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SOLDIER

MARCH 1969 Volume 25, No. 3

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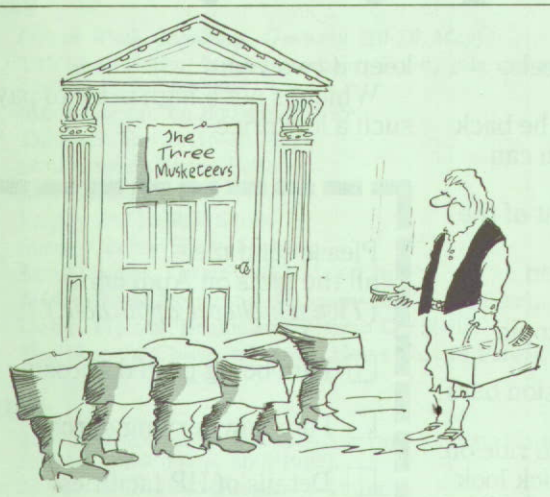

OFFICERS AND SERVANTS *by* LARRY

page 13

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SOLDIER 433 Holloway Road London N7.
(Phone: GPO—01-272 4381 Military network—Holloway Military).
Trade distribution inquiries to PO Box 569, London SE1.
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See-the-Army

DIARY

SOLDIER readers, particularly those who travel around, are always anxious to know when and where Army occasions are happening.

In this regular feature SOLDIER will keep you posted up-to-date. Events will be listed up to a year ahead and repeated monthly. Amendments and additions are indicated in italics.

To make this feature as valuable as possible to the reader, SOLDIER invites the co-operation of organisers of tattoos, Army displays, exhibitions, at homes, open days and similar occasions on which the public is welcome to see the Army's men and equipment.

MARCH

14 250th anniversary, The Welch Regiment, *Royal Hospital*, Chelsea, London.
31 4th Battalion, The Light Infantry, disbands, Colchester.

APRIL

14 25th anniversary, Army Benevolent Fund, "Fall in the Stars."
25 Anzac Day, Horse Guards Parade and Cenotaph, London.
27 Laying up of Colours, 6th Battalion, The Lancashire Fusiliers, Rochdale Parish Church.

MAY

10 British Week, Luneburg, Germany (10-18 May).
10 25th anniversary, Army Benevolent Fund, gala concert, Royal Festival Hall, London.
11 Music festival, Le Bourget, France.
16 Tidworth Tattoo (16-18 May).
17 Lord Mayor's Show, Belfast.
26 New Addington Fair.
26 Reigate and Redhill Show.
26 Surrey County Show, Surbiton.
27 Army Display, Catterick (27 May-7 June).
28 British Week, Dortmund, Germany (28 May-4 June).
31 Devon Traction Engine and Veteran Car Rally.
31 Trooping the Colour rehearsal, Horse Guards Parade, London.

JUNE

3 Massed bands Household Division beat Retreat, Horse Guards Parade, London (and on 5 June).
5 Recruiting display, Glasgow (5-11 June).
6 25th anniversary Normandy landings, Normandy beaches and Portsmouth Cathedral.
7 Machine Gun Corps observance, Boy David Memorial, Hyde Park, London.
7 Trooping the Colour rehearsal, Horse Guards Parade, London.
11 Amalgamation of The South Wales Borderers and The Welch Regiment into The Royal Regiment of Wales, Cardiff Castle.
13 Essex Show, Chelmsford (13-14 June).
13 Recruiting display, Edinburgh (13-15 June).
14 Trooping the Colour, Horse Guards Parade, London.
14 Aldershot Army Display (14-15).
16 NATO Stiching Taptoe, Arnhem (16-21 June).
19 Recruiting display, Dundee (19-21 June).
20 Suffolk Tattoo, Christchurch Park, Ipswich (20-21 June).
20 Bexley (Sidcup) Tattoo (20-21 June).
21 (Provisional) 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, Open Day, Kirkee Barracks, Colchester.
21 25th anniversary, Army Benevolent Fund, Musical Pageant, Empire Stadium, Wembley.

continued on page 7

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S11

DIARY *continued*

JUNE

23 NATO Stiching Taptoe, Brussels (23-26 June).
24 Dover Tattoo, Crabble Ground, Dover (24-26 June).
26 Carisbrooke Castle Tattoo (26-28 June).
26 Army Display, Belle Vue, Manchester (26-29 June).
28 North Wilts Army Cadet Force Tattoo, Swindon.

JULY

1 Investiture of Prince of Wales, Caernarvon Castle.
2 Royal Progress through Wales (2-5 July).
4 Recruiting display, Kilmarnock and Ayr (4-9 July).
4 Recruiting display, Coventry (4-6 July).
5 Open Day, 39 Engineer Regiment (Airfields), Waterbeach, Cambridge.
6 Open Day, Depot The Queen's Regiment, Canterbury.
8 Recruiting display, Stoke-on-Trent (8-9 July).
9 Royal Tournament, Earls Court (9-26 July).
11 Cheltenham Tattoo (11-12 July).
12 Summer Show, Croydon.
12 Basingstoke Tattoo.
12 Recruiting display, Liverpool University (12-13 July).
12 Dagenham Town Show (12-13 July).
16 Recruiting display, Liverpool Show (16-19 July).
19 Larkhill Day.
21 Army Week, Dover (21-26 July).
25 Nottingham Army Display (25-27 July).
26 *Christchurch Tattoo, Bournemouth.*
26 Army Air Corps Open Day, Middle Wallop.
30 Colchester Tattoo, Castle Park, Colchester (30 July-2 August).

AUGUST

1 Cardiff Tattoo (1-9 August).
2 Strensall Army Display (2-3 August).
2 Chatham Army Display.
3 Royal Armoured Corps Open Day, Bovington.
11 Army Week, Darlington (11-16 August).
15 Edinburgh Tattoo (15 August-6 September).
27 Army Open Days, Plymouth (27-29 August).
29 Army Week, Leeds (29 August-2 September).

SEPTEMBER

3 Army Week, Keighley (3-7 September).
4 Army Week, Sheffield (4-6 September).
5 Recruiting display, Glasgow (5-7 September).
6 Shoeburyness Garrison (including 36 Heavy Air Defence Regiment, Royal Artillery) At Home.
13 Recruiting display, Rochdale (13-14 September).
16 Recruiting display, Blackpool (16-18 September).
18 Military Band Festival, Berne, Switzerland (18-21 September).
19 Berlin Tattoo (19-20 September).

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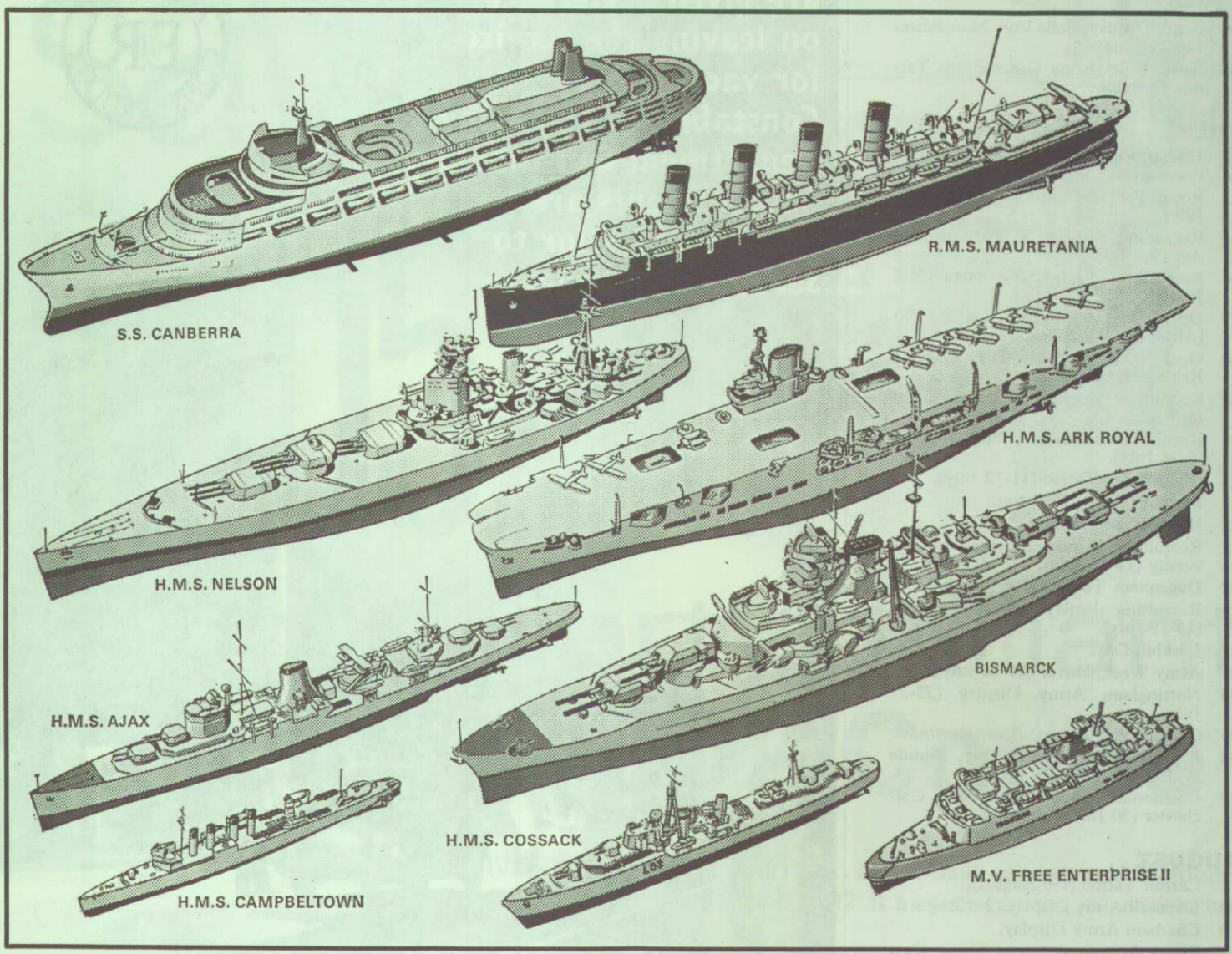

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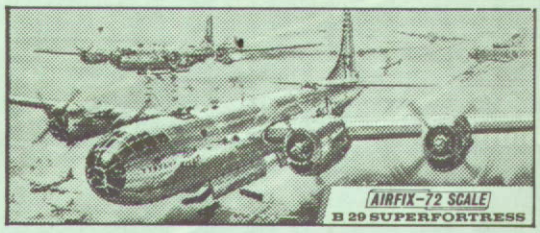

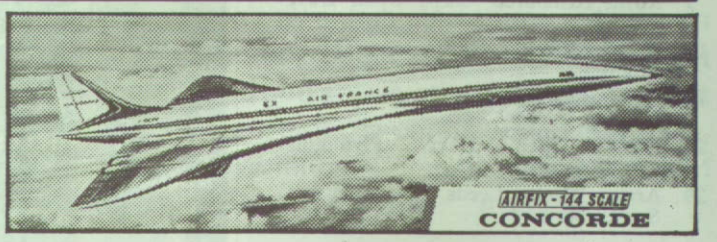

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Story by
GEORGE HOGAN
Pictures by
ARTHUR BLUNDELL
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TREVOR JONES

Sergeant Phillips gets information about blood samples from the auto-analyser in the Chemical Pathology Laboratory which assists hospitals, trains technicians and carries out research to maintain Army's health.

Protecting the soldier's health against today's fast-travelling 'flus and fevers, the Royal Army Medical College keeps

WATCH AND GUARD

A TINY virus currently travelling round the world likes the comfort of ships but seldom makes itself known in aircraft. It thrives on the company of humans but usually takes two or three days to incubate before its presence is revealed.

Then the human host produces symptoms of catarrh, is feverish and sometimes delirious and is depressed with aches and pains.

The latest in this family of influenza viruses is labelled A/2/HK/68 and commonly called Hong Kong 'flu.

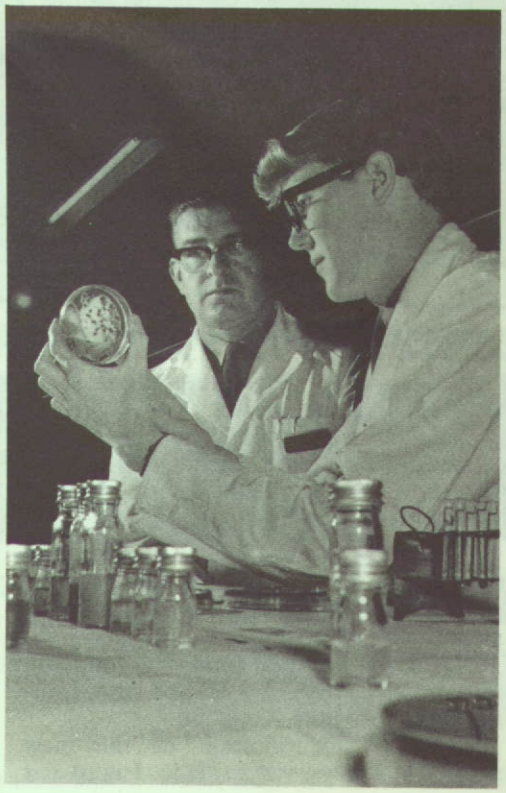
The first identification of this new mutant in Europe was made in August last year by the Department of Pathology at the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank, London.

The victim was a 23-month-old child in a London civilian hospital and the source of the infection was never discovered. A sample of throat washings from this child had been passed to the College for examin-

Top: Sergeant Ringrose inoculates hen's eggs to grow 'flu virus. Above: Sergeant Lewis prepares to cut wafers of frozen tissue. Right: Sergeant Lees takes blood sample from rabbit's ear while Miss Fraser comforts animal. Below, right: Warrant Officer II Peterson instructs a trainee technician in practical bacteriology.

FRONT COVER

Sergeant Whiting counting colonies in a culture of cholera bacteria at the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank, London.
Picture by Trevor Jones.



ation and shortly afterwards other samples taken from soldiers in Hong Kong arrived. In these, too, the same new strain was identified.

Three hundred years ago influenza was an unexplained malady attributed to the influence of the stars, hence the name which is derived from the Italian. Since then there have been a number of epidemics which have had their sources in the Far East, probably China.

Their seriousness lies in the fact that they are mutations of earlier 'flu viruses and have to be isolated and definitely identified before vaccines can be prepared as counter-measures.

The Royal Army Medical College's Department of Pathology undertakes this kind of detective task for the Army world-wide.

All kinds of virus material are sent to Millbank where they are examined and identified with the aid of some of the most modern equipment available.

Body tissues and fluids also are sent for the identification of diseases and for record purposes.

The results are notified to the doctors and specialists—both Army and civilian—

Left: In the Histology Laboratory Sgt Lewis uses the sledge microtome to cut paper-thin sections from tissue frozen in a jet of carbon dioxide. Above: The end product. Inoculation against 'flus and fevers that attack the soldier and against which he would be defenceless.

who submit them and specimens are filed in the Army Central Reference Laboratories which are part of the Department. In routine cases they aid the originators. In unusual cases, such as Hong Kong 'flu 68, the identification is also notified to the World Health Organisation which alerts the medical profession and pharmaceutical industry to initiate the preparation of vaccines and other counter-measures.

The records in the reference laboratories are useful in many ways. They can help to reveal an overall pattern that may lead to further advances in combating disease and, in the case of the individual, they may over the years show definite trends and links and even associations previously unsuspected.

These records and the doctors and technicians in the various laboratories of the Pathology Department are the watchful eyes and ever-active brains behind the vaccination "jabs" and other preventive measures that the British soldier has learned to accept as his personal health protectors.

The Virus Laboratory, where a civilian experimental officer, Mr Hamish Cumming, is assisted by four RAMC sergeant technicians, detected Hong Kong flu '68 and also keeps watch for the Army over smallpox, yellow fever, polio, rabies, German measles, chicken pox and other infections.

It stores viruses in a deep freeze at a temperature of minus 70° Centigrade—or they would die.

Nearby is the animal house where Miss Carol Fraser expertly controls 1000 small creatures such as mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens and pigeons. They help to produce cultures in the cause of Army health and fitness.

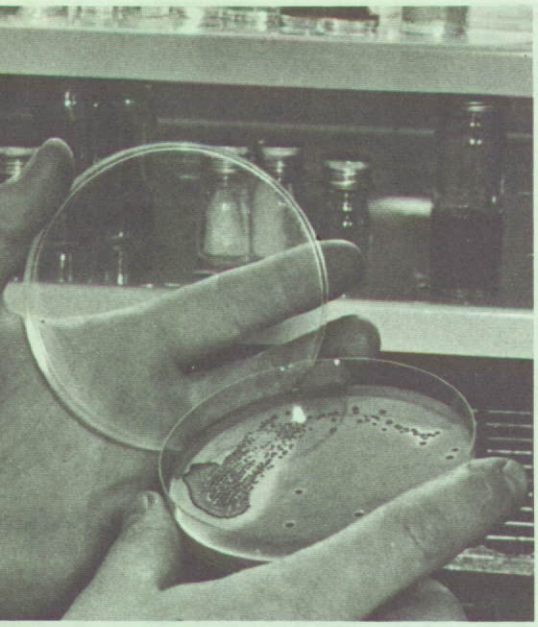
The Cytology laboratory is concerned with the diseases of women and received 14,000 specimens for verification and classification last year. Army wives, dependants, civilians with the Army overseas, and members of the women's services, including the Women's Royal Naval Service and the Women's Royal Air Force, all benefit from this work.

The Histology Laboratory diagnoses tumours and other diseases of body tissues and last year examined 8500 cases involving about 18,000 specimens.

The Chemical Pathology Laboratory analyses blood and other body fluids. Many of the samples are from fit personnel, often volunteers in units, the research being made as part of the effort to maintain the Army's health.

The Bacteriological Laboratory undertakes the identification of bacteria which smaller Army laboratories cannot handle. It is the main centre for venereal disease testing and has a close liaison with many

Major-General Sir David Bruce, Assistant Professor of Pathology from 1889 to 1894 at the Army Medical School, Netley, predecessor of the Royal Army Medical College, discovered the micro-organism responsible for Malta or undulent fever—a killer in its day—when he was a young Army surgeon-captain on his first overseas tour in 1887. In his honour the disease was re-named Brucellosis and the organism Brucella.



Above: Colonies of typhoid bacilli in a culture dish being examined by Sergeant Whiting. Below: Colonel Vanreenen, Professor of Pathology, at the microscope in his office at Millbank, London.

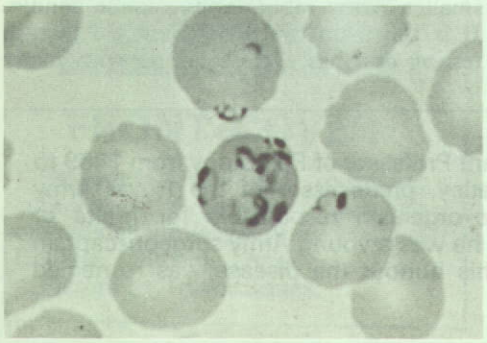
civilian laboratories. It carries out research on fungi, among other things, and has made valuable contributions to the literature on typhoid fever.

Colonel R M Vanreenen, Professor of Pathology, controls the Department's staff of about 50, with Assistant Professor Lieutenant-Colonel E E Vella specialising in microbiology and Major D M Wayte in histopathology.

There are 27 medical laboratory technicians, 17 of them military ranks like the Chief Technician, Warrant Officer Class I L F Baker. The other members of the staff are engaged in non-technical and administrative posts.

While the primary function of the Department of Pathology is to teach doctor and laboratory technicians, the members of its staff combine this task with their other laboratory work.

This enables them to give realistic practical instruction. They keep the Army in good health by ensuring that the best preventive measures may become available through their constant vigilance and expert detective work.



Left: The microscope clearly showed this heavy concentration of malaria parasites in the blood cells. Colonel Vanreenen is at present engaged on a study of this particular tropical disease.

SOLDIER TO SOLDIER

On page 27 of this issue a brief account is given of the achievements of the Army Benevolent Fund. The national fund-raising efforts in this silver jubilee year of 1969 are also listed.

The message is simple. The fund needs more money. And for this it properly looks first to the Army and then to the general public.

