

NOVEMBER 1960 ★ 9d

# SOLDIER



SANDHURST TO THE SAHARA  
(See pages 14-15)

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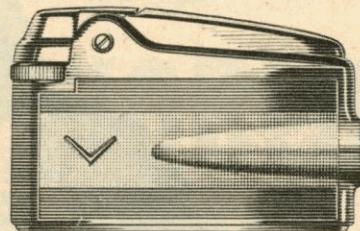


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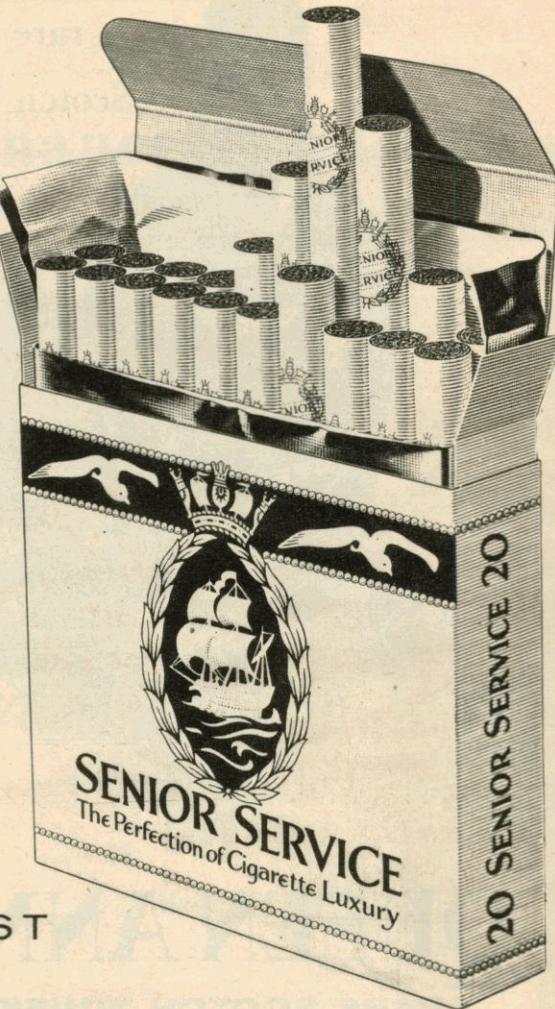
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*The 105 mm in action on the Army's tank gun testing range in Dorset. It has a longer range than the best Russian tank gun and a removable barrel tube which can be replaced in battle*

# A WORLD-BEATING GUN FOR THE TANKS

THE BRITISH ARMY'S CENTURION TANKS ARE  
TO HAVE A WONDERFUL NEW GUN WHICH THE  
UNITED STATES ARMY IS ALSO BUYING TO ARM  
ITS MOST POWERFUL TANK. DEADLY ACCURATE,  
THE 105 MM CAN DESTROY THE HEAVIEST TANKS

**O**N a gunnery testing range in Dorset a Centurion tank lumbered to a halt, its commander, a regimental sergeant-major instructor, searching the hills ahead through binoculars.

Suddenly, the RSM began to bark out orders. The massive gun swung round, stopped, elevated and seconds later the first round was on its way to the target nearly two miles away. Three more rounds followed rapidly, each, like the first, striking the target dead centre.

It was a remarkable demonstration of a remarkable new British weapon—the 105 millimetre tank gun—which is claimed to be the most accurate and lethal of its type in the world, capable of knocking out the most heavily armoured tank known to exist.

The new gun, manufactured by Royal Ordnance factories in Britain, will not only come into service with the British Army, replacing the 20-pounder gun on Centurions, but is also likely to become the main armament for all United States Army tanks.

**OVER . . .**

# AND A NEW TANK KILLER GOES ON TRIAL

A devastating new British anti-tank missile for the Infantry is to undergo Army trials. It can destroy the heaviest tanks yet can be operated by only one man



Vigilant is fired from its own carrier-launcher and is guided to its target by the control stick which passes signals along a four-core wire.

WITHIN the next few months the Army will be carrying out trials on Salisbury Plain with a one-man, guided-missile tank killer which is claimed by its makers to be the deadliest anti-tank weapon ever invented.

It is the Vickers Vigilant, an astonishingly accurate and devastating device which can be carried by one man (it weighs only 45 lbs, including its carrying equipment and launcher, and 33 lbs when stripped for firing) and yet can knock out the heaviest-known tanks at ranges of up to a mile away. It is so light that dozens of them could be carried by helicopter or a light aircraft and flown with assault troops called upon to go into action against a heavily-armoured enemy. It could also be fitted to light reconnaissance vehicles and a paratrooper could land with one and have it in action in less than a minute.

