freedom-from-infection inspection at which recruits learned to lose their shyness.

In many of his casual-looking, yet penetrating, studies there is an agreeable touch of mischief. They present posterity with a more sensitive record of the late war than thousands of photographs could.

Anthony Gross began his long stint as a war artist at the Guards Depot, Caterham. One of his most amusing studies of the Guards appears on this page. A regimental serjeant-major could soon pick holes in it (how, for instance, did those men saluting in the foreground contrive to raise their arms "the longest way" without striking their neighbours?). There is more than a hint of a goose-step in at least one squad. Nevertheless, this scene (note the strewn caps) renders excellently the spirit of Caterham when the big intakes were being groomed for glory.

Mr. Gross next toured the camps of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, sketching assiduously in cook-houses, vehicle bays, lecture-rooms, command posts. Then off he went by troopship to join Ninth Army, in Syria and Irak, and thence to India and Burma. He turned in some very fine drawings from 4th Indian Division, notably of the Chins in their mountain settlements.

On the Normandy D-Day Anthony Gross landed at Arromanches with 50th Division. At the war's end he saw the link-up with the Russians at Torgau.

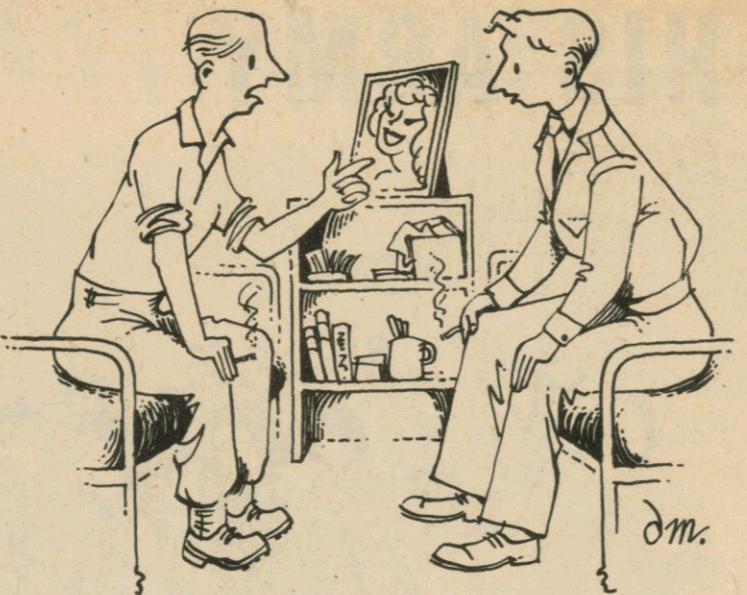
Drawings reproduced by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.

-HIS ARMY



Gross finds a class of Service girls overcome by intellectual effort. Title: "Lecture on Gear Box and Clutch" In 4th Indian Division the artist portrayed many fine types. Here (right) is Subedar Lalbahadur Thapa, VC

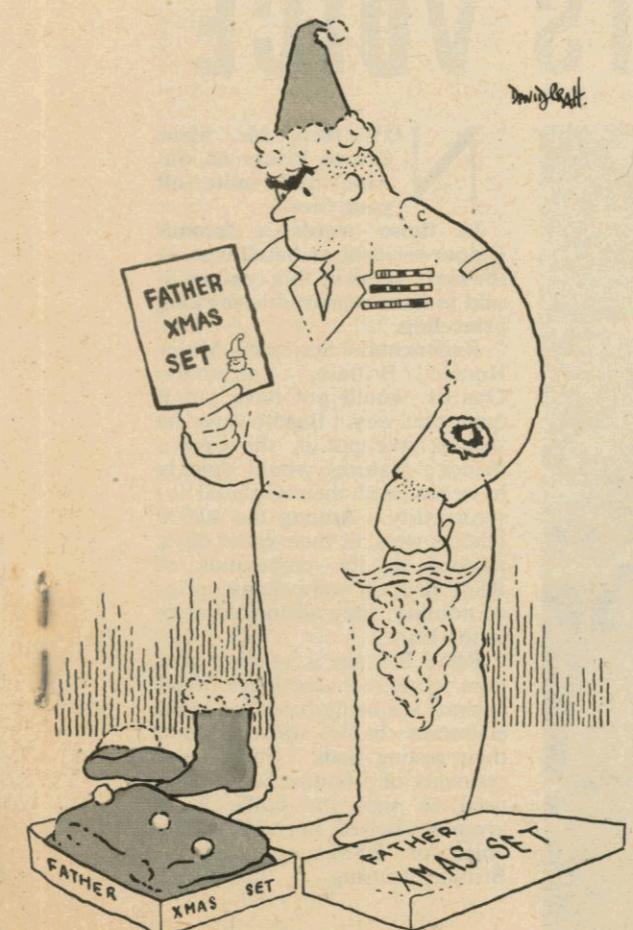
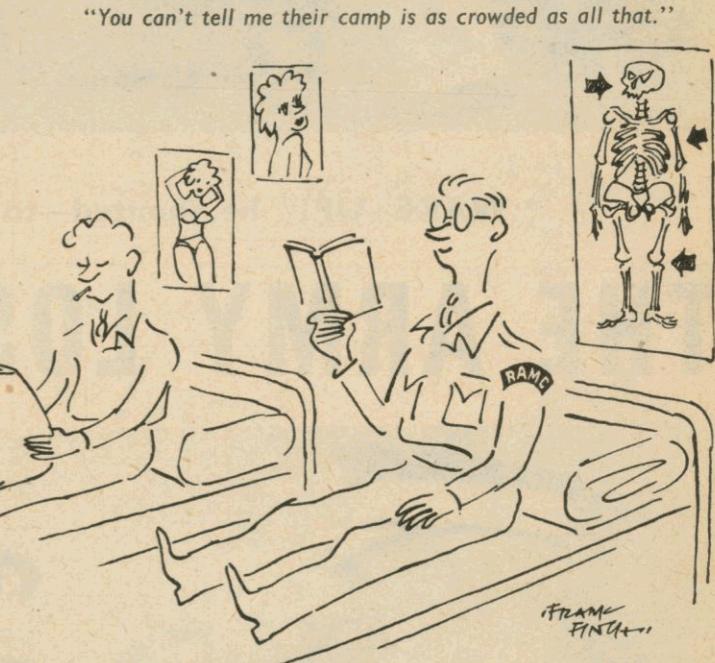




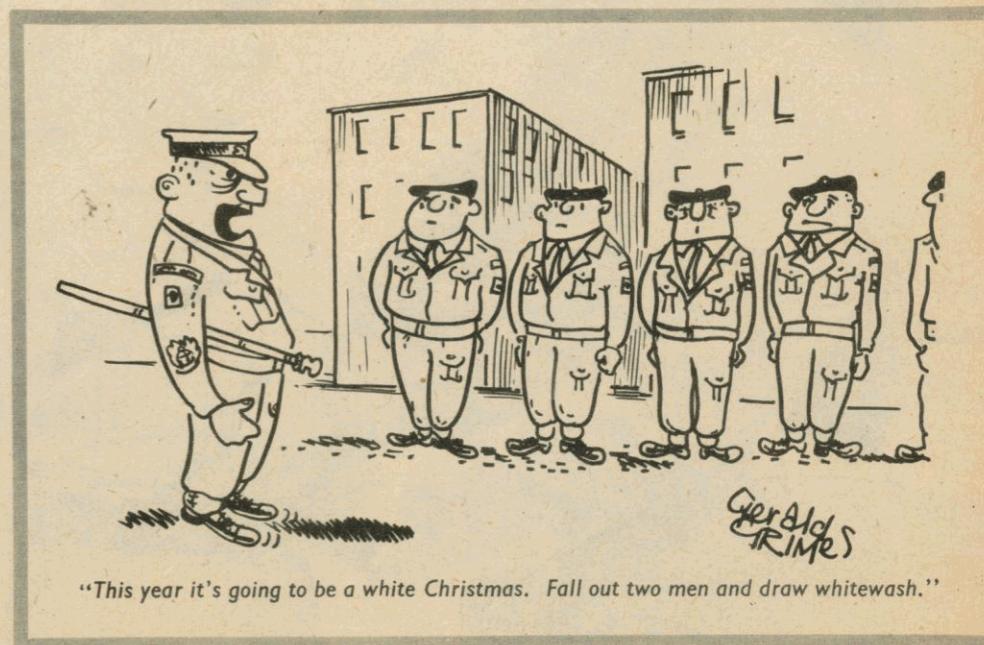
SOLDIER humour



If I can get up to clean this lampshade, so can anybody else.



