

# SOLDIER

THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE

NINEPENCE

FEBRUARY 1955





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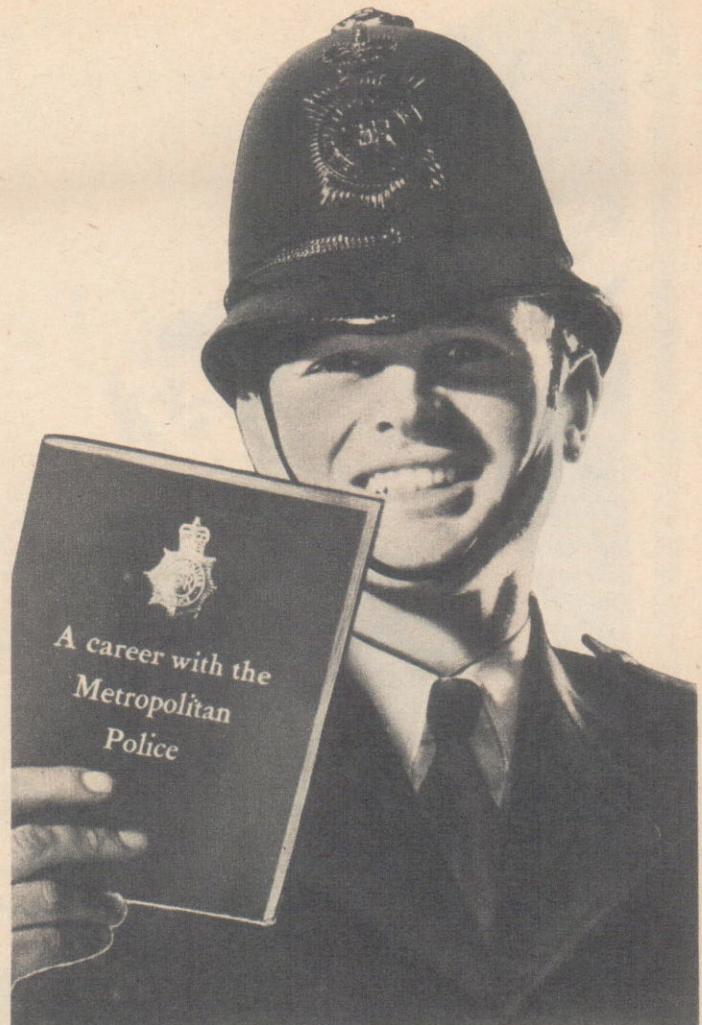
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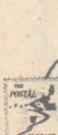
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The boy who asks the questions in the Army's new film: Brian Smith.

# “WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING AN OFFICER?”

**I**F a hundred schoolboys were asked to set down on paper their notions of the life led by an Army officer of today, some odd misconceptions might come to light.

Unless a boy has a father or older brother in uniform, his ideas of Service life will have been derived mainly from adventure-comics and films. He will probably have dipped into the works of Captain W. E. Johns. He will have admired Mr. Jack Hawkins playing with equal facility a commanding officer in the Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. From recent films like *Carrington VC* and *The Caine Mutiny* he may even have gleaned the unfortunate notion that the crown of an officer's career is his court-martial.

He will have laughed, perhaps, at the farcical officer of *Reluctant Heroes*. He may well have heard fun poked at officers in BBC Forces Shows, and wondered how much of it was justified. In the newspapers he will have seen photographs of officers showing their newly-won medals to their admiring sons outside Buckingham Palace. As to how these medals were won, the schoolboy's ideas may be sketchy. Still sketchier, for sure, will be his notion of the day-to-day life of the officers who never win medals. He has seen such officers at Armistice ceremonies and tattoos, but what do they do the rest of the time? Nobody writes stories about peace-time soldiering.

In America there have been complaints that for the last ten years authors have turned out anti-officer novels. These in due course become anti-officer films, which are shown all over the world. Stories about Service life tend to be written by prickly individualists who never settled down to discipline, and are not above wreaking their revenge in print. Many British soldiers must have been baffled, and saddened, by the kind of United States Army portrayed by Hollywood, often apparently with official co-operation.

But those who saw the film of *The Caine Mutiny* may remember the unusual and most effec-

them of the loyal service performed between the wars by men like Captain Queeg, when the Navy was regarded as a hide-out for suckers, and the smart guys were making money—or words to that effect. It was a telling speech, and a telling moment, perhaps, in the history of the cinema. The officer caste was at last being vigorously defended.

In its own way, *Carrington VC* is also a piece of special pleading on behalf of the Service officer.



All this is by way of introduction to a film which is unlikely to be shown at Gaumonts and Odeons, though it may well have some impact on the boys of Britain when they see it screened at their schools. It was produced for the War Office by the Army Kinema Corporation and is called *They Serve To Lead*. The purpose of the film is to give ambitious schoolboys some idea of an officer's life in today's Army. Unashamedly, it is a propaganda film, an attempt to

## SOLDIER to Soldier

tive climax which comes, not with the break-up of the tyrannous Captain Queeg in the witness chair, but with the subsequent outburst of the defending officer when he finds the accused lieutenant about to celebrate his acquittal with his fellow officers. Bitterly the defending officer pitches into them, and reminds

In "They Serve To Lead" only three parts are played by professional actors. Below: Lieutenant David McMurtrie, Somerset Light Infantry, outlines his plans for a jungle patrol. Iban trackers listen intently.

sell the idea of a career in the commissioned ranks. But it is very fairly done and is likely to prove a popular 45-minute break in any school curriculum.

The film opens with a fresh-faced schoolboy and his fresh-faced uncle (who is a captain about to start a course at the Staff College) whizzing through military country near Camberley in a sports car. (The producers toyed with the idea of a Bentley, but decided that might give too rosy a notion of a captain's pay.)

"Uncle Bob," asks the schoolboy, "what's it like being an Army officer?"

For answer, Uncle Bob swings off down the road to Sandhurst. Soon the two of them are eavesdropping outside the lecture huts.

From one hut float frightening scraps of scientific formulae. Wryly the schoolboy shakes his head. From another come words like "ionisation." Again the schoolboy shakes his head. Uncle Bob looks a bit surprised, too.

They tip-toe into a class-room and listen to a group of cadets debating whether it would be a good thing for Britain to put

OVER



large sums of money into colonies like the Gold Coast, with the risk of somebody "doing an Abadan."

It's all rather like being back at school, thinks the schoolboy. What's the point of that discussion about the Gold Coast, for instance? Uncle Bob points out that an Army officer must have a good working knowledge of social and political problems. In the best sense, he must be a man of the world.

The camera lingers no longer than it can help on the drilling squads, but it does pick up a pack of beagles, and the sail boats on the Sandhurst lake. "They don't mind what sport you follow," says his uncle, "whether it's a team sport or not, so long as you do it thoroughly."

Later, the sports car nips through the gates of the Royal Military College of Science (the camera lingering lovingly on two horsemen riding sedately through the lines). Then the two visit a laboratory-workshop where a captain is trying to design suitable armament for a tank. Here the boy learns that you can earn a degree in Army time—"and a good degree, too."

Well, that's the scientific side. But, as Uncle Bob points out, the Army wants men who are good regimental officers as well as good scientists. So they slip into a lecture room to see a film about a patrol in the Malayan jungle. There are excellent shots of men of the Somerset Light Infantry jumping silently from moving lorries at dawn and diving into the *ulu*, and of the same men standing-to around the vine rope which encircles their jungle camp, amid eerie jungle noises. A subaltern is seen giving orders to British soldiers and Iban trackers, deploying his patrol, looking after his men (perhaps one of his decisions may be open to controversy). Next comes a film of manoeuvres in Rhine Army, with young officers controlling the advance of tree-bedded Centurions ("now there's a nice command for you").

Ah yes, but what about prospects? Uncle Bob and his nephew decide to talk about that over tea. As their car halts at a hotel, a civilian with a brief-case passes by. "See that man?" says Uncle Bob, "how far do you think he will rise? Neither of us knows. He will go just as far as his brains and character take him. It's the same in the Army."

Then Uncle Bob remembers that "according to the experts" two out of three of the officers who pass through Sandhurst become lieutenant-colonels. No guarantee, of course.

The boy has got something to think about. So, too, have the schoolboys who see this film. There's a lot more to being an officer than is shown here, but the point is fairly made that an officer needs brains, power of leadership and a sense of responsibility. The career is not represented as one for swots, rugger hearties or strutting tyrants.

## SOLDIER to Soldier (Continued)

After the wars of old there used to be bitter and often degrading wrangles over prize money. The Army's pickings were usually trivial compared with those of the Navy, even though it was the pressure of the footloggers which sometimes enabled the Navy to capture enemy ships in harbour.

Occasionally, when an unusually rich merchantman had been pulled in by the Navy, the Army would turn out and escort the bullion through the streets of London.

The last share-out of prize money was authorised in 1948, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force pocketing a sum which—in spite of all the captures of merchantmen in World War Two—was disappointingly small. In fact, the Royal Air Force share was so small that it was given to charities, not to individuals. In future wars, it was made clear, there would be no more prize money, blood money or any other form of profits for fighting men. Such rewards after an all-in war were thought to be anachronistic. Why should bonuses go to the lucky few who were able to profit from the exertions of the many? That was the argument, and it seems to have been generally accepted.

For the last ten years, how-

ever, a commission has been awarding prize money to a seemingly endless succession of inventors whose brainwaves contributed to the Allied victory in World War Two. Some have been rewarded with big sums, others with small. One of the more recent claims was by firms which manufactured DDT disinfectant ("For every lousy British soldier there were 8000 lousy German soldiers . . .").

Now the British soldier is suitably grateful for the inventions and comforts which supported him in battle, as no doubt the inventors are grateful to the soldiers who made it possible for them to go on inventing (and claiming). It is hard to find any logical reason why prize money should be paid to the inventors and not to the users. Some inventors have not sought any profit from their brainwaves; others, being only human, have argued that they might as well collect anything that is going. It has been said that inventors need a financial spur, which is nonsense. Inventors are like authors: once they feel the stirring of an idea nothing can suppress it.

It seems to SOLDIER that war inventors ought to be rewarded, like any other inventors, by suitable royalties when their ideas go into production, and that that should be the end of the story.

HERE is a curious item from a recent issue of Hansard: Lord Windlesham asked Her Majesty's Government whether they will take steps to prevent, or at least heavily to discourage, senior officers of the Services from expressing their political views through the medium of letters to the Press signed by their wives.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Defence (Lord Carrington): I have no reason to believe that wives nowadays would be likely to allow themselves to be used as a vehicle for their husbands' political opinions.

Who knows what fearful domestic crises in the lives of our generals may lie behind this? Let us exercise the imagination.

General Bodkin is sitting in an armchair of his official residence, simmering. He has hurled his airmail copy of *The Times* across the room in disgust. Gad, sir, those damned legislators ought to be horsewhipped from Westminster to Windsor and back. At this point the general's wife enters, and says: "Mortimer, what about that fur wrap you promised me?"

"You can't have it," snaps General Bodkin. "Thanks to those double-dealers at Westminster I've less money than an unpaid acting lance-corporal."

"Why don't you write to *The Times* about it?" says his wife, sweetly.

"Impossible. It's against Queen's Regulations, para 547(a)."

"I've an idea. You could write the letter, and I could sign it."

"What, shelter behind a woman's skirts?" splutters the general. "What do you take me for?"

"A mug. Look, Mortimer darling, I want that wrap very badly. If you don't buy it for me I shall sit right down at that desk and write a stinker to *The Times*.

"But this is blackmail! You can't do such a thing to me!"

"Stop talking like a Hollywood film. It's a free country, isn't it? Even a general's wife can write to the papers if she wants to. I'm not bound by your silly old regulations."

"But this is terrible. I suppose I could put a notice in the 'Personal' column saying, 'I am not responsible for my wife's views.' But it would be too absurd. Cynthia, you must be out of your mind!"

"You're too scrupulous, Mortimer, dear. Why, Mary Fitz-Noggin always signs her husband's letters to the newspapers. He gave her the sweetest bracelet for that one in the *Clarion*. That's what I call co-operation."

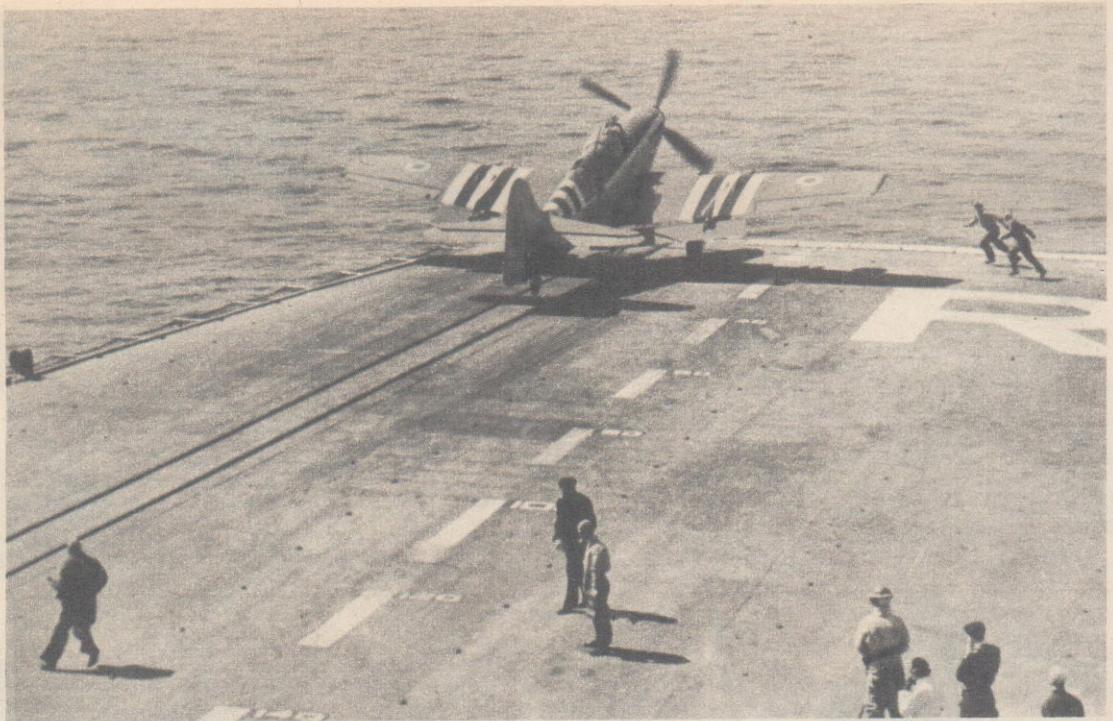
"And you want me to give you a mink wrap for not writing to the papers, is that it?"

"That's the rough idea. Oh, Mortimer, stop, stop, STOP!"

She is too late. General Bodkin has snatched down a Luger from the wall and pointed it at his head. The brains of an old-fashioned English gentleman spatter the floor.



"I've never seen such a day for news! Three air liners down in the Channel, the Queen Mary collides with the Queen Elizabeth, an atom bomb goes off by mistake, and a batman in the British Army is ordered to take the Commanding Officer's wife's dog for a walk."



Photographs on Pages 7-8 by courtesy of the Admiralty

Off to bomb targets in Korea, a Fairey Firefly is catapulted from HMS Glory

# THEY JOINED THE ARMY -- AND SAILED THE SEAS

*Soldiers who go to sea in aircraft carriers play a key part in calling down naval air support for the Army*

**P**ROBABLY no soldiers see more of the world than the officers and men—numbering fewer than a score—who wear a yellow “A” embroidered on a dark patch on their sleeves.

The “A” stands for Air and the men who wear it serve aboard the Royal Navy’s aircraft carriers. They belong to the Army’s carrier-borne ground liaison sections and their job is to train Fleet Air Arm pilots in their ground attack rôle in support of the Army.

Since the end of World War Two they have sailed to all parts of the globe. They have set foot in Iceland, Greece, Turkey, Spain, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sardinia, Gibraltar, Cyprus, Crete, North Africa,

Italy, Aden, Hong-Kong, Ceylon, Japan and the Philippines.

From Singapore they dispatched naval aircraft on bombing raids against bandit hide-outs in the Malayan jungle. In the Yellow Sea they briefed pilots for attacks on the Chinese and North Koreans.

They live a sailor’s life. They work by watches, sleep in hammocks and draw their daily tot of rum. They never go “on parade,” but on “divisions.” To them the cookhouse is the galley and, even when shore-based, they always “go ashore” when they leave camp.

Each section is only five strong—two officers, a sergeant, a batman-driver and a clerk. The senior officer, a major, belongs either to the Army or to the Royal Marines. His assistant, a captain, is generally a Gunner or Infantry officer. The sergeant may be either a soldier or a Marine; the batman-driver and the clerk are always from the Royal Army Service Corps.

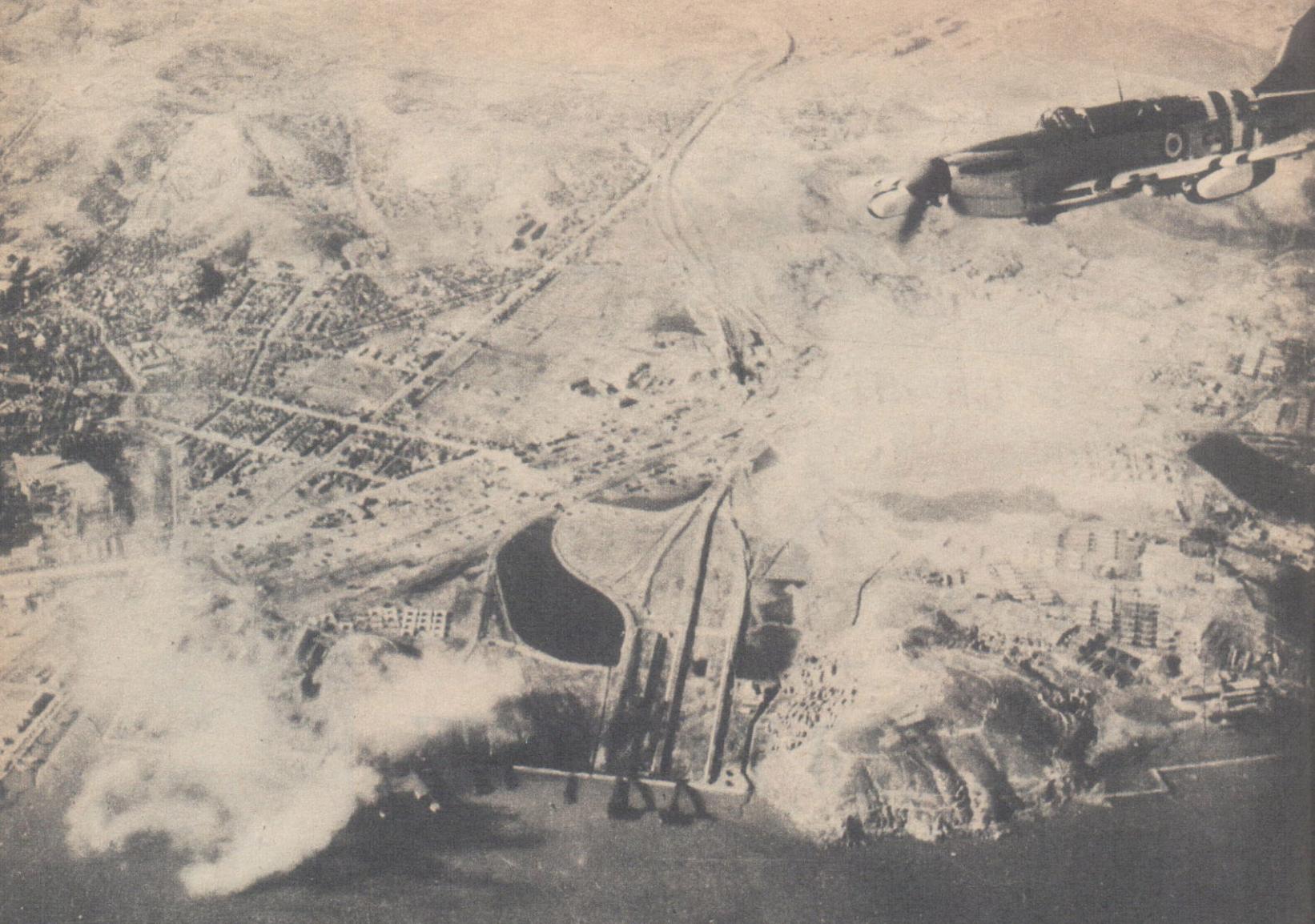
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Fewer than 20 soldiers wear the “A” on their sleeves. Most of them belong to the Royal Army Service Corps.