Most soldiers contribute a day's pay to the Fund every year. Those soldiers who have not yet joined this scheme should read page 27—and join.

And if any of SOLDIER's readers, serving, ex-Service or civilian, should feel that the Army Benevolent Fund's silver jubilee is an appropriate occasion to dip into the pocket for a special gift—perhaps as a thank-offering or perhaps just as a tribute to achievement—then SOLDIER would be only too happy to accept a donation, however small, and pass it on to the Fund.

★

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of NATO, the British Forces Postal Service has produced a special first-day cover which is available from the British Forces post offices at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe) at Casteau, near Mons, Belgium.

This commemorative cover will bear the British NATO anniversary 1s 6d stamp to be issued by the GPO on 2 April.

Special date stamps will be used at the British Forces post offices at NATO and SHAPE on 2 April.

The cost of each cover complete will be 3s 4d or 20 Belgian francs. Orders (by postal order) and inquiries should be addressed to Officer Commanding, British Forces Post Office 49. The proceeds will go to Forces charities.

★

The Queen has approved the title of The Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own) for the Regiment to be formed on 25 October from the amalgamation of 10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own) and 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own).

Her Majesty has also approved the title The King's Regiment for The King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool).

★

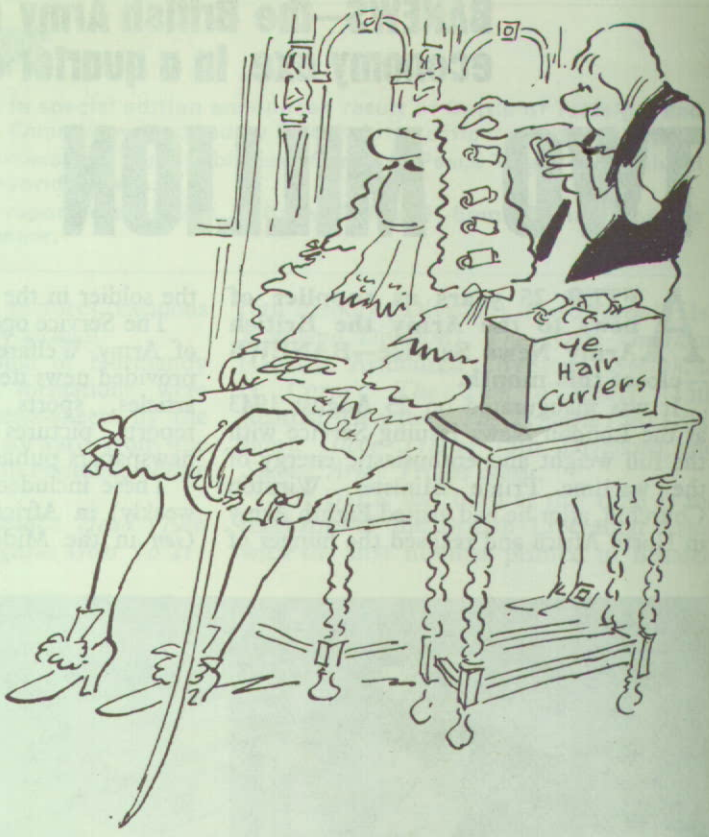
This column announced in November that a feature in January on The Gloucestershire Regiment would be the last in the "Your Regiment" series.

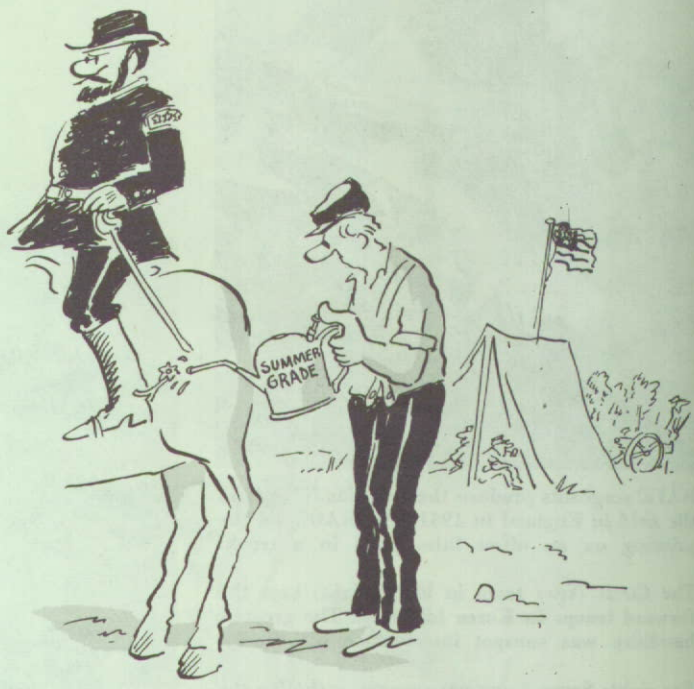
The statement was premature. The Glosters were in fact followed by The Life Guards (February issue) and the Royal Horse Guards (this month, page 28).

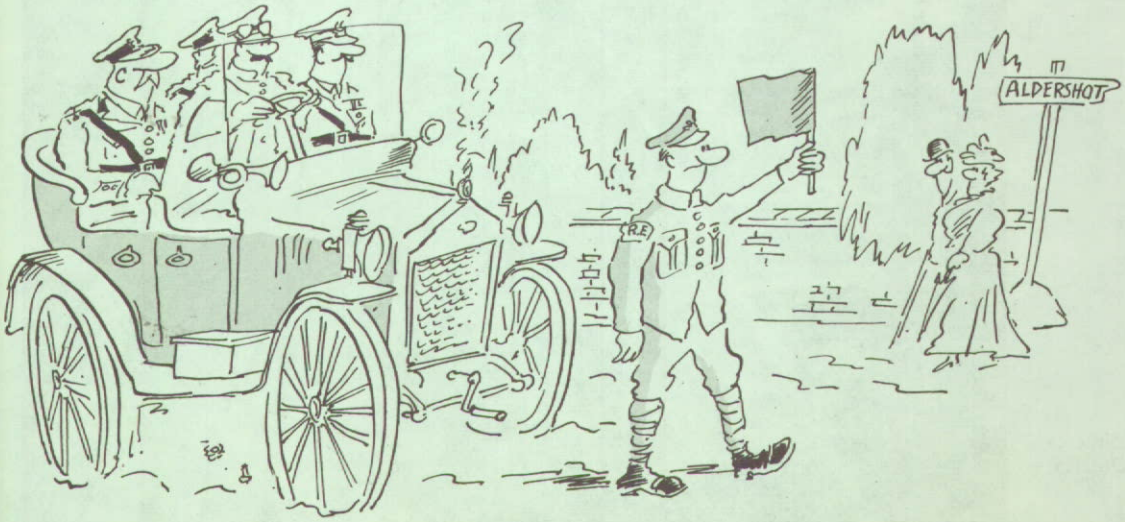
But this series, which began in January 1963, has now definitely ended. It has covered, in 128 pages, all the Regular infantry of the line and cavalry regiments of the British Army.

It has not, however, included the four Gurkha regiments. The Gurkhas will be the subject of a special feature later this year.

Officers and Servants







by

Lamb

BANEWS—the British Army News Service—has fallen to the economy axe. In a quarter of a century its staff churned out

TWO MILLION WORDS A YEAR

AFTER 25 years as supplier of news to the Army the British Army News Service—BANEWS—closes this month.

It was inaugurated on 23 August 1943 as the London News Issuing Service with the full weight and enthusiastic energy of the wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, after he had visited Eighth Army in North Africa and realised the hunger of the soldier in the field for reliable news.

The Service operated under the Director of Army Welfare at the War Office and provided news items about events at home, articles, sports features, parliamentary reports, pictures and cartoons to Army newspapers published in overseas theatres.

These included *Crusader* (Eighth Army weekly) in Africa and Italy, *Parade* and *Gen* in the Middle East, *SEAC*, *Burma Star* and *Contact* in the Far East, *Trunk Call* in Persia-Iraq and *Tripoli Times* in Libya. Later there were *Union Jack* in Italy, *Vienna Morning News* in Austria, the *BAFG* (British Air Forces Greece) *Gazette* and the *News Bulletin* in Trieste.

The News Service was staffed by experienced journalists and included some who were then, or who later became, top-liners in their profession. Such as William

RAEC sergeants produce the *Southland Times* in the field in England in 1951. The RAOC did the printing on an offset litho press in a truck.

The *Circle News* team in lorry (right) kept the forward troops in Korea informed. The greatest handicap was sunspot interference with radio.

Far right: Some Army newspapers, including the *Cologne Post* and *Mid-Pacific News* which beat the world's press, and *SOLDIER's* first number.

Story by George Hogan, last Deputy Editor of BANEWS and now Deputy Editor of SOLDIER

Connor ("Cassandra" of the *Daily Mirror*, later Sir William), Frank Owen, cartoonist Jon whose Desert Army "Two Types" became famous, and Hugh and Percy Cudlipp. Among those who wrote on political subjects were Members of Parliament Emmanuel Shinwell and Quintin Hogg.

Even before Churchill's trip to Africa an idea had been explored in Eighth Army for the introduction of a magazine to be called SOLDIER and a dummy dated 8 May 1942 was produced. Alas, it had to be pigeon-holed but it was not forgotten.

Meanwhile the News Service had full use of material collected by British news agencies and occupied a desk in Reuters, Fleet Street. Its hot news was transmitted over the Reuter beams with the prefix Forcereuter, over Royal Signals' channels, by cable services and through Army and commercial radio, while pictures, cartoons and features were sent by airmail.

Then came the invasion of Normandy in 1944. At least 20 formations were publishing their own news-sheets by the time the Army moved forward from the bridgehead and 35 were in existence before the Rhine was reached.

They included *The Bull's Head* (79th Armoured Division), *Pegasus Goes To It!* (6th Airborne Division), *Piobaireachd* (51st Highland Division), *The News Guardian* (Guards Armoured Division), *Spearhead* (1 Corps), *The Tam o'Shanter* (15th Scottish Division), *The Triangle* (3rd Division), *Globe Trotter* (5th Division) and *Second Army Troops News*.

SOLDIER was born at this time as the magazine of the British Liberation Army with the first number printed in Brussels

WORLD SCOOPS

1805 *Gibraltar Chronicle* **in special edition announced result of Battle of Trafalgar and death of Nelson.** *Chronicle* **was edited by British Army officers in its early days.**

1919 *Cologne Post and Wiesbaden Times* **published Versailles Peace Treaty a day ahead of remainder of world's Press.**

1957 *Mid-Pacific News* **reported explosion of Britain's first H-bomb 24 hours before any other newspaper.**

and published on 19 March 1945. From September of that year SOLDIER served the British Army of the Rhine from Hamburg, where it was printed until October 1953 when the staff moved to Britain.

At the birth of SOLDIER the magazine and the News Service combined to form the British Army News Unit (BANU) with the news section continuing to serve Army newspapers everywhere. News material went out under the title BANEWS which also became the telegraphic and signals address for the unit.

The News Service was still aimed at maintaining morale through the provision of home news and when the war ended there was naturally some concentration on news about resettlement, on postwar reconstruction and other such themes currently occupying the soldiers' thoughts. BANEWS material was now supplied to overseas civilian newspapers wherever British troops were serving as well as to Army publications and to education officers for use within units and libraries. Some 48,000 words were being sent out weekly, nearly half of them as hot news over the Reuter beams.

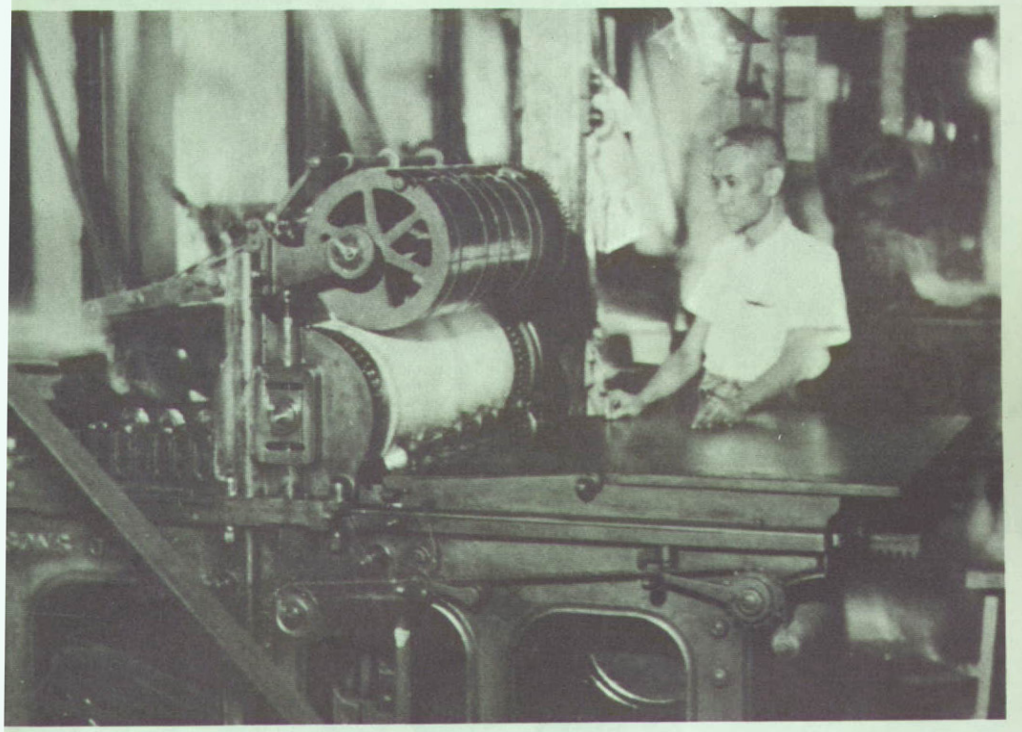
Overseas newspapers which have been publishing the BANEWS Forcereuter and airmailed material including pictures for up to a quarter of a century include the *Times of Malta*, *Singapore Free Press*, *Uganda Herald*, *Sudan Star*, *Gibraltar Chronicle*, *Egyptian Gazette*, *Cyprus Mail*, *Cyprus Times*, *China Mail*, *Mediterranean Forces Gazette*, *Malaya Mail*, *Mombasa Times*, *Japan News*, *Tanganyika Standard*, *East African Standard*, *Uganda Argus*, *Sunday Ghibli*, *Hong Kong Telegraph*, and the *Malaya Tribune*.

The BANEWS story entered a new phase in October 1949 when the Directorate of Army Education was given responsibility for BANU and the Royal Army Educational Corps the task of providing Army newspapers in war. RAEC teams trained by the News Service worked under difficulties in Korea to keep the troops informed with the news-sheets *Circle News*, *Korean Base Gazette* and *Crown News*. A Services edition of *Japan News* was printed in Tokyo and flown to the troops.

In 1952 *Canal Zone News* was produced at Ismailia when there was trouble with Egypt which entailed the banning of Egyptian newspapers which the troops had until then been reading regularly. In 1956 a Royal Army Educational Corps team was turning out *2 Corps News* (later renamed *Musketeer News* after the title of the operation) ashore at Port Said from the first day of the Anglo-French landings.

On Christmas Island from 1957 to 1960 an Army mini-newspaper, *Mid-Pacific News*, played a useful part in keeping the small garrison informed and in touch with home.

The issue of 15 May 1957 is now a collector's item through beating the world's



This ancient press, held together with straps, string and adhesive tape, turned out *Burma Star* in 1946. Right: The 4th Hussars, of which Sir Winston Churchill was Colonel, produced their own paper in Malaya in 1951. The Chef cartoon (below, right) recalls early days before the RAEC was Royal.

IN EARLIER DAYS

News is a morale booster. General Lord Baden-Powell knew this when he ordered the *Mafeking Mail* to be printed for the benefit of his besieged troops during the South African War. Only paper sugar bags were available as newsprint—but the *Mail* came out.

The first British Army of the Rhine had its own daily newspaper, *The Cologne Post and Wiesbaden Times*, which suffered many difficulties but ran for more than a decade from 31 March 1919 to 3 November 1929 and ceased publication only when the last troops were marching out.

Perhaps the most romantic Army news-sheet was *The Emigrant Soldiers' Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle* published weekly in 1858 aboard the clipper ship 'Thames City' which took six months to transport 122 officers and sappers of the Royal Engineers with 31 wives and 34 children to British Columbia via Cape Horn. They played a leading part in launching the new colony. The editor was a Corporal Sinett and the *Gazette*, written on large sheets of cardboard, was read to the assembled company each Saturday evening by the senior Royal Engineer officer on board.

press by 24 hours in reporting the explosion of Britain's first H-bomb.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s BANEWS entered a third phase as the National Service element was gradually leaving the Army and the Service was again becoming all-volunteer and fully professional. *Phoenix* was a publication of this period. A first-class fortnightly newspaper edited by an officer of the RAEC and printed on the presses of the *East African Standard* it served the British brigade in Kenya for two years. The editor was then posted to Malaya where he started the *Bukit Bulletin* which is still being published for the Commonwealth Brigade.

Many units were now asking for the BANEWS news-sheets which were primarily intended for news editors. The Service was not geared for large-scale distribution but all applications from overseas were honoured and the number of recipients rapidly increased.

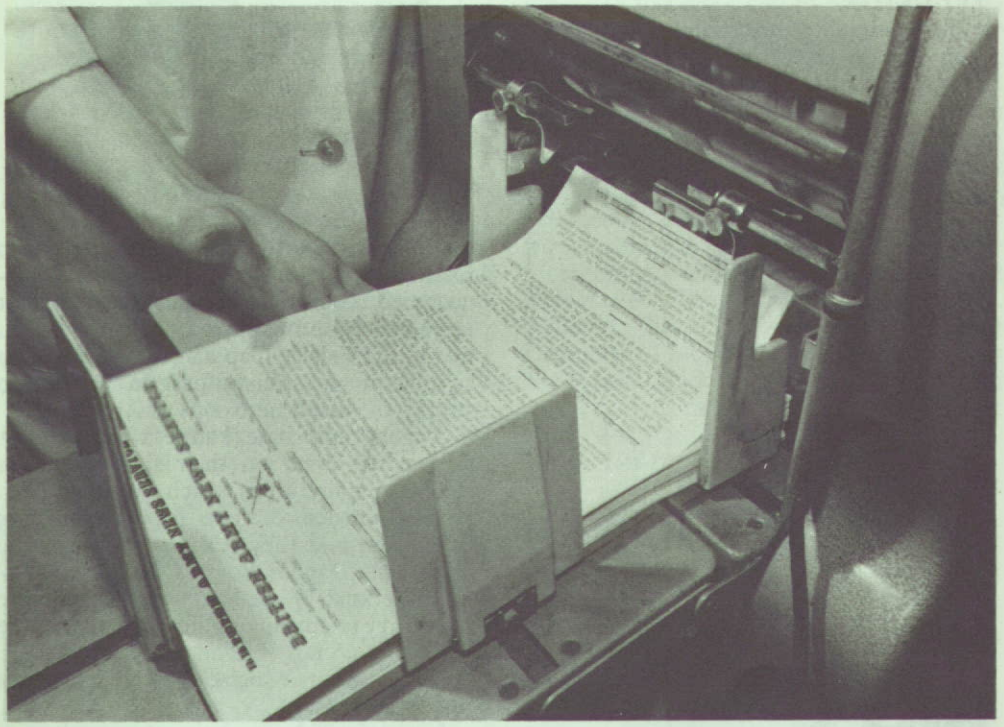
They included Royal Air Force and Royal Navy stations whose personnel appreciated the coverage of joint-Services operations and exercises and who found they could also learn much about the Army with which they were so closely working. The home town news aspect of the Service had not been discarded but BANEWS journalists had realised that an all-professional Army must be deeply interested in itself.

So demonstrations and developments were reported of weapons, equipment, vehicles, ships and aircraft. The tactical development of the helicopter was watched and the birth and practical development of the hovercraft recorded. Units' activities, achievements and movements found space in the news-sheets, reorganisations were explained, defence statements and estimates dissected and fully reported. This led to the fourth and last phase in the BANEWS story.