What do they mean—"the wearer should then assume a genial expression"?

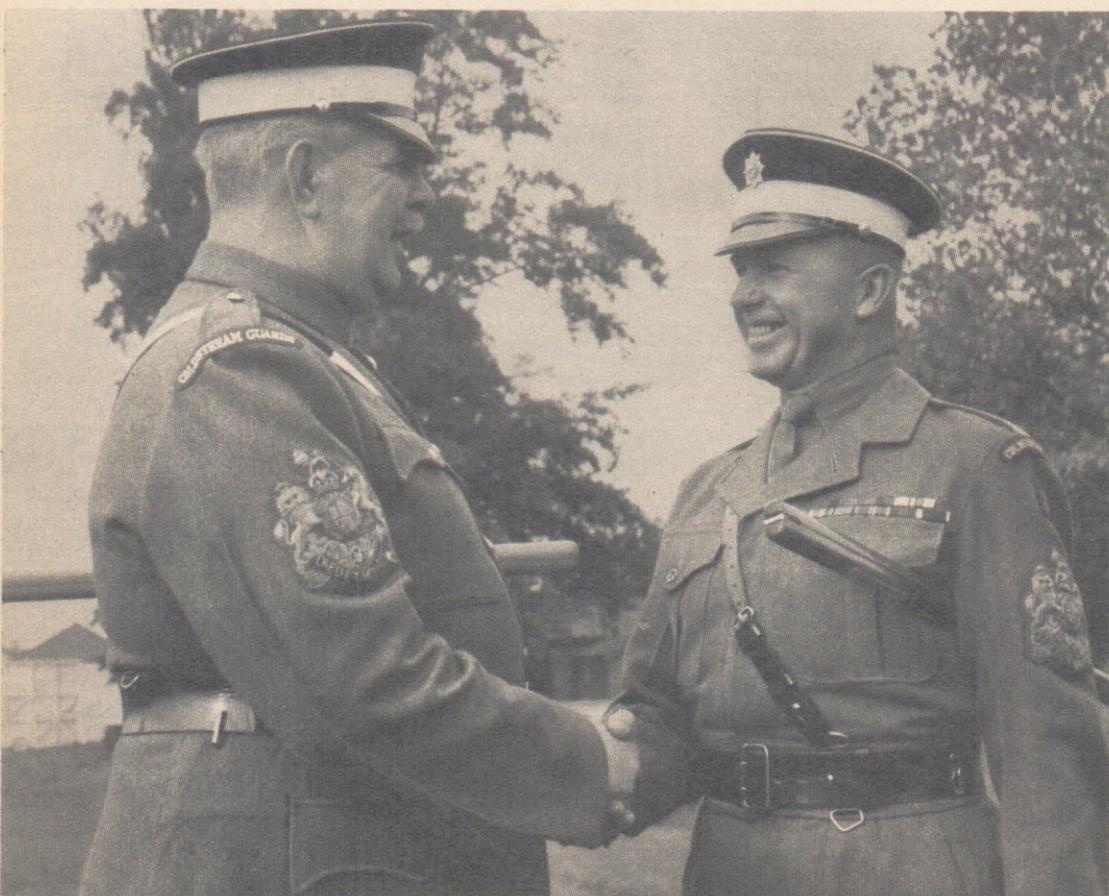


RSM Brittain becomes a one-man parade—for the press.



“WAKE UP!” he shouted—to forty thousand officer cadets

THE ARMY LOSES ITS VOICE



NOW then, Mr. Siam, Crown Prince of, Sir, wipe that smile off your face.”

In those words a famous Colour-serjeant at Sandhurst, in the early years of this century, is said to have reproved a smirking princeling.

Regimental - Serjeant - Major Ronald Brittain, Coldstream Guards, would not have put it quite that way. But however he would have put it, the Crown Prince's features would quickly have resumed their Oriental inscrutability. Among the 40,000 officers who, in their cadet days, jumped to the commands of RSM Brittain were many sprigs of nobility; they all looked alike in the blast.

RSM Brittain is retiring at a time when manufacturers of jet aircraft are being forced to build elaborate baffle walls around their testing beds. There were residents of London S.W.1 who used to sigh for baffle walls around Chelsea Barracks. The voice of RSM Brittain rousing

OVER →

“Well, they're all yours now.” RSM Brittain hands over at Aldershot to RSM Charles Smy, also of the Coldstream Guards.



Off Parade : the regimental sergeant-major with the longest service in that rank takes a refresher. Now for a good spell of leave . . .

the laggards was audible, it was said, above the traffic of Victoria Station.

RSM Brittain is now up in the Duke of Wellington class, in so far as sayings are beginning to be fathered on him ("well, if he didn't say it, he ought to have said it.") Perhaps it is just as well that a biography of him is in preparation, so that the world will know where fact ends and legend begins. Meanwhile he has denied that he was in the habit of using the phrase "You horrible little man." He holds that sarcasm is out of place on the parade-ground. His usual injunctions were "Wake up!" "Get a move on!" "Get in quick time!" "Sharper!" and "Try harder!"

Thanks to the BBC and the cinema, the voice of RSM Brittain has been heard by millions who have never worn uniform. Recently he was heard informing a radio interviewer that a drill instructor should always place himself with the wind on the back of his neck—in order to ensure maximum carrying power for his voice.

The Regimental Sergeant-Major's voice will be heard, though he himself will not be seen, in the film "Carrington VC." Many filmgoers will recall seeing him in the film about the Guards Armoured Division, "They Were Not Divided."

One of the more recent books in which he has appeared—unnamed, but easily recognised—is Thomas Firbank's "I Bought A Star." In a description of life in a Guards holding battalion appears the following passage:

"Finally, with a slow, majestic briskness impossible to imitate, the vast figure of the Regimental Sergeant-Major ploughed through the teeming

throng, as some battleship speeding unhurried undulates with regal pomp past a convoy of tramps. Everybody rocked in his wake. I was startled to see this super-dreadnought move with the speed of an MTB to salute a human posterior which protruded from the door of a parked car."

After he was commissioned, the author of "I Bought A Star" was intercepted in barracks by the Regimental Sergeant-Major, who said, "Excuse me, sir, what's the name of your servant, sir?" Puzzled, the officer told him. "I must have a little talk with him, sir. He's not turning you out properly."

The author adds: "I accepted the rebuke, and cleared my servant of complicity." Later, describing rehearsals for Palace guards, he says that the Regimental Sergeant-Major breathed such confidence on young officers that they became incapable of making a mistake in the ceremonial.

RSM Brittain was not always a Coldstream. His first regiment was the South Wales Borderers, which he joined in 1917. Two years later he put up the Coldstream badge. He went to Sandhurst in 1924 as drill sergeant, leaving in 1927 to rejoin the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards at Chelsea Barracks. It was in 1934 that he became a regimental sergeant-major and he has been one ever since. In 1939 he served in France with his battalion and joined the Mons Officer Cadet School in 1942.

He considers that the National Service cadets of today are quite as good as the officer cadets he first drilled.

After a spell of leave, RSM Brittain will take up a post with a diamond firm in Hatton Garden, London.

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THE DIVERS OF SALAMIS

OFF Salamis, the ancient silted port of Cyprus, the British soldier has found a new thrill. Goggled and web-footed, he gropes down through the cool green gloom into the world of BC.

More than 70 soldiers now belong to the Cyprus District Sub-Aqua Club, the members of which have been concentrating their activities off Salamis. At Famagusta there is a club of 50 more diving enthusiasts. With the military garrison of Cyprus growing, there may soon be few parts of the island's coastline which do not boast a group of divers. Service wives join in the sport, too.