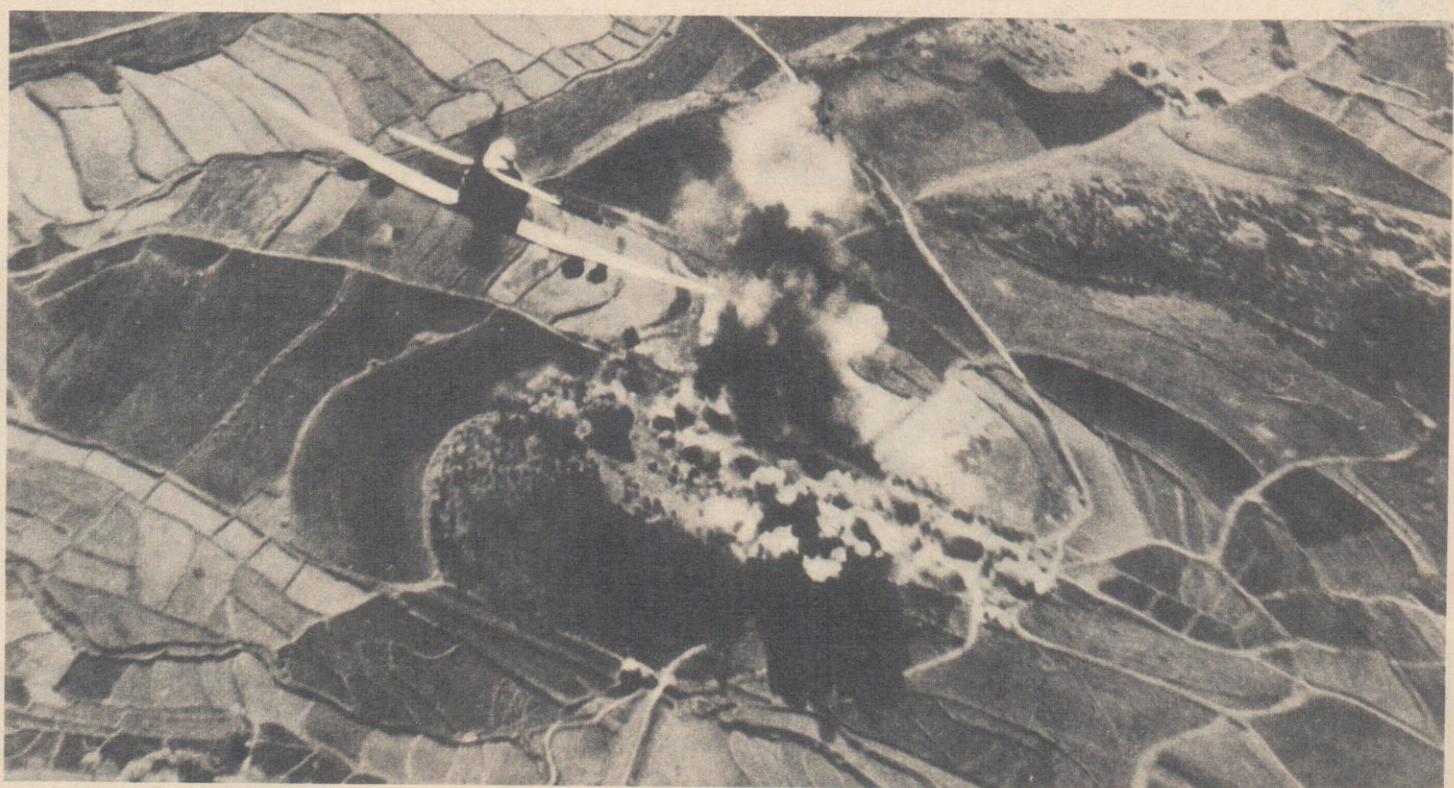
On board HMS Ocean in the Yellow Sea, Major P. Lawson, a section officer, discusses possible targets with the ship’s captain, Captain C. L. G. Evans DSO and the Naval operations officer, Lt-Commander N. Manley-Cooper.



Naval aircraft from HMS Glory bombed this group of buildings housing North Korean soldiers.



In Korea, naval aircraft from carriers strafed enemy positions in support of the United Nations land forces. These pictures show Fireflies from HMS *Glory* attacking enemy targets behind the line.



## THEY SAILED THE SEAS *continued*

Most of the men are National Service volunteers. The officers have to pass a stiff course of instruction at the School of Land/Air Warfare before they are selected. Their tour of duty at sea is normally for two years.

Although the sections are small in numbers they form a vital link in the Joint Army/Naval Air organisation.

When the Army calls for naval air support, the section officers brief pilots and mark their maps with target positions. They also inform them of the best escape routes to follow if they are shot down over enemy territory. They interrogate the pilots on their return and compile intelligence reports for Army and Naval headquarters.

When a carrier is allotted an area of land to control, the section briefs pilots for reconnaissance flights and from the resulting photographs selects likely targets. If the Army needs close support the section may be called upon to go ashore with its jeep and trailer (always kept ready in the ship's hangar) and set up an air contact team to call down the carrier's aircraft.

This arrangement proved invaluable in Malaya when the Royal Navy was called in to bomb targets in the jungle. On one occasion the planes were already in the air on their way to bomb a bandit hide-out when the air contact team was informed that British soldiers had over-run the position. The contact team hurriedly called up the pilots by wireless and directed them on to other targets.

Carrier-borne ground liaison sections were formed in World War Two. They were first used with great success during Eighth Army's advance from Alamein to Tripoli, when the Afrika Korps was bombed by naval air-

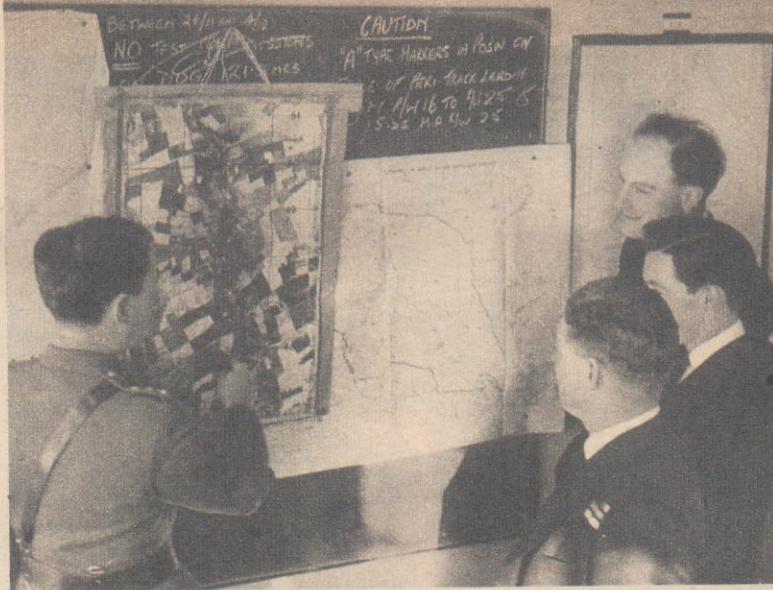
craft whose targets had been pinpointed by soldiers on board carriers in the Mediterranean. Later they operated in the invasion of Sicily and during the Normandy landings.

The wartime members of the Carrier-borne Ground Liaison sections were among the few soldiers included in the distribution of naval prize money. One of them was Major Edward Underdown who played the part of a Guards officer in the film "They Were Not Divided." He served on board HMS *Attacker*.

In Korea the sections again proved their value when the Royal Navy was called in to provide air support for United Nations troops. In seven months, during which the carrier sailed more than 30,000 miles, the section on board HMS *Theseus* briefed the ship's planes on more than 3000 sorties. The planes destroyed an impressive number of railway and road bridges, store dumps, railway stations, gun positions, command posts, factories, power stations, barrack buildings and road blocks. Observed enemy casualties were 1750 for the loss of six naval pilots. Other sections on board HMS *Triumph*, HMS *Ocean* and HMS *Glory* had similar successes.

It was due in part to the quick-wittedness of a section officer on board a carrier in Korea that the first Russian MiG fighter to be captured by the United Nations was recovered. At the end of his report a naval pilot mentioned that he had seen what appeared to be a swept-wing fighter lying on a mudflat near Chinnampo. The section officer immediately caused another plane to be sent on reconnaissance and it brought back a picture of what was undoubtedly a MiG fighter. The plane was later captured intact.

Captain V. Venour, Royal Artillery, gives last-minute instructions to pilots before they take off from a Sussex airfield on a training flight.



At a Royal Naval Air Station in Sussex, Fleet Air Arm pilots are taught how to read aerial photographs by an officer of the Army's Carrier-borne Ground Liaison Section. Below: Major C. J. Terry, Royal Marines, instructs pilots in tank recognition. Later, they will be taken to an Army tank range.



In Britain one carrier-borne section is stationed at a Royal Naval Air Station in Sussex. The headquarters controlling all sections is in Scotland.

The section in Sussex trains Fleet Air Arm pilots in their ground attack rôle before they are sent to join carriers. At week-ends it gives "brushing-up" courses to Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Pilots. After learning how the Joint Army/Naval Air system operates the pilots are put through a course of tank and vehicle recognition with the aid of models and films. They are taken to see ground demonstrations at the artillery ranges at Larkhill, the tank ranges at Bovington and the School of Infantry at Warminster. Later they fly over these training grounds and view the weapons and vehicles from the air. Sometimes

they act as spotters for the gunners at Larkhill and take part in Army manoeuvres when air support is required.

Much of the pilots' training in air support for ground forces is carried out during their daily flights, when the section details them to identify "targets" which are often 150 miles away and indicated only by six-figure map references. On these trips the pilots sometimes make photographic reconnaissances and bring back pictures which the section makes into a mosaic and interprets for the rest of the students.

The carrier-borne ground liaison organisation has set up a thriving club of its own. Once a year past and present members, officers and men, meet for dinner at a London hotel.

E. J. GROVE





Eve Boswell was mentioned in dispatches from Korea.



Left: Jean Bayless' picture adorns many a barrack-room in Germany.

Below: Is Tonia Berns a typical English girl? The Italians think so.



In the sands of the desert they still call for the voice of Vera Lynn.

Right: The Far East fell for Hy Hazell, with the "longest legs in all show business."



She is the Army's favourite British film star: Glynis Johns.

The girl from a desert isle: Lorrae Desmond.



The girl who built a "piano" with bells: Dolores Ventura.

## THE GIRLS WHO CHARM

MARLBOROUGH'S men got along without pin-ups. Wellington's men had no Forces' Sweethearts. Haig's men—ah, that was where it started. They had pin-up girls, and sometimes concert parties. But they had no radio sets from which came the beguiling voices of female crooners.

It was World War Two, with its ubiquitous loud-speakers, which launched the Forces' Sweetheart. Vera Lynn held the title until 1946, when she retired to raise a family. Today soldiers in Middle East and Rhine Army still ask for her songs—the songs she made famous in Hitler's war—more often than those of other singers.

There are many other young women entertainers for whom the Army has a special niche—if

To find today's Forces' favourites it is necessary to study box office receipts at Army stage and film shows, to analyse gramophone request programmes and the listening figures for BBC Forces' shows.

Ivy Benson, who since 1945 has toured Middle East, Germany and Austria with her all-girls band, easily heads the list of money-spinners for Combined Services Entertainment. More soldiers go to her shows than to any others. "Two-Ton" Tessie

O'Shea runs her second—a sobering thought for glamour girls.

Carole Carr, who was first seen by British troops when she toured Rhine Army in 1945, is another whose popularity has not dimmed. She took over the rôle of resident singer in the BBC's "Calling All Forces" programme in 1951 and has played to packed audiences in Middle East, Korea and Malaya.

The BBC's post-war roster of Forces' charmers has included Petula Clark, Lizabeth Webb and

## THE SOLDIERS

Sally Rogers. A recent heart-throb in the Forces' Show was South African-born Eve Boswell, who can sing in eleven languages. She has received more than 200 proposals of marriage by mail. The British Commonwealth Division in Korea who saw and heard her last year were reported to be "wildly enthusiastic." Army Welfare hope to sign her up for a tour of Middle East soon.

At present the BBC Forces' Show is featuring Joy Nichols. Hy Hazell, "the girl with the

longest legs in show business," a favourite pin-up of wartime soldiers, got a rousing welcome from the troops when she toured Korea and Malaya.

And the most popular British film actress? Glynis Johns, without a doubt, say the Army Kinema Corporation. Among American film stars, Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell probably lead the field.

Another newcomer just returned from a Middle East tour is Australian-born Lorrae Desmond, who once lived on a desert

island off the Great Barrier Reef. She sings in two voices—one a rich soprano, the other a husky croon.

Tonia Berns, chosen to play the part of a typical English girl in an Italian film, has forsaken straight acting for musical comedy. She was a great success in her recent tour of military camps in Middle East.

In a class by herself is Dolores Ventura, "blonde bombshell of the keyboard," who used to be a violinist in the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Now she has become one of the most popular boogie pianists in Britain. Recently she performed for an Army audience in Aldershot on an instrument she invented herself—a piano whose wires were removed and replaced with bells. She calls it "The Jazzabell."

**THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR A NEWCOMER**

**IN THE ROSTER OF FORCES' FAVOURITES**

A touch of swagger is a good thing, but there's one form of military swagger which has painful memories. If the Germans re-arm—

## Goosestep query for Allies

When Dr. Adenauer, the West German Chancellor, was asked

# WILL THEY GOOSE-STEP?

this is of considerable moment."

To the British soldier the goose-step has always seemed slightly comical. It is salutary to remember that the British style of marching, with arms swinging high, has sometimes caused amusement to German soldiers.

The goose-step is carried out in three movements: first, lifting the left heel off the ground, bending the knee and moving the left foot forward, keeping it as straight as possible; second, swinging the lower part of the leg forward as quickly as possible without lifting the knee; third, putting the left foot flat on the ground while the right foot begins to move into the first position. The length of step in the German Army was two feet eight inches, and the rate of march 114 paces a minute.

Sometimes the movement was exaggerated. A German ex-officer of SOLDIER's acquaintance recalls seeing the drum-major of the Berlin Guards Company, in the early 1930s, swinging the tips of his toes to the height of his chest (he was six feet four inches tall) and crashing them down on to a puddled

road, to the detriment of his own garments and those of the spectators.

Because it makes great demands on the muscles, the German Army used the goose-step only for short spells. In a daily drill period, goose-stepping would last only five or ten minutes.

A company passing its battalion commander would begin to goose-step five paces before the front rank reached him and go back to a normal marching step five paces after the rear rank had passed him. On ceremonial parades, the goose-step was used for the first five paces on moving off, then only while passing the saluting base. Bandsmen passing a saluting base while playing had also to goose-step.

SOLDIER is informed that the Afrika Korps goose-stepped in the desert on such occasions as a march-past for Rommel or Hitler's birthday parade, but only on hard ground. The step was never attempted in soft sand. Nor, apparently, was it practised in prisoner-of-war camps.

The man to whom the German Army owed the goose-step was

a Hessian named von Kalckstein. In the 1730s he left the army of his own state and took service under King Frederick William of Prussia, the military-maniac father of Frederick the Great. Under the orders of von Kalckstein (who was to die a Prussian field-marshall) the goose-step was first strutted on a Potsdam parade-ground. The King went to see.

Frederick William was delighted. He ordered his *Lange Kerls*, guards raised from the tallest men in Europe, to take it up, followed by the rest of his army. When the German Army was formed from the Prussian Army in 1871, the goose-step was retained.

German drill-masters carried the goose-step abroad, and the Bulgarian, Finnish, Argentine and Chilean armies are reported to have used it. Under Mussolini, the Italian Army invented a *Passo Romano*, or Roman Step, which was similar to the goose-step. This also became synonymous with militarism and aggression.

The British Army had its own goose-step, officially known as the balance-step, which seems to have been thoroughly unpopular. In 1806 one writer recorded that "the balance or goose-step introduced for their practice excites a fever of disgust." In 1825, another wrote: "Oft with aching bones, I marched the goose-step, cursing Sergeant Jones."

The purpose of the balance-step, according to the Infantry manuals of last century, was "to teach the recruit the free movement of his limbs, preserving at the same time perfect squareness of shoulder, in the utmost steadiness of body." The motions were "intended practically to show the true principles of marching and that steadiness of body is compatible with perfect freedom in the limbs."

The balance-step was first taught "without gaining ground." In the complete step, the left foot was brought gradually and smoothly to the front, the knee being gradually straightened as the foot was brought forward, the toe turned out a little to the left and remaining about three inches from the ground. "In this position, said the manuals, the recruit "remains for a few seconds only in the first instance, till practice has steadied him in the position."

This step had its resemblance to the modern slow march, which is today still taught by numbers as a "balance step."

Try this—at 114 paces to the minute.

**R**ATHER a difficult question," admitted Dr. Adenauer, West Germany's Chancellor, when reporters asked him whether a proposed guards regiment in the new German Army would perform the traditional goose-step.

He said he would have to consult the British and American military commanders. So far no decision has been announced.

The goose-step, along with the jack-boot, was always held up as a symbol of the ruthless militarism of the Kaiser and Hitler. There will be those who ask whether its re-introduction will not needlessly inflame susceptibilities in Europe.

On the other hand, the goose-step is part of the tradition of the German Army. As such, its supporters may hold that it is as useful and harmless a morale-builder as the Scotsman's bagpipes.

One of the mysteries of the goose-step is how it got its English name. Certainly, it bears little resemblance to a goose's waddle. In Germany it was popularly known as the *Parademarsch*, because it was generally seen on big parades, but the German Army's official manuals referred to it as the *Exerziemarsch*. They emphasised its merits as a training exercise which required a man to concentrate, kept troops together as a body and trained the muscles of the leg.

A British officer who served with the pre-1914 German Army wrote that "half an hour of this exercise does as much for the muscles of the leg and the abdomen as half a day's route-marching. Hence, there is a great saving of time which may be devoted to becoming proficient in other branches of the noble art of militarism, and to such a materialist country as Germany.



The step which began at Potsdam—and ended with Hitler.

# THE ARMY AND THE KILT

FOR more than 200 years the kilt as a soldier's garment has inspired controversy. It has been admired, derided, outlawed, reprieved. Not only colonels and high commanders, but Kings and Queens have been drawn into the fray.

Here are some of the fruits of SOLDIER's researches into the subject:—

## SOLDIERS ONLY

After the 1745 Jacobite rising, the kilt was banned throughout Britain—except for soldiers.

"From and after the 1st day of August 1747 no man or boy within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, other than such as shall be employed as Officers and Soldiers in His Majesty's Forces, shall . . . wear or put on clothes commonly called Highland Clothes, that is to say, the Plaid, Philabeg, or Little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland garb."—Extract from the *Act for the Abolition and Proscription of the Highland Dress, 1747 (repealed 1782)*.

## WAR OFFICE OBJECTS

In 1757 the War Office began the first of many attempts to abolish the kilt in Highland regiments.

The garment was forbidden to the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders) when they landed in North America that year on the grounds that "it was unfit for the severe winters and hot summers in that country." In his *Sketches of the Highlanders* General Stewart of Garth wrote: "The officers and soldiers vehemently protested . . . and Colonel Fraser explained to the Commander-in-Chief the strong attachment which the men cherished to their national dress and the consequence that might be expected to follow if they were deprived of it. The representation was successful . . . We were allowed to wear the garb of our fathers and in the course of six winters showed the doctors that they did not understand our constitutions, for in the coldest winters our men were more healthy than those regiments who wore breeches and warm clothing."