In the mid-60s units posted to Britain asked that they be retained on the distribution list—until then it had been restricted to overseas addresses. Army Careers Information Offices also wanted the Service as an aid to recruiting and the Royal Air Force asked for considerably more. The list grew and units requested extra copies for sub-units. Many asked for large reprints of special articles and one particular unit in Aden signalled a request for several hundred—one for each man. Obviously it was time for a change of policy.

To this end new machines with vari-type and pictorial possibilities were obtained and plans were made for expansion, to include eventually a mini-newspaper to be published daily. Alas, it was then that the economy axe fell and BANEWS was served with a notice to disband.

In the past 25 years an average of more than 2,000,000 words have been sent out yearly by a staff of six in the early days and four in recent years. BANEWS material has been published and broadcast all over the world. Its journalists have endeavoured to report as factually, accurately and as fully as possible, without bias or slant, and have been allowed to do so without pressure or influence from officialdom.



Left: One of the last BANEWS news-sheets to be issued from London to addresses all over the world.

Below, left: Nearly 1000 pigeon-holes had to be filled daily by staff working against time.

The RAEC is now trained to produce newspapers in the field in war. Perhaps they will not be required. If another war comes maybe a newspaper in London beamed to a satellite will produce a facsimile in the field that can be received not only by headquarters but even at company and squadron level. This has already been pioneered by a British newspaper when the front page of a London daily was read on the streets by customers in the West Indies 20 minutes after transmission began via the Early Bird satellite.

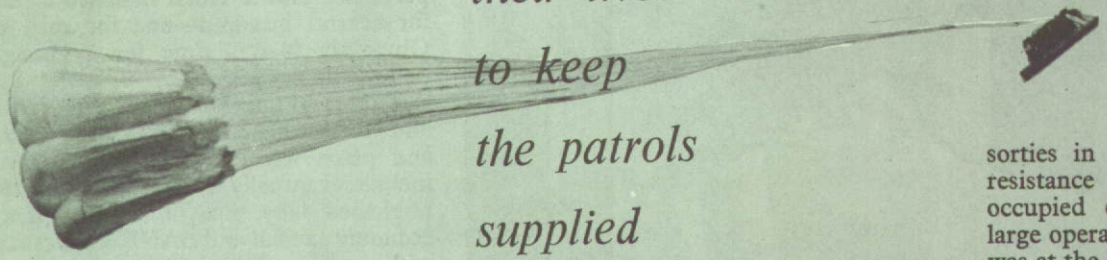
Who will take this task on for the Army? The map makers of the Royal Engineers, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps printers or the Royal Corps of Signals as part of its multi-channel operations? In bequeathing these exciting new possibilities, BANEWS hopes a future successor will follow the principles observed in 25 years of news for the Services.

GOLDEN JUBILEES

Three BANEWS journalists completed 50 years in their profession while with the News Service. They were Sydney Redwood, Editor 1945-1959, Tom Dilnot who ran the Forcereuter desk from 1945-1961 and Archie Quick, sports writer 1945-1968. Peter Lovegrove, who served from 1945 except for three years at SHAPE, was Editor from 1959 to 1967 when Edgar O'Ballance took over the chair. John Jesse, Forcereuter desk and feature writer for 12 years, and George Hogan, Forcereuter, feature writer and deputy editor for 15 years, have now both joined SOLDIER.

Over the treetops, down through the jungle came stores, equipment, food and mail. Risking their lives to keep the patrols supplied were

THE DAK AND DAGGER BOYS



THE disbandment of 389 Air Despatch Troop, Royal Corps of Transport, at the Royal Australian Air Force Base at Butterworth, Malaya, is a reminder of the debt owed to an intrepid body of soldiers with a unique task in the British Army.

The air despatchers are rarely seen by the men in the field but they take high risks to keep them supplied. When the terrain is extra difficult and in emergency situations they are often the only close physical link between the troops and their bases.

In the campaigns in Malaya and Borneo over the past 20 years the supply problems were extremely difficult. Patrols operated in dense humid jungles sometimes 50 miles from road and rail.

In such conditions a platoon needed a battalion to keep it supplied by any surface route.

The air despatchers, flying in Royal Air Force aircraft, packed and delivered supplies by dropping them through 200-foot-high trees into tiny clearings. These were hard enough for the pilots to locate in the towering undulating forests, and the height of the trees made them dangerous hazards, too.

The stores included not only clothing, ammunition, food and mail but also awkward loads such as rolls of barbed wire and long lengths of planking.

389 Air Despatch Troop, of about 50 soldiers under Captain Phillip Blyth, which played a full part in these operations, could trace its history back 24 years to the formation in 1944 of its parent unit, then 799 Company, Royal Army Service Corps, the first of the air despatchers. This is now 55 Air Despatch Squadron, Royal Corps of Transport, based on Singapore.

799 Company began its operational sorties in 1944 by dropping supplies to resistance forces in most of the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe. Its first large operation in support of British troops was at the Falaise Gap and it later played a significant and valiant part in helping to supply the airborne troops at Arnhem.

A gold and blue badge which all air despatchers wear on their sleeves depicts the Dakota aircraft in which they then flew. It was awarded to all air despatchers after this action and they became known as the "Dak and Dagger Boys." "Dagger," perhaps, because of the commando-type knife they carry to cut rigging lines if a parachute fouls the aircraft, but more likely because of their earlier association with European resistance forces.

In 1945, 799 Company was in Burma and the large routine drops it made daily to General Slim's Fourteenth Army included even pack mules. Here they found the dropping zones were difficult and minute and they developed and perfected techniques which stood them in good stead over the next 20 years.

The operations with Fourteenth Army have been described as "probably the greatest single contributory factor to victory in Burma."

At the end of 1945 the company was in Java, mainly supporting 23rd Indian Division but also helping in the relief of prisoners-of-war and the evacuation of refugees.

In nine months in Java 50,000 tons of supplies were airdropped or landed. Back in Burma in December 1946 the company took over ten-ton trucks for an additional role as a motor transport unit. Some airdropping continued and included 600 tons of rice for the starving Karens.

When the company moved to Singapore in January 1948 only 12 men were fully trained in air despatch but the number

Story by GEORGE HOGAN

quickly increased when the Malayan emergency was declared in June that year. Soon the operations against the Communist terrorists were extended far into the jungle and the air despatchers were able to maintain that quick and close contact that boosted the morale of the foot-slogging fighting patrols and ensured their supply right through the long campaign.

At this time there were also detachments of the company in Burma and Hong Kong and in 1950 two air despatchers manned a Sunderland flying boat to drop supplies to HMS Amethyst trapped by Chinese shore batteries in the Yangtse River. Two sorties were made under heavy fire but the drops were not necessary as the Sunderland managed to land near the warship. Those despatchers qualified for the Naval General Service Medal.

The Malayan campaign developed and by extending the supply by air the troops were able to penetrate farther and farther into the jungle. It was necessary for the air despatchers to be extremely efficient in their work and absolutely accurate with the drops as an error of only a score of yards might result in vital supplies left dangling unobtainable in 200-foot-high trees. Moreover a patrol might take hours, even days, to hack its way through extremely dense undergrowth to recover packages.

Although the man on the ground rarely saw the despatcher he was none the less grateful for the fresh bread and fruit, ammunition, arms, mail, medicine, clothing and newspapers that came to him from the skies through the semi-darkness of the hot humid jungle.

Some soldiers made it a personal task to visit the "Dak and Dagger Boys" during a rest period and thank them for their efforts. Many friendships were made in this way.

The air despatchers also took pride in seeking out and delivering special items that were sometimes asked for—even for birthdays.

The Royal Air Force pilots exhibited the greatest skill, judgement and nerve to ensure the successful delivery of an average of 300,000 lbs per month during this period.

In September 1950 the company was renumbered 55. This had been the title of a horse transport company stationed at Aldershot from 1900 to 1911, then of a motor transport company raised at Bulford in 1911 and which went to France in 1914. Reformed at Bulford in 1939 it sailed to the Far East in 1941 and took part in the defence of Singapore until captured by the Japanese in 1942.

So the "double five" had long historical associations and typified the Corps' transition right through from horse to air. The company soon became known as the "Fives."

The tempo of the Malayan campaign gradually increased and in November 1953 some ten battalions were deployed in the jungle, all relying absolutely on air supply. In that month the Fives dropped 848,115 lbs of stores. In the last six months of the year they sent 58,000,000 propaganda leaflets fluttering down to Communist terrorists.

When a permanent chain of jungle forts was established for the Malayan police the three platoons of the company were named after them: Kemar, Iskander and Carfax. Iskander Platoon later became 389 Air Despatch Troop. To these forts went chairs and tables, live chickens, ducks and goats, and from dogs and cats to combat "rats"—all by parachute.

Other materials dropped in Malaya included a Ferguson tractor, a large sum of money to 22 Special Air Service Regiment for payment of aborigine labour and, during a fortnight in September 1955, some 27,581,000 amnesty leaflets. In Sarawak, 9565 lbs of supplies were parachuted to an Oxford University expedition, while in Johore and Penang drops of 39,097 lbs succoured civilians isolated by floods.

The 3,000,000th 24-hour ration pack was dropped in the Malayan jungle in 1957 and Sapper Leslie Rowlands who received it was particularly happy to find a ten-dollar note enclosed.

In January 1956, 21 Air Maintenance Platoon, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, joined 55 Company to prepare and pack ordnance items and to act as experts on heavy dropping.

The platoon worked with the company for the next nine years until the formation of the Royal Corps of Transport in 1965 when the company, now 55 Air Despatch Squadron, took over the full air supply commitment.

When the Malayan campaign ended on 31 July 1960 the company's impressive record included 15,000 sorties, 200,000 parachutes used, 29,590 tons despatched and 650,000,000 leaflets dropped.

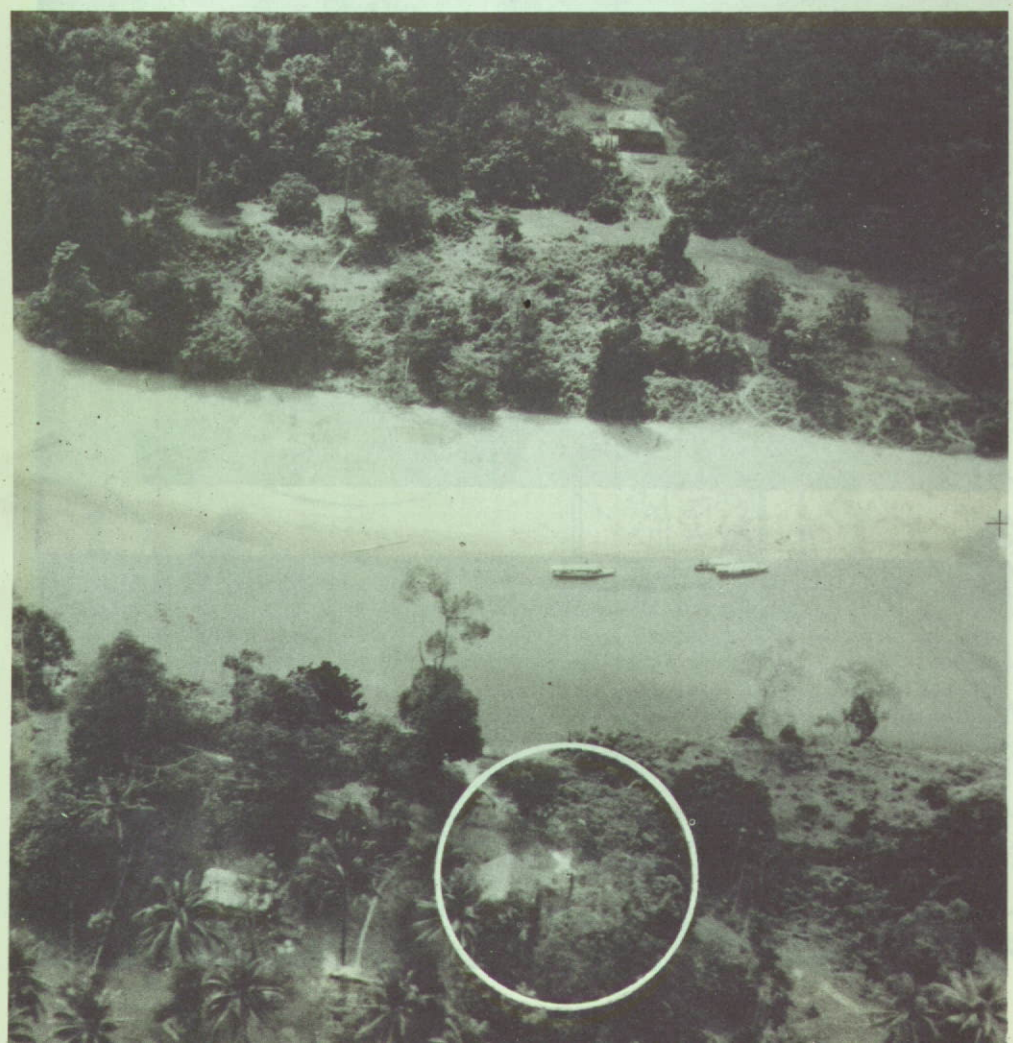
There had also been eight air crashes with the loss of 35 soldiers. From one of these disasters Driver T Lee made a remarkable escape and was mentioned in despatches.

It was thought that no one could possibly have survived the force of the impact and the fierceness of the fire when a Bristol freighter hit the trees on a steep ridge in deep primary jungle.

After a painstaking search, a patrol of the 4th Malay Regiment discovered a faint track and eventually found Lee 12 days later seven miles away. He had a broken ankle and, because of burns on his hands and arms, had used his teeth to pull down banana leaves to make shelters.

During the Malayan campaign 55 Company, whose total strength was rarely more than 150, received the following awards for gallantry and devotion to duty: six Distinguished Flying Medals, one Military Medal and six British Empire Medals. Five officers were appointed Members of the Order of the British Empire and 34 personnel were mentioned in despatches.

On 8 December 1962 an armed rebellion broke out in Brunei and 55 Company sent two detachments to start supply and



The gold and blue Dakota badge worn by all air despatchers was specially awarded after Arnhem.

Left: A dropping zone beside a river in Malaya in 1948. The mark is the cross in the centre of the ring. Every item fell within 25 yards.

Far left: A heavy drop from a Beverley. Even a tractor and railway equipment were parachuted to out of the way places in Malaya and Borneo.

leaflet dropping. When the situation developed a company headquarters was set up in Labuan and troops in the jungle were supplied with fresh Christmas fare. Then reinforcements arrived from 22 and 47 companies in Britain.

The following month there were severe floods in North Borneo and food, blankets and medical stores were parachuted to river valley areas on the east coast. There were also operations on the border between Malaya and Thailand and 80,000 lbs of supplies a month were dropped. In April one of the extra tasks given to the air despatchers was the delivery of urgently needed diphtheria vaccine by air drop to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean.

Next came the "confrontation" with Indonesia, started when Malaysia was formed by the integration of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo on 31 August 1963. The border in Borneo was 1000 miles long and badly defined and helicopters and light aircraft of the Army Air Corps played an important part in the operations. The air despatchers dropped them 44-gallon drums of aircraft fuel and constructional equipment for the building of airstrips.

Prefabricated buildings were also parachuted as well as water pumps, barbed wire and pickets for the establishment of forts and defended villages. In addition there were drops of food, medicines, ammunition, stores, cats, goats and chickens while many hours were spent seeking out patrols eagerly awaiting supplies in the dense jungle.

In 1964 the monthly totals varied between 1,200,000 and 1,800,000 lbs from the two bases at Labuan and Kuching. They rose to 2,000,000 lbs a month in 1965. Included were considerable quantities of canned Tiger beer for the troops.

During this period there were also supply operations in support of units engaged in countering armed landings by Indonesian infiltrators in South Malaysia and a widespread drop of 2,500,000 leaflets over Indonesian bases which the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tengku Abdul Rahman, praised as "a great success." In the last 21 months of the campaign 31,000 tons of cargo were dropped in 112,000 sorties.

Activities of other air despatch units since World War Two include the dropping of food, water and blankets to a party of tourists lost in the Sinai Desert in 1947 who would otherwise have perished. This was by 223 Company, stationed at Fanara in the Canal Zone.

Its main task was to maintain, from the air, personnel engaged in sea and desert rescues of aircrews and passengers after forced landings and crashes.

From the same station in 1950 the company, now renumbered 73, dropped supplies to a party of sailors snowed up in the mountains 70 miles from the Red Sea after visiting the deserted rock city of Petra in Jordan. This company also experimented with packing until it was possible to deliver ripe tomatoes and fresh eggs undamaged in free drop, ie without parachutes.

For the Berlin airlift in 1948 a new Army unit was set up called the Rear Airfield Supply Organisation. Composed originally of men of 749 Air Despatch

Above: Crating ration chickens for the Gurkhas who preferred these delicacies to come in alive. Below: Panniers being pushed out to supply a desert column in 1950 by men of 73 Company in Egypt.

FIRST GARRISON AIR DROP

Kut al Amara, Mesopotamia, was probably the first garrison to be supplied by air. In 1916 six small Royal Flying Corps biplanes and three seaplanes of the Royal Navy attempted to beat the siege which the Turks had been maintaining for four and a half months. A few things like newspapers, mail and medical comforts had been dropped in small packages when General Townshend called for 5000 lbs of food per day to enable the garrison of 14,000 British and Indian troops and 5000 Arabs to survive.

A great effort was made but the largest day's drop was only 3350 lbs and the total in 14 days was 19,000 lbs of which 2200 lbs reached the Turks or fell into the river. Although 140 food sorties were made against enemy opposition it was not enough. The garrison was forced to surrender.

Part of the disbandment parade of 389 Air Despatch Troop, RCT, at the Royal Australian Air Force base at Butterworth, Malaya. The inspecting officer is Air Commodore G H Steege, Commander of the Base.

Company and 63 Parachute Brigade Company, it packed freight into aircraft at the loading fields and into Sunderland flying boats on the Elbe at Hamburg.

A team of a corporal and three men could load a Sunderland in eight minutes from a small barge or a DUKW while both boat and aircraft rolled and pitched in rough rainy weather.

From this nucleus the British contribution to the mammoth airlift, which defeated the blockade of Berlin, developed and expanded until in 13 months British aircraft alone ferried nearly 500,000 tons of supplies to the city.

East Africa, too, has known the worth of the air despatchers. 16 Company, formed there in 1960, played a vital role during famine and flood relief operations in 1964. It helped to train the Kenya Army air despatchers and operated during emergencies in the Northern Frontier District and in Kuwait.

In 1964 it took part in a trial during which it successfully took over from the Royal Air Force the task of controlling the air movement of all stores of the Army leaving Africa. This involved, among other things, the setting up of air transport liaison officer sections at two airfields in Kenya, at Salisbury in Rhodesia, and at Matsapa in Swaziland.

Before Kenya became independent in 1963 the Company received a certificate of commendation from the Governor and Commander-in-Chief and as the troops left in November 1964 for Aden the GOC-in-C British Land Forces, Major-General I H Freeland, told them: "Your bearing, behaviour and efficiency have upheld the name of the British Army."

In Aden 16 Company became responsible for all air supply in the Radfan and the freighting of all Army stores from the Royal Air Force base of Khormaksar to bases in the Western Protectorate. Detachments were maintained at Beihan, 'Dhala, Mukerias and other places. The fighting troops were supplied in the field with rations, ammunition and stores, and the road-building sappers with machines, materials and explosives.

During the period from 1964 to 1966 the Company moved about 1,000,000 lbs of freight each month in addition to considerable quantities dropped by parachute. There was also a detachment at Bahrein in the Persian Gulf which had an air despatch replenishment role in the Trucial States during operations and exercises, particularly with The Parachute Regiment.

Today 55 Air Despatch Squadron remains based on Singapore with a great tradition supporting its ability to carry out operations anywhere at any time.

In Britain, 48 Air Despatch Training Squadron is now the Air Despatch Training Wing of the School of Transport and is moving from Tangmere to Thorney Island.

14 Air Despatch Regiment, based on Odiham, Hampshire, includes 22 and 47 Squadrons and maintains detachments on the Royal Air Force transport airfields at Lyneham, Fairford, Benson, Abingdon and Thorney Island, as well as in Bahrein and Cyprus.

Barely 25 years old, the air despatch units of the Royal Corps of Transport have more than proved their worth in the post-war years—a period of changing tactics and ever-improving communications. They have been actively operational almost continously since their formation in 1944 and their ability to carry out the huge task of moving considerable tonnages of all kinds of supplies screens the fact that their numbers are small.