The Vigilant, which is 35 inches long and has a wing span of 11 inches, has been under development as a private venture by the Guided Weapons Department of Vickers-Armstrong Aircraft for more than three years. It is shaped like a huge wine bottle and is guided by a hand-operated control stick which feeds signals along a fine, four-core continuous wire attached to the missile as it speeds to its target. Fired from its own carrier-launcher, it can be operated by a soldier from a concealed position 75 yards away. The fusing system is so arranged that the final stage of arming, by an

inertial-type system, does not take place until after the missile has left its launcher and is well on its way to the target.

Preliminary tests have shown that highly trained assault troops should be able to hit the turret of a tank from ranges varying between a few hundred yards and a mile nine times out of ten. During a recent demonstration of the missile before experts from the armies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, there was such a rapid succession of hits that the spectators burst into cheers!

A considerable advantage of the Vigilant is the ease with which men can be trained to fire it. Vickers claim that the average Infantryman could learn to fire it successfully in about five hours. Training would be carried out on a simulator housed in a room where the operator sees a target projected on a spherical screen. The missile, represented by a diminishing spot of light, is controlled in its movement across the screen by the hand-stick and when the light strikes the target a hit is scored.

More than £1 million has been spent so far in developing the Vigilant. The United States Army is reputed to be interested in the project as America has no similar weapon in its armoury.

If the trials are satisfactory, the weapon could be produced in large numbers by mid-1961. At present a Vigilant round costs between £400-£500, but this would be drastically reduced if mass produced.

## WORLD-BEATING GUN continued from page 5

So impressed were experts during recent exhaustive tests of the weapon in America that the Defense Department has decided to fit the 105 mm gun to its new giant, diesel-powered M.60 tank and has placed an initial order with the British Government for 180 of them at a cost of £80,000. One report from Washington says that the sale of the new gun may eventually total £25 million.

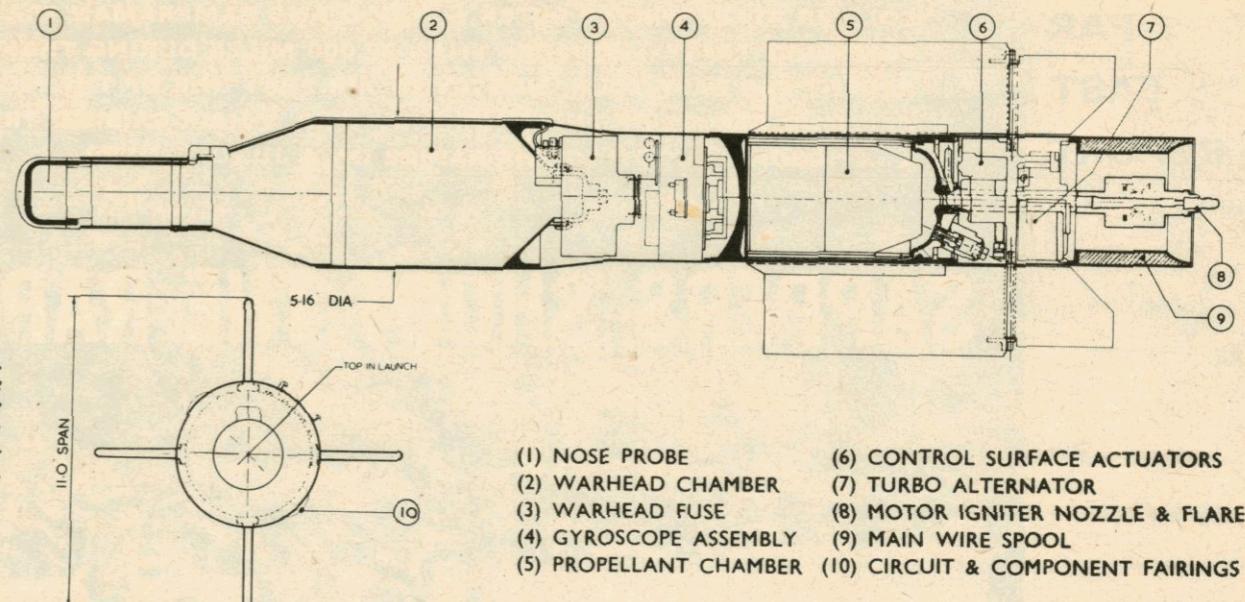
SOLDIER understands that the 105 mm, which fires both

armour-piercing and high explosive shells, outshoots its Russian equivalent by more than a mile and a half. The breech of the gun is identical with that of the 20-pounder gun, but the rounds it fires are larger and more penetrative. An outstanding feature is the use of a removable barrel tube which can be replaced in the field when it becomes worn. With other types of tank guns the tank has to leave the battle area for gun repairs.