## NUNS SHOCKED?

It was a different story when the Highlanders entered the ruins of Quebec in 1759. So cold was the weather that sentries had to be relieved every hour to keep them free from frostbite.

"The Highlanders, despite their natural hardihood suffered more than their comrades, the kilt being but a sorry protection against a Canadian winter," says Sir John Fortescue, the Army historian. "They were only relieved by a supply of long



On guard at Fort George, home of the Highland regiments, a Scottish soldier wears the kilt with the traditional sporran.

- It has been banned by Kings and also by the War Office
- It has been ruled "unsuitable for mechanical warfare"
- It produced a French comment: "For love, yes; for war, no"
- It inspired the nuns of Quebec to knit under-garments
- It has more than once struck terror into the Queen's enemies

the enemy with terror and confusion . . . I sincerely hope that His Royal Highness will never acquiesce in so painful and degrading an idea as to strip us of our native garb and stuff us into a harlequin tartan pantaloon."

## A BAD JOKE

—and Scots troops were packed off in trousers to India.

## NO HARLEQUIN STUFF!

In 1804 this spirited reply was sent by Colonel Cameron of the Cameron Highlanders to the War Office when asked for his views on the proposal to abolish the kilt:

"The Highlander has an exclusive advantage, when halted, of drenching his kilt in the next brook as well as washing his limbs, and drying both, as it were, by constant fanning, without injury to either, but on the contrary feeling clean and comfortable; while the buffon in tartan pantaloon, with all its fringed frippery (as some mongrel Highlanders would have it), sticking wet and dirty to their skin, is not easily pulled off and less so to get on again in cases of alarm or any other hurry, and all this time absorbing both wet and dirt, followed up by rheumatism and fevers which ultimately make great havoc in hot and cold climates . . . The proposed alteration must have proceeded from a whimsical idea more than the real comfort of the Highland soldier, and a wish to lay aside the national garb, the very sight of which has upon occasions struck

When the row was referred to the divisional general and the colonel of the 71st, officers responsible were reprimanded, NCOs were reduced to the ranks and the privates were court-martialled.

## BAN BY A KING

In 1809 George III ordered Highland regiments to discontinue wearing the Highland garb. The official reason was that after the heavy losses sustained by Highland regiments at the Battle of Corunna it was becoming difficult to find recruits to keep the regiments up to strength. The regiments preferred to believe that it was because "the people of South Britain found the Scottish national costume objectionable."

Nevertheless, certain Scots regiments continued to wear the kilt. It was seen on the field of Waterloo, and afterwards in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## SEVEN YARDS OF TARTAN

AMONG Scottish regiments only Highlanders wear the kilt. They are the Black Watch, the Highland Light Infantry, the Seaforth Highlanders, the Gordon Highlanders, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The kilt was taken away from the Highland Light Infantry in 1809. In 1881 the regiment chose to continue wearing tartan trews to identify it as both a light infantry regiment and a Highland regiment. It was not until 1946 that the Highland Light Infantry re-adopted the kilt when it rejoined the Highland Brigade at Fort George.

Every kilt contains seven yards of single-width or three-and-a-half yards of double-width tartan.

The present-day kilt originates from the "little kilt" or *feileadh-beag* which came into use as the poor man's dress in 1725. Those who could afford it wore the belted plaid or tartan trews and plaid.

# THE ARMY AND THE KILT continued

occupied Paris (where French ladies expressed excessive and unseemly curiosity as to what, if anything, was worn underneath it).

In 1823 the Royal decree was rescinded and most Highland regiments were again allowed to wear a form of Highland dress, although they had to adopt the tartan trews or even pantaloons.

## REQUEST TO A QUEEN

In 1871 the 1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were asked by Queen Victoria what the Regiment would like most. The colonel told her they would like the kilt restored. The Queen readily agreed but the military authorities objected, so the battalion remained clothed in trews.

Most Highland regiments were not allowed to wear the kilt again, except when in full dress, until 1881.

## HORSEBACK? OUCH!

General Sir Ian Hamilton tells in his book "Listening for the Drums" how, when he served in India with the Gordon Highlanders, the officers had to go on church parade on horseback.

"We did not wear drawers except at athletics or dancing on a platform, so you were apt to get the skin of your thighs pinched between the stirrup leathers and the saddle and it was not very comfortable—I mean, bareback is all very well when applied to

the pony but not to one's own backside."

## THEN CAME APRONS

An ochre-coloured kilt-apron was introduced for Highland regiments in the South African War as a camouflage measure. The apron was also issued during World War One. It was not popular. The Highlanders said the apron was more conspicuous than the dyed tartan cloth of the kilt.

## IN THE TRENCHES

It was in World War One that kilted Scots troops earned their famous tribute from the enemy—"the Ladies from Hell."

There were varying views on the suitability of the kilt in trench warfare.

"In the winter of 1914 the regiment found the kilt had proved itself fully as it had done in the past. Officers and men can wade knee-deep through the trenches and arrive in comparative dryness and comfort, unhampered by wet trousers or clinging breeches. It undoubtedly prevented much sickness... The kilt apron undoubtedly served one purpose in keeping the kilt clean in the trenches."—*History of the 2nd Battalion, the Black Watch*.

But Field-Marshal Earl Haig (a Scotsman) had his doubts. In his private diary dated March 6, 1917, appears the entry:

"At Ambrines 44th Brigade (15

Div. under Brig-General Marshall). All Highland Battalions in kilts looked very fine, but some of the poor fellows' knees seem to suffer much in this inclement weather. General Joffre's criticism of the kilt seems justified: 'Pour l'amour oui, mais pour la guerre non.' (For love, yes; for war, no.)

## FOR COMMANDOS

In 1939 the War Office banned the wearing of the kilt in action "in view of its unsuitability for mechanical warfare" and laid down that it would be worn in future only for ceremonial and walking-out (some Scots regiments took the kilt overseas). Highlanders who took part in the Commando raid on St. Nazaire in 1942 were given special permission to wear it.

When the Black Watch were leaving for France in 1939 King George VI and Queen Elizabeth commiserated with them over the loss of the kilt.

"Nothing less than royal sympathy and royal ingenuity in helping to make the best of a bad job could have averted a genuine bitterness and a sad slump in morale," says Colonel Bernard Fergusson in *The Black Watch and the King's Enemies*.

"It had been given out that the chief reason for withdrawing the kilt was to prevent the Regiment from being identified. 'But, damn it,' said Big Mac, alias CSM MacGregor, 'we want to be identified.'

"Long afterwards it turned out



that the decision came not from a high policy level but from some Ordnance officer. The kilt would have been hell in winter in France; but the manner of ordering its abandonment was inconsiderate and stupid."

## IN KOREA

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Korea fought in battle-dress but wore the kilt out of the line. They were glad, during the severe winter of 1951, to accept an issue of drawers, woollen, winter, long.

There were kilts to be seen in North Africa in World War Two. Here are massed pipers of the 51st Highland Division in Tripoli. "When kilts were available," says the Division's historian, "kilts were worn."



*Don't talk to soldiers about vitamins—all they want is something filling*

# THEY SAY SALAD ISN'T SOLID— GIVE US CHIPS!

**A** TOPIC which has been aired recently in the letter columns of *The Times* is the ultra-conservative taste in food of the British soldier.

The heavier the meal, the better he likes it. The more art put into it, the less he likes it.

Even under a broiling tropical sun, with sweat pouring off him, he demands steak-and-kidney pudding, followed by a large helping of mixed fruit pudding or something equally filling.

A nice cool green salad? That is "blasted bunny food."

The person to blame for all this, according to at least one correspondent of *The Times*, is Mum.

Greatly interested in this correspondence were the Army's experts whose job is to give the soldier a balanced diet containing calories and vitamins necessary to good health (and this means issuing "unpopular" foods as well as steak-and-kidney pudding). They agree that attempts since the end of World War Two to wean him away from heavy foods have met with little success. Even in Malaya the favourite ten-men "compo" pack is the one that contains steak-and-kidney pudding and mixed fruit pudding. It was also the most popular pack during the war.

All the evidence collected by the Royal Army Service Corps' food research and development section goes to show that the soldier today is as conservative in his tastes as his father and grandfather were before him. He likes his food the way Mum cooks it—substantial, plain and no fancy business. He doesn't give a rap about calories and vitamins; he

likes to get something under his belt.

Travel rarely seems to broaden the soldier's tastes in food. In many a country where the British Army has sojourned are to be found disillusioned cooks who had hoped to impress Tommy Atkins with their imaginative treatment of Army rations, only to learn that he prefers to take his ration of imagination at the cinema, not in the dining hall.

He can soon tire of delicacies like turkey and tinned peaches. Early in the Korean War British soldiers eating American rations actually complained of the monotony of such a diet and pleaded to be given British rations. They said they missed their meat puddings and jam roll. (On the other hand, British rations are not popular with American soldiers, who find them too substantial. In Algeria in World War Two Americans issued with British "compo" rations bartered them with the Algerians for whole sheep which they ate barbecue fashion.)

The British soldier's favourite dish after steak-and-kidney pudding is probably fried sausages-and-chips, followed by eggs-and-chips and fish-and-chips. He will eat chips with any meal. Fish must be fried in thick batter. He dislikes it boiled, poached or camouflaged as fish-cakes. After mixed fruit pudding, the most



Nice heavy food for a hot climate: a load of duff in the Western Desert.

popular sweets are other "heavies," jam roll, currant roll and rice pudding.

NAAFI reports that in its cans all over the world fried foods—especially eggs and chips—are the most popular. Next come creamy cakes and pastries.

Easily top of the list of foods the soldier dislikes most are tinned herrings, served plain or in tomato sauce. Then come swedes, turnips, beetroot, green salads and brussels sprouts.

The soldier likes to know what he is eating and has a deep distrust of any unusual meal, especially if it appears on the diet sheet under a French name. One correspondent in *The Times* told how, in an attempt to brighten up the men's food at a Royal Air Force station in East Anglia, the messing committee introduced *chouxflour mornay*. "A vigorous complaint was made that it tasted of cheese," said the correspondent. "With a sigh the committee arranged for cauliflower in future to be served naked and unadorned. It is a grim task that lies before would-be liberalisers."

Similar stories can be told of the Army. SOLDIER knows a wartime messing officer who described veal cutlets on the diet sheet as *escalopes de veau* and was shaken to overhear one soldier refuse his meat with the remark, "What, French horse? Not for me, chum!"

Another *Times* correspondent, a woman, recalled being sent on a messing course during the late war and learning 37 different ways of treating potatoes. Back in her unit, however, she had to bow to a demand for "real potatoes, like Mum cooks"—in other words, plain boiled potatoes. Next, the daring innovator began to serve rich, creamy rice pudding, but this also was rejected as being unlike Mum's slightly pale-blue rice puddings.

This is not the first time Mum has been under attack. Officers of the Army Catering Corps made front-page news not so long ago by suggesting that the Army fed its men more appetizingly and nourishingly than Mum.

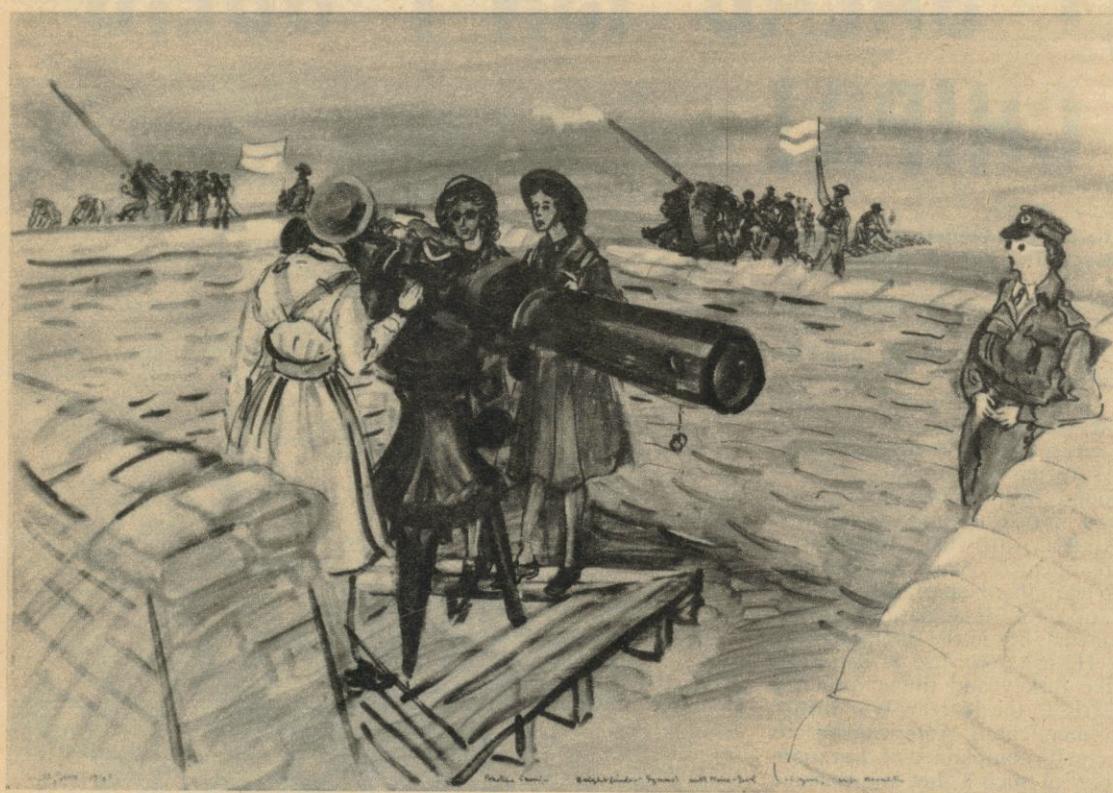
One indisputable fact emerges: The soldier has never been so well fed by the Army as today. Only 50 years ago he was given a pound of bread, a pound of meat and twopence a day for extras—and had to cook his own food. Today he receives a daily ration worth nearly 4s and containing more than a score of foods. It includes all the ingredients which medical science considers best for his bodily health, and is cooked for him by trained cooks of the Army Catering Corps.

A later article in SOLDIER will describe forthcoming innovations in tinned foods and compo rations for the Army.



Even in the tropics, he prefers the food that Mum used to serve.

# THAT'S "MIXED"



A practice camp study by Anthony Gross.—Imperial War Museum

The mixed regiment—  
now on its way out—  
was a military innova-  
tion in which Great  
Britain led the world

**H**ARDLY noticed in the recent announcement about the disbandment of Anti-Aircraft Command was the news that mixed anti-aircraft regiments are being abolished.

So ends an experiment described by a wartime Secretary for War as "breath-taking and revolutionary."

"British girls," General Sir Frederick Pile has said, "were the first to take their place in a combatant rôle in any army in the world."

The Russians might contest that statement—they had women snipers with scores of victims to their credit. But Britain was almost certainly first to use women to control the fire of artillery.

The Germans introduced flak

girls late in the war, but the innovation does not seem to have been very successful. The Americans never took this step. In 1951, however, Colonel John W. Davis, artillery instructor at the United States Army War College, got as far as advocating employing women on home anti-aircraft guns (see *American Military Review*, November 1951).

It was lack of manpower that forced Britain to use women in

the anti-aircraft arm. Even before the war General Pile had asked Miss (now Dame) Caroline Haslett, an engineer of distinction, whether she thought women could operate fire control instruments. Miss Haslett reported that women could do everything but fire the guns.

"I could see no logical reason why they should not fire the guns, too," says General Pile in his book "Ack Ack." But he knew wiser than to suggest employing women direct on lethal weapons. As it was, there were protests. Happily the thought processes of most people were conveniently woolly on the subject; they would have rebelled at the idea of a daughter's hand on the firing lever, but illogically they did not mind a daughter using her skill to guide the guns on the target. Later came the day when the voice of a woman plotting officer gave the initial order "Fire."

The idea of shutting roughly equal numbers of men and women behind barbed wire on lonely sites excited the imagination of the popular newspapers and alarmed many parents—not to mention husbands of ATS girls. One paper had a feature headed "Co-Ed Gun Girls." Another imported an American novelist who was surprised to find that the men and women of mixed gunsites were able to keep their minds on their work. "The girls just don't think of the men that way," he was told; which was true, up to a point.

At first the policy was to send to mixed gunsites older men, many of whom could have been the girls' fathers. This did not work out too well—especially at dances. The Gunners thought the girls frivolous, and the girls thought the Gunners senile. Later younger men were posted to gunsites.

# THAT WAS

Certain married Gunners on mixed sites are reported to have told their wives that the "(M)" in the battery title stood for "Mechanised."

Choosing suitable battery commanders was not easy. Some officers of field rank were unable to accustom themselves to the idea of troops who brought their knitting along to lectures, and who turned out on a night alarm wearing battle-dress hastily thrown over pyjamas, hair in curling pins and faces thick with cream.

The press never quite lost their curiosity about mixed batteries. *Punch* had a series of verses about gunsites life, with lines like: *The shoot is done, the rounds are spent.*

*Goodnight, my sweet. I swear  
I worship you. I love the scent  
Of cordite in your hair.*

Romances there were, to be sure—it would have been strange

if there had been none. They were not helped by a rule which said that husband and wife should not live on the same site. Married women exercised the right to claim "husband leave"—that is, if a girl was married to a sailor she had the right of joining him when his ship came home. This was only one of the problems facing the officer commanding a mixed battery.

Senior officers of the Auxiliary Territorial Service viewed the gunsites experiment warily. There was an attempt to persuade the girls that their prime loyalty should be to the ATS; but the girls, and their male officers, thought that their prime loyalty should be to the battery—and that was the way it was. Sir Winston Churchill, whose daughter Mary joined one of the first mixed batteries, was drawn into this controversy. "Considering that they (the girls) share the risks

Discipline in mixed regiments was excellent—with perhaps a tendency towards romping at Christmas; hence the drawing at right. Below: midnight alarm in the command post. Note officer with stop watch.



and the work of the battery in fact," he said, "there can be no justification for denying them incorporation in form." With pride the girls put up the Gunners' "Ubique" badge on their battle-dresses.

Operationally, there was never any doubt that the women who operated the predictors, height-finders and radar sets were efficient; indeed, they may have been more efficient than men, lacking as they did the male quality of hair-fistedness. In action, they remained calm when metal rained down on them. On a Thames gunsites the flames of fifty incendiaries ringed the radar receiver, but the girls under Lance-Corporal G. C. Collard ATS (who was awarded the British Empire Medal) continued calmly operating.

In Richmond Park and Hyde Park were show sites which were visited by a fascinated procession of Service chiefs, ministers (prime and otherwise), potentates, Members of Parliament and editors. They all agreed that British women were wonderful. Not all the sites had the amenities of these show places, but on the whole the introduction of women led to an improvement in the comforts of gunsites. At least one mixed battery took its polished linoleum with it when deployed in the field against V1s.

After the war the mixed regiments lived on in the Territorial Army. It was common to find a high degree of inter-marriage and family relationship in such units.

When the mixed regiments are broken up, women will still work alongside men in a wide variety of units—but not operationally. If an emergency comes there will be no need to worry about a precedent; the precedent is there, and it is an excellent one.



A 3.7 fires—controlled by girls operating a Vickers predictor.



# IT'S EASY TO BLAME ARMY DRIVERS, BUT—

*figures suggest the Army's road safety record is as good as anybody's, even though sometimes one accident is counted as two*



"Left hand down—steady—right hand down . . ."

**A** TRAFFIC accident is an occurrence where, owing to the presence of a vehicle, damage or injury results to any person, property or animals (horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat, dog, poultry or domestic animal other than a cat).

The definition comes from the Army's motor-vehicle training manual. Mr. Antony Head, the War Minister, will be thinking of it this month as he prepares the Army Estimates to present to Parliament. Somewhere in the Army's bill he must make provision for damage or injury caused by Army vehicles in the coming year to civilians, their property or animals (except cats).