Though few and rarely seen they have earned a name for reliability, efficiency and courage and have created a tradition that new generations of air despatchers will be proud to emulate.

How observant are you?

These two pictures look alike but they differ in ten details. Look at them carefully. If you cannot spot the differences see page 38.

PURELY PERSONAL

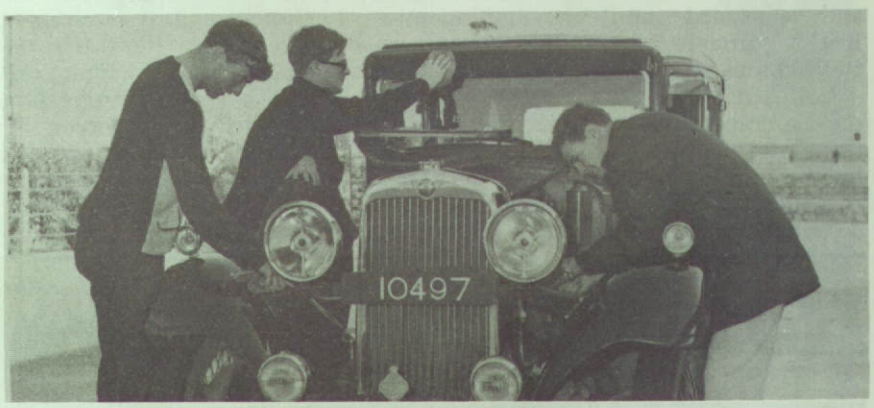
Footplate farewell

Major-General Errol Lonsdale, retiring Transport Officer-in-Chief, drove the last of the Army's steam locomotives, "Errol Lonsdale," when he paid a farewell visit to the home of military railways at the School of Transport, Longmoor. The engine, a saddle-tank type built in 1953, was named after him a year ago. The "whistle stop" tour included a call at the Motor Transport Wing, Bordon.

Premiere paras

Three men of The Parachute Regiment walked more than 162 miles to keep a date with a princess at the pictures. **Private N Galbraith, Sergeant M Vaughan** and **Major Michael Thompson** (left to right) were the first of four three-man teams to reach the Empire, in London's Leicester Square, for the premiere of "Where Eagles Dare." Princess Alexandra congratulated them for arriving promptly "considering the traffic." Richard Burton, the star of the film, and wife Elizabeth Taylor arrived by Rolls-Royce—20 minutes late. It was he who had challenged the Parachute Regiment to undertake the march. The film (see SOLDIER, February) features wartime parachutists.

Back by "banger"



Once owned by an admiral, this 1930 Morris car was being used by a local farmer as a chicken coop when **Corporal Keith Knowles,** 1st Battalion, The Loyal Regiment, discovered it in Malta. With **Bandsman David Radcliffe** and **Private Anthony LeCheminant** he got it into sparkling condition and then drove it the 2500 miles across Europe to the Loyals' new station at Dover. It was a rewarding journey without difficulties—just one puncture.

gewsdnikettiW

A two-day trek over the difficult Wittekindsweg between Minden and Osnabruck in Germany brought unexpected medals to three signalmen of Headquarters and Signal Squadron 11th Infantry Brigade. **Roy Larkings, Barrie Pitt** and **David Sanderson** were not content to walk the 60 miles and nine hills the conventional German way but took the reverse route which meant steeper climbs and more effort. Their reason—they are training hard because they are keen to join the Special Air Service Regiment. When interpreter **Frau Helga Diekmann** presented the medals on behalf of **Herr Georg Weibgen,** head of Minden's tourist bureau, she told the signalmen they were the first British Servicemen to gain the honour.

THAT RISING SUN

A COLLECTION of bayonets and sword-bayonets radiating from a crown cut from sheet brass and mounted on a red semi-circular board. This was the decorative setpiece which 66 years ago inspired the "Rising Sun" badge of the Australian Army.

For years the setpiece was in the hands of the Australian Navy but eventually it reappeared and has now been put on permanent display at Army Headquarters in Canberra where it symbolises the birth of the Australian Army.

It all began when a drawing, "Australian Rising Sun," made by a well-known Adelaide artist, Mr Frank Bartels, before the turn of the century, came into the hands of Major José Gordon of the South Australian Military Forces. Major Gordon (later a brigadier-general and Commandant of New South Wales) decided to have the setpiece made from this drawing as an ornament for his mess in Adelaide.

He persuaded his friend, Captain Sir William Rocke Creswell ("Father" of the Australian Navy and later vice-admiral) to arrange it and the decoration was constructed by a shipwright. The setpiece and drawing were eventually presented by General Gordon to a British officer, General Sir Edward Hutton.

General Hutton, who had been commissioned by the Australian Government in 1902 to mould the heterogeneous forces of the six states into one army, placed the setpiece over the doorway to his office. It gave him the idea for a badge for 1st Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse, which was being raised for overseas service in the South African War.

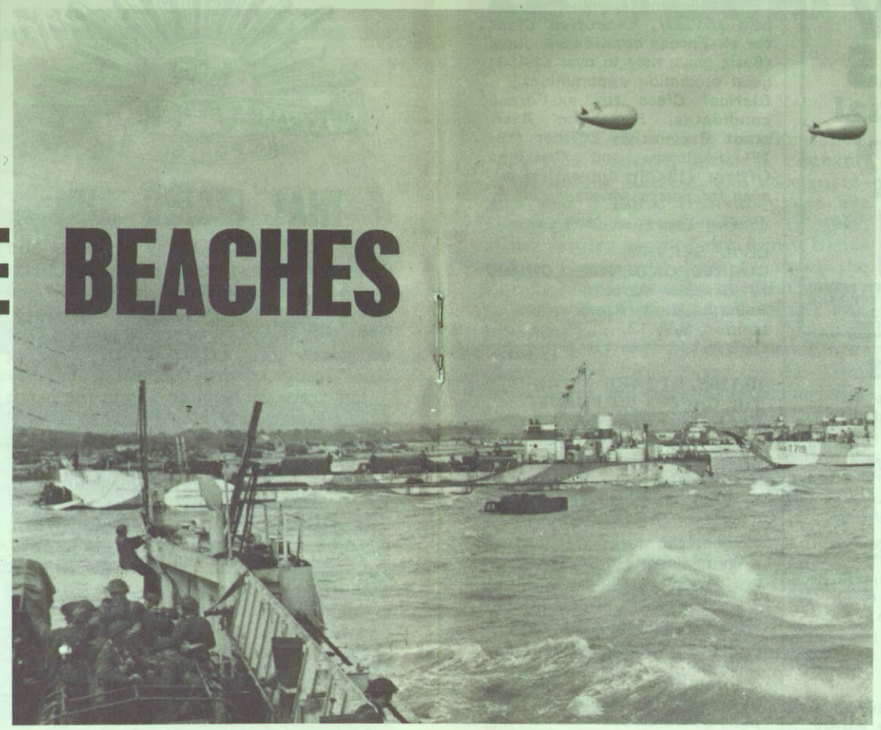
At a dinner in his honour in Melbourne just before his return to England, General Hutton gave the setpiece and drawing back to Admiral Creswell who in turn kept the drawing but handed the decoration to the naval commandant at Port Melbourne. From there it was transferred to another naval depot and though several generals tried to re-acquire it, the Navy had no record of its existence.

Eventually it was found and is now in the foyer of Army Building 1 in the Defence Complex at Russell Hill, Canberra.

From the original Australian Commonwealth Horse badge was developed the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces badge, introduced in 1904 and designed and made by the British firm of Gaunt, Birmingham. In 1911 it became the General Service badge. A redesigned badge introduced in 1949 bore the new title of "Australian Military Forces." The current badge, issued in 1966, is worn by training battalions, Royal Australian Army Pay Corps and Australian Army Legal Corps.

Join SOLDIER's D-Day trip to the 25th anniversary commemorations of the Normandy landings . . .

IT'S BACK TO THE BEACHES



Warships and aircraft pounded a 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast . . . Unchallenged from sea or air, 5000 ships headed for the French shore to begin the liberation of a fettered Europe.

This was D-Day, 6 June 1944. Twenty-five years later—on D+9131—British, French, American and Canadian Servicemen are going back to the beaches to commemorate history's most memorable amphibious invasion.

So that men who landed on the Normandy beaches can re-live those momentous hours and days, SOLDIER is making available to its readers a D-Day trip. This reasonably priced coach and croos-channel ferry trip will leave London on the early evening of 5 June, returning to London around midnight on 7 June.

This pilgrimage has been organised for its members by the Civil Service Motoring Association, in conjunction with Friendship Tours, and has been specially extended to include all SOLDIER readers.

Firm details of the official commemorations had not been announced when this issue went to press. When they are known the trip itinerary will be altered to allow attendance at these ceremonies.

It was hoped, however, that 1st Battalion, The Royal Hampshire Regiment, and its band, and three other military bands, would take part. Plans were being made for the band and corps of drums of 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, to play at Ranville on the morning of 6 June and for the main ceremony to be held in the afternoon at Ouistreham.

This would take the form of a drumhead service followed by a march-past and, if possible, a fly-past of "vintage" aircraft and a salute by two frigates of the Royal Navy anchored off-shore.

The Royal Air Force contribution would be a band and probably the Queen's Colour Squadron. It was expected that there would be a Royal Marines detachment from *HMS Blake* at Eastney and the Royal Marines Band (Plymouth Division).

TOUR DETAILS

ITINERARY

5 June Depart from Tower Pier Coach Station, London, 1900 hours. Dinner or drink stop will be made en route. Arrive Southampton 2230 hours for Normandy Ferry to Le Havre, sailing at 2330 hours.

6 June Arrive Le Havre 0700 hours. Depart in French coach via Tancarville Bridge, Honfleur, Deauville, Cabourg to Pegasus Bridge and British invasion beaches of Sword, Juno and Gold. Arrive Arromanches, visit D-Day Museum, free time, lunch. Depart mid-afternoon to Port-en-Bassin, then via American Sector (Omaha Beach) and American war cemetery of St Laurent-Colleville to Bayeux. Visit Cathedral, Bayeux tapestry and British war cemetery, then continue to Caen for free time, dinner and overnight stay.

7 June Breakfast 0800 hours and depart Caen 0900 hours for coach drive through battle areas of Tilly, Balleroy, Forest of Cerisy, St Lô, Villers-Bocage to Cherbourg. Arrive Cherbourg about 1300 hours for lunch, free time before boarding Thorensen Car Ferry at 1600 hours. Arrive Southampton 2130 hours, then coach to London, arriving approximately midnight.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

In double rooms only.

CABINS ON CROSS-CHANNEL FERRY

The trip includes an aircraft-type reclining seat on the outward and return crossings. Limited cabin accommodation (eight 4-berth couchettes, four 4-berth standard cabins and one 2-berth cabin) will be allotted on a "first come, first served basis" and at no extra charge.

MEALS

All meals from lunch on 6 June to lunch on 7 June are included in the trip. Other meals can be bought on the ferry and at suitable stops provided.

COST

£21 per person ("V" form amount £5). Children accepted at reduction of £2 10s.

INSURANCE

Friendship Tours Comprehensive Holiday Insurance Scheme (with Lloyds) is available at a premium of 14s per person for 2-3 days.

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Closing date 30 April—final payment one month prior together with "V" form.

The closing date for bookings is 30 April; bookings can be accepted now. A deposit of £4 should be sent to SOLDIER (D-Day Trip), 433 Holloway Road, London N7, payable to Friendship Tours Ltd.

Further information will be sent direct to readers who indicate interest in the D-Day trip.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following is a short list of available books about D-Day:
"D-Day—Spearhead of Invasion" (R W Thompson) (Macdonald, 8s 6d).
"D-Day Beaches Pocket Guide" (Patrice Boussel) (Macdonald, 8s 6d).
"Dawn of D-Day" (junior edition) (Collins, 15s).
"D-Day" (Peter Gray) (McGraw-Hill, 12s 6d).
"The Battle of D-Day" (William McElwee) (Faber, 14s).
"The Invasion of Europe" (Alan A Michie) (George Allen & Unwin, 24s).

25 YEARS OF ARMY BENEVOLENCE

A ROYAL variety performance, gala concert, musical pageant, beating Retreat, two race meetings and a floral festival—these are some of the events which in 1969, silver jubilee year of the Army Benevolent Fund, will help to meet the Fund's ever-increasing need for money to assist the distressed ex-soldier and his family.

The jubilee year opened with a dinner given by the Army Board for the Army Benevolent Fund and the first major fund-raising event, "Fall in the Stars," at the London Palladium next month, is to be attended by the Queen, who is patron of the Fund, and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Speaking at the Army Board dinner in Lancaster House, London, Mr Gerry Reynolds, Minister of Defence for Administration, outlined the history and achievements of the Fund which was created on 15 August 1944 by the Army Council.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent were the principal guests; other guests were from the Variety Club of Great Britain, the "Saints and Sinners" Club, the film and theatre worlds, Naafi and the Services Kinema Corporation, all of which have given considerable help to the Fund, and from the Fund's regional committees.

During its first ten years, said Mr Reynolds, the Army Benevolent Fund disbursed nearly £4,000,000 to corps and regiments and the many national Service charities to help ease the lot of the soldier, his family and children, when fate, illness and luck turned against them. At its peak in the early 1950s the Fund was dispensing an average of £300,000 a year in relief work, but to meet the pressing and ever-increasing need, particularly in resettlement of the soldier after World War Two, it was continually necessary to dip into capital.

By 1959 nearly half the capital had gone and it was then decided that in future the Fund should conserve the remainder and live only on income. This meant appealing for some £200,000 a year to fill the minimum gap between normal income and the level of grants.

First the Army looked to itself for fund-raising efforts and a new scheme whereby every soldier was invited to contribute voluntarily one day's pay a year to his corps or regimental association.

But the Army in 1959-60 was minute in relation to the size of the problem it had inherited from World War One (when 75 per cent of all fighting men belonged to the Army), from World War Two and from the many post-war operations such as Korea, Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus. The only other course was to turn to the general public—and a national appeal was launched in 1961.

By 1967, said Mr Reynolds, the Army Benevolent Fund had restored its total grants to the £300,000 mark of the early 1950s, all from income and not from capital as in the earlier days. In 1967 the total of Army relief work passed the £600,000 mark.

The one day's pay scheme was contributing £200,000 a year and many serving and retired officers had increased their scale of covenants and subscriptions.

In the past four years the Fund had received £27,000 from the Variety Club of Great Britain to help ex-soldiers' children and for three years it had been a beneficiary of the charity race meeting run by the "Saints and Sinners" Club at Kempton Park.

The Fund's friends in the film world had given it the proceeds of the premières of "The Longest Day," "Guns at Batasi," "Zulu," "Khartoum" and, raising the record sum of £17,000, "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

Mr Reynolds also thanked for their help Naafi, the Services Kinema Corporation and the world of the theatre, particularly ex-Bombardier Harry Secombe who since 1960 has continuously visited troops in Germany, Cyprus, Malaya, Borneo and Aden and who has played a major part in staging every second year, under the sponsorship of the Variety Club of Great Britain, the royal performance, "Fall in the Stars."

Finally he thanked the 50 London and regional appeal committees of the Fund which since 1962 had raised £651,000, much of it from commerce and industry.

The Army relief effort, said the Minister, had risen steadily from £300,000 in 1962 to more than £600,000 in 1967 but this was still nearly £150,000 a year short of the target of £75,000 assessed in 1961 as the minimum annual requirement to meet the Army's need properly.

It was becoming more difficult year by year to raise money. The reduction in the size of the Army affected money-raising within the Army and particularly the day's pay scheme—every regiment disbanded meant an average loss of £1000 income a year. There was a corresponding loss of income from Naafi rebate, much of which finds its way to Army benevolence. As World War Two receded it became more difficult to maintain the national appeal income, workers and supporters grew older and no one was coming on to take the place of the many workers who were members of the Territorial Army.

"It has been hard work reaching our present reasonably effective standard of relief," said Mr Reynolds. "It is going to be harder still to maintain this, let alone close the gap. In any case I foresee a continuous and relentless struggle ahead if we are to continue to give an effective hand to the ex-soldier and his family and children when they are in distress and in need, due so often to their service to their country and to the inevitable aftermath of wars."

The Army Benevolent Fund provides central support for the Army's corps and regimental associations, with which it works in close partnership, and the 50 national Service charities which also serve the Army's cause. The Fund also acts as co-ordinator over the whole field of Army benevolence.

SILVER JUBILEE EVENTS

"FALL IN THE STARS"

At the London Palladium on 14 April. Organised by the Variety Club of Great Britain—and Harry Secombe. Tickets at ten, five, three and one guineas from Variety Club of Great Britain, 1/4 Argyll Street, London W1.

GALA CONCERT

At the Royal Festival Hall on 10 May. Programme by the band and trumpeters of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. 250 performers. Tickets from Box Office, Royal Festival Hall.

BEATING RETREAT

By the mounted band of the Household Cavalry, massed bands, pipe bands and corps of drums of The Guards Division, on Horse Guards Parade, London, 3 and 5 June, 6pm. Tickets—one stand at 12s 6d, 7s 6d and standing 2s 6d—from Keith Prowse Group.

"SAINTS AND SINNERS" CLUB RACE MEETING

Kempton Park, 11 June. One race sponsored on behalf of Army Benevolent Fund.

MILITARY MUSICAL PAGEANT

At the Empire Stadium Wembley, home of the Wembley Tattoo in the early 1920s, 21 June. More than 1000 musicians. Popular prices. Tickets from Box Office, Wembley Stadium.

FLORAL FESTIVAL

From 24 to 26 June at Banqueting Hall, Whitehall. Organised on behalf of Fund by the Flower Arrangement Association of London and Overseas.

VARIETY CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN RACE MEETING

On 6 September at Sandown Park. Sponsored race for Army Benevolent Fund.

"HORSE OF THE YEAR" SHOW

Empire Pool, Wembley, 6 October. Gala night proceeds to Army Benevolent Fund, National Hunt Disabled Jockeys Fund and Riding for the Disabled.

BLUE-BLOODED BLUES

THE blood-red Egyptian sun, glowering through the battle-smoke and dust clouds set slowly behind the mountains overlooking the Kassassin plain. It was August 1882.

The Egyptians, inspired by the presence of their chief Arabi Pasha whom they believed was endowed with supernatural powers, had boldly advanced. Then Major-General Drury Lowe, commanding the British cavalry, suddenly received an alarmist message that the British infantry were being heavily engaged. Unruffled, he continued to carry out existing orders to attack the enemy under cover of the hills.

The Royal Horse Guards (The Blues) and The Life Guards, flanked by the Dragoon Guards, padded over the grey sand, their sabres and scabbards glittering in the pale moonlight. Ahead of them the enemy artillery vomited angry jets of flame, shells screamed through the sky and shrapnel tore open the ground around them. Soon men were falling from their saddles. Then came the command: "The cavalry are to charge these guns!"

That stirring moonlight charge at Kassassin was to be commemorated in verse by one Trooper Tom Freude of the 2nd Life Guards. He tells how the British cavalry, thirsting for revenge for the fate of their Christian comrades, cut their way through the infidel hordes:

"From right to left their skulls are cleft,
where three long lines had been
Lie clusters of their bleeding dead, and
here and there are seen
A group of daring Nubians who fire as
we dash by,
We turn and cut, and guard and thrust,
they stagger, fall, or fly.
But such vain flight. E're they have gone
a dozen yards or more
They shout to Allah, then sink down on
earth to rise no more.
Here might you see a horse rein back, as
down upon his knees
Some Bedouin knelt with bayonet fixed,
whom soon the rider sees,
A forward plunge, a gurgling noise,
a deep wound in the throat,
Are signs that once again the gory hand
of death denote.
We pick our way most carefully thro'
hundreds of their dead,
But few of them are wounded for all
our swords are red."

The enemy lost about 400 men but The Blues suffered only two casualties—one trooper wounded and another killed (he was found laying with hands and feet partly crossed as if in sleep).