The feats of the soldier-divers off Salamis have roused much interest on the island. Explorers have surfaced with relics of ancient days—notably a large terra-cotta head of a young woman, dating from the 6th century BC. They have found

Soldiers serving in Cyprus have been exploring a lost world under the Mediterranean

wine vessels and other articles of pottery. They have seen flagstones laid out as in a courtyard, tumbled walls and the outline of an old jetty. A large carved stone slab has so far resisted their efforts to lift it. Trophies have been turned over to Mr. A. H. S. Megaw, Cyprus's Director of Antiquities, who has given the divers every encouragement.

Not all the attraction of under-water swimming is archaeological. The scenery is bright and often bizarre, and the shoals of rainbow fish are a fascination in themselves. Using spring and elastic propulsion guns, spear fishermen led by Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor F. Eveleigh, Army Physical Training Corps, have hunted successfully off Kyrenia, Dhekelia and Karaolos. Divers work in pairs—never alone.

The moving spirit behind much of this under-water adventure is the secretary of the Cyprus club, SQMS W. Jackson, Royal Army Service Corps. A champion swimmer who set up a two-way, non-stop record for the Great Bitter Lake in Egypt in 1950, he has now lost interest in surface swimming. Recently he has been "swotting up" the history of Cyprus for a proposed treasure hunt next season, between Gambella reef and the Famagusta mainland, where seven Turkish vessels were sunk by the Venetians in 1570.

This winter the club is striving to produce an under-water camera casing, so that next year the sunken ruins may be photographed. An under-water survey off Salamis, in which the club's aid has been sought by the Museum and Antiquities

Homing from an underwater trip. Divers always explore in pairs.

Department, has had to be postponed until certain equipment is available. To buy more elaborate types of diving gear a sum of £200 is required. The club has asked the Nuffield Trust for a grant. Much useful advice and assistance has been received from Mr. H. Penman of the Underwater Explorers Club, in London, with which the club is affiliated.

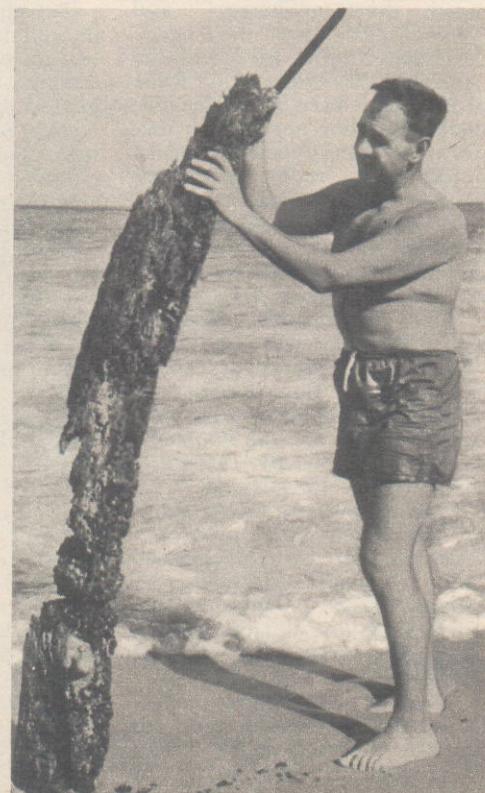
In a hundred years from now, says M. Philippe Diolé, in his book "Four Thousand Years Under The Sea," men may hold it as a paradox that scholars should have claimed to have found the truths of history at a time when the archaeological evidence lying at the bottom of the sea was inaccessible.

To this new evidence the sub-aqua soldiers of Cyprus may well have contributed something.

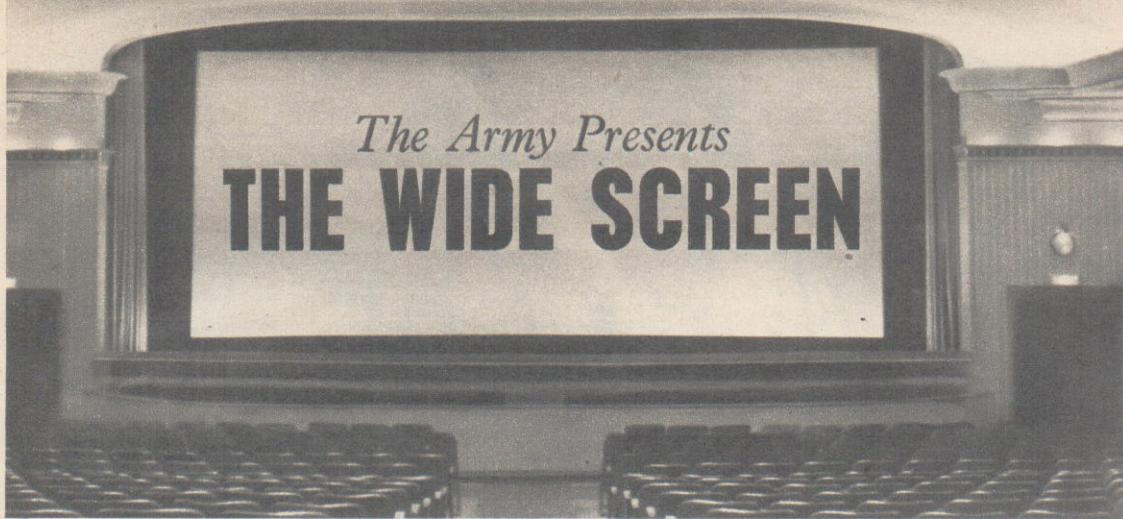


This terra-cotta head of a girl is the oldest relic so far located by soldiers at Salamis. Its date: 6th century BC.

Soldier-divers surface with a piece of an amphora (two-handled vessel)



WO II F. Philp, RAEC, examines a length of timber retrieved by him. Pierced by bronze rivets, it may belong to a ship sunk in a Turco-Venetian sea battle of 1570.



Shown here is the wide screen in an Army Kinema Corporation cinema at Detmold, Germany.

THE British Army has been caught up in the Hollywood revolution. Wide-screen cinema entertainment for the soldier has come to stay.

Within a year most of the static cinemas operated by the Army Kinema Corporation at home and abroad will be able to show Cinemascope and Vista-vision films.

In Britain 30 of the 38 Army cinemas and in Germany more than half of the Corporation's 61 cinemas will be fitted with wide screens and stereophonic sound apparatus. It is planned to have 24 of the Rhine Army cinemas converted by the end of next March.

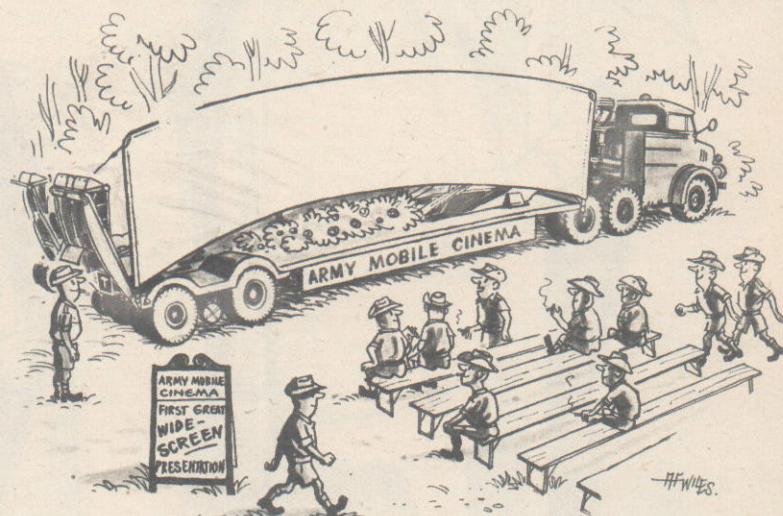
Plans are also being made for converting some of the static cinemas in North and West Africa, Hong-Kong, Singapore, Malaya and Malta. In Cyprus the projected new cinemas at Dhekelia and Episcopi will also

be able to show wide-screens films.