Other items in the bill will also be swollen by the Army's traffic accidents: for example, vehicles written-off, and repairs.

The Army's reputation suffers with almost every accident, as well as its finances. Army vehicles are conspicuous, and when one is involved in a crash, whether it is the driver's fault or not, somebody is sure to go away blaming that soldier in particular and the Army in general.

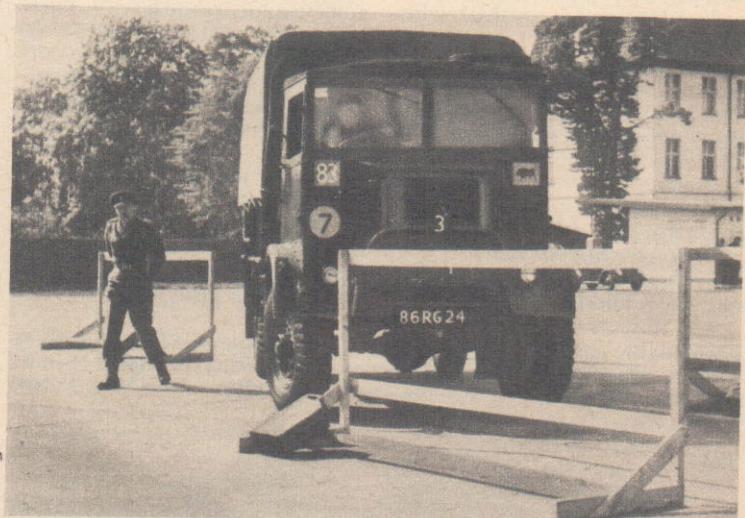
It is worth noting that the Minister of Transport considers the Army driving test demands a slightly higher standard than the civilian test.

The Army is not idle in preventing accidents. Recently 23 officers from home commands sat down with representatives of the War Office, the Army Mechanical Transport School and the Royal Military Police to exchange ideas. They hope to meet annually for the same purpose. To help them, there were also scientists from the Army Operational Research Group (a

body which has already investigated motor-cycle accidents in the Army: *SOLDIER*, October 1949) and a speaker from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

They faced a diet of figures, but figures in this field are notoriously unreliable. Someone has calculated that the Army has fewer traffic accidents for every 100,000 miles driven in Britain than commercial firms. It may be that comparison is not as creditable as it seems, since Army drivers use crowded city streets less than commercial drivers. On the other hand, when one Army lorry backs into another and causes damage, two accident reports are filed, one for each vehicle, and two accidents go into the record. So it is equally likely that the figures do less than justice to the Army.

What is needed now is more detailed analysis of accidents. The War Office is working on a new accident report form from which, it is hoped, it will be possible to draw some definite and useful conclusions. Thus, if turning to the right (fourth on the civilian police list of accident causes) appears from this form to account for a large proportion of accidents to Army vehicles, then training and propaganda can be directed towards making this operation less perilous. Perhaps, too, vehicles can be modified with the same purpose.



Is this the way to greater safety? A driving test in Rhine Army.

The scientists of the Army Operational Research Group demand even more information than the form is likely to give them. They want to know the driver's state of training. Dr. J. C. Penton, for the Group, said it had been suggested there was a danger period just after a driver had finished his training. Other people thought the danger period came about nine months after training. Because of the extra work involved in finding out all the Group requires, the information will probably be supplied only by selected units.

Command and district headquarters want to know the locations of accidents. By plotting where accidents happen, "black-spots" can be detected and something done about making them

safer. The experts agree that trivial accidents should be reported because, as one officer put it, a driver who scrapes his paint on a post could just as easily brush it against a man, with more serious consequences.

Incidentally, men under five feet six inches are regarded as too short to drive certain heavy vehicles,

such as tank transporters. They cannot push the pedals in fully. A height of five feet two inches is enough for most vehicles.

Other road safety items are these:

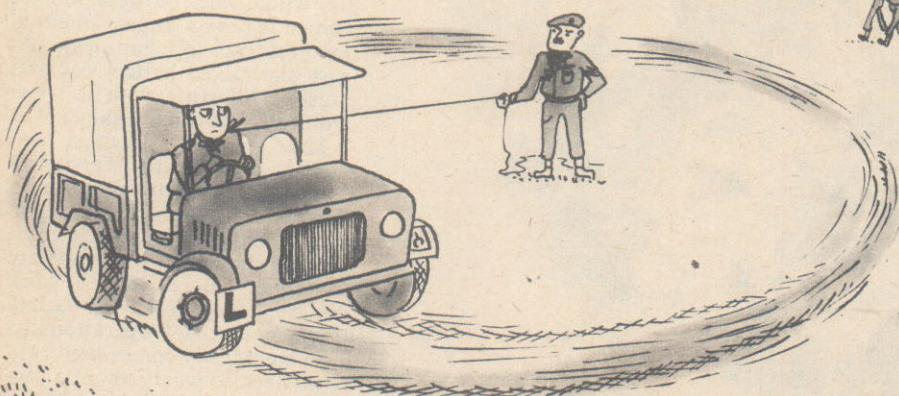
Winking indicator lights are to be fitted to all Army vehicles and almost all trailers. A motorist driving behind an Army lorry may see ten different points of light, twin rear lights, twin red reflectors (to conform with the Road Traffic Act), twin stop-lights, a convoy light on the differential, a number-plate illuminating light, and the "winkers."

Regular and Territorial officers are being appointed to road safety committees which local authorities have set up. Soldiers are helping in demonstrations organised by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

In one area, soldiers who want to keep their private motorcycles on Army property must undertake not to ride them without wearing crash-helmets.

A new and simpler list of standing orders for drivers is to be issued this year.

It has been suggested that the Royal Army Educational Corps should provide instruction in kerb-drill for soldiers' children returning from overseas. In some stations abroad, notably in Germany, kerb-drill is taught, but as traffic there drives on the right-hand side of the road children are confused when they return to Britain.



"Traditions die hard in these Cavalry regiments."

# The Men of MARS

THE name of the unit smacks of space fiction — Seventh MARS.

But the men of Seventh MARS, in Korea, have a down-to-earth job. The full name of this unit is Seventh Mobile Ammunition Repair Section and they belong to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Their job is to carry out urgent repairs and modifications to ammunition; to inspect dumps; to investigate ammunition accidents; to remove recovered ammunition (both United Nations and Communist) from unit areas; to destroy unwanted ammunition; and to advise units on storage.

The Section was formed at the RAOC School of Ammunition at Bramley, Hampshire, in 1952. Its commanding officer is Inspecting Ordnance Officer Captain Peter Smythe, who completed a long course at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham. His staff includes two ammunition examiners (Class X trade). Only the Inspecting Ordnance Officer and his sergeant are authorised to carry out demolitions. In six months they have detonated 200 tons of ammunition.



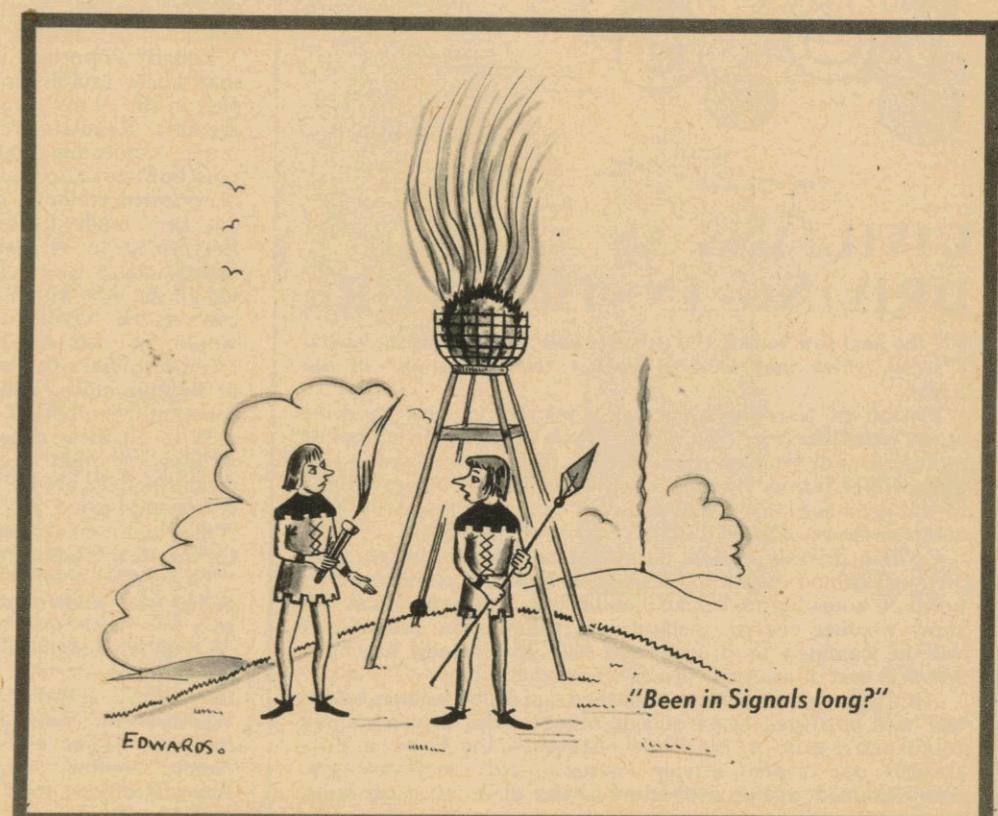
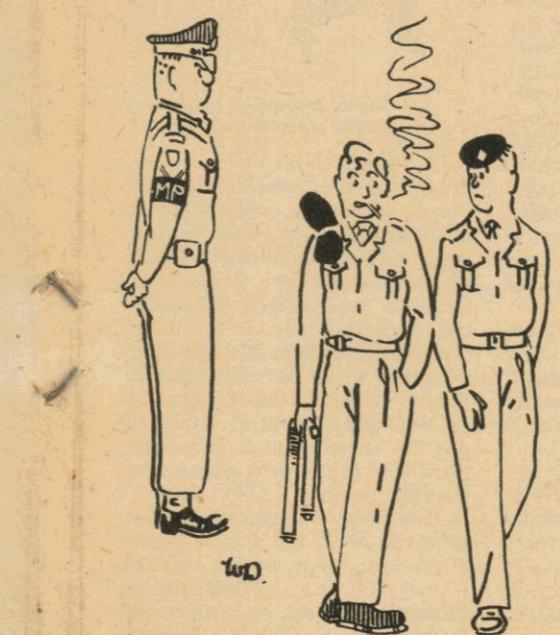
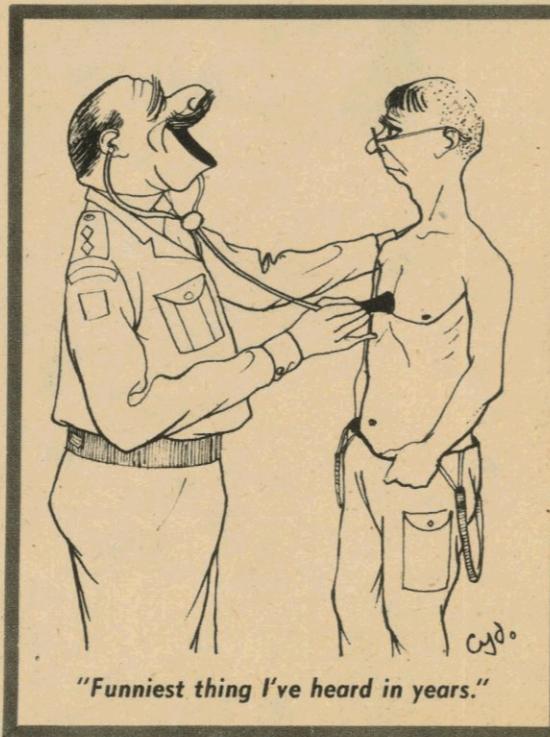
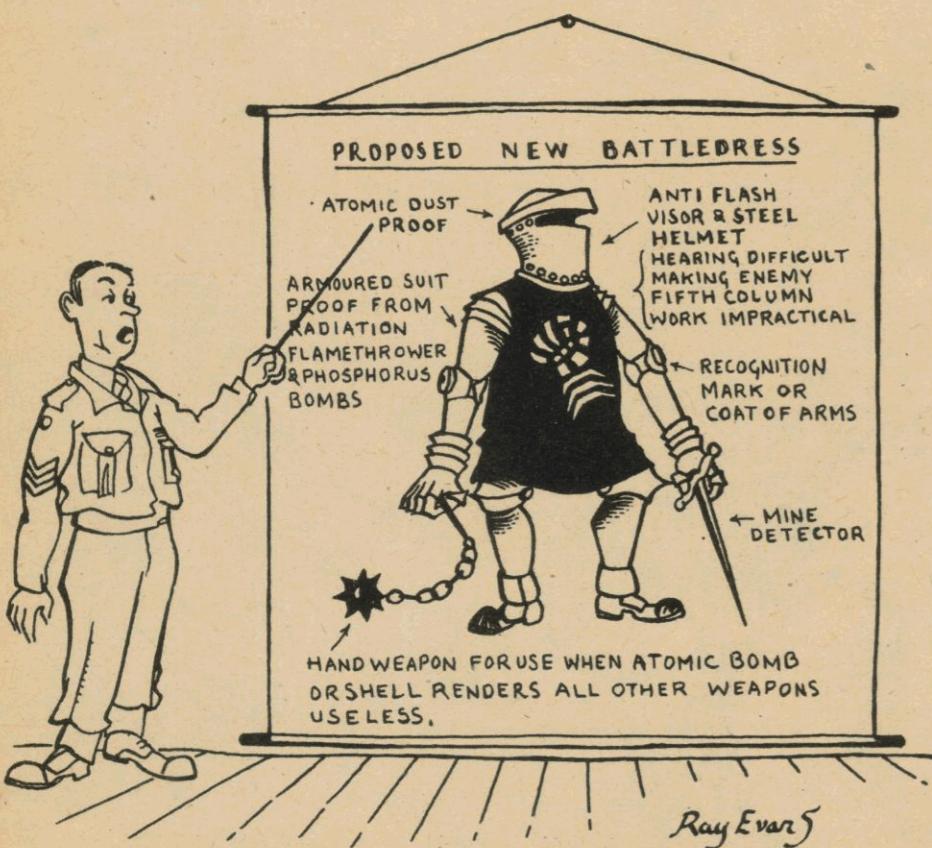
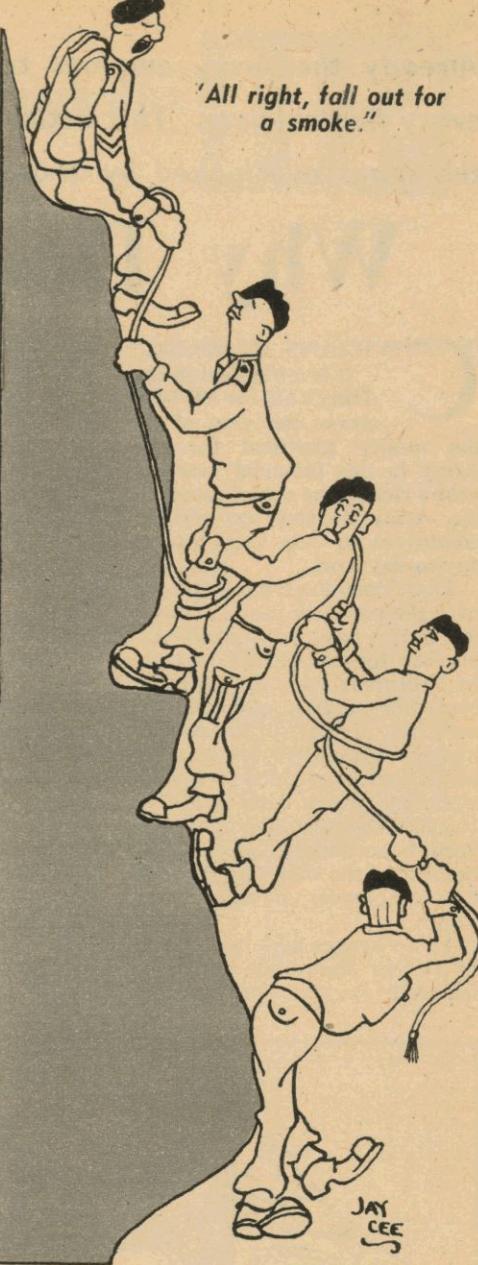
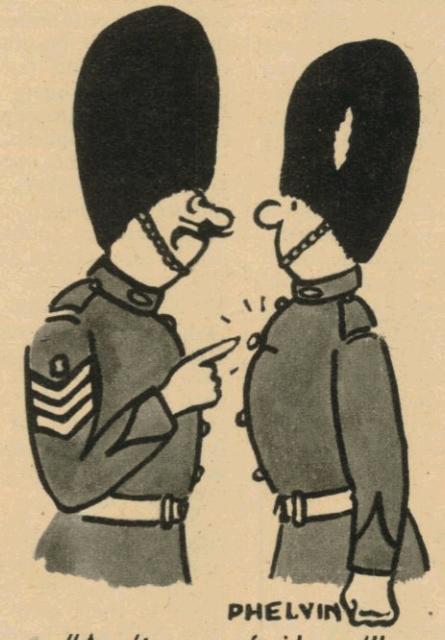
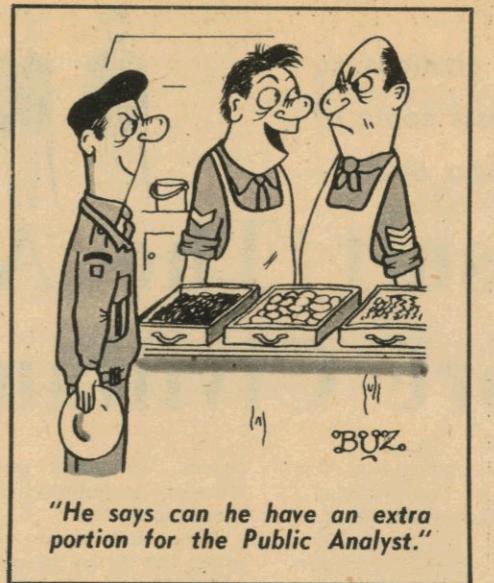
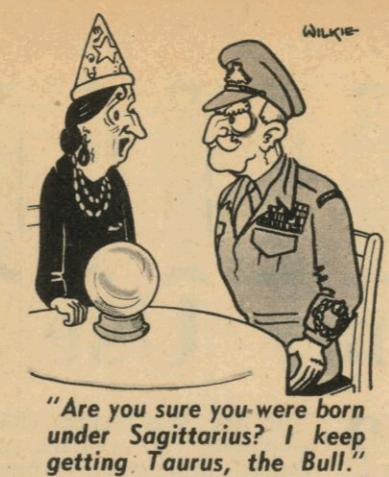
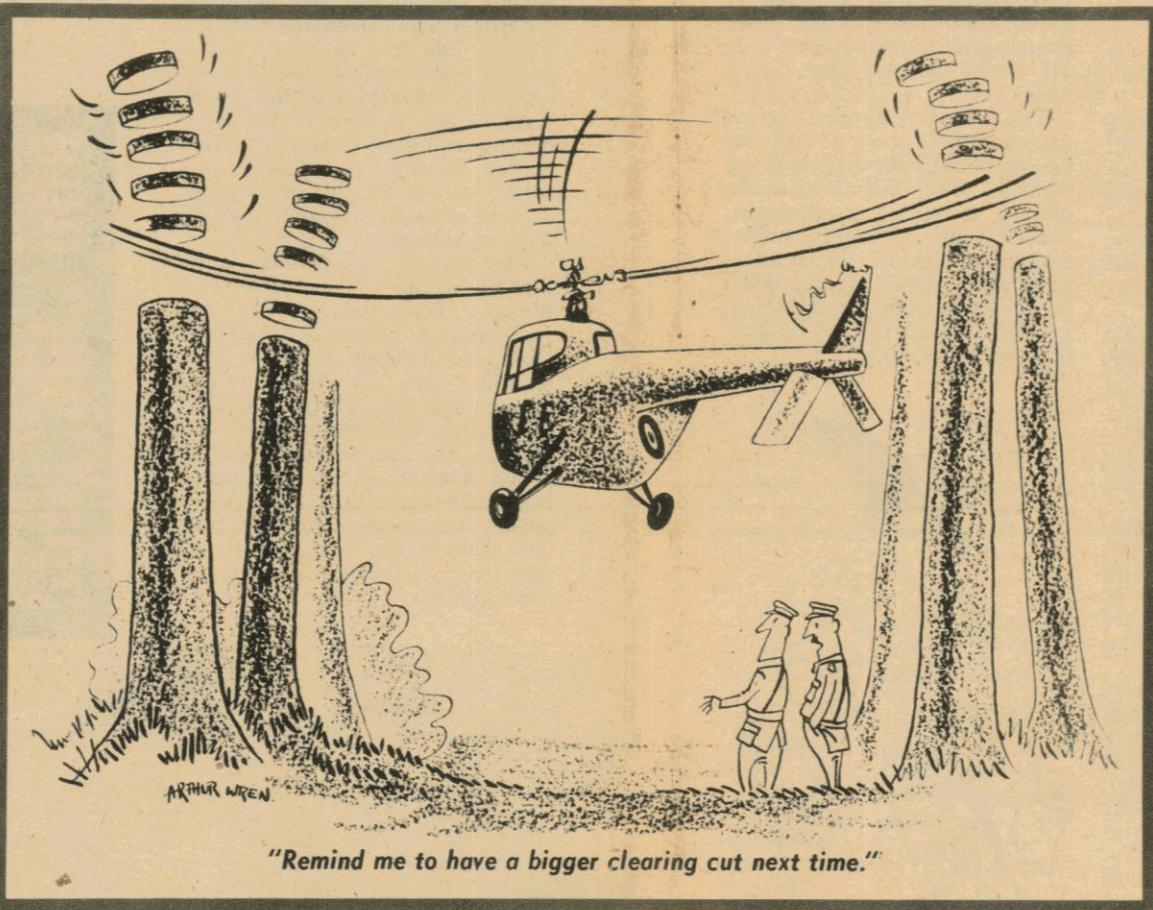
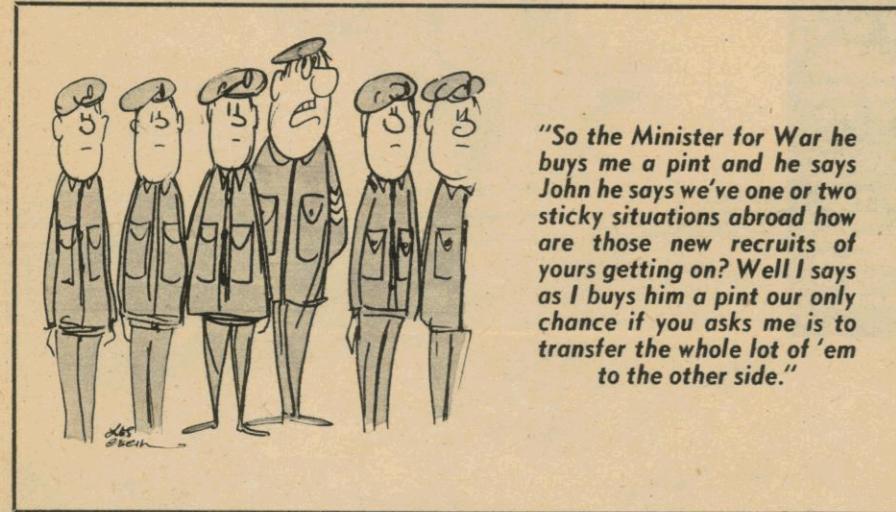
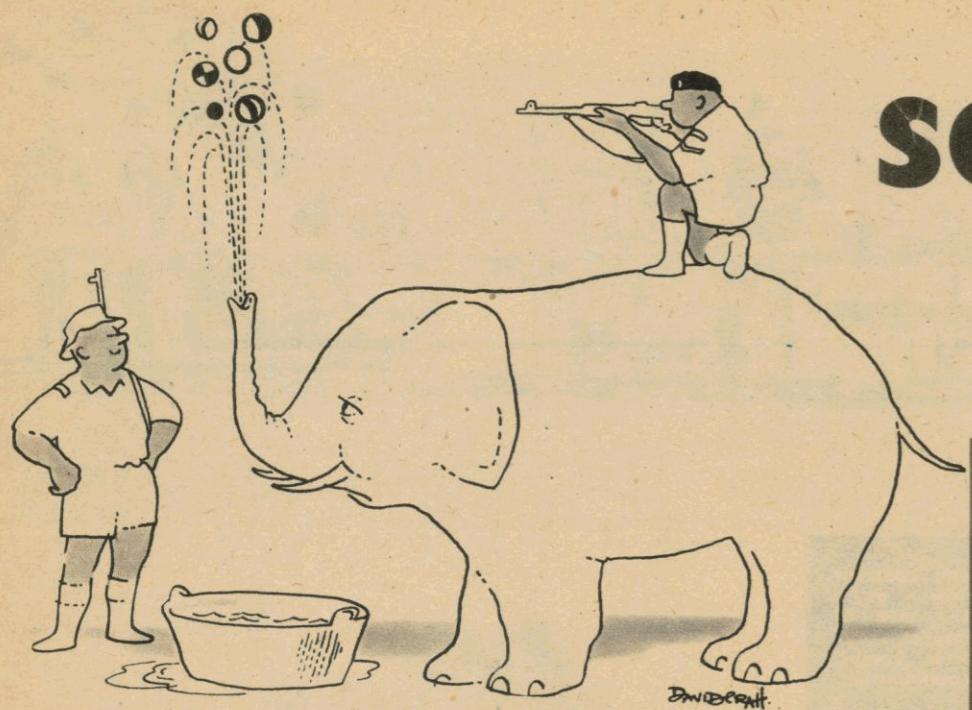
Using an open-air roller-conveyor as a bench, the men of MARS inspect two-inch mortar bombs and other ammunition.