Two survivors had remarkable experiences. Colonel Milne-Home, MP for Berwickshire, who was with the Blues squadron, was uninjured despite his helmet strap and sword scabbard being shot away. Trooper Bennett of The Blues, already suffering three wounds, ran the gauntlet of enemy infantry and cavalry when his horse bolted. He was lassoed by Bedouins and dragged from the saddle. With a rope round his neck he was taken before Arabi Pasha who told him that "the English were fools to fight him, as he had 40,000 men; that the English would never return home, as they would be completely cut up."

But Arabi Pasha spoke too soon. His sleeping army was routed in a dawn raid at Tel-el-Kebir, and Cairo was entered next month. Arabi was exiled and the British ruled Egypt until 1922.

The Royal Horse Guards were raised by Charles II in 1661 to act as royal bodyguard and military police and to stamp out sedition. Their first colonel was the 20th Earl of Oxford and the most distinctive feature of their uniform was a blue tunic. Hence they came to be nicknamed "Oxford Blues" (later "The Blues").

The noble Blues were blooded in 1685 when they helped to crush the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion against James II. But James, who tried to impose Roman Catholicism on his subjects, became unpopular and fled to France. In 1690 he was defeated at the Battle of the Boyne by a force which included the Blues.

They were in the first line of cavalry at Dettingen, were the only cavalry regiment to be mentioned in dispatches at Fontenoy and won a spectacular victory at Warburg. They finally proved their mettle at Waterloo when they charged without their distinguishing steel cuirasses. With The Life Guards and King's Dragoon Guards, they smashed the battering ram of French cavalry and infantry which Napoleon had directed against the weakened British Lines. In recognition of their distinguished service they were elevated to Household Cavalry and granted honours and privileges hitherto restricted to The Life Guards.

The Royal Horse Guards share state ceremonial duties with The Life Guards, the only regiment senior to them. They still retain customs that reflect their aristocratic tradition and pageant of history:

No sergeants—The term, from the Latin *servire* (to serve), implied subservience and servant status, it was said.

Goldstick—Personal bodyguard to the Sovereign, shared by the Colonel of The Life Guards (Earl Mountbatten of Burma) and Colonel of the Royal Horse Guards (Field-Marshal Sir Gerald Templer). Officers, carrying an ebony staff with a gold head, attended the King from waking until bedtime in case of assassination attempts. Nowadays they stand by the Sovereign at state ceremonies.

Silverstick—Deputy to Goldstick. Held by the Officer Commanding Household Cavalry, Colonel Harry Hopkinson.

Flashing sabres, whinnying horses and acrid stench of gunpowder—moonlight charge at Kassassin.

Above: Mirror-like cuirasses and swaying plumes. Trooping the Colour on Horse Guards in 1967.

Saluting without headdress is a custom peculiar to the Royal Horse Guards. It is done in uniform and PT kit but not when wearing civilian clothes. In other regiments the rule is an eyes right or left.

Some say it began when the Marquis of Granby lost his cocked hat and wig while leading the regiment in a charge at the Battle of Warburg in 1760. He had to salute his commander without them. Another theory is that a Blues officer saluted the Duke of Wellington bareheaded at Waterloo in 1815 when reporting that a charge by the Household Cavalry had been successful. The Duke countenanced what he had done instead of reproving him.

Native members of the Fijian Military Forces also salute without a hat, but for another reason. They regard their hair as a head covering and do not wear headdress anyway.

Non-commissioned officer ranks in The Blues are (left to right): Staff-corporal/squadron-quartermaster-corporal; corporal-of-horse; corporal and lance-corporal (the same). An SCM wears a crown, RQMC laurel wreaths, and RCM lion and unicorn. Different aiguillettes on state uniform and rows of braid on hat peak also denote rank.

No outsiders—Even the medical and veterinary officers are members of the regiment, transferring respectively from the Royal Army Medical Corps and Royal Army Veterinary Corps. They can even be recruited directly from civilian life. Once the cooks were all in the regiment but some Army Catering Corps have been attached within the last two years.

Ceremonial axe—Carried on parade by the farrier corporal-major. Horses seriously injured in battle were dispatched by an axe and a hoof later produced as proof.

Address—A Blue calls a senior officer by his rank eg "General" while a Life Guard says "General, Sir."

Dress—The two regiments can be distinguished by the colour of their plumes. The Blues wear red, The Life Guards white, (but farriers have black plumes and trumpeters red ones in the Life Guards).

The resplendent uniforms of blue and gold were changed for drab khaki in 1914. The Household Cavalry Composite Regiment was part of the tiny Regular army which kept Germany's crack divisions back from the Channel ports and gave Britain a chance to re-arm. But in three months the Composite Regiment was decimated to 63 men.

After the first gas attack at Ypres, The Blues and The Royals—drenched by rain with their coats off, in puttees, breeches, shirts and bandoliers—went over the top with bayonets. They charged 600 yards across no man's land and routed the enemy from the front line trenches. But of the 14 officers who charged only three remained, and 97 non-commissioned officers and men were killed.

At the Somme in 1916 the regiments moved about behind the front on horses awaiting the breakthrough which never came. It was here that the Household Battalion—officers and men of the Household Cavalry fighting as infantry—suffered 300 casualties.

The Blues still had horses in 1940 and took them to Palestine. But their mounts were exchanged for a motley fleet of requisitioned vehicles for a drive across arid desert to relieve the Royal Air Force garrison at Habbanya. The Blues and Life Guards were in action together again, this time as the composite 1st Household Cavalry Regiment. And it was at Kassassin—just 40 years after the moonlight charge—that they were finally equipped with armoured cars ready for El Alamein. The 1st Regiment went on to fight in Italy and later Germany where it ended up on the Elbe estuary. Men of 2nd Regiment formed the remnant of the Household Cavalry in England, were the first British troops to re-enter Belgium and Holland, and drove into the German naval base of Cuxhaven in armoured cars on VE Day.

The post-war years were spent in Germany patrolling the Iron Curtain. They policed Cyprus during the emergency from 1956 to 1959, capturing large hoards of weapons and documents and providing escorts for the successive governors.

This month, after more then 300 years of history, The Blues are to amalgamate with The Royal Dragoons to form a new regiment of Household Cavalry—The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons).

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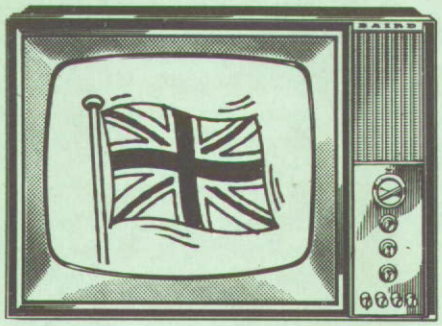

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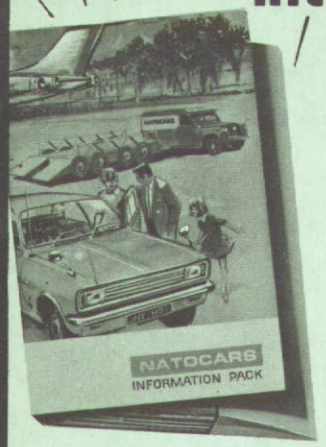

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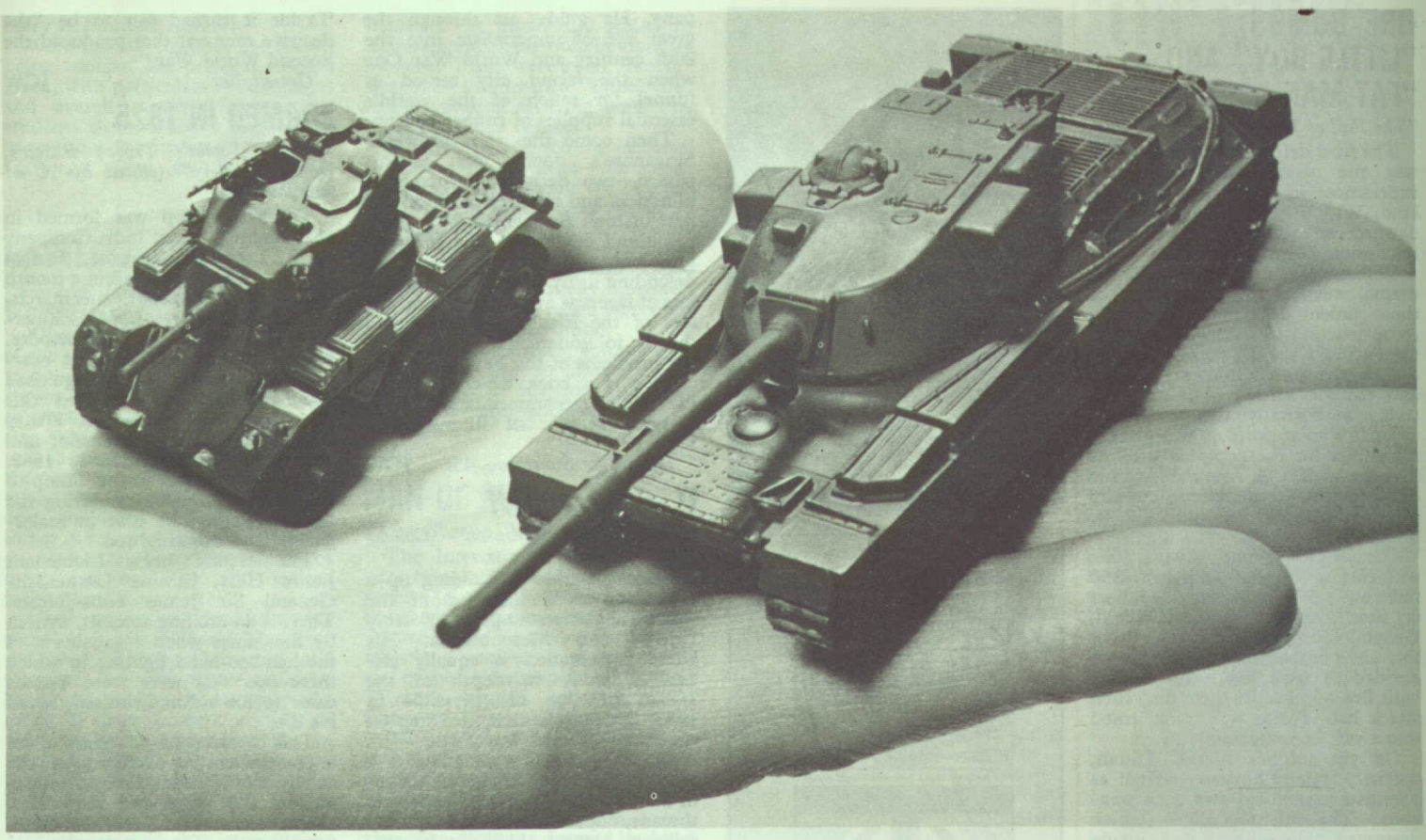


MINI-TANKS AT MINI-PRICES

MINI-CARS, mini-buses, mini-skirts—and now mini-tanks. "Minitanks" is the trade name adopted by a firm in Salzburg, Austria, which produces miniature military models. They are plastic, cost from 2s to 7s 6d and are in HO and OO (1/76 and 1/77th) scale.

They are so small that a squadron of Chieftains can be held in the hand. With smallness come neatness and a surprising accuracy of detail. The makers claim to mould them to blueprints.

Minitanks are sold as finished models although unpainted. They are made in several parts which snap together. This means that conversions can be made and inaccessible parts painted. The Saladin—under 2½ inches long—has a body in two halves and detachable turret, machine-gun and mounting, hatches, gun barrel, smoke dischargers, jerry cans, wheels and axles.

Models are restricted to World War Two and modern from the United States, German, British, Russian and French armies, but the range is vast. It includes tanks and transporters, guns, missile launchers, recovery vehicles, motorcyclists, armoured personnel carriers, bridge-layers, ambulances, tractors, armoured cars, half-trucks, lorries, jeeps, trailers and amphibians. There are also artillery and infantry soldiers, anti-tank obstacles, pine trees, tents and battle terrains.

There is a certain amount of burring left over from the mould and the models need cleaning up with a razor blade or craft knife. Caterpillar tracks are unfortunately non-movable and have rather unnecessary plastic wheels inside. These, however, can be removed. Transfers are not included. Decals and numbers are available at 2s a set but the selection is not very comprehensive. Humbrol and Airfix matt paints can be used for a camouflage effect and other little touches, such as silver inside the caterpillar tracks, can also be added.

Minitanks are ideal for the wargamer and with careful painting should even satisfy a military model connoisseur. The models come in neat plastic and card containers complete with statistical data.

Model Hobby Products of Akroyd Place, Halifax, Yorkshire, are the British agents. They also publish the *Minitanks Manual* which costs 10s, details the complete range of models available and gives background information.

Above: An hour's work with a craft knife and a paint brush and these models look like the real thing. The Saladin and Chieftain cost 3s each.

Did you know that the Ministry of Public Building and Works is in the military model business?

The models, sold as souvenirs in the Tower of London, include (right) a four-inch high equestrian knight in 15th century armour (costing 42s 6d), a bronze medallion at 50s depicting three yeoman warders with the White Tower on the obverse, a three-inch high model (18s 6d) of the armour made for Henry VIII and a Wedgwood cameo (37s 6d) depicting the Roman Emperor Hadrian.

There have been many requests for souvenirs at the Tower, which has more than two million visitors a year, said a Ministry spokesman. "There are some commercial souvenirs but they are a bit trashy—for instance plastic ashtrays with a picture stencilled on. We commissioned our own souvenirs to ensure a high standard of accuracy and quality."

The models have been selling well and will soon be available at other historic monuments in the Ministry's charge such as Hampton Court and Dover and Deal Castles.

BOOKS

FIRE BOMBS, "LITTLE BOY" AND "FAT MAN"

"*The Fall of Japan*" (*William Craig*)

The final defeat of Imperial Japan was one of the most shattering experiences in the history of mankind. With it a new age of terror dawned and a new and horrific dimension was added to war.

William Craig captures all the drama, suspense and heroism of those violent days in this masterly reconstruction of the last months of the Pacific War. His account has all the elements of a first-rate thriller and though written in a dramatic style is authoritative throughout.

Japan's great problem was finding a formula for the acceptance of its first-ever defeat. A formidable clique of fanatics could not accept it at any price and their cry was still "Victory or death."

Outside the home islands, fate was closing in. On Okinawa, 350 miles away, 100,000 Japanese soldiers lay dead. On another Pacific island, General Curtis Lemay, veteran of the air bombardment of Europe, decided to send his B-29s in low with fire bombs. In their first such attack half Tokyo was transformed into a vast crematorium.

On yet another island, Tinian, specially trained aircrews waited as scientists assembled two new weapons. The "Little Boy" which destroyed Hiroshima was made obsolete a few days later by "The Fat Man" which wiped out Nagasaki.

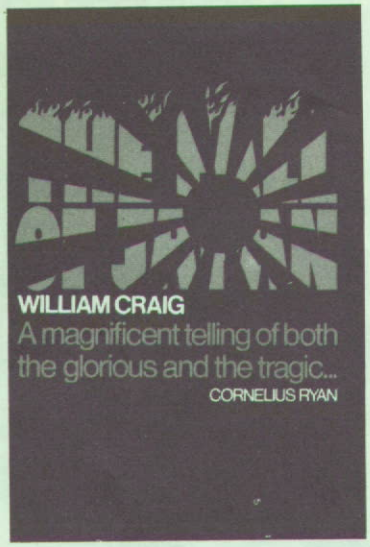
As the surrender took effect, little independent dramas were played out all over the East. The Russians, 11th-hour entrants in the Far East war, drove into Manchuria; American OSS men parachuted far behind the battle fronts to help allied prisoners-of-war.

In Manila, MacArthur worked out arrangements for the occupation of Japan. He sent for General Jonathan Wainwright, the man he had left on Corregidor, to witness the surrender. Percival, defeated at Singapore, was similarly honoured.

In Japan, generals and admirals committed *hara-kiri* to atone for their defeat. In America, victory celebrations turned into riots as liquor stores were looted. In San Francisco, 12 people died on VJ-night, mostly victims of drunken drivers.

Mr Craig is American. His country bore the brunt of the Pacific War. Even so one could have thought the British victory in Burma under Mountbatten and Slim worthy of mention. As MacArthur was accepting Japan's surrender in Tokyo Bay, Mountbatten was accepting the surrender of 680,000 Japanese in South-East Asia. This is the only fault in an otherwise excellent book.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 45*s* **JCW**



THE WEST LOST FACE

"*Singapore: The Battle That Changed the World*" (*James Leasor*)

By their capture of Singapore within a week the Japanese inflicted on British arms the greatest defeat they had ever suffered. More than 85,000 British, Australian and other Commonwealth troops were captured as this much-publicised "Gibraltar of the East" collapsed.

The defeat gave signal proof to Asia that the West was not invincible. It is Mr Leasor's thesis that the British Empire never recovered from the jolt of Singapore's capture. The shock wave it generated led to the dismemberment of the Empire and its replacement with the Commonwealth.

Militarily and politically Singapore—and the Malayan peninsula before it—was a mess. No air cover, few jungle-trained troops, lack of defence works—Mr Leasor covers the whole sorry story.

He does it however with sympathy and understanding for the men put on the spot in 1942. He accepts, as more and more historians are coming to accept, the impossibility of their task. He takes the view that those primarily responsible for the fall of Singapore were the men who made all the wrong decisions in the inter-war years and covered up with ballyhoo about "Bastions of the Empire" and the "Impregnable fortress of the East." They fooled everybody but the Japanese.

Despite subsequent allied victories in the East the political vacuum created by the fall of Singapore was filled by Communism or its threat.

Mr Leasor begins his story in the early 19th century when the great Stamford Raffles founded Singapore on behalf of the East India Company. He guides us through the great age of imperialism into the 20th century and World War One when the island city served as funnel for much of the world's essential supplies of rubber and tin.

Then come the years in which Singapore's doom was encompassed—two decades of incredible blindness and self-deception on the part of high British officials. When the island finally fell to a Japanese force only one-third the size of the defending army perhaps the West's loss of face was even greater than the loss of the island. To understand this is to understand much about the problems of the Far East today.

This is a book which earns an unqualified recommendation. It is a fine example of interpretative history.

Hodder & Stoughton, 45*s* **JCW**

IT IS US TODAY

"*The Civilizing Mission*" (*Colonel A J Barker*)

Colonel Barker is building up a reputation as a historian of the world's neglected campaigns, notably Eritrea and Mesopotamia. His latest presentation is equally offbeat—a study in depth of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, perhaps the first firm step on the road to World War Two.

He set himself a tremendous task —the subject is entangled in a mass of historical, political and economic threads, apart from the purely military aspects. Skilfully he unravels the tangle to produce an excellent objective study.

The first clash between Italian and Ethiopian troops came in December 1934 at the isolated wells of Walwal. Only a few months earlier Mussolini had screamed: "It is Italy's mission to civilize Africa." This was Mussolini's announcement that he had designs on Abyssinia, the only country in Africa free from European domination. Mussolini was at that time the successful dictator, admired by Hitler and not yet the jackal he later became.

Eight months after the first border clash the Italians launched a full-scale invasion. In seven months the conquest was complete and Emperor Haile Selassie had sought refuge in Britain.

Mussolini screamed again. "Italy finally has her empire." And what had the triumphant Duce done? He had sent modern motorised infantry, bombers and fighters, armed with machine-guns, high explosive bombs and mustard gas, against a feudal barefoot army whose general weapon was the spear and whose most up-to-date armament was the 1874 Etienne rifle. Some victory.

But it was more than the conquest of one country by another. Italy's aggression provided the first test case for the League of Nations and its ideal of "collective security." The League failed. Britain and France, the twin pillars in theory supporting it, were unwilling to act beyond sanctions. This only ensured that when the day came, Italy would throw in her lot with Hitler.

"It is us today, it will be you tomorrow," said Haile Selassie after making his dignified and heart-rending appeal for the League covenant to be upheld. He was quite right. In the words of A J P Taylor it turned out to be "the decisive moment that produced the Second World War."

Cassell, 63*s* **JCW**

FORMED IN 1825

"143*rd* (*Tombs's Troop*) *Battery, Royal Artillery*" (*edited by A M Macfarlane*)

Tombs's Troop was formed in 1825 under the East India Company as 2 Troop, 1 Brigade, Bengal Horse Artillery, and within a month of being at full strength was marching under General Lord Combermere to crush a rising at Bhurtpore.