Already the Army Kinema Corporation has eight cinemas equipped with wide screens: four

in England—at Tidworth, Bicester, Donnington and Pirbright; and four in Germany—at Moench-Gladbach, Hamburg, Detmold and Iserlohn.

Many Army cinemas are being fitted with the fashionable wide screen . . . but the scene depicted on the right is merely an artist's fancy



IT'S EVERY KIND OF SCHOOL - IN GERMANY

A BARRACKS built by the Germans, just before World War Two, to house an artillery regiment is now Rhine Army's newest boarding school for boys and girls.

The Windsor School at Hamm is that rare institution, a co-educational boarding and day school offering a comprehensive range of education. (There are similar British schools at Ploen and Wilhelmshaven, but they do not take day students.)

Windsor School is able to carry out the provisions of the 1944 Education Act much more simply than most British schools, since the three principal types of education are taught in the same building. Pupils can be moved without difficulty between the grammar, technical and secondary modern streams if their initial grading at the age of 11 should require modification. Children who show no particular ability for any one of the divisions between the ages of 11 and 12 are placed in "border" forms until their teachers can decide which will suit them best.

It was necessary to double the

size of Windsor School even before it was opened. In April last year, when the task of converting the barracks began, plans were made to house 250 pupils. Later, because more British units and the Canadian Brigade in Germany moved to the Hamm area, it was extended to take

more than twice the number. The school has its own swimming pool, cinema, gymnasium and playing fields. Pupils can also go riding, yachting and rowing.

For children in the technical grade there are woodwork and metalwork shops, and for girls there are domestic science classes where cookery and dressmaking are taught.

The British Families Education Service, which administers and staffs the school under the



Windsor School at Hamm is a converted artillery barracks.

The conversion project will be a costly one, running into about £5000 for each converted cinema in Britain. Conversions in Germany will cost less.

Wide screens, which are coated with an expensive silver-aluminium compound, cost up to £800 each. Special lenses, amplifiers for stereophonic sound and projectors with magnetic sound tracks are other expensive items.

The money to pay for the scheme will come from the reserves which the Army Kinema Corporation has built up over the past two years to meet just such a contingency.

"When the programme is completed," Major-General N. V. Watson, General Manager of the Army Kinema Corporation told SOLDIER, "we shall be able to give the soldier in almost every command much better cinema entertainment than he could find in many parts of Britain where the high cost is delaying conversion of cinemas."

direction of the Royal Army Educational Corps, has cause to be grateful to the architect who planned the German barracks. The large, airy, 40-man barracks rooms needed very little alteration to make ideal classrooms and dormitories.

Like the boarding schools at Ploen and Wilhelmshaven, Windsor School never knows how long its students will remain. They are admitted at the age of 11 and may in theory stay until they are 18, but few, if any, will do so. Because their fathers may be posted away from Germany at brief notice, some may attend for only a few months. Most of them will be there for no more than 18 months.

"This situation makes it all the more important that we should have more schools like Windsor," a Staff officer told SOLDIER. "The standard and character of Services schools have been developed to help the child fit easily into any other school, at home or abroad, in the area to which the father may be sent."



"Come and eat...it's Guinness Time!"

HERE'S new life for tired feet! Guinness with your supper works wonders — you can feel it bucking you up from the very first sip. That clean appetising taste has you refreshed in no time, and best of all, you *stay* refreshed.



The Guards have worked out a new drill for the new rifle. It is simpler to teach than the present drill and is learned in half the time.

SLOPE ARMS GOES OUT

Right: On the march the FN rifle will be carried at the "Shoulder," which means no more untidy "slopes". **Below:** The butt salute (right) will be replaced by the left-hand salute with the rifle at the "Shoulder."

ANY soldiers who hoped that the introduction of the FN self-loading rifle, with its protruding grip and magazine, would mean no more arms drill will know by now that their expectations were ill-founded.

The proposed new drill is simpler than the one for the Lee-Enfield, however, and for that reason the soldier of the future will probably spend less time on arms drill.

If accepted, the new drill evolved by the Guards and based on recommendations by Infantry regiments will mean that the soldier will no longer slope arms—for the simple reason that the cocking handle would dig into his shoulder. He will have to learn to salute with his left hand



when carrying the rifle. Those are the two main changes.

On the march, troops will carry the rifle at the "Shoulder" position, holding it into the side by the pistol grip. This is less tiring than marching at the slope and makes a uniform appearance easier to attain. At the "Halt" the rifle remains in the "Shoulder" so that when ranks are dressed the soldier does not have to worry about shuffling his rifle in line with his toes.

In the "Order Arms" care has to be taken not to bang the butt on the ground, as most of the working parts are in the rear of the rifle. In the new drill the rifle will be lowered smartly but gently.

As the rifle cannot be sloped, saluting is carried out by bringing the left hand across the centre of the rifle while it is held in the "Shoulder Arms" position.

The new "Present" has only two movements. In the first, the right hand brings the rifle from the "Shoulder" to the centre of the body while the left hand grasps the barrel woodwork above the magazine. On the second movement the right hand moves down to the butt as the right foot is placed behind the left.

On the order "Fix Bayonets" the bayonet is withdrawn in one movement from the scabbard, from the rear.

Movements like "Stand at Ease," "Stand Easy," "Attention," "Rest on your Arms Reversed" and "Trail Arms" remain unchanged.

The proposed new drill may be slightly modified before final approval. It has not yet been decided whether the Lee-Enfield rifle will be retained for ceremonial pur-



OVER

Most of the proposed new drill movements will begin from the "Shoulder Arms" which is one of the positions of "Attention."

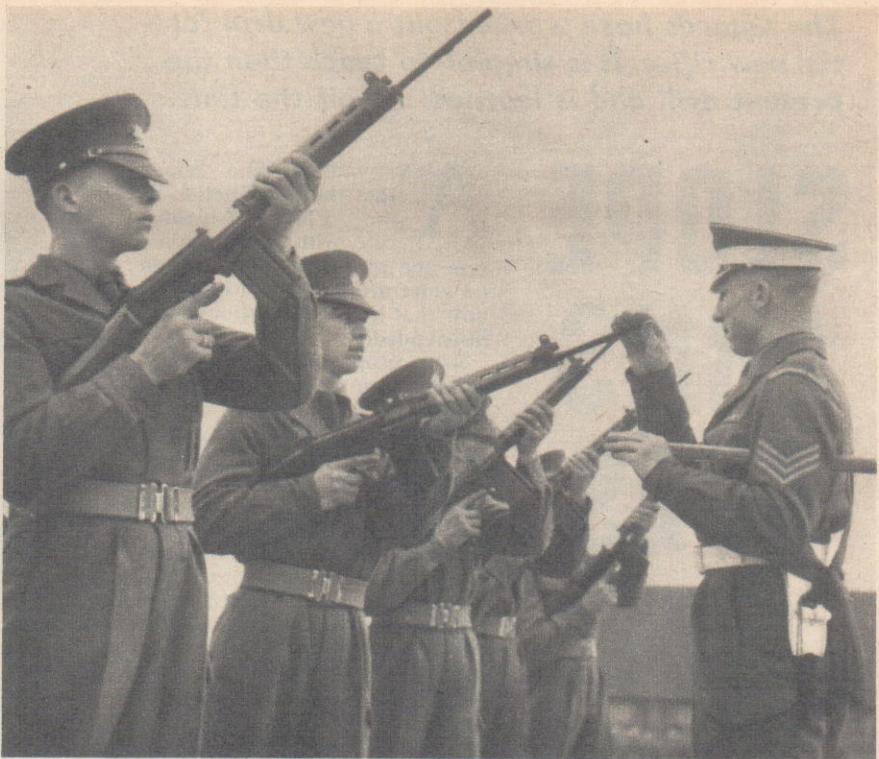
continuing

SLOPE ARMS GOES OUT



The new "Present Arms," in two movements from the "Shoulder Arms."