Describing the new gun in a recent issue, the United States magazine "Armor" says: "Accurate and rugged, the new 105 mm gun has a capability for hyper-velocity, flat-trajectory fire vastly greater than existing 90 mm guns . . . This tank cannon employs electric primary and auxiliary firing circuits . . . Its primary armor-defeating round is a kinetic-energy, piercing, discarding sabot type. Other anticipated ammunition types consist of an

anti-personnel and anti-materiel round, a chemical round and a target practice round."

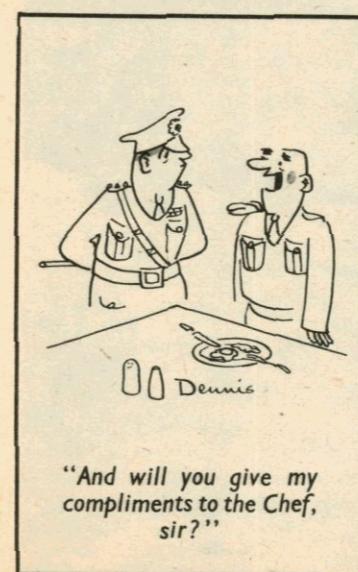
As SOLDIER went to press it was learned that talks have taken place between Britain and Germany on the possibility of arming the new German standard tank with the 105 mm gun. Other member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation may follow suit.



A diagram of the Vigilant. The motor body forms the main structural member and the single-chamber motor is of the solid-fuel booster-sustainer type.



A paratrooper prepares to drop with the Vigilant. He could have the weapon in action seconds after landing.



"And will you give my compliments to the Chef, sir?"

## SOLDIER to soldier

M R. JOHN CREASEY, the crime novelist, has hit on a novel plan for putting an end to the senseless slaughter on Britain's roads. He would call out the Army.

In an admirable little book called "They Didn't Mean to Kill," Mr. Creasey says that a state of national emergency should be declared and the Army given the task of manning check points all over the country to act as a deterrent to reckless, careless and impatient road users. If all available troops were used to form three-man patrols there could be a traffic check point at every five mile interval on all roads or, if only trunk and main roads were patrolled, one every mile and a half.

This drastic action could not fail to reduce road casualties to an absolute minimum, says Mr. Creasey, who proposes that a volunteer road defence corps recruited from civilian organisations should take over after the Army has operated the scheme for a few weeks.

The Army has never been slow in coming to the rescue quickly and effectively in times of national disaster—as SOLDIER went to press hundreds of troops were battling with the floods in Devonshire—and there is no doubt that if called upon to act as traffic wardens soldiers would make an excellent job of it. But they could only be brought in by the Government declaring a state of emergency.

This does not mean that the Army cannot meanwhile play an important part in helping to reduce the appalling number of road casualties ("35,000 dead in the next five years, unless drastic measures are taken") by encouraging its drivers to use the roads more carefully. Soldiers are no better and no worse drivers than civilians and a visit to any military town will confirm the view that there is room for improvement.

One commendable step in the right direction has already been taken by the formation of the new British Army Motoring Association whose chief aim is to improve the standard of driving and servicing of military vehicles and to encourage road safety through competitive driving. This is an excellent idea and deserves the whole-hearted support of every unit and every individual.

REGULAR Army officers are taught to take the rough with the smooth. This is just as well if they read *The Observer* which recently published a book review by a Mr. Simon Raven who wrote: "With few exceptions, professional officers, like their men, have always tended to be feckless, drunken and idle . . ."

Happily, a week later, in the intervals between their drunken orgies, these feckless and idle officers were able to read in the same newspaper a much less vituperative and better balanced assessment of their qualities when, on the day Nigeria received independence, the new Prime Minister said, "We are grateful to the British officers who we have known first as masters, then as leaders and finally as partners, but always as friends."



FEW will disagree with the analogy recently coined by Major-General J. F. Metcalfe, Colonel of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, that a battalion is a body with a commanding officer as the head, the Officers' Mess as the belly and the junior NCOs and men as the arms and legs.

And who represents the vertebrae on which the rest of the body hangs? Why, the Sergeants' Mess, of course.

Take a bow, all you warrant officers and sergeants. You're the backbone of the Army!



IN North Borneo recently Private John Wesley Hall, a Royal Army Medical Corps orderly, was told to accompany a gravely injured woman to hospital as quickly as he could.

On the way, the Land Rover they were in was held up by a flooded river. Private Hall jumped out and began to lead the way across a submerged bridge but the vehicle was swept away by the raging torrent.

With no thought for his own safety, Private Hall leapt into the vehicle as it went down and somehow got the driver out. Then he went back for the woman. Last seen struggling to release his patient, Private Hall disappeared. All three were drowned.

SOLDIER salutes the memory of a gallant man who gave his life in the greatest cause of all—trying to save the lives of others.