One of only eight batteries bearing the name of a distinguished commander, it was granted this honour in 1926 although Henry Tombs commanded, as major and later colonel, from 1856 to 1862. One of two officers in the Troop to gain the Victoria Cross during the Indian Mutiny, he rose to major-general and was knighted.

The second hero, Lieutenant James Hills, became Lieutenant-General Sir James Hills-Johnes. There is an exciting account, written by Sir James when a subaltern, of the hand-to-hand fighting in which these two VCs were won. Tombs came to his aid and, indeed, saved his life.

This booklet of 64 pages gives a comprehensive summary of the activities of Tombs's Troop throughout its 143 years and there is a chapter of very good anecdotes revealing the Troop atmosphere in days gone by. The Battery is very fortunate in having records from its earliest days and there is a full list of commanders and stations. There have been 16 changes of title—an average of one every nine years.

Tombs's Troop fought well in the two world wars and gained many awards. In recent years it has served in Cyprus, Hong Kong and Germany, and is now part of the support regiment at the School of Artillery, Larkhill.

Battery Captain, 143 (*Tombs's Troop*) *Field Battery RA*, 49 *Field Regiment RA, Roberts Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wilts*, 10*s* **GRH**

AACHEN TO ZUTPHEN

"*A Dictionary of Battles*" (*David Eggenberger*)

Here is a time-saver with considerable wealth of detail—facts and figures of 1560 military actions, battles and wars conveniently assembled in one volume of 526 pages and covering more than 3400 years, from the first battle of Megiddo in 1479 BC to the Israeli-Arab Six Day War of 1967.

The author probed many sources and as far as possible provides the strategic situation, tactics employed, names of the military leaders, composition of their commands, casualties, and the consequences, military and political, of each conflict. Many two-colour maps help to illustrate the text.

The battles are in alphabetical order from Aachen, the first German city to fall to the Allies in World War Two, to Zutphen of the Netherlands War of Independence, 1586. An index gives a guide to personalities, treaties, battle cries and to smaller actions recounted within the general text. There are cross-references at the end of each battle

entry to facilitate research.

Wars too are covered, the record being concise, the political reasons given, with particulars of campaigns and overall casualty figures. For students there is also a long list of suggestions for further reading.

George Allen & Unwin, 105*s*
GRH

CASTLES AT BAY

"*Sieges of the Middle Ages*" (*Philip Warner*)

Allure, solar and donjon are some of the splendid technical terms used to describe the various parts of old castles and like crenellation and machiolation they have a magnificent ring to them.

It is surprising to remember that the romantic ruins crowning ridges outside so many British towns were once the latest and most terrible things in war. Not that any castle was ever impregnable although many of them put up long and gallant resistance when attacked.

Many readers will recall the outstanding sieges of World War Two —Malta, Tobruk, Stalingrad and Okinawa, but even these would be hard put to match the savagery of a medieval siege. Imagine a group of defenders with ample supplies of food and water safely ensconced behind a wide moat (Boarstall moat is 60 feet) and thick walls (Dover walls are 24 feet).

When attacked they would pour quicklime, red-hot sand, boiling oil, lead and water on assailants. But the besiegers were just as ingenious. Huge stones would be hurled at the defences by mangonels, ballistas and trebuchets, ramparts would be weakened by mines and scaled by ladders, stout gates would be smashed by rams. There were even "horror" weapons—the dreaded "Greek fire" and catapulting decaying horse carcases to spread disease.

In close fighting too the medieval siege was pretty grim—the crossbow, the five-foot-long Welsh longbow of yew which could shoot an arrow up to 240 yards, 20-foot-long pikes, pole-axes and five-foot clubs studded with spikes and called "morning stars." Usually, however, besiegers eventually relied on the ultimate weapon—starvation.

This is a fascinating volume with simple drawings to illustrate the fearful array of weapons, a glossary of technical terms and fine plates.

Bell, 36*s*
AWH

MAN OF BLOOD

"*King Charles I*" (*Margaret Toynbee*)

The International Profiles series aims to portray historical characters against the background of their times within the compass of a slim volume. This is obviously difficult without a conviction as to what is the proper interpretation. Margaret Toynbee argues consistently in favour of Charles I from his early childhood, when he struggled with an impediment of speech and made good progress in classics and French, to his last hours on the scaffold.

His character in the main is very attractive. He was a devoted husband and father, religious, cultured, courteous, kind and moral, with an air of grave dignity which many misinterpreted as coldness. There is little evidence to suggest that he wanted to be a tyrant and much more to indicate that it was Parliament's aggressive attacks on the royal prerogative that destroyed the harmony of the constitution. Especially in his last years there is a great deal of pathos in his futile attempts to save his crown and to safeguard the heritage of his children.

But all this is to ignore the serious defects in the king's character. Quite clearly he was not a good judge of people and his reliance on stronger personalities such as the self-seeking Buckingham and later his strong-willed wife, Henrietta Maria, led directly to many of his difficulties. For some strange reason he even turned on or deserted proven friends like Middlesex and Wentworth. The fatal mistake of this artistic but stubborn monarch was to try and enforce his episcopal views upon the Scots. His father had warned him long before that they needed careful handling. This Charles forgot or rejected.

At the same time, in retrospect, one has to admit that Charles was very unluckly in having to face such implacable enemies as Eliot and Pym, in ruling in an age when kingship by divine right was under strong attack, in being forced to meet at the same time complex issues in religion and economics. It was this misfortune that eventually led him to play off his all enemies—Scots, Parliament and Army—against each other, which won him the title "Man of Blood," and cost him his life.

An interesting little book with a fine select bibliography, rather marred by an irritatingly small print and an excessive number of plates.

Morgan-Grampion Books, 15*s*
AWH

IN BRIEF

"*British Army Vehicles and Equipment*" (*R E Smith*)

This 240-page book provides a useful guide to the British Army's main equipment. It combines two formerly separate parts, "Armour" and "Artillery," with two new parts, "Small Arms" and "Guided Weapons."

Mr Smith supplies background detail on the development and employment of the vehicles and weapons he describes and offers the occasional peep into the future. In addition there are technical data and some excellent illustrations.

The author sternly defends the Chieftain tank and points out that the considerable attention which it has attracted has no doubt caused major foreign armies to reconsider seriously their future strategy. He allows, however, that the Chieftain will never achieve even a single-figure percentage of the Centurion's overseas sales. "Its greatest competitor, rarely mentioned, is the political outlook of the world in general," he writes.

Ian Allan, 30*s*

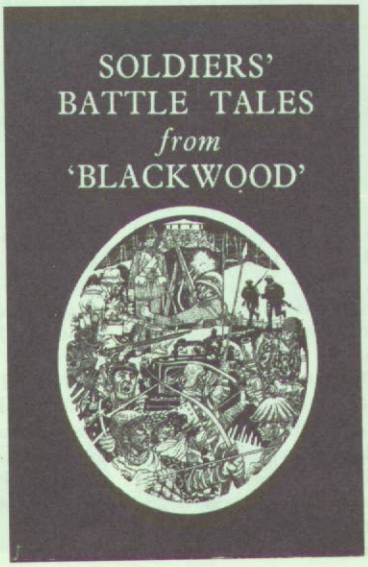
"*The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers* 1689-1968"

Pictorial scrapbooks make excellent souvenirs and this is a fine example. Briefly covering their long historical career over more than 250 years it shows their service "with distinction and honour" on all five continents in peace and war.

The Skins (reputed to have fought in the nude against the French in Italy in 1806) have a proud array of battle honours from Martinique 1762 to Burma 1943, and distinguishing features of the sphinx and white horse on the Regimental Colour, grey hackles against red backgrounds on their caubeens. The origins of all these are explained.

There are photographs from the last 20 years from Kenya to Kuwait and Cyprus to Canada which will stir many a fond memory. Other plates reveal the enormous change recently both in equipment and uniform. Produced to celebrate amalgamation with The Royal Ulster Rifles and The Irish Fusiliers into The Royal Irish Rangers, it marks "... the end of a chapter, but not the end of our story."

PRI, Ist Battalion, The Royal Irish Rangers, Norton Barracks, Worcester, 8*s*



"*Soldiers' Tales From 'Blackwood'*"

Since its founding in 1817, Blackwood's Magazine has built up an unrivalled reputation for its original stories, particularly those dealing with adventure or world affairs.

More than 300 volumes of the magazine were searched in the compilation of this excellent little volume. The result is 13 unforgettable cameos of war. They range from Agincourt to the Malayan jungle; in between are such great engagements as the Alma, New Orleans, Balaklava, Rorke's Drift, Mafeking, Gallipoli and Arnhem. Heb Stuart's Chief of Staff describes the Battle of Seven Pines, Ian Hay takes one into the trenches of World War One and David Antonio conducts the reader through a Western Desert tank battle.

Blackwood, 21*s*

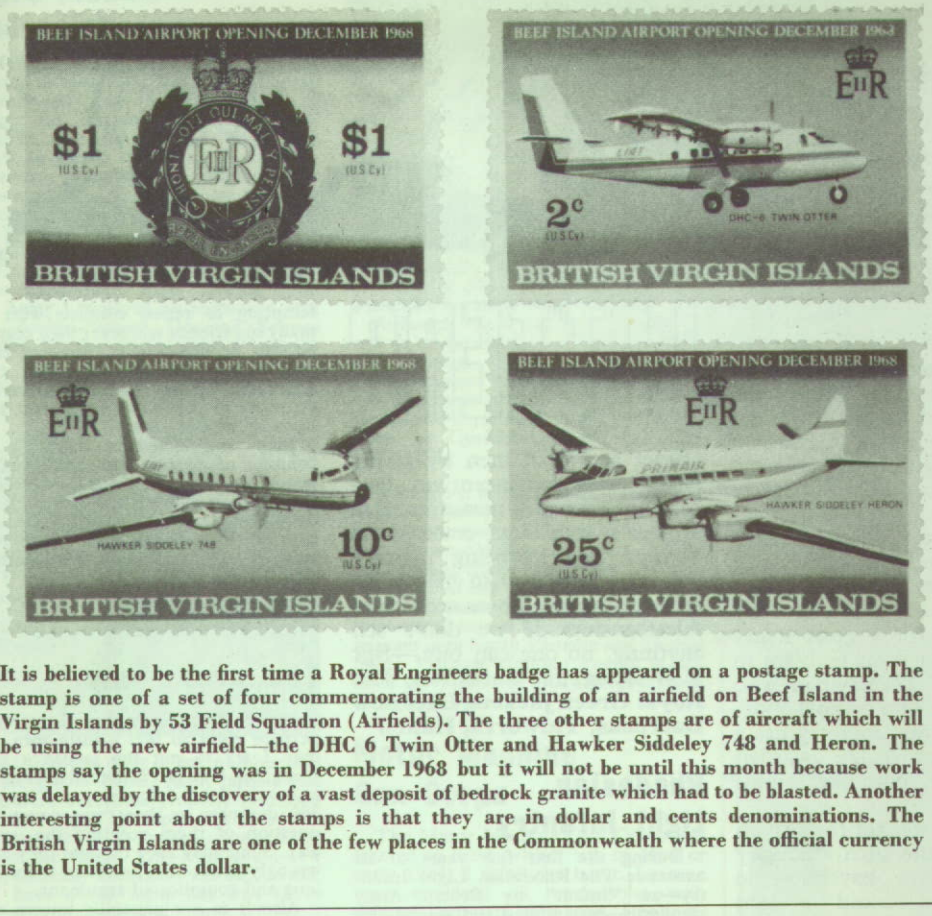
LEFT, RIGHT AND CENTRE

Chicken cooked in the traditional way of their own countries by Chinese, Indians, Malays and Gurkhas tempted the palate of the Inspector of the Army Catering Corps, Colonel H A Decker, when he visited the Catering Wing, Far East Training Centre, Nee Soon. There was also a sample of roast chicken of England prepared by a British sergeant. The variety and excellence prompted Colonel Decker to comment on "the huge strides made in the standards of food served in units in the Far East over the past few years." The cockerel was attentive but not impressed.

A plaque handed over to Southampton Zoo by Lieutenant-Colonel John Lofts, commanding 17 Port Regiment, Royal Corps of Transport, commemorates the presentation a year ago of three South Arabian giant tortoises. They were brought to Britain by the Regiment's 51 Port Squadron which had been responsible for shipping out immense quantities of vehicles, equipment and stores when Aden was evacuated. The plaque was received by Mrs Rose Chipperfield, wife of the circus and zoo owner. 17 Port Regiment is stationed at Marchwood, Southampton.

When 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards, at Chelsea Barracks, heard that ex-Coldstreamer Harry Chambers, aged 77, and his wife Jane could not redecorate their flat in Kennington they decided to do it for them. Sergeant Roy High did the paperhanging while Sergeant Stuart Rutherford and Corporal Malcolm Holland got on with the painting. The Battalion paid for the materials and the cost of accommodating Mr and Mrs Chambers at the Union Jack Club. A *Daily Express* leader praised the value of regimental tradition and said: "*Esprit de corps* may begin on the parade ground but it does not end there. It goes on into Civvy Street."

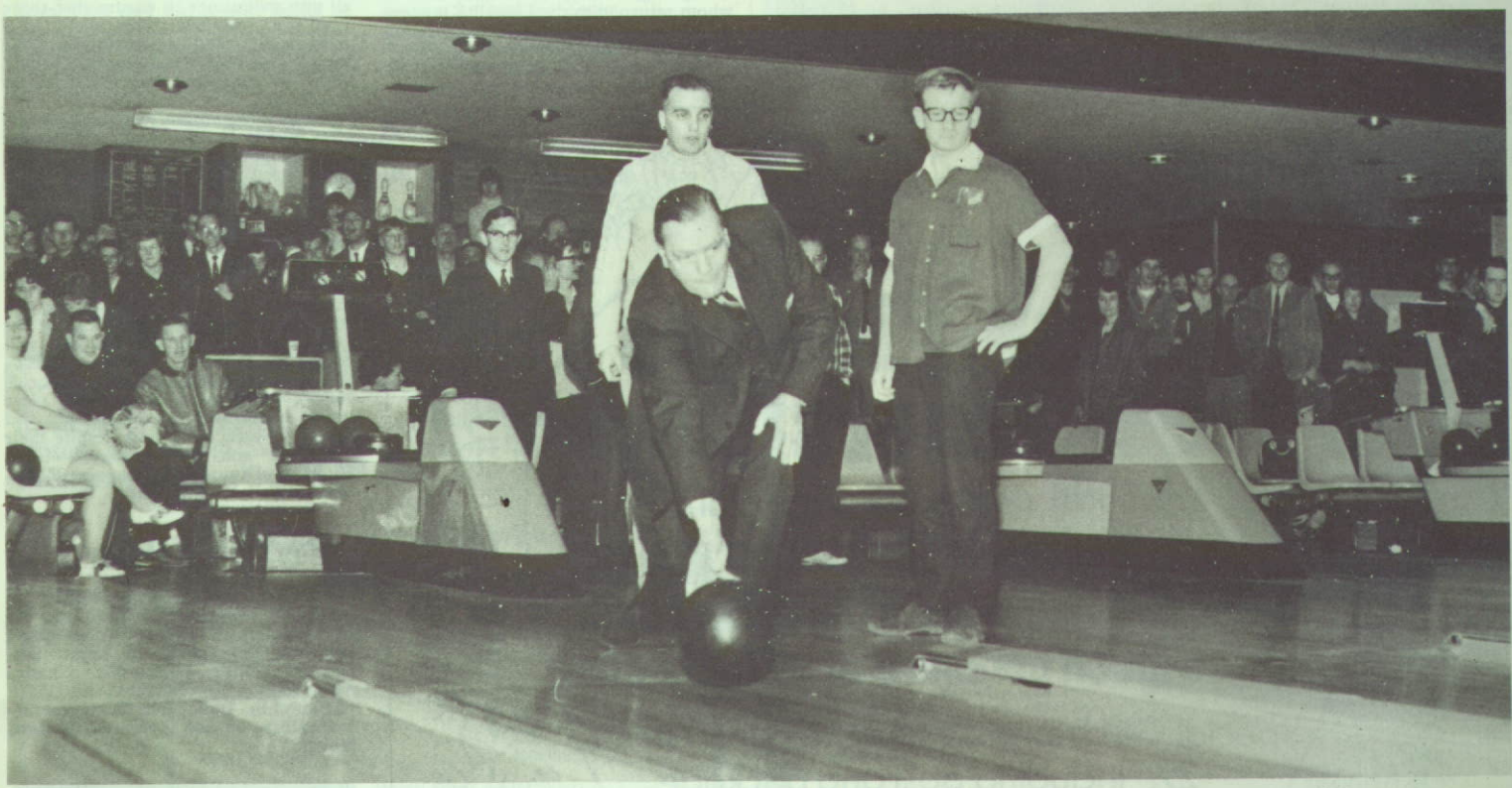
Malay Member of Parliament Mr Ang Nam Piau says "Thank you" with a plaque to Lieutenant-Colonel W J Campbell, officer in charge of the Administrative and Regimental Wing of 3 Base Ordnance Depot, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, in Singapore. His gratitude was for a new basketball pitch built in Thomson village with the aid of four British Army members of the Depot, two of them Malays, while the villagers supplied tools and labour. The four soldiers were Major L Baldwin, Regimental Sergeant-Major J W King and Malays Sergeant Abbas and Corporal Suhaimy.

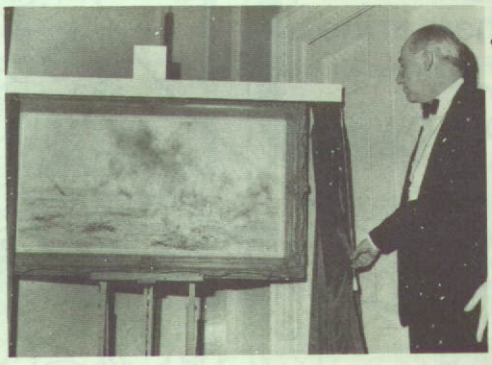


It is believed to be the first time a Royal Engineers badge has appeared on a postage stamp. The stamp is one of a set of four commemorating the building of an airfield on Beef Island in the Virgin Islands by 53 Field Squadron (Airfields). The three other stamps are of aircraft which will be using the new airfield—the DHC 6 Twin Otter and Hawker Siddeley 748 and Heron. The stamps say the opening was in December 1968 but it will not be until this month because work was delayed by the discovery of a vast deposit of bedrock granite which had to be blasted. Another interesting point about the stamps is that they are in dollar and cents denominations. The British Virgin Islands are one of the few places in the Commonwealth where the official currency is the United States dollar.

Moving large quantities of stores with speed and efficiency was one of the demonstrations laid on at the Royal Pioneer Corps headquarters, Northampton, by 521 Company, after a five-day study period for officers held by Brigadier C F Walker, Director of Army Pioneers and Labour. Other displays of Corps activities included dog handling, a platoon in an operational role guarding a brigade headquarters, mechanical equipment used for handling materials, and a presentation showing the role of the Corps in the supply and administration of civilian labour for the Services.

Lieutenant-General Sir John Mogg, GOC-in-C Army Strategic Command, tried ten-pin bowling when he attended the Army championships at the Acorn Bowl, Wokingham. Lance-Corporal R Scott, singles champion, 1st Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, (right of the General) was his instructor. Sir John is Colonel Commandant of the Regiment. The team championship was won by 30 Signal Regiment from Blandford. Competitors totalled 120.





The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Geoffrey Baker, unveiled an oil painting at the Royal Artillery Mess, Woolwich, which depicted the gallant action at Sidi Rezegh on 21 December 1941 when J Battery, 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, fought the Panzer might of the Afrika Korps. Two gunner officers, Major Bernard Pinney and Second-Lieutenant Ward Gunn, were recommended for the Victoria Cross and the award was made to Ward Gunn posthumously. The painting, by David Shepheard, records the height of the action, which Brigadier Jock Campbell told the battery "had changed the whole course of the day."

LETTERS

Infantry combat badge?

Whilst recently working with an American unit I was impressed with several aspects of their dress and routine. I feel that we in the British infantry might consider bringing back or adopting some of these. These Americans had a great pride in their national flag which was treated with genuine respect and was a source of pride wherever it was flown. It was saluted by all ranks, not just by commissioned personnel.