Right: The "Port Arms" is carried out in one movement from the "Shoulder". Rifles are lowered individually for inspection.



poses in London, but a senior officer concerned in planning the new drill told SOLDIER that he saw no reason why the FN rifle and the new drill should not be used.

While Light Infantry regiments and the Green Jackets will have to conform generally to the new drill movements, it is believed that they will retain the words of command and movements which are peculiarly their own. For instance, the 60th Rifles when marching at ease carry their rifles on the left shoulder with the butt uppermost, to commemorate the occasion when, out of ammunition, they assaulted the walls of Delhi with their rifle butts.

The new drill was demonstrated at the School of Infantry recently before generals and brigadiers attending the Infantry

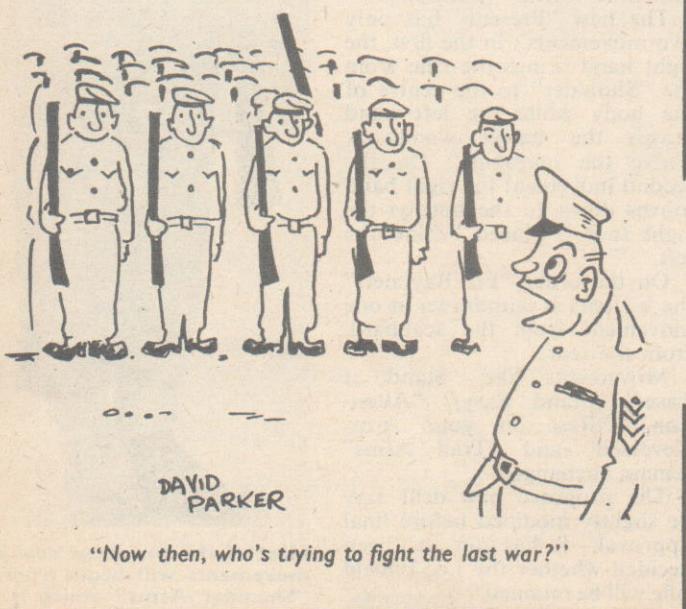
Commanders' Conference.

Displays were given by a squad of the Wiltshires, who had received their early training on the Lee-Enfield, and who had had only ten days on the new weapon; and by a squad of Coldstream recruits who had been trained on the new rifle exclusively. Also, the Signal Platoon of the Wiltshires took part in a guard-mounting display to show that smart ceremonial drill is possible with the new rifle.

Before the parade was dismissed the Guards staged a farewell to the Short-Magazine Lee-Enfield rifle. Led by the band of the Wiltshire Regiment, a platoon of the 1st Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment marched briskly on to the square, their Lee-Enfields at the slope and bayonets fixed. They were brought to a halt in the centre of

a hollow square formed by the squads who had demonstrated the new drill. As the Worcesters set off in slow time across the square, the squads with the FN rifles presented arms and the band struck up "Auld Lang Syne."

It was a touching tribute to a rifle which has served the British Army faithfully for more than 50 years, but as a farewell it was perhaps a little premature. It will be many months before the Army lays aside the Lee-Enfield for good.



In "Ground Arms" the rifle is placed with the magazine facing inwards.



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MIDLAND BANK

Two new lives have just been published of one of the most perplexing—and one of the noblest—British soldiers: General Gordon

The General Possessed by a Demon

DOZENS of books have been written about General Gordon. Why, then, should two new biographies be published, within a few days of each other?

The answer is: Because General Gordon is still as much a mystery to the present generation as he was to his contemporaries. He was a man beset by an inner, unidentified demon. He hankered after a life of contemplation in lonely places, but the urge to vigorous action always came to wreck his peace of mind. He had bitter, black moods. He dreaded notoriety, but his acts were fated to bring it on him. They called him a soldier-saint, a Christian warrior, a fanatic, an eccentric, a nuisance. They did not deny that he had an uncanny power of command over primitive peoples and troops.

The authors of the two new lives of Gordon both set out with the intention of separating the man from the confusion created by his idolators and detractors alike. They are Lord Elton, whose book is called, simply, "General Gordon" (Collins, 25s) and Charles Beatty, a nephew of the famous Admiral, whose title is "His Country Was The World" (Chatto and Windus, 21s). Both are admirable narratives; and both, incidentally, are recommended by the Book Society.

It was the lot of this "God-intoxicated" Sapper to serve in lands where beheading and unprintable brutalities were a commonplace. The orders he carried out often stirred his conscience. His men took a vigorous hand in sacking the fabulous Summer Palace at Peking, as retribution for the torture of British prisoners. Four million pounds worth of property went up in flames. As prize money each officer received £48, each soldier £4. "You can scarcely imagine the beauty and magnificence of the places we burnt," wrote Gordon. "It was wretchedly demoralising work for an army. Everybody was wild for plunder."

In 1863 Gordon had his first independent command, and a bizarre one it was. Says Mr. Beatty: "He was a captain Royal Engineers, brevet-major in Army rank, acting lieutenant-colonel, behaving as a general and taking his basic instructions from Her Majesty's Minister at Peking. He was also an officer (mandarin) of the Chinese Government. . . . He was an undenominational Christian fighting for pagans against heretics. He was an individual who tried in matters of honour



The statue erected to General Gordon—soldier and mystic—in Khartoum, the town where he was assassinated by the Dervishes.

to be such a paragon as was Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac, yet lived among people who seemed to have no scruples of any kind."

One day his men were on the point of mutiny. Groans of derision rose from them as he addressed them. Personally he dragged the loudest groaner from the ranks and said to a loyal soldier, "Shoot him." The mutineer fell dead in an instant. Over his body the piercing blue (but colour-blind) eyes of Gordon glared at the rebels. The mutiny was over.

After one of many massacres, a British officer called on Gordon, who sat dejected on his bed. Before the caller could explain his business Gordon fished under the bed and drew out a grisly object. In an awful voice he explained, "The head of La Wang, foully murdered."

Yet, in the same campaign, Gordon wept when he heard of the death of a Chinese commander who had ordered 2000 men of the Soochow garrison to be beheaded for not resisting.

Triumphant, Gordon was invested with the Yellow Riding Jacket and the Peacock Feather. So farewell China, and home to Chatham, where he befriended ragged boys, cut their hair and strove to fill them with his own ideals.

Came the day when Gordon went out as Governor of Equatoria, then a barbarous, pestilential province of the Sudan. In his own mind, says Mr. Beatty, he was engaged in the service, not of the Queen or the Khedive, but of mankind. Alone he challenged the slave-traders. He rode camel after camel to death in a passion to be everywhere. One of his henchmen called on King M'Tesa, who, as soon as the visitor had entered the reception hall, ordered his bodyguard to bash in the heads of thirty subjects selected at random, explaining politely that such methods were necessary with such people as his. Gordon went on a mission to the King of Abyssinia, who cut off the lips of smokers and the noses of snuff-takers. For more serious offences he filled the culprits' ears with boiling tallow. Against fanaticism of this kind, Gordon's brand was relatively harmless.

De Lesseps, of Suez Canal fame, paid tribute to Gordon's honesty, intelligence and bravery; "but," he added, "he keeps all the Sudan accounts in his pocket, written on small pieces of paper. All that he pays out he puts in his right pocket, and all that he receives in his left. He then makes up two bags, sends them to Cairo, and money

is sent back to him. He is not the man to regulate the affairs of Egypt."

Lyton Strachey, who "debunked" Gordon in his "Eminent Victorians," hints that Gordon withdrew to his tent in the Sudan and drank. Both Mr. Beatty and Lord Elton repudiate this aspersion. Those lonely sessions in the tent, behind a hatchet and a red flag set up to deter intruders, were more likely to have been biblical than bibulous, thinks Mr. Beatty.

The General, mistrusted in his own country, was offered a post by King Leopold in the Congo; but the call came to return to the Sudan. He was to report and advise on its evacuation, and on methods of safeguarding Europeans, taking his orders from Sir Evelyn Baring in Cairo. Said Baring gloomily: "A man who habitually consults the prophet Isaiah is not likely to obey the orders of any man." Gordon still, no doubt, saw himself as in the service of mankind, and he decided to hold out against the forces of evil at Khartoum. The relief expedition arrived too late and Queen Victoria accused Gladstone of "murdering" Gordon by his neglect. Once Gordon had grieved over a severed head; now his own head was displayed to the Mahdi.