SOLDIER STAFF WRITER PETER N. WOOD AND CAMERAMAN FRANK TOMPSETT TRAVELED MORE THAN 25,000 MILES DURING THEIR RECENT FAR EAST TOUR, MOSTLY BY AIR. BUT ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING STAGES OF THEIR JOURNEY WAS A HAIR-RAISING TRIP IN A LONGBOAT, SHOOTING THE RAPIDS ON A JUNGLE RIVER

## SAPPERS SHOOT THE RAPIDS

"Seven seasick soldiers sitting side-by-side . . ." But no one was seasick and no one fell overboard (note the life-jackets) as the long-boat shot the turbulent rapids.

Right: "First-class passengers stay in your seats; second class dismount and walk, third class get out and push." Yet another hazard of boating in the jungle.

Below: No backward-facing seats here—bowman, boatman and passengers all look to their front as its powerful motor drives the longboat up into the rapids.



JAGGED rocks flashed by, only inches from its beam, as the Malayan longboat hurtled down the half-mile stretch of rapids, the water whipped to an angry white foam and gushing over the gunwale.

Seven British Sappers, wearing life-jackets, clutched their rifles more tightly as the longboat slewed round a boulder and gathered speed again—and then relaxed as it entered calmer water.

Only the skill of the Malay boatman and the power of an outboard motor had stood between life and an uncomfortable

death or serious injury—between the comparative safety of the longboat and being whirled away and battered against the jagged rocks.

For the Sappers of 11 Independent Field Squadron, Royal Engineers—on their way back from hacking an airstrip out of the virgin jungle—the worst part of their hair-raising journey up and down the upper reaches of Malaya's Perak River was over.

In this 45-mile stretch, from Fort Tapong, near the Thailand border, to Grik, the Sungai Perak falls 400 feet, winding through dense jungle and alternating between steep, narrow rapids, placid deeps and broad, rippling shallows. But it had few fears for the two keen-eyed Malays who guided the narrow, wooden longboat with uncanny precision past the hidden rocks, marked only by the faintest of surface ripples, and sensed the exact moment to head the boat into the swirling rapids.

The longboat was one of 14 similar craft which ply up and down the Sungai Perak, ferrying Sappers to and from the airstrip at Tapong and taking Gurkhas, Australians and New Zealanders on jungle patrol by the quickest possible route. The road ends at Grik and eastwards, towards the Bentong Salient in north-east Malaya, are only single-file tracks—overgrown almost as soon as they are cleared—and

the river. The journey along the tracks to Tapong means a two-day forced march; by river an exciting but brief trip of only eight hours.

Troops going on jungle patrol stage the first night at the Commonwealth Brigade's forward command post at Grik where the



A steep bank, up which their supplies have to be man-handled, greets the Sappers as they arrive at Tapong, ready for work on the airstrip, at the end of a 45-mile trip up-river.

longboats are stationed under the command of a subaltern nicknamed "The Admiral." They then move up river (sometimes disembarking and by-passing rapids by walking through the jungle) to land near their base camps. From these points, some of them on narrow but navigable

tributaries of the Sungai Perak, the patrols are re-supplied by boat.

The longboats, which can carry seven fully-equipped soldiers or 1000 lbs of supplies, have ferried more than 900 troops each month up and down the Sungai Perak.

## AND BUILD A JUNGLE AIRSTRIP



Who'd be a Sapper? No Infantryman or Pioneer worked harder than these bronzed and fit Engineers as they hacked out and levelled Tapong's airstrip. Note the ready rifles and felled trees on the approach line.

STRIPPED to the waist, the Sappers toiled in the blazing sun, building a 500-yard long airstrip deep in the Malayan jungle near Tapong and only 16 miles from the Thailand border. Their tools were axes, parangs, shovels, barrows, a home-made roller and changkols (the Malayan handhoe).

It was primitive, back-breaking work but the versatile Sappers of 11 Independent Field Squadron took it in their stride. Behind them lay six months of road and bridge building in Kedah, northern Malaya, and ahead a move to North Borneo to carry on the work of Gurkha Engineers at Kota Belud, the Far East's new training centre (SOLDIER, October).