Recently in Cyprus we were the only contingent in the United Nations Force not to wear a national flag emblem on our uniforms or vehicles. I believe that we are also the only contingent not to fly our national flag in our Zone Headquarters.

The second thing that impressed me was the pride and importance the Americans attached to the divisional signs on their arms. Whether straight infantry or airborne, these were proud men. Not so long ago we in the British infantry walked out wearing brigade and divisional flashes that had blazed across the major battlefields of the world under Slim and Montgomery, and we were just as proud of our formations.

Today our uniforms are drab affairs compared with the colour of the battledress days. Can no one give us back these flashes? We have had for a great many years a need for some emblem to distinguish an infantryman who has seen action in a combat zone. The United States infantry has a combat infantry badge awarded for 30 days or more continuous combat.

Is it not possible for the British Army to institute such a badge? Perhaps a silver bayonet—the infantry symbol—could be worn over a ribbon or ribbons.

With recruiting and re-enlistment becoming an ever increasing problem I feel that we have a requirement both to attract and hold men by giving added pride and incentives. Perhaps by adopting measures such as these, pride in county and division and in being infantry will go a long way to help solve these problems. These are aids to salesmanship. If we don't sell anything, no one can buy.—**Sgt T W Byng, 1st Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, Lucknow Barracks, Tidworth, Hants.**

Rhodesian Light Infantry

During the first few years of its existence The Rhodesian Light Infantry—an "infant" by British Army standards—was guided and manned by a very large number of Britons, most of whom returned to the United Kingdom upon the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963.

Now, an RLI Regimental Association has been formed and we are attempting to renew contacts with our many old friends wherever they may be. As can be appreciated, most of these people seem to have changed their addresses several times and various attempts to contact them direct have been to little or no avail.

May we, therefore, through the columns of your widely read magazine appeal to all those who have served in the RLI and who wish to obtain further details of the regimental association, to contact the secretary at the following address.—**John C Moore, Secretary, RLI Regimental Association, Private Bag 10, PO Cranborne, Salisbury, Rhodesia.**

The wrong way

Mr Kemp (December Letters) is perhaps right to feel a little sore, but may I try to put the record a little straighter. The fact is that all heavy guns in coastal fixed defences could traverse 360 degrees, so there was never any question of them pointing the wrong way. Some may have thought they were wrongly sited; that, however, is another long and complicated argument.

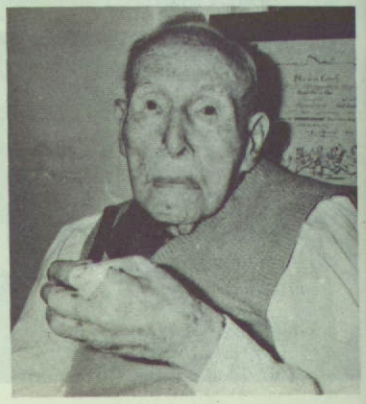
Also it is not generally known that there was a "Stop, limiting traverse" on all gun mountings to ensure that those sited for seawards firing would not accidentally land a round on "the local." This stop, when removed, would allow for all-round traverse in either direction.

As to ammunition, **all** fixed coastal guns had in their magazines a ten per cent proportion of "landwards" HE (nose-fused) over and above their regular allotted amount of AP (base-fused), ie a 9.2-inch gun allotted 250 rounds AP would also have 25 rounds HE. The authority for this was ER2 X11a (probably now extinct).

There are some authentic versions of the fall of Singapore in circulation, one such having been published in *The Gunner* some time ago. I would also refer Mr Kemp to chapter XXV, "History of Coast Artillery" (Maurice Jones), which gives exceptionally clear details concerning the deployment and firing of Singapore's guns despite their "pointing the wrong way."—**Capt H M Sullivan, 26 Queen's Road, Shanklin, Isle of Wight.**

Oldest old soldier

I feel sure that readers of "Oldest old soldier?" (November letters) will be further interested to see the photograph below of the subject of Lieutenant-Colonel Tull's letter—Mr Charles Macguckin who celebrated his 105th birthday in India last September.—**L Shalom, 67 Ash Road, Aldershot, Hants.**



More medals—and quicker?

Newspaper stories of an officer of the United States Air Force receiving 19 medals—all won in Vietnam—at a parade in England prompts me to observe that the United States are quick to award medals to their well-deserving Servicemen whereas the opposite seems to be the case with the British Army.

The British Army appears to be old-fashioned and fussy with regard to medal awards, as instanced in a personal experience. After retiring from the Army I received by registered post my double-clasped General Service Medal. On the receipt form I jokingly

noted that one digit of my number was out of place—name, rank, initials and unit were otherwise properly inscribed on the edge. In reply I received a registered envelope with instructions to return the medal. This I did and a new one, correctly inscribed, was sent to me.

I have never worn this fine silver medal on parade and never will as I received it too late, like many thousand others. I am sure that medals would be more appreciated if awarded on entitlement or soon afterwards. It is also the opinion of the average British Serviceman that medals for overseas service should be issued as generously as they are to our Allies. For instance, the Americans receive a medal for service in Germany. It would not lower the value of Service medals if British Servicemen were similarly entitled. Recent well-appreciated medals have been struck for its armed forces by UNO. Perhaps NATO could follow suit?

Another bone of contention is that the British Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is issued in a Serviceman's 19th year at the earliest, providing he is not commissioned and has an "exemplary" character, while officers and men of other armies can gain such a medal after three years' service.

Although these are the views of a retired soldier they are shared by many still serving. There are too many "virgin breasts" among British soldiers overseas, some with about a quarter of a century of excellent service.—**R Rimmer, 29 Coniston Road, Chester, CH2-1PX.**

★*Recipient of the* 19 *medals, carefully pinned on him by his commanding officer at the Alconbury, Hampshire, air base, was* 27*-year-old Captain Robert C Rankin, United States Air Force. He won them for skill and valour as navigator of a supersonic reconnaissance aircraft during a six-month tour in Vietnam. He flew* 100 *missions over North Vietnam and* 14 *over South Vietnam. Captain Rankin is pictured (left) (courtesy* Daily Express*) with his wife, Jo Ann.*

Motor Machine Gun Corps

The Motor Machine Gun Corps was formed at Bisley either late in 1914 or early 1915; I think the latter. Its men were mounted on motorcycles with sidecars and were very soon (I believe) amalgamated with the MMGC Heavy Section to form the Tanks.

Apparently all their records were destroyed in World War Two and I would appreciate it if any of SOL-

DIER's older readers could let me have details or souvenirs of the MMGC.—**Maj Lionel P Clarke (Retd), Editor *NRA Journal*, National Rifle Association, Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey.**

REUNIONS

Notices of corps and regimental reunions should be sent to Editor, SOLDIER, 433 Holloway Road, London N7, at least two months before the event is due to take place. No charge will be made for announcements.

XVth Armourers Reunion, Saturday, 17 May, at Royal Green Jackets Drill Hall, 56 Davies St, London W1, 1830 hrs. Open to all serving or served as armourers or artificers weapon in RAOC or REME. Details and application forms (applications close 5 May) from Capt (AIA) E C Caldwell REME, HQ Southern Command, EME Branch, Hounslow, Middlesex.

The King's Royal Rifle Corps. Annual reunion, Saturday, 26 April, 6.30pm at Headquarters, 4th (Vol) Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, 56 Davies Street, London W1. Full details from C H Siddle, Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, Hants.

The Rifle Brigade. Annual reunion, at Royal Green Jackets Drill Hall, 24 Sun Street, London EC2, Saturday, 26 April (Cup Final day). Admission free, no tickets.

RAOC Association. Annual reunion dinner at Victory Ex-Services Club. 73 Seymour Street, London W2, 26 April. Tickets £1 1s from RAOC Secretariat, Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey.

3 Divisional Signals Reunion Club. Reunion 12 April, Victory Ex-Services Club, 73 Seymour Street, London W2. Enquiries to E Bayley, 28 Albert Square, London SW8 (Phone 01-735 8717).

Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association. Annual parade and service Hyde Park, London, Sunday, 4 May.

The Queen's Own Hussars. Reunion dinner Saturday, 3 May, at Criterion, Piccadilly, London W1. Dress optional. Tickets 25s each from Maj J S Sutherland (Retd), HHQ The Queen's Own Hussars, Post Office Chambers, Old Square, Warwick.

The York and Lancaster Regimental Association. Annual reunion weekend 26/27 April in Sheffield. Applications for dinner tickets, attendance at annual service and buffet lunch, to RHQ, Endcliffe Hall, Endcliffe Vale Road, Sheffield S10 3EU, by 14 April.

The York and Lancaster Regiment. Officers' annual luncheon and dinner in London 16 May. Details from RHQ, Endcliffe Hall, Endcliffe Vale Road, Sheffield S10 3EU.

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

(*see page* 21)

The two pictures differ in the following respects: 1 *Length of tie on show.* 2 *Cuff-links of left salesman.* 3 *Left saucer.* 4 *Right sleeve of shirt.* 5 "*L*" *in* "*Clothes.*" 6 *Hair of man on far right.* 7 *Pockets on jacket at right.* 8 *Left leg of left salesman.* 9 "*L*" *in* "*Casual.*" 10 *Ear of man with cap.*

WHAT, WHERE AND WHAT?

"This competition was a real brain-teaser and nearly drove me mad in working out a satisfactory answer." "It was great fun working it out." ". . . quite a brain-teaser."

These were comments on Competition 126 (November). The answers were: (a) Clerk. (b) Leeds. (c) Royal Corps of Transport.

Prizewinners:

1 M G Sharp, Hyes, Mill Road, Ringmer, Lewes, Sussex.
2 L R Gray, 33 Carlisle Road, Shirley Southampton, Hants.
3 Miss Ann Entwistle, 297 Holcombe Road, Greenmount, Bury, Lancs.
4 D Goddard, 19 Gillian Avenue, Aldershot, Hants.
5 Sgt R Stevens, 2 Queens, Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co Down, Northern Ireland.
6 Mrs F E Tomlinson, c/o S/Sgt F E Tomlinson RAOC, 6 Stanmore Drive, Trench, Wellington, Salop.
7 Mrs K M Younger, 6 Stainton Square, Barnard Castle, Co Durham.
8 Maj (QM) G F Blunden, The Rifle Depot (RGJ), Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, Hants.
9 Maj R M Brewer RTR, The Recruit Selection Centre, Basil Hill Barracks, Corsham, Wilts.
10 WO II T Stephenson, BDLS (Army), British High Commission, 80 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Canada.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

J A E Munro, RR/1, Nelson BC, Canada.—*Requires British Army regimental cap badges either by purchase or in exchange for Canadian badges.*

Ivor D Jackson, 18 Boleyn Drive, Eastcote, Ruislip, Middlesex.—*Wishes dispose 96 copies SOLDIER 1959 to 1968, most years complete. What offers, excluding postage?*

Denis P Conway, 41 Alan Way, Colchester, Essex.—*Will exchange regimental and police badges; also stamps. All letters answered.*

WO II Duke RE, 272 Fd Sp Sqn RE (V), Belle Vue Barracks, Manningham Lane, Bradford, Yorks.—*Urgently wishes borrow or buy books on British Army 1911 particularly field service manuals on artillery, engineers, Service Corps etc. Also photos of reviews that period and military postcards Gale and Polden; oilettes etilineer, Taylor, Milton etc. Any item borrowed will be well looked after and faithfully returned (deposit if necessary).*

A Austin, 50 Bartram Avenue, Braintree, Essex.—*Requires Essex Imperial Yeomanry, West Essex and other badges.*

ACADEMIC YEAR AT SANDHURST

Officer cadets who started their two-year course at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, in January will be the first intake to have a complete year of uninterrupted academic study.

This is the academic year—described by Mr Gerry Reynolds, Minister of Defence for Administration, in a written Parliamentary reply—which, it is hoped, will be recognised by a university as the first year of a three-year course leading to an arts degree. Qualified officers may later go on to study at that university for the further two years needed to complete the degree course.

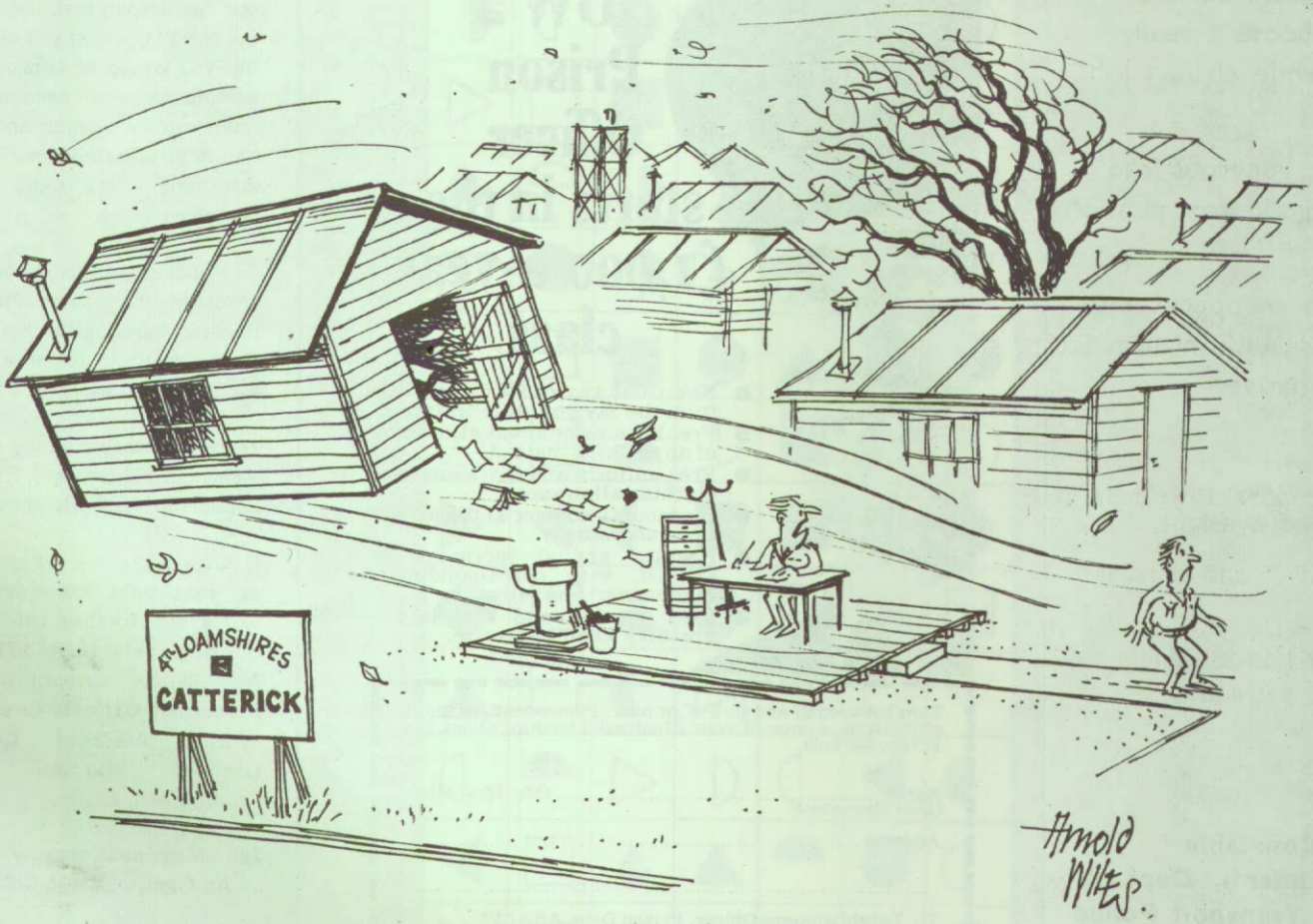
Existing schemes under which young officers from Sandhurst go on to study at universities will continue. Some go to Oxford and provincial universities to read arts and others to Cambridge for engineering while a large number take engineering or science degrees at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham.

HUMOUR

" You're peeping!"

" I can hear their machine-guns quite clearly now."

" The comedian was good— he went down quite well!"



" Door!"

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Chief Constable (Recruitment), Dept. A British Transport Police PO Box No. 25 Park Royal, London NW10

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Applications from ex-service N.C.O.'s with suitable experience will be welcomed. A realistic starting salary will be offered together with immediate entry to the Company's pension and free life assurance scheme. Relocation assistance will be provided where necessary. Applications in writing should be addressed to the Personnel Officer, Plessey Radar Limited, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, quoting reference ADD/196/E.

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COMPETITION 130

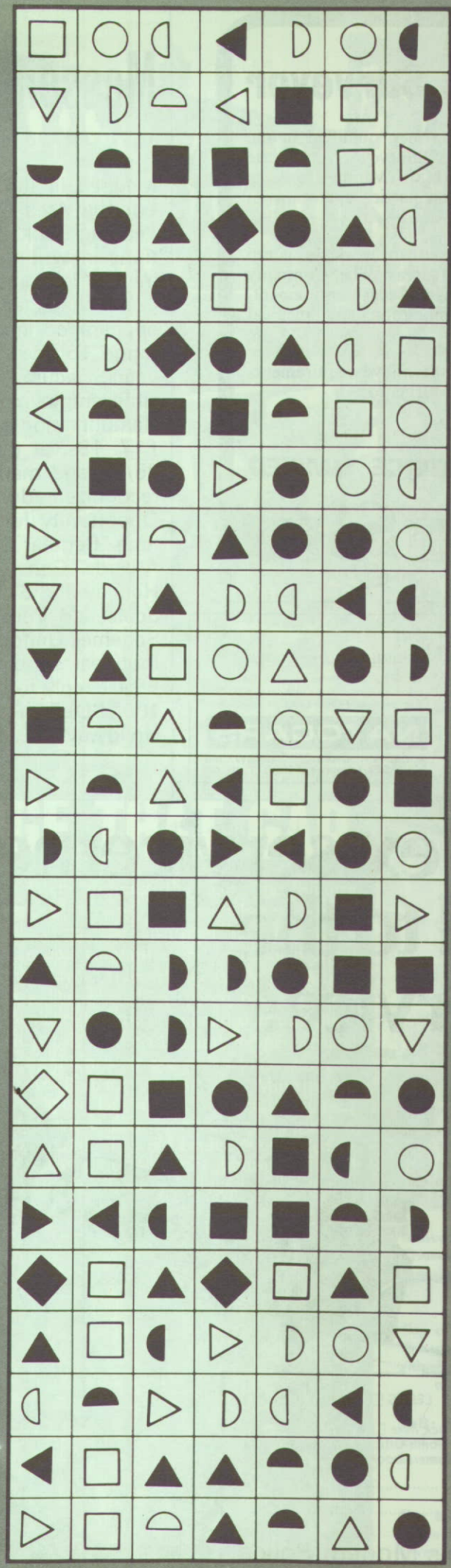
THIS month's competition is similar to the October teaser in which the world's capital cities were transformed into a mumbo-jumbo of geometrical symbols.

This time the same symbols are used—though not representing the same letters, of course—to replace the letters of 25 seven-letter Christian names. Sort out the substitution then hunt for three more names, each again of seven letters. They are to be found, reading downwards, in three of the vertical columns.

Send these three names, with the "Competition 130" label from this page, and your name and address, on a postcard or by letter to:

The Editor (Comp 130)
SOLDIER
433 Holloway Road
London N7.

This competition is open to all readers at home and overseas and closing date is Monday, 19 May. The answers and winners' names will appear in the July SOLDIER. More than one entry can be submitted but each must be accompanied by a "Competition 130" label. Winners will be drawn from correct entries.