Lord Elton describes the Gordon cult which now sprang up. For precedents, he says, it would be necessary to go back to the Middle Ages.

"Gordon windows were dedicated in cathedrals and parish churches. Gordon clubs for boys sprang up in industrial towns, and Gordon statues in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere.

"Pamphlets, books and sermons on the soldier-saint poured from press and pulpits. A national day of mourning was observed, a national subscription established the Gordon Boys' Homes, and Parliament voted a handsome sum to the family . . ."

Yet Gordon, who thought nine-tenths of human glory was twaddle, would have chuckled sardonically at it all, thinks Lord Elton.

Mr. Beatty's summing up is that Gordon is memorable for his "incurrigible integrity." His trouble was that "he tried so hard to love his brother and could not, because he despised himself."

Both these books will dignify any military library. The authors are greatly to be congratulated on their fair and perceptive treatment of a complex personality—even if they do not quite solve his riddle.

Too Much Food on Patrol?

THE British soldier in Malaya has learned to defeat the jungle and the climate. By tenacity, ingenuity and adaptability he has overcome conditions entirely foreign to his nature. But he would catch more bandits if he carried less food.

So says Major Anthony Crockett in his book "Green Beret, Red Star" (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 18s), describing the jungle operations of 42 Royal Marine Commando.

Major Crockett tells how, all too often, during his two years in Perak and Selangor as a troop commander, he led patrols into bandit lairs which had been evacuated only a few moments previously. No matter how quickly his men gave chase they were rarely able to catch up.

The staple diet of the bandit is rice, vegetables and dried fish, all light in weight and of little bulk. A bandit can carry sufficient to last him for many days. The soldier lives on "compo" rations, excellent in variety and quality, but heavy and bulky. To carry more than a three-days' ration saps his energy.

The solution, says Major Crockett, is that the soldier must accept a drastic change in his

diet. "The conservatism of the British Serviceman, particularly as far as his stomach is concerned, is proverbial," he writes. "The uproar and resistance which would be aroused if a radical change in his food was introduced is easy to imagine... but many men who had never eaten curry and rice grew to have a liking for it."

Despite frustrations, No. 42 Commando had a high number of "kills." This was largely due to well-planned ambushes and the excellent tracking of Ibans from Borneo.

The Ibans are warlike little men with a custard-pie sense of humour which appealed to the Marines. They joined in all the unit's activities and particularly enjoyed playing football. They were fond of tattooing, using primitive tools like sharpened nails, sewing needles and lamp-black on Marines who were prepared to suffer pain in the

search for originality.

Several Marines made close friends with the Ibans and learned enough of their language to be able to converse easily with them. A few of them flew to Borneo to spend leave with the Dyak tribe, living alongside the Ibans in communal Long Houses. On their return they reported that a strong head, an unyielding stomach and an ability to go without sleep had been necessary to stand up to the interminable feasts and parties.



"Sorry my Christmas message has been so long, but here's hoping you all enjoy your Christmas dinner."

Retreating

WHICH were the great retreats? Napoleon's farewell to Moscow... the British march to Corunna? The biggest of them all was the withdrawal of the Axis forces from Russia in World War Two.

A vivid description of this forced march from the Don to the Polish borders comes from an Italian, Mario Rigoni Stern, who was sergeant-major of an Alpini Regiment: "Sergeant In The Snow" (Macgibbon and Kee, 8s 6d). As a gesture, Mussolini had sent an expeditionary force to fight in Russia—and that was why the men from Mediterranean vineyards found themselves trudging over the steppes in 40 degrees below zero.

Without vehicles, they covered 300 miles in conditions of hideous misery. As they marched they were harried by the Russians, but General Winter was the real enemy. On the steppes nothing lived; in the peasants' huts, where they slept, there was life all right—millions of lice. "I thought," says the author, "if I were to die, what would happen to the lice on me? When the blood in my veins was like red glass would they die later than me, or hold out till spring?"

This is the story of men facing fearful odds, yet still preserving comradeship and a measure of discipline. Their nationality is of no consequence: they were soldiers.

Of 230,000 men, 90,000 were lost and about 45,000 were frost-bitten or wounded.



How do you Cut a Cake?

FOR Lieutenant-Colonel E. H. Walter, commander of the Weybourne firing ranges in Norfolk, there was a 100-pound cake at his "dining-out" party on the eve of his retirement.

The cake was presented by the American 32nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Brigade, which uses the Weybourne ranges.

Had the Americans been Marines instead of Gunners, the cake-cutting might not have been as simple as the picture indicates. The United States Marines have recently received a four-page order laying down cake-cutting procedure.

First, the Marines are formed in a rectangle around the cake, which rests in state on a special cart. Then the commanding general and the guest of honour make short speeches. After that, "the senior cake escort steps forward, takes a sword from the cake cart and passes it over his left forearm—grip forward—to the commanding general."

The band strikes up "Auld Lang Syne," and while it is playing the general cuts the first slice of cake. This he places on a plate handed to him by one of the cake escorts, and passes the plate to the guest of honour. The guest may not carry his slice away. Any uneaten portion must be returned to the cart.

Annecy, in France. The author, bearing as he did the name of the "best-hated man of the Axis Powers," expected short shrift. "Odette," however, showed a better understanding of the German psychology than did her commanding officer; she guessed, correctly, that they would keep him as hostage.

The two were in love and had told their captors that they were man and wife. Even during their imprisonment at Fresnes they were enabled to see each other occasionally, by the intercession of the German sergeant who sprang the trap on them, Hugo Bleicher ("Henri"). After two examinations, during which Captain Churchill successfully "played stupid," he was left alone. It was upon Odette, unhappily, that the torturers got busy.

Captain Churchill was able to communicate with Odette by sending her books with pin-holes under the appropriate letters. He held "conversations" also with fellow prisoners by tapping on pipes. At first he tried one tap for "a," progressing to 26 taps for "z," but this was too tedious; he taught one prisoner the Morse code—within a day.

It is an essentially personal narrative. Captain Churchill tells in detail what he felt in captivity, as well as what happened. Now if only it had been Captain Churchill who spent 14 days in that cupboard at Arnhem, what a story he would have made out of it! As it was the gallant officer who achieved the feat dismissed it in a few lines.

This always-gripping story ends, and rightly, with Captain Churchill and "Odette" facing the King on a red carpet in Buckingham Palace.

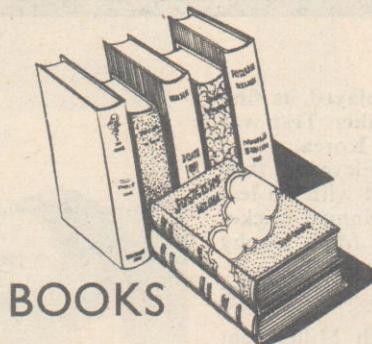
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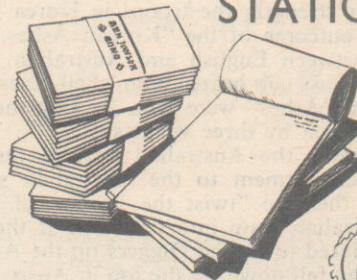


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The fight for the "Ashes"—military version.

TEST MATCH—IN KOREA

ON the same day that the touring MCC team played its first match against a State side in Australia, another Test was being played many thousands of miles away in Korea.

And while Britain waited for news of the English Eleven as they first tested their strength, the troops in Korea looked with no less interest to the outcome of the "Korean Ashes," an annual cricket game played between English and Australian teams for a trophy consisting of a brass cup beaten from shell cases.

Last year the "Ashes" were won by England, but this year the Australian side won by three wickets.