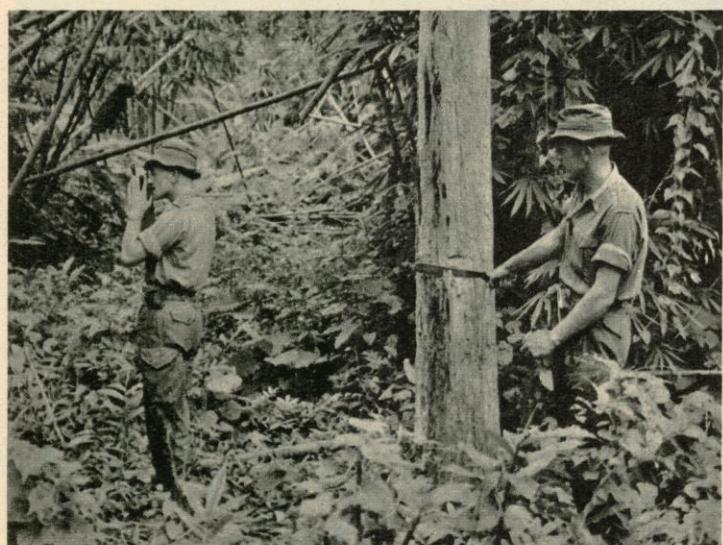
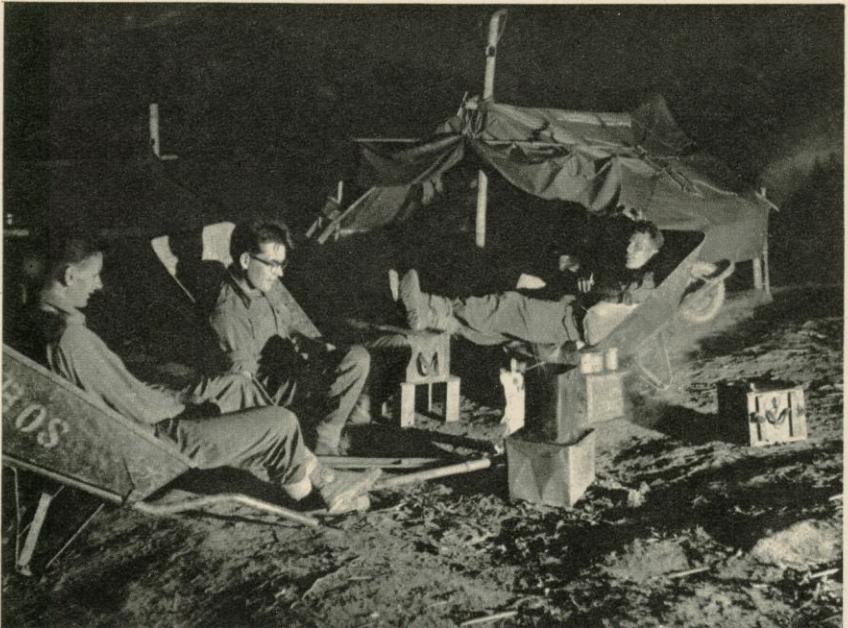
In Kedah the Sappers had worked hard, from dawn to dusk, but they had had the mechanical help of bulldozers, scrapers, graders and excavators. At Tapong, where engineering plant could be brought in only piece-meal, by helicopter or boat, there was no option but to turn to hand tools.

Each of the Squadron's two British troops and Royal Australian Engineer troop worked in

OVER...

Right: It's a monastic life with no NAAFI, no nightclubs, no cinema nor "local." There's just time for a "brew" and a rest in barrow armchairs before turning in for the night.

Sgt. J. Whitemore blazes a tree to mark the runway's end while Lieut. D. Barton takes a compass reading. The sergeant made Tapong's only roller—a water filled 44-gallon drum.



turns at Tapong, travelling 150 miles by road from their base at Butterworth to Grik, then up the Sungai Perak by longboat.

First, the Sappers marked out a strip ten yards wide down the centre of the proposed runway, on a flat stretch of land near the river. Then Royal Malayan Air Force pilots flew over in *Twin Pioneers*, which are now landing and taking off from the airstrip, to test the approaches.

The ground had been semi-cultivated—it was once part of an old Malayan *kampong*—but there were trees, some of them large. So the Sappers blew them up by the roots—they used a ton of explosives in the process—and cut them into lengths for carrying away. Trees on the hills at each end of the strip were

chopped down to give a better flying approach.

One of the most laborious jobs was clearing the ground of bamboo roots. These great conglomerate masses could not be blown and had to be dug out one by one, a laborious, back-breaking task that took three weeks to complete.

Then came the levelling, and the Sappers turned from *parangs* and axes to shovels and wheelbarrows. But their progress was so rapid that they turned down the offer of a tractor. It was to have been air-dropped in parts, but the time taken to collect the pieces and assemble them would have outweighed the advantages.

Each troop spent three weeks at Tapong—a spartan three weeks of hard work and little play, for the nearest habitation, apart from aborigine *ladangs*, is 45 miles away at Grik. The Sappers worked from 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and after a shower, an evening meal and rifle cleaning there was little time left until an early lights out at 9 o'clock. In their limited leisure time the Sappers read voraciously, played an occasional game of volley ball against the Malayan Police, and bathed in the river—Tapong's water point, laundry, bath-house, swimming pool and transport route.