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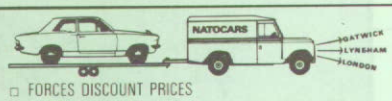

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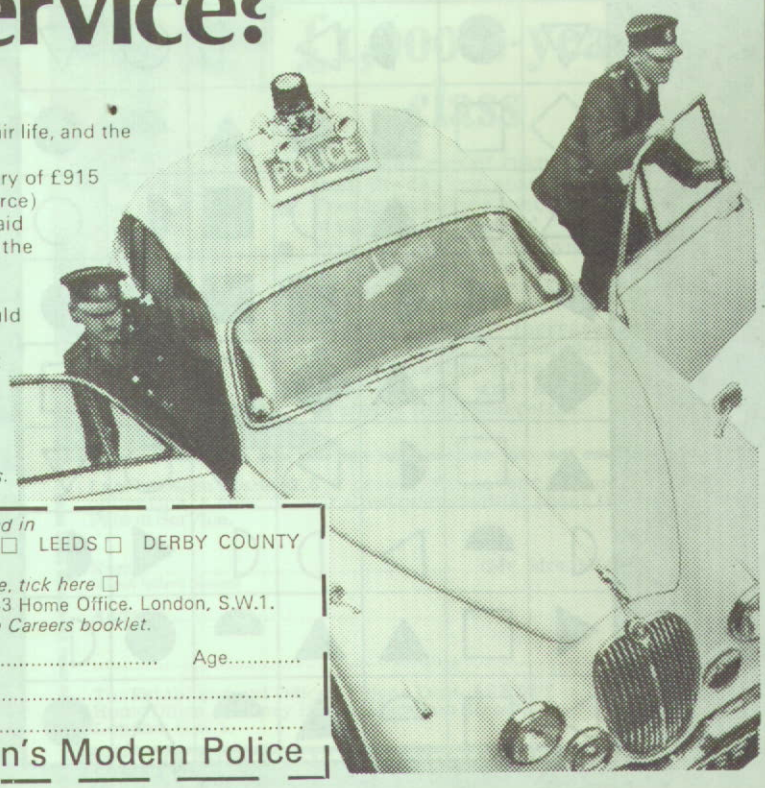

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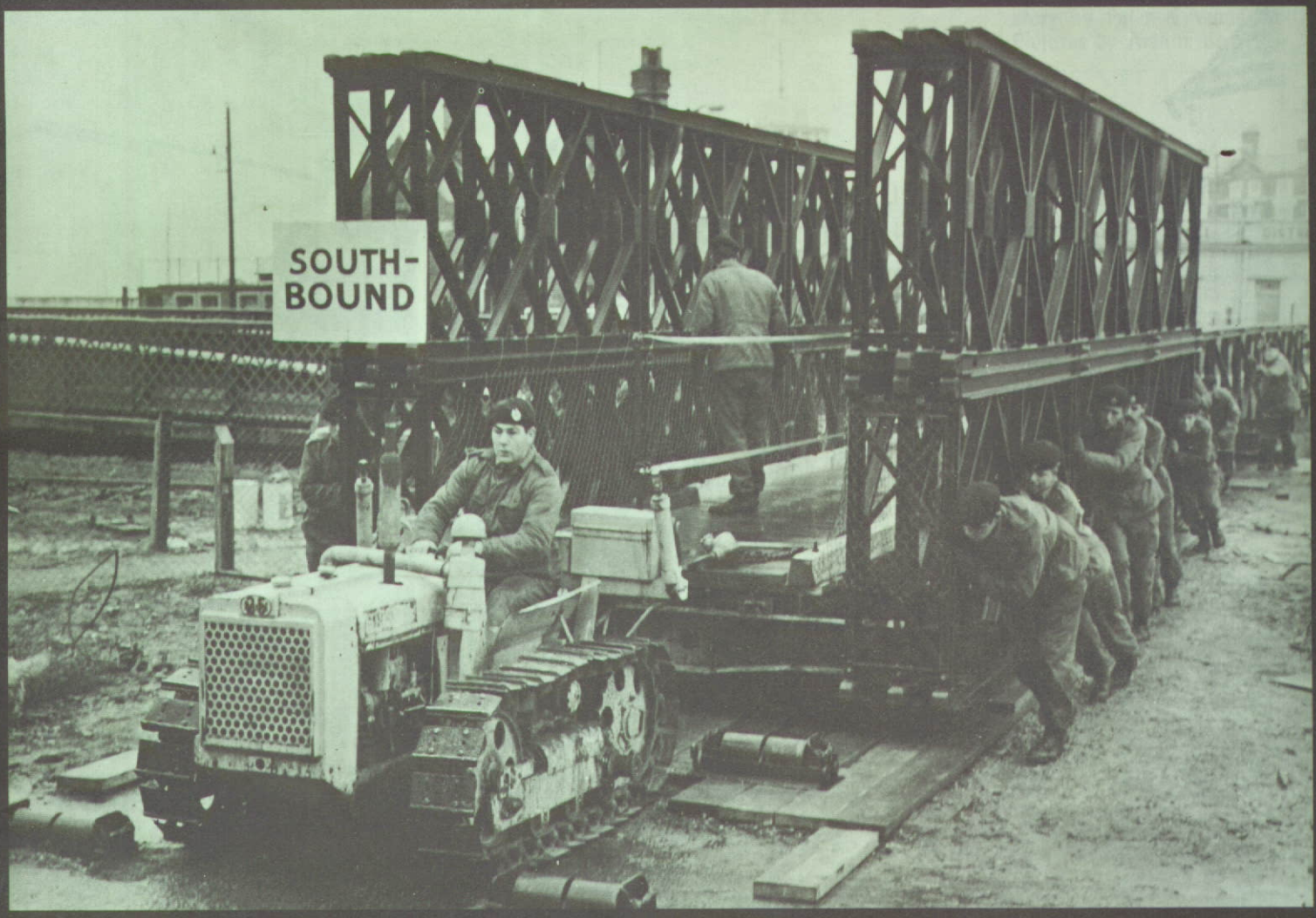


SAPPERS BRIDGE THAT GAP

THE Royal Engineers have united the divided town of Lowestoft. The swing bridge there jammed in the open position, cutting the town in two and causing a five-mile traffic diversion.

Sappers of 36 Engineer Regiment, from Maidstone, worked at night, over the weekend and all day Monday to complete a footbridge in time for the evening rush hour. The bridge—built on rollers so that it can be retracted to allow ships to pass into the harbour—was made of 14 sections which had to be narrowed to a width of six feet.

After bridging the gap, the hungry sappers were provided with boxes of fresh plaice by the chairman of the town's transport committee and crates of beer by the Mayor, Alderman G G Davey. Alderman Davey made a speech praising them for their skill and speed and thanking them on behalf of the thousands of pedestrians using the new bridge.

Mr Richard Marsh, the Minister of Transport, later inspected it and promised the town a permanent bridge in two to three years. The old bridge is expected to be out of action for three months.

Above: Mr Richard Marsh, the Minister of Transport, inspects the Army's bridge. He promised a new permanent one in two years.

Top of page: It slides with elbow grease. A sapper squad retracts the bridge to let shipping through into the inner harbour.

Left: Every day thousands of pedestrians and cyclists are using the bridge. It will be remaining for at least three months.

Far left: The bridge that sappers built. "This is a first class job," said Mr R A Owen, Lowestoft's Dock Board Manager.

Story by Peter N Wood
Pictures by Arthur Blundell

TURNPIKE TO BERLIN

World War Two ended 24 years ago but British and United States military police and French gendarmes still control the Helmstedt checkpoint on the East German border, keeping open the

THERE are still the same formalities and the same warnings, to be ignored at one's peril or at the least at the expense of considerable discomfort and delay, but in recent years the Russian and East German attitude towards the 110-mile corridor between West Germany and Berlin has changed considerably.

The aim of the Allies—Britain, France and United States—has always been to keep open the Hanover-Berlin autobahn from Checkpoint Alpha at the West German border town of Helmstedt to Checkpoint Bravo near Berlin's western perimeter. The autobahn is the Allies' road link with their military forces in Berlin and one of the island city's routes to and from the outside Western world.

Now, increasingly, Russia and East Germany are finding that the autobahn can work to their own advantage as an export outlet to the West. Checkpoint formalities are still observed as closely as ever and it becomes ever more difficult for individuals to escape from East to West, but goods traffic from the Communist countries is now growing to such an extent that any closure of the autobahn by Russia and East Germany will rebound on the Communist economy.

East German lorries passing through Helmstedt in 1964 totalled 14,000. In each of the next two years the figures increased by 6000, then by 10,000 to 36,000 in 1967.

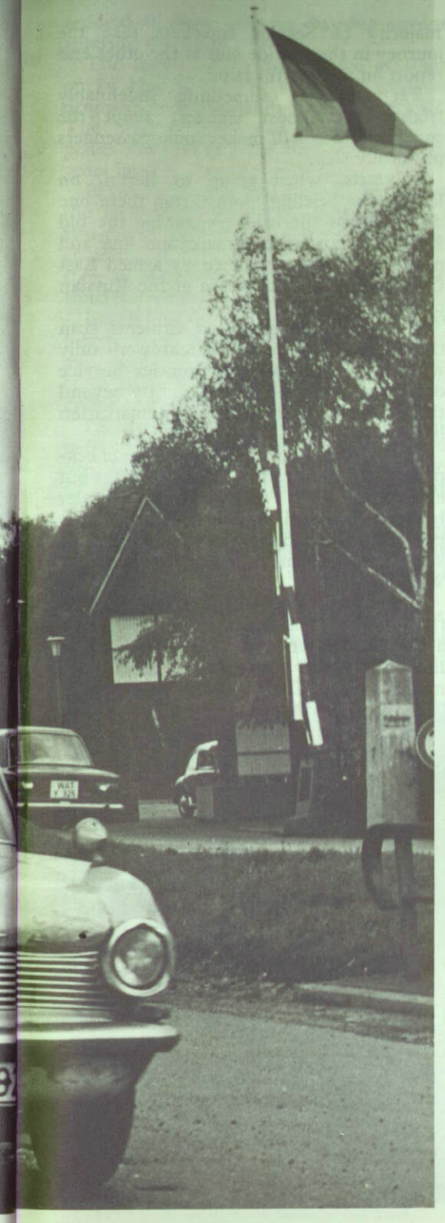
During the same period there were 6000 vehicles in 1964 from other Communist countries, mainly Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, then 8000 in 1965, 12,000 in 1966 and a jump of 9000 to a total 21,000 in 1967.

The East Germans used to maintain small sections of the autobahn sporadically as funds allowed but now major resurfacing projects are being carried out, new gantry junction signs have been erected and work has started on the damaged Elbe bridge section which had been virtually untouched since World War Two.

New buildings, big car parks, dozens of mandatory notices and elaborate East German border defences give the Helmstedt checkpoint complex an air of permanence that belies talk of German unification. Helmstedt once meant a mining and agricultural town in Lower Saxony—now for most people it has become synonymous with the free end of the Berlin road corridor.

Tension has certainly lessened but this makes little difference to the work at Helmstedt of the Autobahn Control Detachment of 247 (Berlin) Provost Company, Corps of Royal Military Police.

With 20 odd years behind it and an unknown future ahead, the Detachment



Above and left: The Allied checkpoint at Helmstedt as seen from the border. Below: Duty corporal typing travel documents at the duty desk. Above, right: Lance-Corporal T Rowland briefs SOLDIER's Editor.

lives its lonely life of clock-round, month-round, year-round duty.

Like the French and American armies the Detachment mans a continuous briefing and document check for all British Servicemen and their families motoring to and from Berlin whether on duty or for pleasure.

On the way to Berlin all military vehicles and passengers (including the Military Police themselves) have to be carefully documented then briefed on the route and its junctions and on the action to be taken should a breakdown occur or should the vehicle be stopped by the East German police.

Because East Germany is not recognised, documents are shown only to Russians and all negotiation is only with Russians. It is, for example, strictly forbidden for an Allied vehicle to pay an East German police on-the-spot fine for speeding; its driver must demand to see a Russian officer.

France is represented at the Helmstedt checkpoint by a *chef* and four men of the Gendarmerie de Service who are posted monthly from Berlin, while America has military policemen and its customs service.

Britain's representatives are the British Frontier Service and the Military Police Detachment which, because this was the British Zone of Germany, undertakes overall Allied responsibilities. One of these is vehicle and medical recovery between Helmstedt and the autobahn halfway mark at Zeisar, beyond which the responsibility is that of the American military police based at the Berlin checkpoint.

The British Autobahn Control Detachment has a recovery vehicle carrying tools and blankets which can be at the checkpoint, ready documented, within ten

minutes of a call for help, and on standby a four-berth ambulance with radio, oxygen and a lance-corporal of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The Detachment's officer commanding is operationally responsible to the Assistant Provost Marshal at HQ Berlin (British Sector) and in matters affecting all three Allies normally acts as the Helmstedt spokesman in discussions with the Russians.

The present detachment commander, Major Tony Le Tissier, does not speak Russian and always takes one of his two interpreters, who are always senior non-commissioned officers or warrant officers, when he goes to see the Russian Army officer. When Major Le Tissier is away for any length of time he is replaced from Berlin.

The Russian duty officer may be a lieutenant, captain or major. His frontier detachment—its men are better dressed than the average Russian soldiers—is commanded by a full colonel who has held this appointment for seven years and who also controls the rail link from Helmstedt to Berlin.

Convoy drivers are briefed in the British Detachment's headquarters where a duty desk is manned 24 hours a day by a busy military policeman who checks documents, runs a radio network and operates the Helmstedt military switchboard—he is the only telephone operator in his Corps!

Down the road the briefing desk is similarly manned clock-round, in three shifts each of two men. Here the "new boys" do three weeks under instruction, for this and much of the Detachment's work is outside the normal scope of military policemen and has all to be learned at the start of the three-year tour of duty at Helmstedt.

When the briefing desk has passed a vehicle through, a check is made to ensure that it arrives safely at the Berlin end of the autobahn.

An average time for the journey is two hours and a maximum of four is allowed before search parties—military police, of course—are sent out.

Despite the detailed briefing drivers occasionally manage to lose their way—usually by ignoring both the briefing, the route map and the huge illuminated signs and taking a wrong turning off the autobahn.

It is as impossible as taking the M45 to Birmingham when one should be continuing north on the M1—but it happens, and the military police have to go out searching for the lost whatever the weather or time of day.

Incidents of this kind are rare and the majority of Service travellers take the journey in their stride and at the other end report an uneventful trip.

Yet there is something indefinably frightening, almost sinister, about the corridor which still makes some passengers physically sick.

It starts, when going to Berlin, on leaving the briefing room. From there one drives across the bridge spanning the old Route 1, across the demarcation line and past a watchtower manned by armed East German police to check in at the Russian checkpoint.

Closed circuit television cameras scan the approach from the watchtower—only when accompanied by a Frontier Service officer can one walk with impunity beyond the British barrier up to the demarcation line.

In the immediate vicinity of the checkpoint there are no anti-personnel mines but elsewhere along the 860-mile border between East and West a minefield forms part of fortifications intended rather to keep East Germans in than to keep out the West.

Three years after it was set up in 1949, the German Democratic Republic erected a barbed wire fence along the demarcation line and cleared and ploughed a strip ten metres wide. Their border police were

Left: East German watchtower at Helmstedt. Note closed circuit TV camera under platform. Above: Warning notice, East German post and old barbed wire fence at border. Below: Walks in the border woods are clearly marked. Right: Route 1 ends.

ordered to shoot without warning anyone entering this strip.

The Iron Curtain came down at 10am on 26 May 1952. The stream of refugees dropped from thousands to a brave trickle. The original fence can still be seen in places but that and the strip gave way ten years later to obstacles in depth.

Beyond the wire and cleared strip near the Helmstedt checkpoint there is now a two-metre-high double steel mesh fence enclosing a mined strip 30 metres wide, then an anti-vehicle ditch lined by vertical concrete slabs.

Beyond the ditch is a second strip six metres wide, which is regularly ploughed and examined for footprints, then a concrete track which is patrolled by motorcycles and vehicles.

In the 500-metre "protective strip" all public buildings were closed and meetings forbidden and work in the fields or anywhere outside the homes is allowed only in daylight.

Backing this strip is a 4½-kilometre restricted zone in which there is no freedom of movement and for which a special pass is required.

In contrast there is, with a few exceptions, complete freedom of movement on the Western side right up to the demarcation line.

Interspersed in the East German border obstacles are watchtowers, foot patrols, trip wires, dogs on running lines—every discouragement to would-be escapers. Yet from 1949 to 1961 two and a half million refugees crossed from East Germany to West Berlin or West Germany.

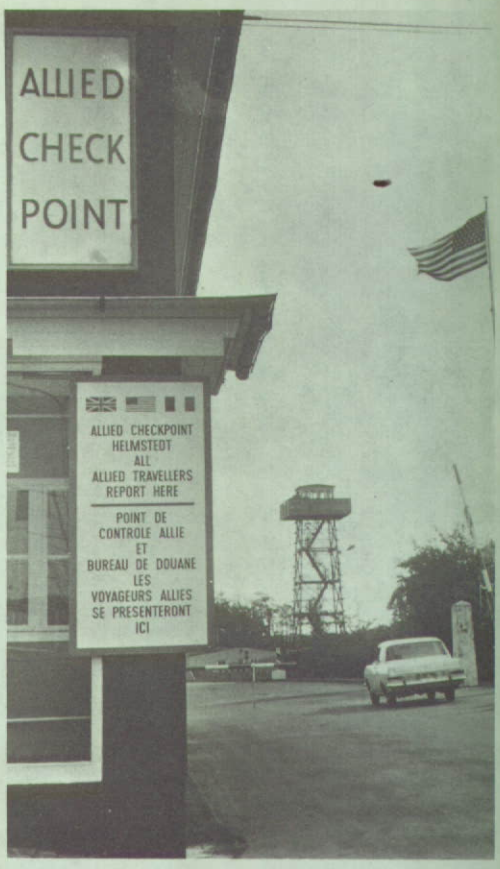
South of Helmstedt, Harpe power station, which once supplied Brunswick, is in East Germany. A new station has been built on the western side.

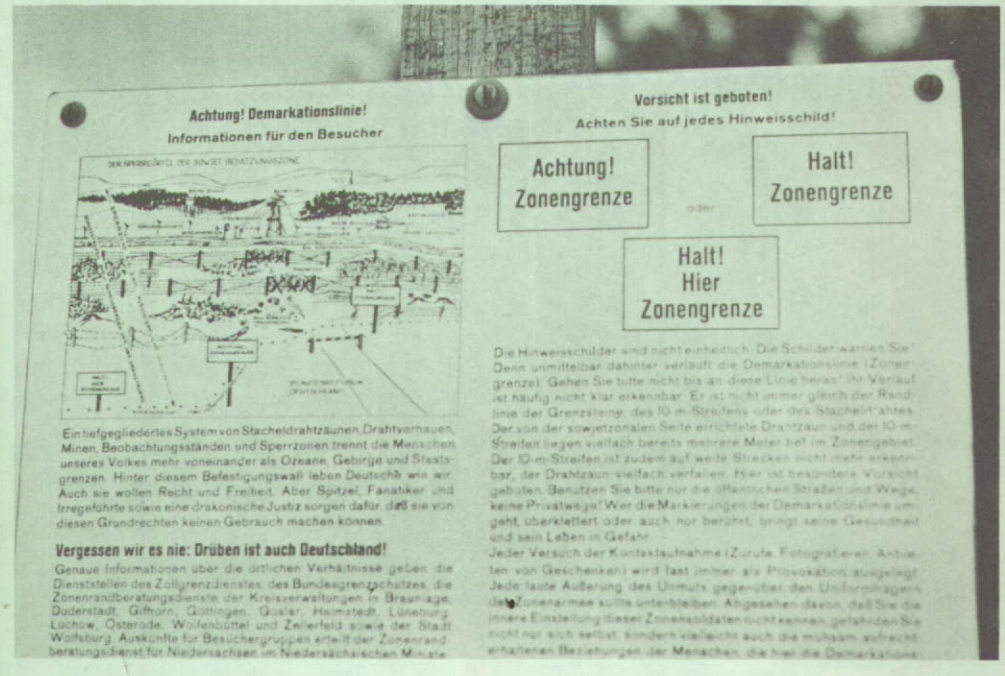
But nowhere perhaps is the division of Germany more pronounced than at the point where the old Route 1, starting on the French Riviera and sweeping to the north and east, ends ignominiously as a tourist attraction at the demarcation line north of Helmstedt.

Beyond there it used to run to the Baltic Coast. Now it finishes under the eye of an East German watchtower where long-dead powerlines from Harpe cross and recross the frontier.

Route 1 ends in the division of a country —and in the schism of Communism and the free world.

The picture on page 44 shows the Allied checkpoint at Helmstedt as seen from the demarcation line. Right: Viewpoint of the Berlin traveller.





Above, left: This border notice warns West Germans. Above: Frontier Service Officer Jack Bell is based on Helmstedt. His area covers a 60-mile stretch of border. Below: American driver checks in at Berlin end of autobahn. British WRAC MPs work here.

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