Right: blowing up a big batch of unserviceable ammunition. Some stocks are due for dumping at sea.

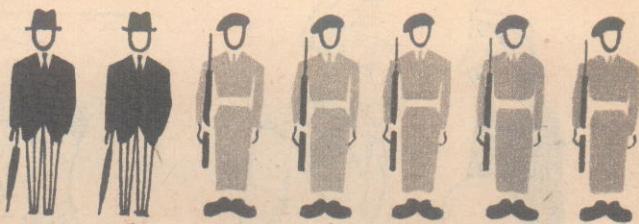
All their own work: Captain Peter Smythe and Staff-Sergeant Frederick Yearling in the yawning crater of a 40-ton demolition.



# SOLDIER HUMOUR



Already the Army employs two civilians to every five soldiers. This article lists some of the snags overlooked by those who ask—



# Why Doesn't The Army Use More Civilians?

**CIVILIANS, £67,000,000.**  
It is a big item in the Army's bill for 1954-55, eleven per cent of all the money provided for the Army in this financial year. It shows clearly the extent to which the Army depends on civilian employees to help carry on its day-to-day work.

That dependence has increased over the past few years. Today, the Army has two civilian employees for every five soldiers. In 1939 there were only two for every nine soldiers, and they cost only four per cent of the Army's budget. Since 1950, the number of civilian employees in Britain alone has grown from 96,700 to 108,900. Overseas, the figure has been reduced in that time, largely because of the walk-out of Egyptian employees in the Canal Zone.

These figures take no account of further thousands employed indirectly on the Army's behalf

by contractors engaged on Army projects, or by the Ministry of Supply to produce weapons and equipment.

Why the large numbers? Largely because there are not enough soldiers to do all that the Army has to do. So, wherever possible, civilians are employed to release soldiers for field force units. It is one way of carrying out the process known as cutting down the Army's tail.

There are other reasons. In some administrative jobs there is need for continuity of service, which soldiers liable to be posted every two or three years cannot give. Other posts, like that of the Scientific Adviser to the Army, Council (salary, £2500), demand qualifications which it is not possible to acquire during a military

career. In some posts, it is cheaper to employ a civilian than a soldier.

Now and again, somebody urges the Army to employ still more civilians in the hope of achieving economies, reducing the period of National Service, cutting down the "tail" still more, or saving soldiers from the drudgery of "housewifely" jobs like peeling potatoes.

Overseas, the Army cannot always find workers of the right quality or enough of them, so there must be soldiers to carry on. In some places, as in Malaya, the men who work in an Army establishment may be called upon to defend it, and defence is not in a civilian's terms of service. Most overseas depots, too, need to be fairly mobile, and civilians cannot be moved as readily as soldiers whose lives are geared to cope with frequent and rapid changes.

Soldiers who man overseas establishments cannot be asked to spend all their service abroad. So there must be vacancies for them in their own work when they are posted home—as clerks or fitters, store-keepers or armourers, cooks or drivers, plumbers or nursing orderlies, staff officers or paymasters.

Equally important is the part that home establishments must play in the Army's training programme. Regulars preparing for more responsible appointments must be fitted in; so must National Servicemen training against the day they might be called from Reserve to go overseas with an expeditionary force. If civilians did all the jobs which might conceivably be "civilianised," there would not be nearly enough trained soldiers for war, except in fighting units, which cannot function unsupported.

With all these considerations, striking the right balance when establishments are being planned is a complicated job, especially if the right men are not available for the ideal establishment.

Generally, civilians work together with soldiers in one team. In a few small units which have no training commitments, there are no soldiers. An example is the Army Forms Depot at Wandsworth. Some branches of the War Office are also completely staffed by civilians. Records offices, too, are largely civilianised.

In the War Office, civilian employees start with the Army Council, of which the Permanent Under-Secretary of State (salary £4500) is a member, and go down the pay scale to temporary Grade III clerks (starting pay, 50s a week).

The Army Estimates reveal that no fewer than 359 of the General Staff's 901 members are civilians. They include scientific officers, a senior psychologist, electrical and mechanical engineers, map curators, an architectural and engineering draughtsman, cartographic draughtsmen, a map research officer, illustrators and a librarian.



... civilians cannot be moved as readily as soldiers."

Elsewhere, the Army's civilians range from land officers to broadcasting specialists, schoolteachers to merchant navy crews, motion study officers to firemen, senior administrators to clerks and cleaners, statisticians to craftsmen and labourers.

Since 1951, there has also been a special Civil Service class of Retired Officers—ex-Army officers who supplement their retired pay by serving on as civilians, thus relieving serving officers for the field force.

The Army's biggest employer of civilians is the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, with a total of 62,000. Of these, 42,000 are in Ordnance depots in Britain and 20,000 abroad. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, with 19,000 at home and nearly 13,000 abroad, come next. In the

## CIVILIANS AS DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

IN the next few weeks, 100 privates will take part in an experiment which may lead to further "civilianisation" of the Army.

Instead of learning from Army instructors how to drive motor-vehicles, they will become pupils of a civilian school of motoring. For six months, 50 drivers from each intake in two units will be trained by the school, while another 50 are trained in the ordinary way. At the end of that time the Army will compare the results and the costs of the two methods.

Civilian driving schools claim to teach drivers in less than 30 hours behind the wheel. The Army finds the average soldier needs 50 hours before he can pass his test. The experiment will show whether civilian methods are suitable for soldiers. It will be confined to driving and will not include servicing, which is part of an Army driver's normal course.

Although this is the first time the training of soldier-drivers has been entrusted to an outside organisation, driver-training by civilian instructors is not new. At present the Army employs roughly one civilian driving instructor for every two non-commissioned officer instructors in its driver-training units.

Royal Engineers, nearly 23,000 are employed in works and other engineer services at home and abroad; nearly 2000 work on War Department railways and inland water transport, more than half of them abroad.

Among smaller employers are the War Department Constabulary, a uniformed force 2300 strong, and the Royal Army Chaplains' Department, which employs, among others, 39 vergers, eight women chaplains' assistants and, overseas, 56 locally-engaged religious teachers. One group for whom the Army will not have to budget again are the

59 civilians who were employed by the Allied Military Government of Trieste and who included police officers and administrative staff.

The War Department Constabulary is recruited mainly from ex-soldiers. So are a few specialists such as barrack-store accountants and district gunners (the men who maintain Britain's coast artillery). Otherwise, the Army's civilian jobs are filled in the same way as those in the rest of the Civil Service, though in some instances ex-Regulars receive special consideration.

## In the "Good Old Days" Civilians Dragged the Guns

THE Army's civilians have behind them a long and chequered history.

The early standing army consisted of little more than Infantry and Cavalry regiments and a group of senior officers to command them in the field.

Not until 1716 did the Royal Artillery acquire full military status.

For a long time there had been a company of "fee'd gunners" at the Tower of London and similar gunners at strong-points around the country. Their discipline was negligible and, besides drawing pay for their appointments as gunners, they also carried on other trades.

Only in times of war were artillery trains organised, and then they were only partly military. Even after the Gunners came under military discipline, the guns were dragged to 18th-century battles by horses led by civilian drivers. These hired men were liable to bolt with their horses as soon as a shot was fired, leaving the guns and Gunners stranded.

Engineer officers, who had slowly acquired military status, had no troops to command until 1772, when the first Company of Military Artificers was formed in Gibraltar. Until then, they had had to rely entirely on civilian labour for building fortifications.

The Royal Army Ordnance Corps is of even more recent foundation — 1865. Though there had been military officers concerned with supply, most of the work of the Board of Ordnance had been done by civilians. There were plenty of sorry tales of corruption and inefficiency, of gunpowder which would not explode and of guns which would, of troops left in the Colonies without fresh bedding for periods up to 15 years.

From 1794, various military transport trains were raised in war-time, but the other side of the work now done by the Royal Army Service Corps—supplying

the rations—was carried out by Commissariat officers. These were Treasury officials until 1865, and the War Office controlled them for another four years before they received military status.

Until 1870, civilian posts at the War Office were filled by patronage. In other words, the way to get a job was to know the right people.

In World War One the Army's civilian staff expanded enormously. For the new Ordnance depot at Didcot there was a grave shortage of labour, partly made good by volunteer parties of ladies, of dons and professors from Oxford, and boys and masters from Eton. Among the latter was Prince Henry (now the Duke of Gloucester). Also helping were boys and masters from an "industrial" school — the equivalent of today's "approved" school.



... liable to bolt when a shot was fired."

There is no record of such desperate measures in World War Two, when the number of the Army's civilians swelled to more than 130,000 in Britain alone. Some of the war-time "temporaries" have stayed on. Their experience, combined with the experience gained in uniform by war-time soldiers and ex-National Servicemen who have joined the Civil Service, gives the Army's civilians a deeper understanding of the Army's needs than they have ever had in the past.

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# COACH TO CHAMPIONS

**The Army's boxing coach is to retire. Jack Gardner and Joe Erskine were among the champions he has groomed.**

**O**PPORTUNITY did not knock for Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Frederick Verlander. It rang. He was in the Brigade of Guards gymnasium at Windsor, where he had five Olympic Games "probables" under training, when the telephone buzzed. The voice at the other end, without any preliminary sparring, asked: "Would you like to take the Army boxing team to Denmark?"

This—to a man who was dead keen on boxing, but whose efforts to win an Army title had always been frustrated—was an opening he had been waiting for.

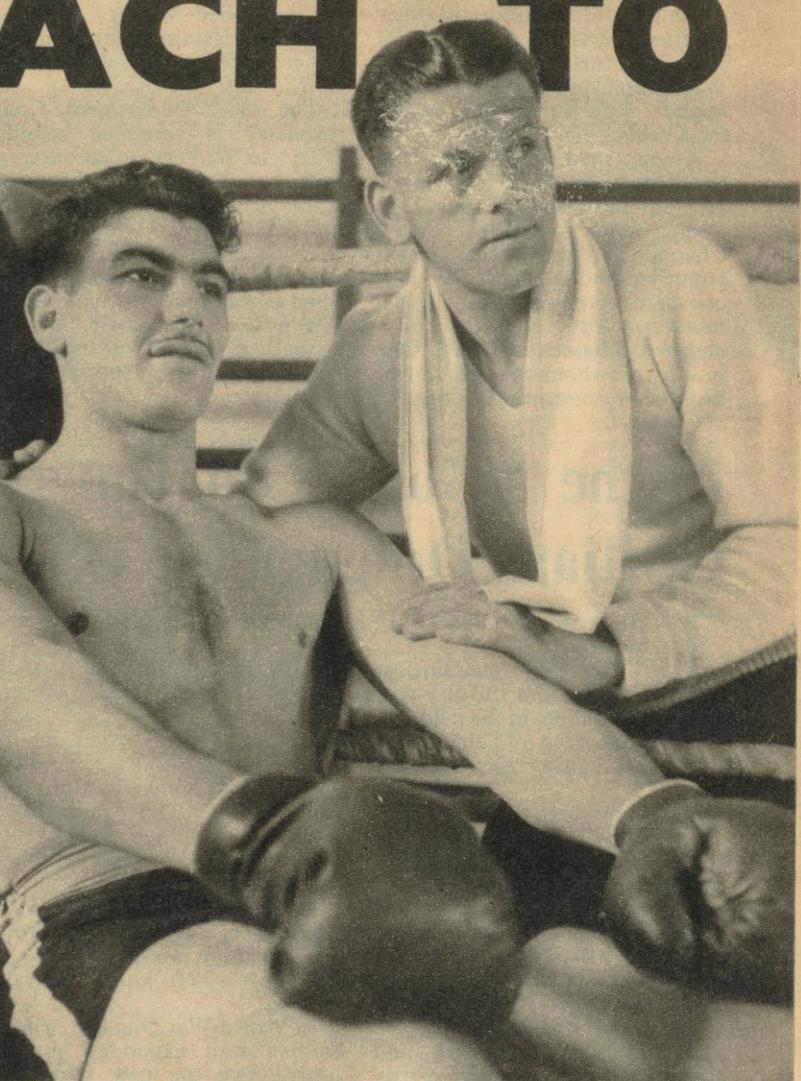
The voice warned him: "It's a make or break job," but he knew that already. On an assignment like this there was no room for a man who did not know the boxing game, outside as well as inside the ring. Managing a team of young boxers, at home or

**In action at the ringside: QMSI Verlander suffers blow by blow with a protégé. His own efforts to gain an Army title were frustrated.**

abroad, demands tact and leadership as well as professional skill.

QMSI Verlander felt that he could stay the distance. He accepted the challenge (and the job) and moved in as successor to Regimental Sergeant-Major Harry Cromey.

He never looked back. For seven years he has managed successive Army boxing teams, and has seen his boys become Army, amateur and professional champions. Glance at the names of



Jack Gardner, one-time British heavy-weight champion, was one of the sergeant-major's pupils. Gardner retired but recently made a come-back.

some of those who have passed through his hands: Jack Gardner, Don Scott, Peter Longo, Arthur Worrell, Eric Ludlam, Ronald Hinson and his brother Denis, Henry Cooper, Joe Erskine, George Martin, Terry Gooding, Joe Lucy, Wally Thom, Ron Bebbington, Peter Morrison, Johnny Ryan, Mickey Forester, Joe Murphy, Peter Toch and Ron Crookes. Fourteen of these won National Championships while in the Army and many of them have since turned professional.

Among the countries he has visited as coach are Denmark (three times), Sweden (three times), Belgium and Germany. He even went behind the Iron Curtain—to Poland, for the European championships.

One night recently QMSI Verlander, occupying a five-guinea ringside seat as the guest of Peter Wilson at a Jack Solomons promotion, saw three of "his" boxers on the same programme. But the gift of a Solomons cigar did not fire him with managerial ambitions.

What conclusions has he reached after hours spent in the gym at Chelsea Barracks, on the running-track in Battersea Park, or crouched by the ringside "in the blue corner," tending to,

encouraging and advising his pupils?

Something that is quite surprising. Said he to *SOLDIER*: "If National Service ended tomorrow it would be a sad day for Army boxing. Most of those who make the grade come into the Army with considerable experience, thanks to long association with good amateur boxing clubs. They have a decided advantage inasmuch as their faults have been corrected by capable hands before I ever see them."