After a gruelling six months' work the airstrip has been completed. Now, thanks to the Sappers of 11 Independent Field Squadron, the Malayan Police can give greater and speedier help to the aborigines in the area and take the offensive into the heart of one of the last strongholds of Communist terrorism in Malaya.

A Bristol freighter of the Royal New Zealand Air Force making an air-drop to the Sappers. Fresh rations and bread arrived once a week.



FOR OVER 150 YEARS BRITAIN'S MILITARY BASE IN SINGAPORE HAS BEEN SERVED BY A WATER TRANSPORT ORGANISATION. BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS OPERATED THE WAR DEPARTMENT FLEET AND AS THE CORPS FLEET TOOK OVER THE TASKS OF FERRYING SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, MEETING TROOPSHIPS AND CARRYING STORES. IN HONG KONG, TOO, A WATER TRANSPORT COMPANY SPANS THE GAPS BETWEEN THE MAINLAND AND NEARBY ISLANDS



## THEY COVER THE WATER FRONT

Here's an unusual chore for the Army—taking Malay children in a harbour launch ferry to school in Singapore. Pictured here at Buller Jetty on Pulau Brani are moored harbour launches (left) and the fast launch *Forsa* against the background of one of the few Malayan stilted kampongs.

A BLAZING sun beat down on the tank landing craft as she steadily butted her way north through the Malacca Straits, the ensign of the Royal Army Service Corps Fleet fluttering from her stern. To starboard lay the west coast of Malaya and ahead Malacca itself and the British Army base at Fort George, destination of the building stores on the tank deck.

A hundred miles to the southeast, a ramped cargo lighter displaying a similar ensign was landing a three-ton lorry on the beach at Pulau Blakang Mati, one of the small islands separated from Singapore's waterfront by its half-mile wide harbour approaches.

At the same time a Malay soldier, wearing the Corps Fleet flash on his shoulder, stood ready to fend off with a boathook as a passenger-carrying launch nosed into the jetty of Singapore's Jardine Steps.

Landing craft, lighter and launch were all vessels of 37 Company, Royal Army Service Corps (Water Transport), the successor to water transport organisations which have existed since 1803. The Corps Fleet's main peace-time tasks are coast-

wise carriage of stores between bases and garrisons, providing a link between troopships, ocean-going freighters and the shore base, ferrying vehicles and stores to off-shore island garrisons and inaccessible units—and providing launches for family recreational trips and picnics on the attractive islands

surrounding Singapore Harbour.

Lighters and landing craft are grouped in "A" Flotilla, the Company's cargo and vehicle carrying section. The six lighters, now providing a vehicle ferry in Singapore's roads, mainly to a Gurkha Infantry battalion on Pulau Blakang Mati, are of World War Two vintage. Inten-

ded originally for the Burma campaign, they were pre-fabricated in Australia and Canada and shipped out piecemeal.

Before the recent arrival of the larger Mark VIII landing craft, *Ardennes* (see *SOLDIER*, August, 1960) and her sister ships *Agedabia* and *Arromanches*, the

OVER ...

*The river class fast launch Fowey, with embarkation and pay staff aboard, prepares to go alongside as the Nevasa, one of the Army's five remaining troopships, arrives from Hong Kong and drops anchor in Singapore's roads.*



Company operated Mark IV landing craft built, like the lighters, during the war, and regarded then as expendable!

But these craft—the *Akyab*, *Algiers* and *Arakan*—have given remarkably stout service, particularly on the weekly "milk" runs to Penang, Port Swettenham and Port Dickson on Malaya's east coast. Carrying 150 tons of stores each, mainly for 17 Gurkha Division and the Commonwealth Brigade's new base at Fort George these ships have since 1958 saved more than £80,000 a year over any other form of transport.

Royal Army Service Corps warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers command the larger craft, but the launches are crewed by Malays and civilians, for the Company has only 40 British officers and other ranks, with some 160 Malays and 140 civilians.

The Malays were recruited as non-tradesmen and taught seamanship, navigation and marine

engineering by British and Malayan sergeant-instructors in the Company's own schools. Malay other ranks to crew the Mk VIII craft are being provided from surplus tradesmen of other corps. Practical training, examinations and trade testing take place at sea in the unit training ship, a 61½-ft motor fishing vessel operated by "B" Flotilla.

This flotilla also operates three high speed twin-screw launches, two general service launches and a triple-screw fast launch, *Minoru* (named after a Derby winner), which is the personal barge of the C-in-C Far East Land Forces. The twin-screw river class craft, *Fowey*, *Forsa* and *Beaulieu*, ferry movement control embarkation and freight staff officers between Singapore and incoming trooperships and freighters and are also used to clear shipping from dangerous zones of ranges on which there is seaward firing. The *Beaulieu* carries the flag of the GOC, Singapore Base District.