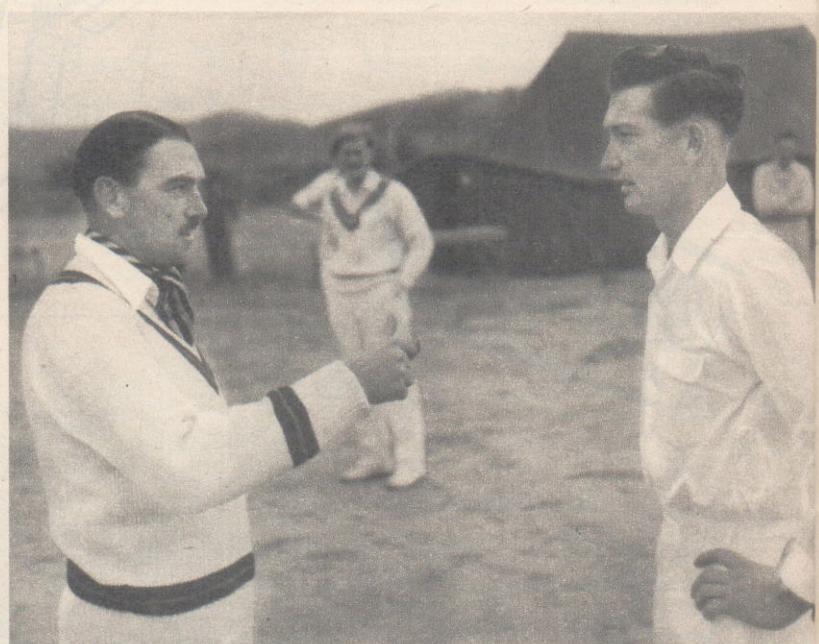
Before the game the Australian Test player Keith Miller sent a note of encouragement to the Australian soldier cricketers in Korea, urging them to "twist the Lion's tail." He threatened to dump the Australian team into the Imjin if they lost the "Korean Ashes," and offered to let the Diggers tip the Aussie Test team into the Yarra if they fell down on the job in Australia.



There was no gasworks landmark at this Oval, but the ground was fully signposted.

After the Korean Ashes had been won by the Australians the Captain, Lieutenant J. Taggart, cabled to Keith Miller: "We have given the Lion's tail a preliminary twist, the rest is up to you."

Len Hutton cabled best wishes to the English team, but he did not threaten them with a ducking in the Imjin if they lost.



Tossing the coin is the English captain, Major J. B. H. Daniel. The Australian captain is Lieutenant J. Taggart. Below: In typical Test Match weather, Major-General H. Murray awards the "pots."



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LETTERS

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BELSEN

Your picture of the burning of Belsen (SOLDIER, October) recalls the one comic incident I remember in connection with that evil place.

When the last hut was due to be burned, in May 1945, it was to be set on fire ceremonially. A large picture of Hitler and a Nazi flag were set up in front of the building and Wasps were drawn up with their flame-throwers ready-aimed. Then, when only the first of the invited spectators had assembled, somebody inadvertently let out a squirt from a flame-thrower—and up went the hut. There was a frenzied scramble for fire-extinguishers and the place was duly saved, to be burned properly, and to schedule, 20 minutes or so later.

Despite this accident, it was an impressive occasion among the stinking ashes and rubble of the camp. Not until that last hut was set on fire did the Union Jack fly over Belsen.—“Eyewitness” (name and address supplied).

STILL SMART

The wearing of scarlet and the old military discipline definitely instilled a habit of tidiness in men which lasted long after they left the Services. In my day civilian dress was not allowed for walking-out and there were no pockets in the military dress, so that, with the assistance of the swagger cane and white gloves, there was no desire to put the hands out of sight. Our cash allowance was stowed away in the small fob pocket in the tunic and a handkerchief was pushed up the sleeve with the help of the swagger cane.

It is held that self-praise is no recommendation, but I think I have retained military tidiness in a good many ways, in spite of the fact that I have attained 68 years of age. I never walk out with my hands in my pockets, I keep my hair short and I never have breakfast before I have washed. I always have a crease in my trews and there is no trace of “Charlie” on the back so far.

Recently, I attended the reunion of my regiment and I noticed that the young Regular and National Servicemen were very smart, clean and keen to follow the “spoor of the tiger.” They were all happy and it seems probable that they will carry the habit of tidiness into civilian life.—S. H. Calow (formerly of The Royal Leicestershire Regiment), 96 Narborough Road South, Leicester.

ARMY TIES

Can you tell me which of the Army ties a member of the Regular Army Reserve of Officers can wear?—Captain E. H. Onions, RARO, 4a, Ideal Buildings, Mill Street, Kidderminster.

★ There are now three types of Army tie: Maroon—for Regulars and ex-Regulatrs; Green—for volunteer Territorials and ex-volunteer Territorials (including National Service volunteers); Blue—for volunteer members of the Army Emergency Reserve and ex-volunteer members.

No tie has been designed for the Regular Army Reserve of Officers.

EX-SEAMAN

Can a Regular, who served during the war in the Merchant Service, ask for this service to count either for pension or for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal?—CQMS T. Bolgor, H.Q., RASC, Tripoli District, MELF.

★ No.

● SOLDIER welcomes letters. There is not space, however, to print every letter of interest received; all correspondents must, therefore, give their full names and addresses to ensure a reply. Answers cannot be sent to collective addresses.

Anonymous or insufficiently addressed letters are not published.

● Please do not ask for information which you can get in your orderly room or from your own officer.

● SOLDIER cannot admit correspondence on matters involving discipline or promotion in an individual unit.

IRISH REGIMENTS

A correspondent (SOLDIER, October) says he believes the Leinsters wore a badge with the letters RC for Royal Canadians. The letters formed part of their shoulder title, which read “Leinster RC.”

The joke went farther than your correspondent mentions. When asked what their shoulder title meant, they would, with fine Irish humour, reply: “Let Erin’s Isle Never Surrender to England’s Rotten Red Coats.” There was no rancour in this soldierly leg-pull. Their disbandment was a loss to the British Army that could not be afforded.—J. R. Lynch, ACF Drill Hall, Cavendish Street, Ipswich.

TEK

The mound shown in this photograph (taken in 1948) is marked on the



maps as the remains of trenches used in the Battle of Tel el Kebir. The men are those of the Tek Garrison Police, with whom I was serving.—Flying Officer K. J. Jeffery, Royal Air Force, Wunstorf, Germany.

BROWN BERET

Can you settle an argument as to why our regiment does not wear a cap-badge in its beret?—Lance-Corporal R. Gleeson, 11th Hussars, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya.

★ When the 11th Hussars adopted the beret (on mechanisation, in 1928) it was decided that the headdress was sufficiently distinctive without a badge. The 11th Hussars’ beret is brown with a band of crimson.

NUMBER ONE

Is it true that Number One Dress for men is to be issued to the Territorial Army after the Regular Army has been fitted? If so, how long will the Territorials have to wait for it?—Sergeant J. A. Barnes, 4th Bn The Royal Hampshire Regiment (TA), Southampton.

★ If the Treasury makes the money available, it is hoped to provide Number One Dress for the warrant officers and sergeants of the volunteer element of the Territorial Army in 1955-56. This would be after all Regular lance-corporals have received it, but before issues begin to Regular privates.

A Territorial may buy the dress privately, but should not wear it without his commanding officer’s permission.



Here is a new answer to an old problem. Cussons Clear Brilliantine controls the hair but leaves it soft and healthy—and just as important—does not discolour hats and pillow cases. 2/3 and 1/7.

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SINGLE MEN

The married soldier, separated from his family, and serving in the Middle East is allowed free air passage home for leave after nine months separation.

Is this not rather unfair on the single man? After all, present-day service in the Canal Zone is no harder for the married man than the single man. He is also separated from his loved ones, yet if he wishes to return to Britain on leave, must pay his own fare of £51.

I agree that the object is to get experienced Regulars (most of whom are married), to extend their service, but surely the experienced single man is just as important to the Army. It is hardly an incentive for him to extend his service when he knows that a married man of equivalent rank and experience, or even one with less, will receive privileges to which he himself is not entitled, merely because he is single.