As an illustration, there is Private George Whelan, present Amateur Boxing Association lightweight champion. Just 20 years of age, he has already had more than 120 contests, mostly with the London Transport Boxing Club at Chiswick, which he will soon rejoin. Oddly enough, before call-up Private Whelan had signed as a professional, but a broken right hand prevented him from boxing. A friend advised him to seek reinstatement as an amateur. He did so—and went on to win an Amateur title.

Another of QMSI Verlander's recent charges who had an excellent grounding before he entered the Army is Private Nick Gargano, present Empire Games and Amateur Boxing Association

welterweight champion, who is an experienced product of the well-known Eton Manor Club.

If National Service ended—a contingency perhaps too remote to be contemplated—where would the Army turn for new blood? QMSI Verlander points to the apprentice schools as a possible source and cites as current examples Sapper McCairn and Craftsman Phayr.

"We have had some first-class boys from the apprentice schools, but too many of them lose interest all too quickly," he said. "The main hope for a larger sprinkling of Regulars in future Army boxing teams lies with these schools and the boys' battalions."

It looks, then, as though QMSI Verlander's successor will have to spend some of his time fanning—and not with a towel—the waning enthusiasm of ex-boy apprentices into a passion to emulate the deeds of Jack Gardner, Wally Thom, Johnny Ryan and so on.

Johnny Ryan, incidentally, is a boxer who stands out in QMSI Verlander's memories of these seven years. This champion welterweight once beat Randolph Turpin in their days as amateurs together, and he was the only British boxer who was always too good for Victor Jorgensen, the Dane.

"He was a natural boxer," says the coach, "gifted with a keen boxing brain."

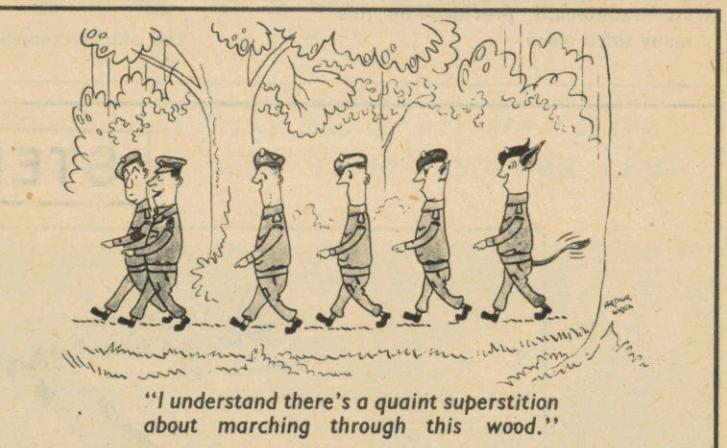
QMSI Verlander's own efforts to achieve an Army title—lightweight or welterweight—were made while he was serving before World War Two in the Royal Signals. The rock against whom he broke was a soldier named McKinley. It may be that his lack of success was caused by engaging in too many sports at the same time—he ran, swam and played football for the Royal Signals.



Between rounds the sergeant-major works fast on a damaged eye.



Private G. Whelan, ABA light champion and (below) Private Nick Gargano, Empire Games and ABA welter-weight champion, are two Army boxers treading the road to fame.

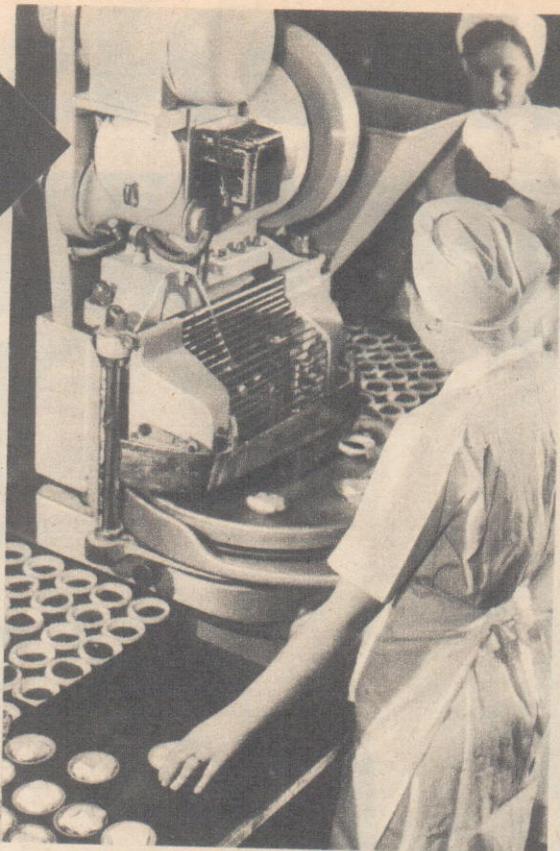


"I understand there's a quaint superstition about marching through this wood."

QMSI Verlander with the Army team which recently fought the London Amateur Boxing Association.



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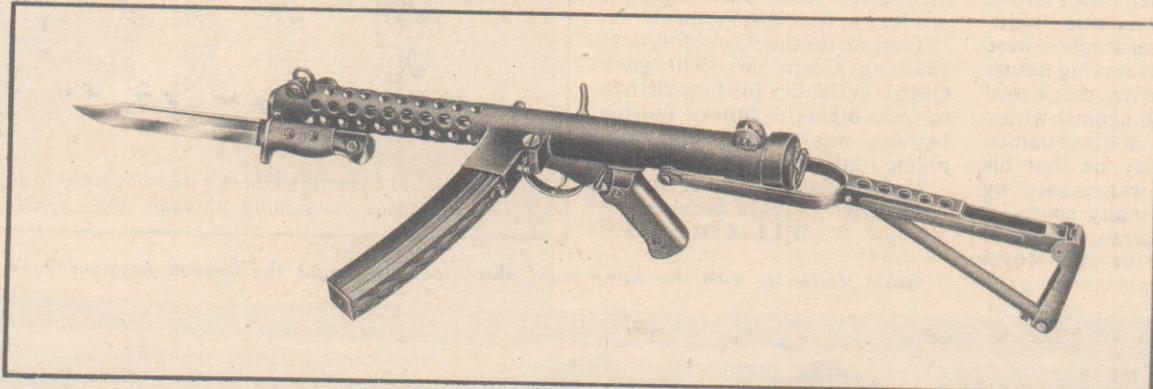


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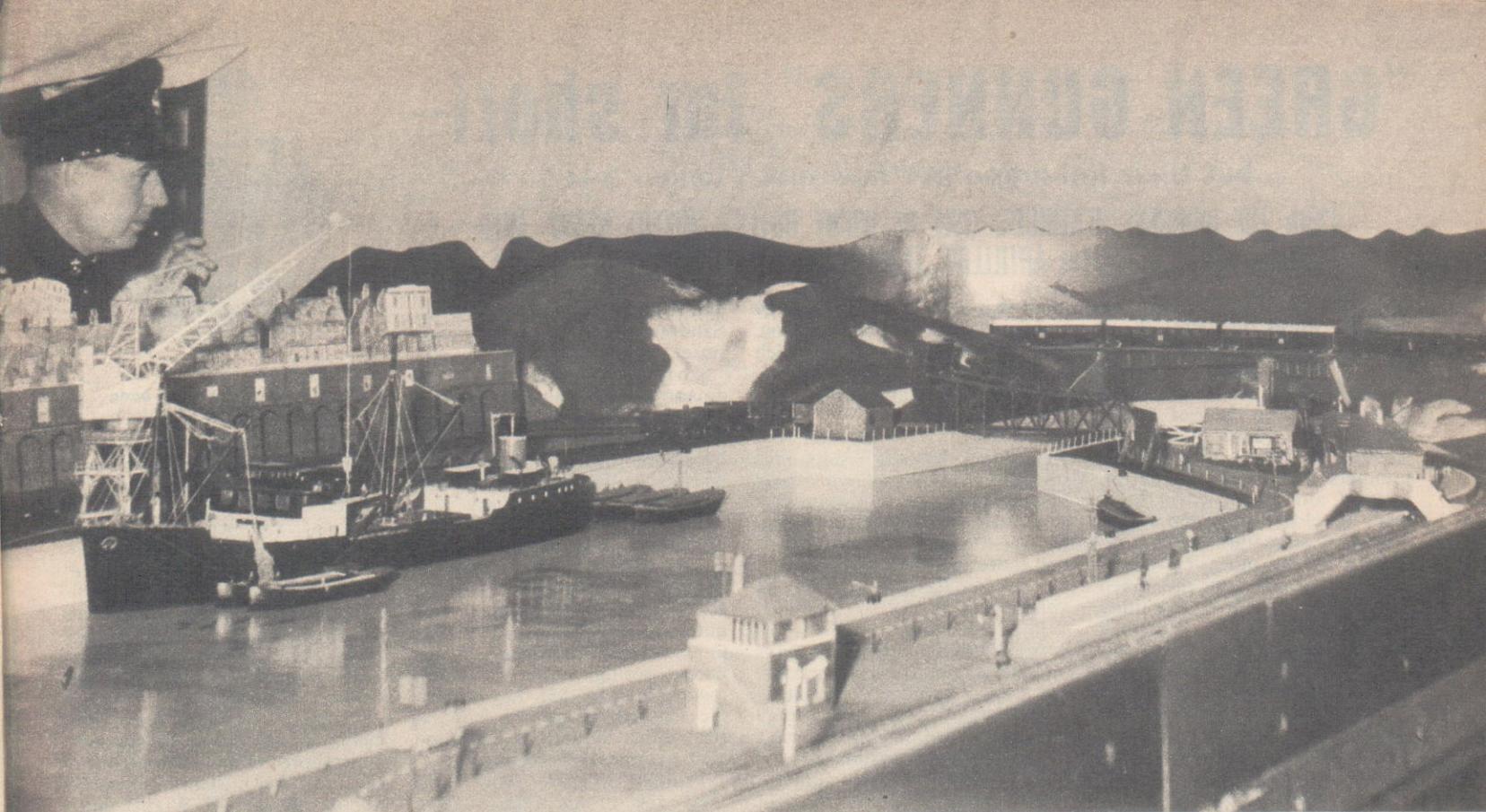
and improved their Sub-Machine Gun to meet the latest military requirements. The weapon is today in the hands of troops of the British Army and those of twelve Colonial Military and Police Forces.

After years of endeavour, the adoption of this weapon by H.M. Government reflects the achievement of the Company's skilled engineers and technicians whose knowledge, enthusiasm and untiring efforts—in war and peace—have resulted in the **STERLING SUB-MACHINE GUN**.

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A port with railhead was shown by the Royal Engineers' Transportation Branch.

## THE ARMY SHOWS ITS BOATS

THE Army likes to show its wares in public. In recent years it has exhibited at the National Radio Show, the Ideal Homes Exhibition, the International Handicrafts and Hobbies Exhibition, the International Hotel and Catering Exhibition, the Model Engineering Exhibition and the Schoolboys' Exhibition—not to mention numerous agricultural shows.

It was no surprise, therefore, to find the Army on parade at the first National Boat Show at Olympia. In the limelight were the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Engineers.

The Royal Army Service Corps has had its own fleet for more than 50 years. It was operating ships as long ago as 1856, when it ferried ordnance pieces and stores from Woolwich to Shoeburyness, partly to save harbour dues. Today, companies of the fleet operate in Britain, Hong Kong, Singapore, Port Said, Malta, the West Indies and West Africa. Their task is to maintain coastal forts, to move men and stores to and from ships and to provide target boats for coastal gunners and searchlight crews.

One of these target boats, a radio-controlled unsinkable "Queen Gull" with a speed of 21 knots, was a popular exhibit. Grown-ups and children competed to manoeuvre a scale model in a water tank. Also on show were models of some of the other craft operated by the Corps.

The Royal Engineers, whose Transportation Branch operates tugs, lighters and other small craft on inland waterways and in military docks, showed an electrically-controlled model of a railhead and port layout, with models of some of their vessels. They had been made by officers and men of the Transportation School at Longmoor in their spare time.

*The British Army has its private "Navy" —complete with radio-controlled craft*



A radio-controlled model in the Royal Army Service Corps tank.

# "GREEN GUNNERS" for short-

but their full name (for how much longer?) is

428th THE PRINCESS BEATRICE'S (ISLE OF WIGHT RIFLES) (MIXED) HEAVY ANTI-AIRCRAFT REGIMENT, ROYAL ARTILLERY, TERRITORIAL ARMY (THE GREEN GUNNERS)

**H**AS any unit a longer name than that above? It comes to 20 words (including the numerals and three sets of brackets). It is all official, too, except the "Green Gunners" bit, which is the Regiment's popular name.

The Green Gunners are as easy to spot in a crowd as in a list. They wear their own Isle of Wight Rifles badge (once black, now silvered to show up against the Gunners' blue beret) and a green lanyard, along with Royal Artillery shoulder-titles and Anti-Aircraft Command flashes.

Like all the other Territorial anti-aircraft Gunners, the Green Gunners are anxiously awaiting news of their future. Will they continue in the rôle which contributes half of their long name and to which they have devoted so much effort? Will they continue at all? They are hopeful. Their claim looks good.

The Regiment is the only Territorial unit in the Isle of Wight, and so receives nearly all the island's National Servicemen when they are released to part-time service. It is very much a family regiment. "The same names keep cropping up in the records," says Lieutenant-

Colonel C. M. D. Burnett, the Regiment's Regular commanding officer. "We have two fathers serving beside their sons now."

A quarter of the Green Gunners are volunteer Territorials and more than half the National Servicemen have also signed as volunteers.

In summer most of the members are heavily engaged in serving the island's holiday-makers, so the Regiment's recruiting propaganda makes much play with the phrase, "Camp is always in May before Whitsun." At one time, the Regiment even contemplated shutting down its drill halls during the holiday season, but the members were not having that. "There are always some who turn up, even in the busiest times," says Lieutenant-Colonel Burnett. The Regiment has eight drill halls, two each at Newport

and Ryde and one each at Cowes, Sandown, Ventnor and Freshwater.

The Green Gunners trace their ancestry back to an Isle of Wight Militia raised in 1757. They also have Gunners among their predecessors, for in 1777 the Militia became an independent company and a train of artillery was formed by each parish providing one piece of brass ordnance.

The official birth of the Isle of Wight Rifles came nearly a century ago, in 1859, when Volunteers were reformed in six independent companies, which became a single regiment the following year. In 1885 they became the 5th (Isle of Wight, Princess Beatrice's) Volunteer Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment.

Princess Beatrice, whose name they took at this time, was the youngest child of Queen Victoria and wife of Prince Henry of Battenberg, Governor of the Isle of Wight. Prince Henry became honorary colonel of the Regiment, and the officers presented him with a sword. He was a keen



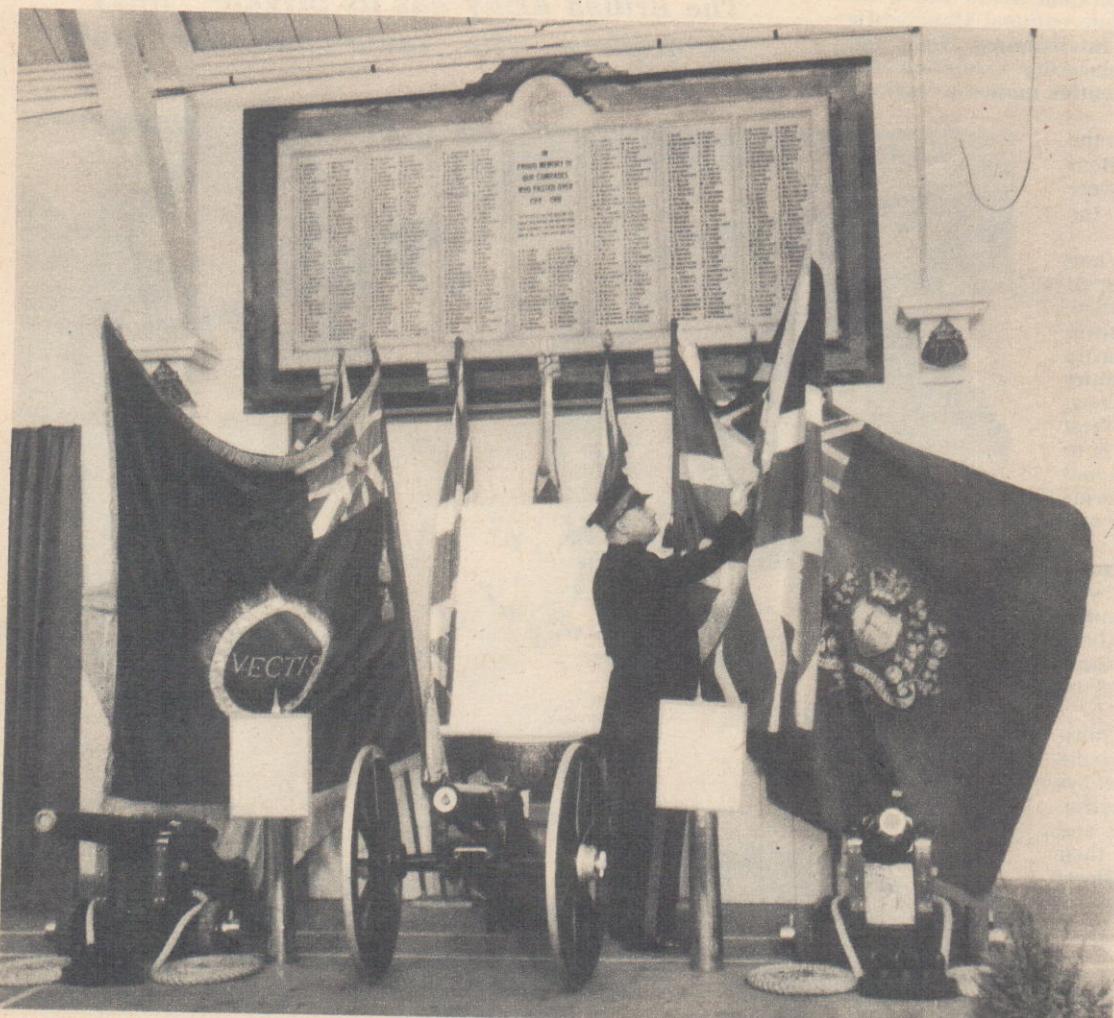
The Isle of Wight's own badge.

soldier, and at his own request went off to serve in the second Ashanti War. While there, he picked up a fever from which he died in 1896. King George V, then Duke of York, succeeded him as honorary colonel and later became colonel-in-chief. Among exhibits the Regiment displayed recently to the public were a photograph of the King in the Regiment's uniform, along with the uniform itself.

Princess Beatrice had no official appointment in the Regiment which bore her name (though she succeeded her husband as Governor of the Isle of Wight) until 1937, when she became honorary colonel. She died in 1944. Among the Regiment's souvenirs of her are a photograph inscribed, "To my Regiment," and the sword the Regiment presented to her husband. This she gave on condition that the commanding officer should wear it every time the Regiment was inspected.

The Regiment has undergone other changes. When the Territorial Army was formed in 1908, it became the 9th Battalion The Hampshire Regiment (Princess Beatrice's Isle of Wight Rifles) and as such fought at Gallipoli and in Palestine, bringing home a neat little Turkish gun as a war trophy. Its World War One casualties totalled 526. In World War Two it defended the Isle of Wight as an anti-aircraft regiment (though the islanders from the Regiment were scattered far and wide in other units and men from the mainland took their places). When the Territorial Army was reformed in 1947, the Green Gunners became a coast artillery regiment, but returned to their present rôle in 1948.

In 1950, Earl Mountbatten of Burma became the Green Gunners' honorary colonel and resumed a family connection with the Regiment. Prince Henry of Battenberg was his uncle and Princess Beatrice his aunt.



## THINGS YOU WOULDN'T KNOW UNLESS WE TOLD YOU

In the early days of Sandhurst, a cadet under arrest was allowed to dine in mess, but was marched out before the pudding was brought in.