One of the general service launches is on permanent detachment at Penang, in Northern Malaya, for port movement duties and running recreational trips for the Army leave centre.

Harbour launches of "C" Flotilla shuttle with clockwork precision between Jardine Steps, Pulau Blakang Mati and the neighbouring Pulau Brani ("Island of the Brave"), carrying 2500 passengers a day—British and Malayan soldiers, wives, families, schoolchildren and civilians. Many of the passengers are from 37 Company itself, its Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers workshop and 6 Boat Stores, Royal Army Service Corps, all of which are based on Pulau Brani.

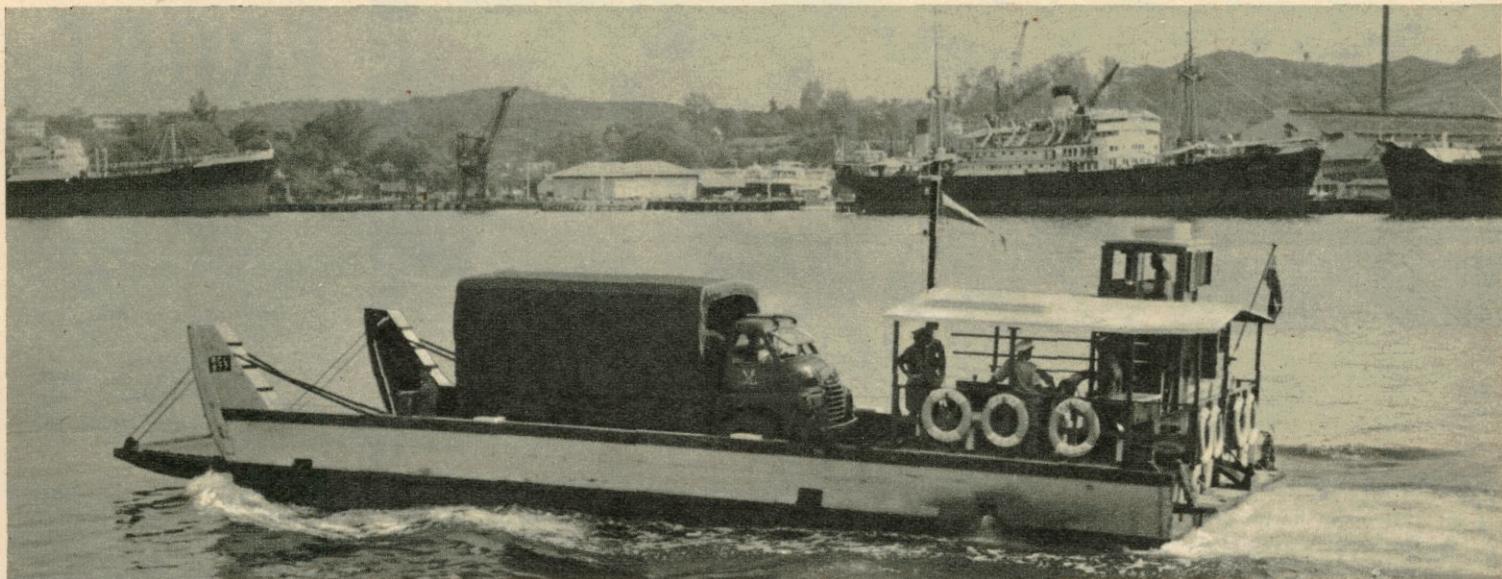
Maintenance keeps workshops and stores busy. Wooden-hulled vessels—the launches and dinghies—have to be slipped for five or six days every two months to kill the *teredo* borer, a wood-eating worm. The tank landing craft are overhauled in Royal

Navy or civilian dockyards.

Like the water transport company, the workshop at Buller Jetty has a civilian staff and only a small element of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, including a workshop warrant officer and chief shipwright. The workshop's biggest job is handling engine changes in the tank landing craft.

One of the Company's earliest members, Coxswain (Master II) Ismail bin Haran, was in the War Department Fleet before rejoining in 1946. In his 12 years as a coxswain he has commanded three C-in-C launches.

Another old hand, Haji Mansor bin Haji Moor BEM, joined as a deck hand in 1939 and is now waterman foreman, responsible for slips and moorings. Lance-Corporal Othman bin Idris, coxswain of a harbour launch, was awarded the British Empire Medal for helping to rescue five members of the crew of a tug after it had collided with a Japanese freighter and sunk.