Under this system, a single man can be placed in the invidious position of having extended his engagement from 12 to 22 years, thus committing himself to 15 years' service before his first option date, and yet not be entitled to a free leave passage during a tour in MELF; whereas in the same unit is a married man on a five and seven engagement with two years to complete and every intention of leaving the service after that period, who is entitled to free leave passage. Is this not liable to cause discontent within that unit?

I feel sure that single men are in the minority. Could not the scheme therefore be extended to include them, as the extra expense involved would not prove excessive?

The obvious reply, which I have been given many times, is, "Well then, get married." That is small help to a man whose service has kept him overseas for many years on end.—Puzzled Warrant Officer, MELF 11 (name and address supplied).

HAIRCUTS

It is not only necessary for a haircut to be short, it must also be simple. The authorities would do well to define their idea of shortness and I suggest a definite order saying that the hair should be not longer than a certain number of inches.

If a standard haircut were introduced, then the "crew cut" would seem to be the most suitable. Many foreign armies have a compulsory close crop.—Sergeant G. Ashmole, RAOC, Feltham.

★ **SOLDIER** does not see how it would be possible to introduce a satisfactory standard haircut to suit everyone, since heads vary in shape and hair in quantity and quality. Not even the "crew cut" is possible for everyone. It would also be difficult to define such a haircut in inches, since the length of hair must vary from the clean-shaven neck to the top of the head. In any case, who can imagine an officer solemnly parading with a ruler to measure his men's hair? There seems to be no way of improving on the present system of leaving the interpretation of "the hair of the head will be kept short" to those responsible for unit discipline.

May I reply to the two critics of my display of male hair-styles for the Army (Letters, October)? As you so rightly say in your editorial, the soldier today deserves something better than a convict crop.

All Mr. J. B. Brown and Lieutenant J. Bradford can do is to dismiss the whole thing as nonsense. Lieutenant Bradford suggests I am advocating

seven-shilling haircuts for soldiers. My idea is that an Army Corps of Hairdressers would provide such a service in the same way as the Army provides meals and kit to its men—free.

There is no reason why such a corps of trained and skilled Army hairdressers could not provide an attractive haircut of the soldier's own choice, short enough to meet Army needs. All the styles I displayed were shorter than Army regulations demand. Some were only two inches long.

I have received letters from soldiers both at home and overseas in support of the scheme, and all give evidence of the widespread discontent at the regimental haircut. The soldier has a uniform to be proud of. Why not let him be proud of his hair, too?—Leonard Pountney, President, Gentlemen's Hairdressers Artistic Creators Committee, 549 Great West Road, Hounslow.

Your correspondents and **SOLDIER** entirely miss the point. It is not a question of appearance, but what is most suitable. The Army has to train for conditions which would leave no room for fancy barbers (or fancy haircuts!). The Army authorities should either introduce the "close-crop" or give commanding officers the power to order it, if circumstances warrant. I understand that in the Great War front-line troops had to have their heads completely shaved. In my unit in Germany several of us have a "convict crop" and we all agree that it is hard to beat for comfort and convenience. If one is worried about the appearance . . . the beret covers a multitude of sins.—Trooper R. Kew, RTR, 24 Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick.

DETACHMENT, PLEASE

In "Academy of Artillery" (SOL-DIER, October) the words "gun-crew" appear several times. I have heard of "gun-crews" in the Royal Navy and the American Army, but never in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Surely it should be "gun detachment"?—WO II A. E. Winter, 451 (Chelsea) HAA Regt, RA (TA).

★ Gun detachment is correct.

COMRADES

Recently, I attended a course in England and for the first time in my life I mixed with and worked among men from the Dominions, including sailors and airmen. Knowing how "the other side" works creates its own interest; the idea of mixing all three Services achieved wonders.—Sjt. A. White, RE, 1254 Workshop and Park Squadron, BAOR.

SALUTING A VC

There was a VC private in my father's regiment who got a salute, whether or not he was entitled to it. I and my officers always saluted a VC—then a civilian—in the Taunton area during the last war. The tradition of the Regular Army before 1914 was that a VC was saluted. Perhaps **SOLDIER** may be like that war-time Secretary of State for War who had never heard of a King's Corporal—Reader (name and address supplied).

★ As **SOLDIER** said (September), there is no official ruling that a non-commissioned holder of the Victoria Cross should be saluted. **SOLDIER** has heard many rumours of King's Corporals but has found no evidence that they ever existed.

LETTERS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

HOW TO GET SOLDIER

If you are a serving soldier, you will be able to buy **SOLDIER** from your unit, your canteen or AKC cinema. Presidents of Regimental Institutes should ask their Chief Education Officer for resale terms.

If you are a civilian you may order **SOLDIER** at any bookstall in Britain.

Anyone unable to obtain the magazine through these channels may subscribe direct to Circulation Department, **SOLDIER**, 433 Holloway Road, London N7. The rate is 10s 6d a year, post-free. Cheques or Postal Orders should be made payable to "Command Cashier" and crossed "a/c **SOLDIER**."

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145 Waterloo Road, S.E.1.

MORE LETTERS

CONTEMPTIBLES

In reply to Lieutenant-Colonel Naylor's letter (SOLDIER, August), I believe I am one of the youngest Old Contemptibles, if not the youngest.

At the outbreak of World War One I was trumpeter to Lieutenant-Colonel H. E. Stockdale, commanding 29th Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, at Shorncliffe. Our first action was at Le Cateau on Wednesday 26 August 1914. At that time I was 15 years and 10 months old.—Captain (retired) A. J. Hale, Royal Artillery, 125 St. George's Avenue, Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey.

★Le Cateau was a delaying action in the retreat from Mons. On this day the British Second Corps faced Germans who had a crushing superiority in men, guns and machine-guns. Though the retreat continued, Le Cateau did much to explode the legend, built up over 50 years, of the German Army's invincibility.

In the January 1952 number of the Army Medical Services Magazine we published a letter from Major A. A. Barton, RAMC which had appeared in the Old Contemptible.

Major Barton claimed to be the youngest soldier in the field during the first world war and wrote as follows: "I enlisted in the RAMC December 1913 at the age of 14 years and three months. I was bugler in No. 2 Field Ambulance 1st Division, and remained with this unit from Mons to Ypres. In August 1917 I was posted home, having been in France three years and still being under the age of 18."

I am not in touch with Major Barton but have no reason to suppose that he is not still flourishing.

★ This will be hard to beat!—Major-General R. E. Barnsley, CB, MC, RAMC Depot, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Crookham.

FILMS

coming your way

The following films will shortly be shown in Army Kinema Corporation cinemas overseas:

THE BELLES OF ST. TRINIAN'S: The demoniac schoolgirls of Ronald Searle's cartoons come to life. There is conflict between the Fourth Form and the Sixth Form over the running of a race-horse, with the teachers involved. Alastair Sim plays the headmistress and her bookmaker brother. Others implicated are Joyce Grenfell, George Cole, Hermione Baddeley and Betty Ann Davies.

THE PURPLE PLAIN: Gregory Peck joins the Royal Air Force for the war in Burma. He really did go to a jungle—but in Ceylon—for the film-making. There, in colour, were shot the memorable scenes in which he carries an injured man to safety after an aeroplane crash. Cast includes Win Min Than, a beautiful Burmese girl in her first film, Brenda de Banzie, Bernard Lee and Maurice Denham.

THE BLACK KNIGHT: How Alan Ladd became one of King Arthur's knights and rescued Patricia Medina several times in the process. To give you all this, Miss Medina sustained a cracked ear in a torture sequence and a stunt-man caught fire while being roasted in a wicker cage. In colour.

VALLEY OF THE KINGS: Battle among the archaeologists in Egypt. Reason: the Pharaohs' treasures. Savage tribesmen, a sand-storm, genuine Egyptian antiquities, murder and, of course, love. Robert Taylor sings in Arabic. With Eleanor Parker. In colour.

ON THE WATERFRONT: Marlon Brando among the racketeers of New York's dockland, with Karl Malden and Lee J. Cobb. "Packed with . . . realism . . . brutality . . . and exalted emotional appeal. . . ."

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