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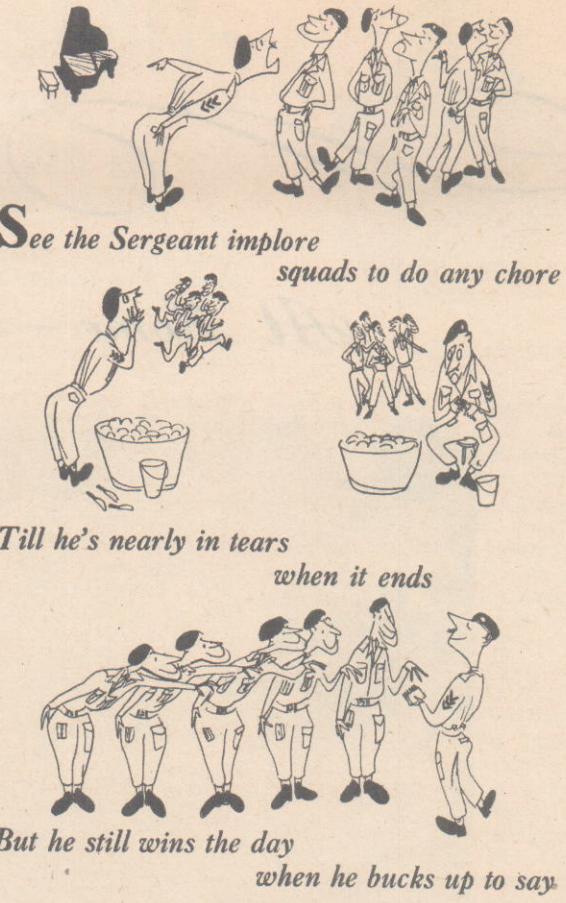
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# POPSKI: Looking Under The Legend

**I**N Italy a military policeman stopped a jeep of Popski's Private Army.

"Ah! Popski's Private Army. That's the eccentric Polish millionaire who hired an army of his own," he exclaimed.

The military policeman might have been less amiably disposed if he had known that this private army was a British unit in which no officer was saluted or called "sir" and the complaints of military police about driving offences were torn up.

A biography of the late Lieutenant-Colonel Vladimir Peniakoff DSO, MC—"Popski" (*Macgibbon and Kee, 18s*)—has been written by John Willett, a friend and military associate. It is in no sense a re-hash of Popski's own book "Private Army."

## Dédée Earned GM

**A**NDRÉE DE JONGH, Dédée to her friends, is a Belgian girl whose father nicknamed her "Little Cyclone" because she was always rushing around.

She was also the moving spirit of the Comet Line, the Belgian and French organisation which ferried Allied Servicemen, mostly airmen, through German-occupied territory from Brussels to Spain. That is why Lieutenant-Colonel Airey Neave, DSO, MC, MP, has called his story of the Comet Line "Little Cyclone" (*Hodder and Stoughton, 12s 6d*).

It is a story of courage and audacity. One girl stood outside a prison, shouting to an inmate, until she obtained the name of a traitor who had given the Line away. A Pyrenees smuggler, who guided escapers over the frontier, was rescued from captivity in hospital by three friends in borrowed Gestapo uniform and a borrowed ambulance.

There were fantastic incidents, as when a spoiled Allied airman, eating in a black-market restaurant, gave his steak to a dog because it was underdone. Steaks were precious rarities, and the airman and his companions became uncomfortably conspicuous. A German officer stalked up to the table—and congratulated the man on his kindness to animals.

Through treachery and other causes, hundreds of Comet Line helpers fell into German hands. Many were tortured; 23 were shot; 133 died in concentration camps.

Was it worth it? The Comet Line workers and the author have no doubts. They kept 800 airmen from the frustration of prison-camps (200 of them were being hidden in woods as liberation armies approached). Trained airmen were valuable to the Allied air forces, but more than that their return gave new heart to their fellows. The Comet Line, declares the author, "had done more than anything else to take

The author's idea was to blow away some of the fluff which has surrounded Popski, and show the man himself; which does not mean that this is a wanton exercise in debunking.

The military policeman in Italy was only one of many who fell for the Popski myth (perhaps Popski did himself). A few of the more bizarre newspaper notions about him are listed at the beginning of this book: "When Venice

She survived concentration camp, and was awarded the George Medal.



the sense of hopelessness out of the sceptical words 'Missing' or 'Missing, believed killed.'"

Dédée survived a concentration camp and, with two of her women helpers, received the George Medal. She is now training to be a nurse.

was liberated, he was parachuted with a jeep into the Piazza San Marco"; "he was the most mysterious personage of the war"; he was "the Legendary Chief of the Puritans of the Desert"; his men were "mainly Commandos and Guardsmen" and "all wore beards."

In fact, says Mr. Willett, the Private Army was "a mere flea" among the divisions which fought in Africa and Italy. It did useful work, but never brought off one of those coups which alter the course of campaigns. Undoubtedly it "would have attracted less attention if its name had been 'B Squadron of the Wiltshire Hussars,' or if its commander had been called Smith. Popski, in fact, was not one of the war's outstanding heroes, nor one of its great commanders, though perhaps if the Army had used him with more imagination he might have become one."

What, then, is to be said for Popski's Private Army? Says the author: "It cheered up the ordinary soldier by convincing him that our army had its more original and enterprising, even its comic side; by making him feel that individual enterprise and bravery were possible, even at the

war's blackest moments . . . the mere existence of such unorthodox units helped to liven and to leaven the ideas of a whole army."

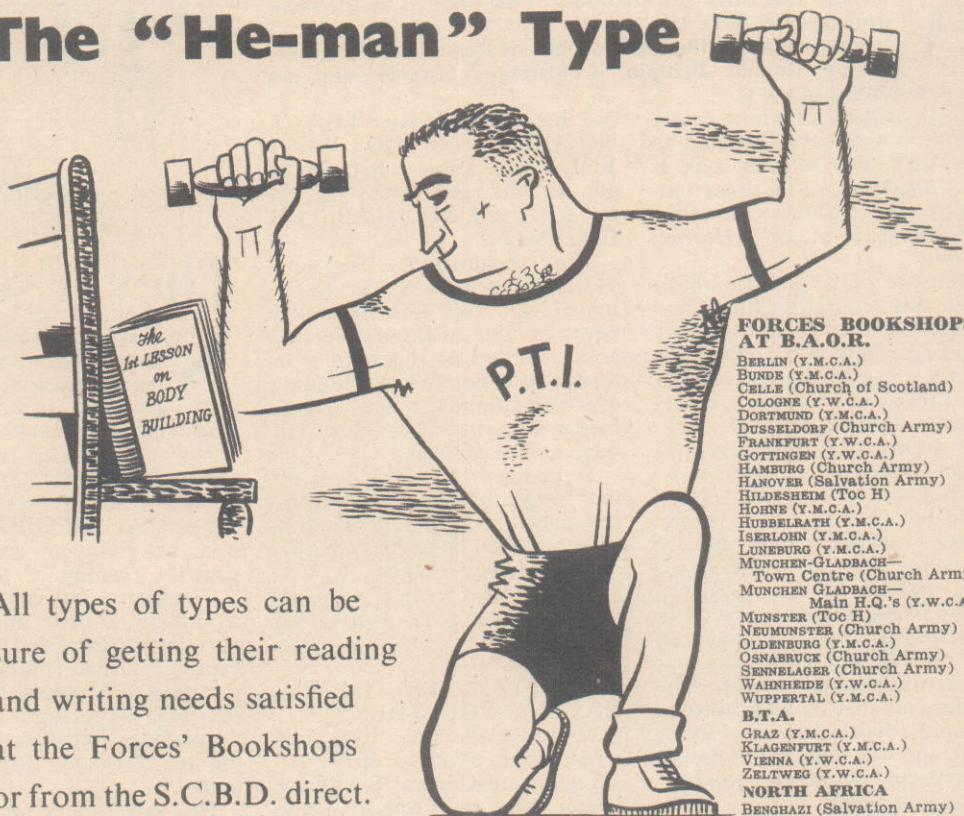
Only a small part of this book is about Popski's war-time exploits. The rest fills in his curious background.

His parents, Mr. Willett, relates, were Russian refugees who settled in Belgium in the 'nineties. Young Peniakoff was at Cambridge during part of World War One, at which time he had pacifist views. These did not stop him working on research into poison gas. Then, like many Belgians, he went to Egypt, where he worked for a sugar firm. This was when the bug of desert exploration bit him and he made long tours into the Sand Sea by car.

Popski decided to fight in World War Two "for love of England." At 43, with no military training, he badgered the British Army for employment. The war diary of the Long Range Desert Group is fretful about the Popskis of those days—"an increasing stream of Commandos (European and Arab) . . . bogus

Continued on Page 32

## The "He-man" Type



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Germans, lost travellers, escape scheme promoters, stranded aviators, etc." all wanting to be transported to improbable places and then picked up again. But Popski and the Long Range Desert Group subsequently became good friends.

After the war Popski is said to have been offered the job of organising a revolution in Mexico. He was also involved, apparently, in a plan to make things unpleasant for King Leopold if he decided to return to his palace at Laeken, near Brussels. The measures included use of smoke bombs, howling loud-speakers, impersonation of the king, blocking of palace sewers, and blowing of coloured smoke through manholes. Happily none of this was necessary.

In 1950 Popski's admirers were surprised, shocked or horrified, according to their nature, when they read that he had addressed a big peace demonstration in Trafalgar Square. The atom bomb had stirred Popski to the roots.

Mr. Willett has written a shrewd, fair study of a likeable, yet prickly individualist, loyal yet demanding, fond of luxury, but not of pretentiousness, sedate yet a lover of fun. What a pity he hated the Guards! They did not hate him.

# One-third of a Sardine for the Dogged Kentish Men

**T**HE Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment draws its men from the boroughs of South London and the rural hamlets of Kent. "The stubborn alertness of the Londoner is thus merged with the slower solidity of the worker in the Garden of England." The result is a fine blend of fortitude and determination, says Lieutenant-Colonel H. D. Chaplin in "The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 1920-1950" (Michael Joseph, 25s).

The 2nd Battalion had need of all its fortitude during the siege of Malta in 1942. In the worst days they grew noticeably thin. For two years they had borne day and night air attacks and for months had been on half rations. Sardines were divided into three—a third to each man. The bread ration was down to ten ounces (less than a third of a loaf) a day.

For much of the time the Battalion lived like troglodytes in caverns, emerging to help beat off air attacks with small arms fire and to rescue trapped civilians from the rubble. In between raids they filled in craters, built splinter-proof pens to house aircraft, unloaded the few ships that were able to reach the island and re-fuelled and re-armed the fighters and bombers.

At one time the Battalion took over control of Luqa airfield, four subalterns "scrambling" fighters into action by firing Very lights.

When the Battalion's petrol allocation was cut to ten gallons a week every officer and man was provided with a bicycle. The commanding officer visited outlying detachments in a pony cart.

By the time the siege was raised in the summer of 1943, the Battalion had experienced more than 3000 air raids. The author's comment that the troops felt they had played no small part in the award of the George Cross to Malta seems fully justified.

In World War Two the Regiment also fought at Dunkirk, in North-West Africa, Sicily, the Aegean Islands and in Burma.

The 4th Battalion won fame at

Kohima, where for 15 days, supported by a handful of Indian troops, it held up an entire Japanese division, inflicting well over 1000 casualties and allowing the 2nd British and 7th Indian Divisions to arrive in time to prevent the invasion of India.

In this action Lance-Corporal John Pennington Harman won the Victoria Cross. Single-handed he destroyed two Japanese machine-gun posts. While returning to his section after wiping out the second post he was mortally wounded. He died five minutes later after telling his men, "I got the lot. It was worth it."

"Much of the praise for the successful outcome of this siege must, as often in the story of the British Army, be given to the private soldiers and the junior leaders," says the author. "Hand to hand skirmishes were fought practically every night. At the end, one platoon consisted of a single private."

**Malta:** owing to the petrol shortage the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment take to bicycles. See "Dogged Kentish Men."

Imperial War Museum



## Scourge of The "Idle"

**A** NYBODY can carry the coal-box. You want to be the chap who says PICK IT UP."

This was the military philosophy of Regimental Sergeant-Major Ronald Brittain, Coldstream Guards—and an excellent philosophy it is.

RSM Brittain, of whose career a brief description appeared in SOLDIER two months ago, is the subject of a full-dress biography by James Leasor: "The Sergeant-Major" (Harrap, 10s 6d).

Here are all the popular stories about this scourge of idlers and whisperers, this enemy of free-wheeling. This is the man who told the present Minister for War, at Sandhurst, "You're a casual gent, sir. Bone casual."

It seems that the Sergeant-Major owed his first stripe to the fact that he was so burly he could not be fitted into a squad without making it look silly. In his young days he was charged with making "a frivolous and highly irregular complaint in an improper manner"—namely, telling the Medical Officer he was not getting enough to eat. The upshot was that he was awarded one-and-a-half portions at every meal, and was told that he would be expected to do the work of a man and a half.

When RSM Brittain was first instructed in Palace guard duty the Sergeant-Major of the guard said: "Pay no attention to the hofficer. It don't matter what he says—YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. Even if he gives the wrong command on the wrong foot

on the wrong day—THAT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU. You know what you've got to do and when to do it. AND GAWD HELP THE IDLE MEN!"

The Regimental Sergeant-Major once went to an elocutionist who told him he would never be able to shout. Worried about his weight, he went to a doctor, but nothing much came of his slimming endeavours. Either way, his career does not seem to have suffered.

Sometimes the laugh was on the Sergeant-Major. Once he harangued a soldier demanding to know when he had last written to his widowed mother.

"Have you written to your mother at all since you joined the Army?"

"No, sir."

"WHY THE DEVIL HAVEN'T YOU, THEN?"

"Because she only lives half a mile from barracks, sir."

Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese, who as Captain Leese backed the Sergeant-Major to the limit in the war on idleness, contributes a foreword to the book. This is not only an entertaining picture of a rugged character, but an interesting record of Army life in Britain over the last forty years.

## They Escaped—in England

**S**OONER or later, no doubt," said SOLDIER a couple of months ago, "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 Auchenhough, being given cups of tea and odd jobs by friendly natives."

Now such a book has come in "Single or Return?" by ex-Commander Fritz Wentzel (Kimber, 12s 6d). As SOLDIER forecast, it makes "piquant and perhaps painful" reading.

The author was captured from a sinking U-boat and held in various British and Canadian camps. He had a family escape tradition to live up to. In World War One an uncle got away from England and succeeded in returning to Germany through Holland.

He saw many attempts at escape. The most notable was the tunnelling break-out from Swanwick Camp, near Derby. Five officers got away. Two went to a petrol station, where a friendly lorry-driver agreed to give them a lift to Liverpool; but the lorry was halted by police

for a check of identity cards, which the two escapers had omitted to forge.

Two more boarded a bus for Nottingham. "Single or return?" asked the conductor. The question puzzled the escapers. "Yes," said one German. The conductor repeated the question. "Two for Nottingham," repeated the escaper. The conductor then asked his companion. "Yes," came the answer. The conductor issued two tickets—whether singles or returns the two Germans never discovered. (Since this book was published, the author has advertised in a newspaper in an attempt to find the conductor and ask him.) One of the prisoners slipped off the bus in a Nottingham

continued on page 34

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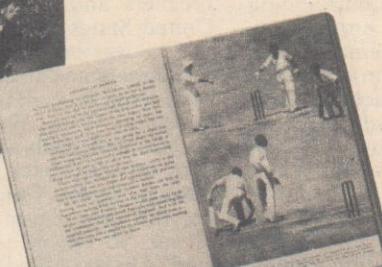


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## ACES AND 'DEUCES'

I read with interest the article (SOLDIER, November) on the exploits of Sergeant-Major Charles Coward, when he was a prisoner-of-war. I was with him for two years. He was then the NCO in charge of Red Cross (POW) Food Parcels in our working camp, E175, which was only a quarter of a mile from Auschwitz.

He was known to us as "Charlie," and always saw to it that food and cigarettes were issued to us on the right days and at the correct time, despite German opposition. He was well liked by all in E175—and was well-known by the German guards!

I will never forget "Charlie" issuing battle-dress. He had only eight suits and there were 250 men. Packs of cards were made up and issued by him and then he called out: "The four aces and four deuces remain. The others hand in their cards and fall out."

What became of "Charlie" on the day we marched out of E175 in January, 1945, I never did discover. Reading SOLDIER's article and seeing his photograph brought back many memories of a great and good comrade.—F. R. Morgan (ex-POW 33254), 10 Kingston Road, Coventry.

## VEGETARIAN

Was there ever a separate ration scale for vegetarians in the Army and is it likely to be re-introduced? Or can vegetarian soldiers claim a cash allowance in lieu, in order to fend for themselves?—Sergeant L. W. Waking, REME, 16 Vehicle Bn, RAOC, BPF 21.

★The Home Service ration scale provides that orthodox Jews and "vegetarians by conviction" may draw the following items in lieu of meat and bacon: bread four ounces, margarine one ounce and cheese one ounce (instead of meat); fish uncleaned four-and-a-half ounces, or fish fillets three ounces, or dried skimmed milk powder one ounce (instead of bacon).

## SINGLE MEN

"Puzzled Warrant Officer" (SOLDIER, December) has at last voiced the opinion of every single man in the Army. What a temptation exists for the soldier due for Middle East to marry—as urged so often when he "cribs"—if only to get leave.

At the present rate a single Regular with any service is practically an "Old Contemptible." Commanding officers



are pleased to meet him because he is so little trouble to a unit.

"Puzzled WO" should not be puzzled really—the Army does not interest itself in the single man. Its main purpose is to increase its administrative load by encouraging married men, and all of their necessary (?) entourage, to stay in.

My promotion to WO II in eight years is partly due to being under unit COs who appreciated a person who was prepared to work and not charge off to his family at 1700 hours daily.—"Thoroughly Embittered" (name and address supplied).

★This letter may over-state the case of single men; but SOLDIER prints it as an indication of what some Army bachelors are thinking.

## MASS RADIOPHOTOGRAPHY

I have often seen national blood transfusion units operating with the aid of voluntary donors in British Army barracks in Britain, and the British soldier well aids this admirable service. Yet I have never seen a national mass radiography unit, although they have been dealing with civilians in nearby towns.

It is not disputed that a man could have his chest examined on application to his Medical Officer. On a soldier's final medical examination paper there is a question: "Have you ever had your chest X-rayed?" Perhaps in time it will be amended to read "Date of last chest X-ray."

I had two acquaintances who stated that they were unaware they had tuberculosis until mass radiography produced the evidence. Although on joining the Army soldiers now have their chests X-rayed there is a surprising number in the Army who have not done so. It would be interesting to

know whether the Army is keeping pace with civilians in regard to mass radiography. — "Warrant Officer" (name and address supplied).

★Since the last years of the war, according to the Army medical authorities, recruits have had their chests examined by miniature radiography either shortly before or immediately after joining. In 1948 civilian teams began undertaking this service for National Servicemen. Today about four out of every five are X-rayed before they are called up. Army teams assist in this work at Preston, Lancaster, Gloucester, Exeter and Kingston-on-Hull, where civilian facilities are not conveniently available. Examination of new recruits is given the highest priority to ensure as far as possible that no man is called up unless he is fit. If he could not be X-rayed before call-up he is examined by an Army team as soon as possible.

A start was made on X-raying Regulars in August 1953 and a large number of troops serving in England have been examined. It has been found more economical to examine the larger units in the easily accessible areas than to send teams to X-ray the

## HIS GORGET

THE device worn round the neck of Captain T. J. Carty, of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Massachusetts (below, right) puzzled readers who saw the photograph in the November SOLDIER.

It was a gorget—the last piece of body armour to be used by the British Army (except for the Household Cavalry's cuirass).

Devised some 550 years ago, it replaced the chain-mail which hung from the helmet. The gorget rested on the shoulders.

Through the centuries it became more ornate and ended as a badge of rank. In 1684 captains were ordered to wear gold gorgets, lieutenants black studded with gold and ensigns silver. Gorgets were officially abandoned by the British Army in 1830—but gorget tabs are still worn by colonels and above.



Photograph on left by courtesy of James Walker Ltd.

few in the more remote parts, but these will not be overlooked. It is intended that every man shall be examined every three years and more often if possible.

In certain places arrangements have been made for soldiers to be examined by civilian teams. If a soldier is examined privately in this way the result of the X-ray can be recorded in his documents and any necessary investigation undertaken by the Army.

So far it has not been possible to carry out a periodic review outside this country, but it is hoped that two teams will be available this year to begin work in BAOR. With the return of more troops to this country it should be possible to ensure that a high proportion is regularly examined.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

I am a Regular soldier (22 years) serving a two-year engagement attached to the Territorial Army. I am also a keen amateur photographer.

While serving with my present unit I have managed to make my hobby pay by advertising locally, making calendars with the photograph of the purchaser mounted thereon, and various other means. I have also sold photographs, using a pen name, to magazines.

I have been informed that the practice is illegal and amounts to professionalism. Will you advise me in this matter?—NCO (name, address and unit supplied).

★There is no objection to this soldier carrying out his hobby off-duty, provided he does not bring the Army into disrepute or use military material for his photographs.

## KOREAN STORIES

Norman Macswan (a war correspondent) and myself, who served in Korea during 1950-53, are producing a volume of stories and poems written by sailors, soldiers and airmen who served there. Men from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, as well as Great Britain, are being invited to submit contributions.

If any readers of SOLDIER have written, or feel they could write, poems, short stories or articles, will they forward their contributions to me? As well as being acknowledged, full credit will be given for those used. Rejected manuscripts will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.—Major Hugh Pond (former Military Observer), c/o Blue Hill Farm, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire.

## BOOKS continued

suburb and stole a bicycle, but met two policemen and was overpowered. The bus, meanwhile, was stopped outside a police station by the suspicious conductor, and after a hearty battle the other escaper was arrested.

The fifth officer to escape, Lieutenant Franz von Werra of the *Luftwaffe*, was outstanding among escapers of any nation. He relied on the resemblance of his *Luftwaffe* uniform to that of a Dutch pilot, approached a farm and said he had made a forced landing nearby. Sure enough, the farmer's wife gave him a cup of tea.

From a call-box, von Werra repeated his story to the nearest Royal Air Force station, which obligingly sent a car to pick him up. In the officers' mess he was given breakfast. Then he asked to borrow an aeroplane to return to his own station. His plan was to fly to neutral Eire.

Questions over the breakfast-table began to be difficult, so von Werra excused himself, left the

mess by a lavatory window and found a mechanic refuelling a Hurricane. "I'm the pilot come to take her," said von Werra. He was caught at the last minute—and might have got away if there had been a starter battery in the aircraft.

In Canada, von Werra later jumped from a train, walked to the frozen St. Lawrence River, stole a boat in which he paddled over the channel cut by ice-breakers and thus reached the United States side. It was 1941 and he was on neutral territory. The Americans arrested him, but let him out on bail, in the glare of publicity. Von Werra jumped his bail and, with a forged passport, travelled back to Germany through Japan, China and Russia, the only German prisoner-of-war to escape to his homeland. He was killed in Russia.

The author's own attempt to escape from the same train as von Werra failed.

*Footnote.*—Another publisher is advertising a book by a German prisoner-of-war who escaped from captivity in England and joined the Royal Air Force.



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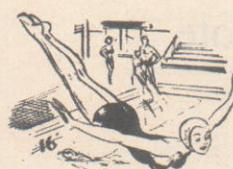
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## **more Letters**

### **SMARTNESS**

SOLDIER is right when it asserts that smartness of uniform depends on the man wearing it. We in Britain have lost the art of looking smart. Other reasons for bad turn-out are that manufacturers no longer make material as good as it was and tailors are not, on the whole, as expert.

Look at the way the Salvation Army are dressed. I do not refer to the pattern, but the material, particularly its lightness and fit. Compare a Salvation Army forage cap with that issued to the troops. The latter article is clumsily made, thick and coarse, and badly-shaped.

Why are the Guards and the Royal Military Police permitted to distort their headgear? There used to be a regulation against it.—**Major J. H. S. Locke (retd.), 1 Grosvenor Gardens, London, N.10.**

While serving with the Commonwealth Division in Korea my eyes were opened by the quality of the uniforms worn by troops of other nations during their leave in Tokyo. Poplin shirts and gaberdine combat suits, similar in pattern to battle-dress, seemed to be the vogue.

The Australian Number One Dress is far superior in quality and appearance to ours and their collar and tie add the finishing touch.

The American wool-gaberdine raincoat has a zip-in fleece lining and is warmer than our greatcoat. This raincoat was issued in Korea and proved ideal—as many of our soldiers can testify—and yet it looked smart enough to wear in Whitehall.

The British Army has made great strides in recent years, notably in cold-weather clothing, but the "powers that be" should take a look at other armies' clothing for some ideas.—"Envious but Hopeful" (name and address supplied).

### **KHAKI PREFERRED**

I wish to plead for the return of khaki service dress for other ranks. I am not sure whether its use is still permissible. On the rare occasions it is seen worn by mounted troops and boy soldiers it stands out ahead of any nation's everyday uniform. It has the practical merits of being essentially serviceable, comfortable and very smart. It has a rugged fitness of purpose, which leaves no doubt that its wearer is a soldier and proud of being one, provided, as with battle-dress, it fits properly, particularly around the neck, is worn correctly, and that a little extra effort is taken to secure a smart turnout.

Let us get rid of this collar-and-tie cult, which does not suit either the appearance or improve the comfort and convenience of a soldier's uniform. I would not suggest that civilian clothes should not be worn if pre-

ferred when off-duty. The blue Number One Dress is rather nondescript and not very suitable for walking-out in the daytime, but it should be available to those who want it.

I do not think that I am a reactionary, but perhaps had better sign myself "Blimp" (name and address supplied).

★*Certain units are authorised to wear khaki service dress, but as a general rule it is obsolete.*

### **ARMY TIE**

Having just been discharged after 42 years in the Royal Artillery (35 Regular and seven Territorial) I thought I should feel justly proud to wear the Regular Army tie. On applying at the appropriate shop I was told that there is no restriction on the sale of this particular tie; anyone can buy it. I said, "In that case I don't want one."

I shall feel more proud to wear the tie of the "Old Contemptibles" (which can be purchased only from that Association) so that, when meeting another member wearing a similar tie, I know I am talking to a genuine Old Contemptible. The object of the Regular Army tie is defeated as soon as it is put on the market.—**Ex-WO II (RQMS) T. Cannam, "Le Cateau," 4 Salisbury Road, Lowestoft.**

### **TANK "CREW"**

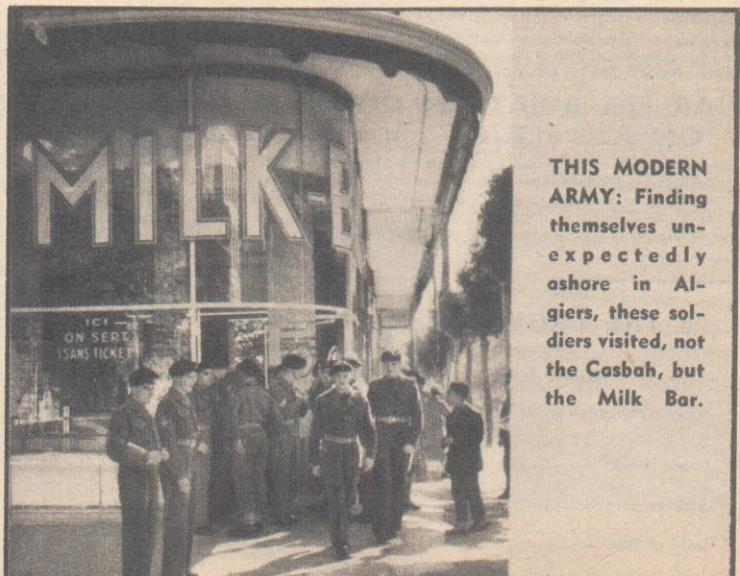
We in this unit were very interested in the picture appearing in the November issue, purporting to show a tank crew of 6th Royal Tank Regiment changing a broken track. Judging from the cap-badges worn by this "crew," the long-suffering Light Aid Detachments are now manning the tanks as well as repairing them.—**Sgt. H. C. Payne, 74 LAA Workshops REME, BAOR 28.**

### **REPAYING BOUNTY**

I joined the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1938 for "seven and five." Instead of coming out, I completed the twelve. Two days before my terminal leave ended, in 1950, I was recalled for Korea. Then, waiting for the emergency to finish, I signed on to complete 22 years and received a £100 bounty.

How much of that would I now have to pay back if I decided to finish with the Army? Do I have to pay back the £100 after completing 16 years?—**L/Cpl A. Tomeity, 1st Bn RUR, BAOR 9.**

★*A soldier who, having received a bounty, voluntarily terminates his Colour service before completing the period of service related to the bounty is liable to refund the whole of the bounty as well as paying any other costs in connection with his discharge. The fact that a soldier may be granted, say, a free discharge after 16 years' service does not alter the position in regard to the bounty.*



**THIS MODERN ARMY:** Finding themselves unexpectedly ashore in Algiers, these soldiers visited, not the Casbah, but the Milk Bar.

## MSM

I was under the impression that the MSM, which I was awarded in 1951, was a medal rather than a decoration and, as such, does not entitle the holder to use the letters after his name. A letter addressed to me included the letters "MSM." Is it correct?—Capt. O. G. T. Berry (retd.), 6 Egerton Road, Blacon, Chester.

\*The Royal Warrant relating to the grant of the Meritorious Service Medal contains no authority for adding the letters "MSM" after a recipient's name. The practice is, therefore, irregular.

## ATS GIRL

I was most interested in "The Road to Glamour" in SOLDIER (September). The poster picture of the ATS girl of World War Two was taken from a series of photographs of a



"Predictor Number" of 449 (Mixed) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery. It was taken at Oswestry in 1941, before the unit left for Scotland. The girl was from Gloucester and the picture is a good one. I wonder what has happened to her since?—John Hughes (ex-Sergeant 449 (M) HAA Battery, RA), 75 Brook Lane, Newton, Chester.

## NUMBERS GAME

When I joined the Territorial Army in 1933 I was allotted an Army number. This I retained on joining the Regular Army in 1935. My Colour service expired in 1947 and I was transferred to Class Z Reserve. I volunteered for the Supplementary Reserve (now Army Emergency Reserve) in 1950 and was allotted another Army number. This year I re-enlisted into the Regular Army and was given yet another Army number and continued with it until reverting to my Army Emergency Reserve one.

Queen's Regulations state, in effect, that a soldier retains the same number on re-enlistment. Where is the over-

riding authority cancelling this? It is recognised that an Army number once allotted can never be given to another soldier, so why create unnecessary confusion?— "Three-in-one" (name and address supplied).

\*It has been the policy for many years for a soldier to retain his Army number throughout his Colour and Reserve service. A number once allotted to a soldier is never re-allotted to another. During the last war millions of new Army numbers were required. In 1947 the system of documentation was simplified, the control of numbers centralised and a new series brought into use for all new entrants and for ex-soldiers re-enlisting. That is why this soldier was given a new number when he took a new engagement in 1950. Then, on re-enlisting into the Regular Army he was allotted a further new Army number, obviously in error as it was subsequently changed.

## MEDAL GRATUITY

Why does the Admiralty grant the Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with a £20 gratuity to ratings of good conduct and 15 years service, whereas Army Other Ranks up to WO II need to have 18 years service with good conduct to qualify for the equivalent medal, with a gratuity of £5? These gratuities are the same today as they were before World War Two, although the value of the pound has decreased.—"Warrant Officer, Malta" (name and address supplied).

\*Although in 1945 it was decided that the three Services should come into line for pension purposes, it has never been considered that rewards in the Services should necessarily be standardised.

At inter-Services discussions on this subject it was decided that the present arrangements should continue undisturbed as the Royal Navy have no additional provision, such as exists in the Army and the Royal Air Force, for rewarding long and meritorious service with the Meritorious Service Medal and annuity of £10.

It is true that the £5 gratuity has remained unchanged over a period of time. But nowadays additional provision exists for reward of long service by a terminal grant (minimum £100).

## PARACHUTIST

Can an ex-parachutist of the British Army join the Canadian Army as a parachutist?—J. M. Garry, 22 Fernside Crescent, Almondbury, Huddersfield.

\*A man who is a qualified parachute rigger as well as a parachutist, and is prepared to jump with a parachute he has packed himself, may seek enlistment in the Canadian Army at 66 Ennismore Gardens, London, W7.

LETTERS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

# FILMS

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

**CARRINGTON, VC:** The film of the successful court-martial play by Major-General C. M. Christie MC and his wife (SOLDIER, September 1953). David Niven plays the major who borrows from his battery funds to meet an emergency caused by a paymaster's delay in producing his allowances. Margaret Leighton, as his neurotic wife, and Alan Cuthbertson, as the jealous commanding officer, are the people who get him into trouble. Noelle Middleton appears as the "other woman." Excellent court-room drama.

**MAD ABOUT MEN:** Glynis Johns as that man-mad mermaid Miranda again. She also plays the mermaid's human double (complete with legs) with whom Miranda changes places for a few days. Donald Sinden is one of the men she is mad about, Margaret Rutherford is the nurse who joins in the plot, and Anne Crawford is the jealous girl who discovers, and tries unsuccessfully to expose, the plot. In colour.

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**BEAU BRUMMELL:** The dandy who served in the 10th Hussars is played by Stewart Granger (SOLDIER, February 1954). There are 29 changes of clothes for this courtier who influenced the Prince Regent, but ended his life in poverty-stricken exile. Also starring: Elizabeth Taylor, Peter Ustinov and Robert Morley. Men of the Household Cavalry rode to Woolwich to take part in this film, which wanders a fair way from history. In colour.

**THE BAREFOOT CONTESSA:** The tragic story of "The World's Most Beautiful Human Animal," an Italian gipsy girl who becomes a film-star and marries a nobleman. Stars: Humphrey Bogart, Ava Gardner, Edmond O'Brien, Valentina Cortese, Marius Goring and Rossano Brazzi. In colour.

**ROSE MARIE:** If you went to the theatre in the 'twenties or the cinema in the 'thirties, you probably know this story. In any case, you know such famous songs as "Rose Marie" and "Indian Love Call." Here is a new version, with some new songs, the Mounties still getting their men (though not always their women), the Rockies in colour, and Ann Blyth, Howard Keel and Fernando Lamas.

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Six sets of twins in one battalion. In this picture, which was taken when the 1st Battalion The Rifle Brigade was stationed in Germany, the twins are shown in pairs, one standing and one sitting. Left to right: the Ford twins (Army Catering Corps), the Marshall twins, the Stannards, the 2/Lieutenants Dawson, the Bielbys and the Masseys.

## A GLUT OF TWINS IN THE RIFLE BRIGADE

THE orderly sergeant in the 1st Battalion The Rifle Brigade in Kenya must sometimes be a very confused man. And who can blame him?

In his unit there are no fewer than five sets of twins, each brother resembling his twin as only a twin can.

Until recently, when the battalion was stationed in Germany, he must have been even more perplexed for two of the officers were also identical twins. The twin officers have now left the Army after completing their National Service.

Three sets of the twins who are still serving are riflemen, another pair are rifleman and bugler and the fifth pair are both Army Catering Corps cooks who are attached to

the Battalion.

The Army tries whenever possible to keep twins together during their service, recognising that separation sometimes tends to unsettle them. It is unusual, however, for more than two pairs of twins to serve in the same unit at the same time.

Six pairs serving together in the same battalion is probably an all-time record.

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## more Letters

### CONTEMPTIBLES

I have the honour of being the youngest soldier Old Contemptible. I went to France with No. 2 Field Ambulance, 1st Division, in August, 1914, at the age of 14 years 11 months.

There was a claim from a Royal Marine bugler who landed at Antwerp just before its fall, but I am officially regarded by the Old Contemptible Association as the youngest "Soldier Chum."—Major A. A. Barton, RAMC (retired), "Sundal," 39, New Wanstead, London, E.11.

★SOLDIER (December) published a letter from Major-General R. E. Barnsley staking a claim for Major Barton, but making his age eight months less.

### DOCTOR'S BILL

I was on leave from the Middle East in Germany, where my wife resides, when she was taken ill and admitted to a German hospital. I have been told that I have to pay for her stay in hospital, and I have already paid one bill. Can I claim a refund of the money?—Sergeant (name and address supplied).

★Outside Britain, medical facilities for a soldier's dependents are provided only in the station where the soldier is serving. Unless this reader's wife is living in War Department accommodation in Germany, there is no way in which he can claim help from Army funds.

### THANK YOU

I would like SOLDIER to publish this letter of thanks to all concerned at the War Office and Headquarters, British Troops Austria for the speedy passage of my mother-in-law to England by Medloc to look after my two children while my wife undergoes a major operation. By this gesture, thus setting my wife's mind at ease over the children, half the battle is over. The fact that the War Office charged the lowest possible rate for the passage reduced my worry.

I would like also to thank my unit officers, who put the plan into action.

Never can it be said that the Army lets its Regular soldiers down.—Sergeant M. J. Cann, Royal Signals, Blacon Camp, Chester.

### IRISH REGIMENTS

I refer to your article on the lost Irish Regiments (SOLDIER, August).

Owing to the great strain on the Army caused by the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, a considerable number of British immigrants in Canada felt that they should do something practical to help the "Old Country." They decided to raise a regular regiment for the British Army

from among the settlers from the British Isles, a proposal that was approved by Queen Victoria in 1858. The regiment was designated the "100th, or Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian Regiment."

In 1881 it was linked with the 109th (Bombay Infantry) to form the "Prince of Wales's Royal Canadian Regiment," of which it was the 1st Battalion, the former 109th being the 2nd Battalion. A few weeks later the title was altered to the "Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)."

RC, therefore, stood for "Royal Canadians." Thus this composite Canadian and British-Indian Regiment became an Irish Regiment quite by accident. On the inauguration of what is now Eire in 1922, in common with other Southern Irish Regiments it was disbanded.—Major T. J. Edwards, 50 Summer Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey.

### INSIGNIA

Is it correct for ex-members of the Commonwealth Division to wear the Commonwealth flash on the left arm and the unit flash on the right arm, regardless of the Command to which they belong?—Corporal R. Wadkin, Engineer Base Group (E), Qas-sassin, MEFL 11.

★Once a soldier leaves a command or formation he ceases to be entitled to wear its insignia.

### PETS

I want to take my pedigree dachshund to Singapore but am uncertain about the conditions and cost. My husband is serving in Japan.—Mrs. Christine Potter, Drill Hall House, Carlton, Nottingham.

★The cost of despatching a dog to Singapore is approximately £26. A certificate of health, signed by a veterinary surgeon before the dog's departure, is required, plus an export certificate from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Further particulars can be obtained from an animal transport agency.

### SEVEN-TON SHELL

During a recent argument between two soldiers in our billet it was stated that there was, or still is in use, a gun that fired a seven-ton shell. Please settle the argument by giving me the facts.—LAC T. White, Buckeburg Airfield, BAOR 29.

★Before the last war the German Army produced two 80-centimetre (31-inch) railway guns. They were called "Schwere Gustav" and "Dora Gerat" and were operated from specially-built four-track railway carriages. They could fire a seven-ton anti-concrete shell 41,560 yards (nearly 24 miles) or a 7.2 ton high explosive shell 51,400 yards (more than 29 miles). Each gun weighed nearly 1500 tons and was manned by a regiment, under the command of a major-general.

### DO NOT MISS SOLDIER!

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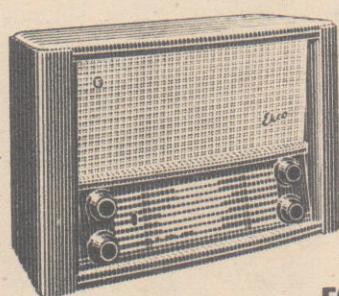
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THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE



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*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*