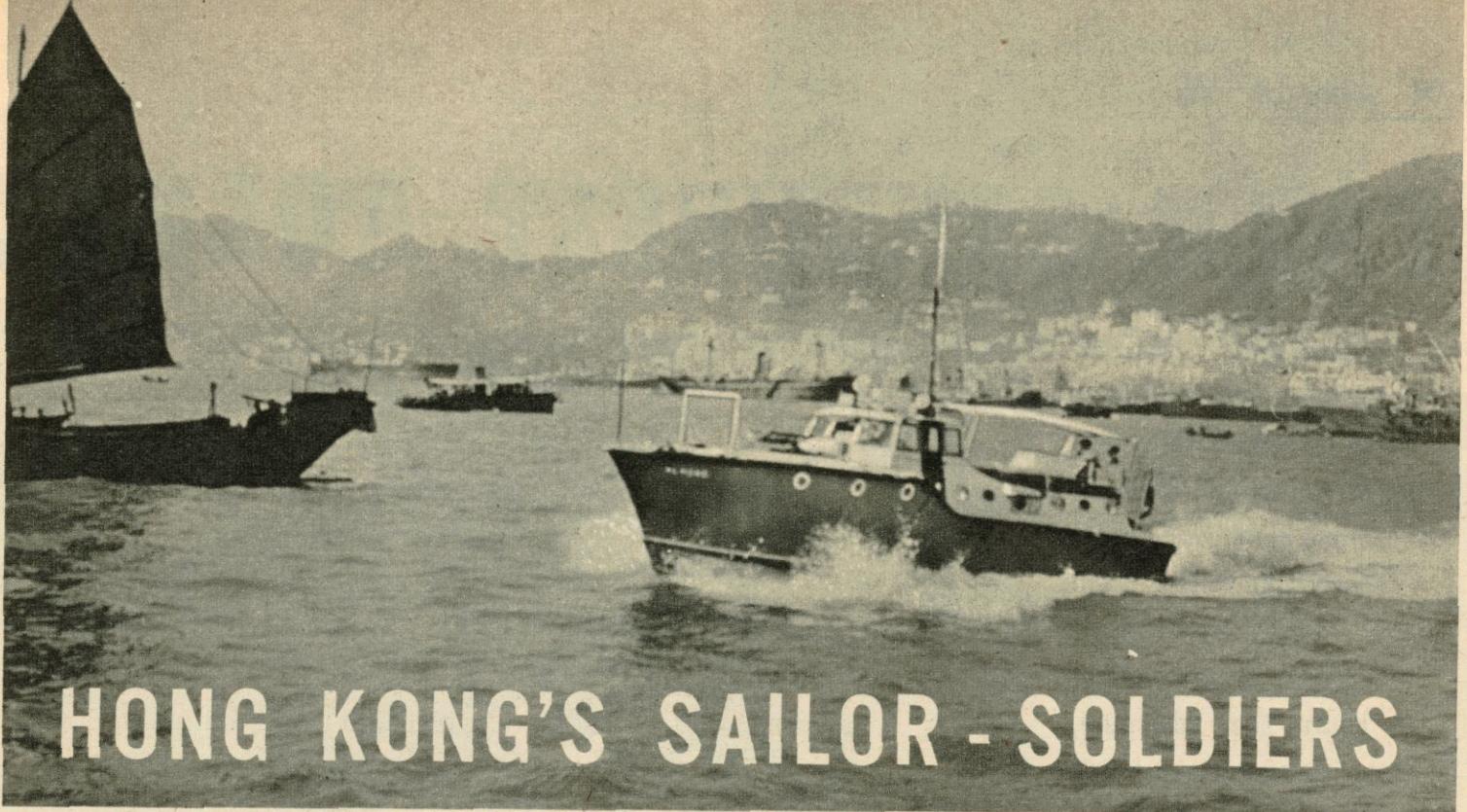


Above: A ramped cargo lighter, an ungainly-looking but extremely useful craft, carrying a three-tonner from Singapore Island to the Gurkha battalion on Pulau Blakang Mati.

Left: Malayan civilians of the REME workshops stripping the rubbing board from a ramped cargo lighter, watched by S/Sgt H. A. Cresdee, (second from left), chief shipwright.

Right: WO E. A. Garrison (right), the workshops foreman, supervising adjustments to a new diesel engine which is to be installed in the landing craft *Algiers* alongside Buller Jetty.





## HONG KONG'S SAILOR - SOLDIERS

**I**N Hong Kong, too, the Royal Army Service Corps has been operating a water transport unit since the end of World War Two.

The present 79 Company (Water Transport), like its Singapore counterpart, maintains a ferry service with five harbour launches between its base at Kowloon and military units on Stonecutters' Island.

Between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, the Company augments a civilian ferry service with a private fast launch for the Commander, HQ Land Forces, and a cargo service in its landing craft and lighters. There are three fast launches, two ramped cargo lighters and four mechanised landing craft.

The landing craft lift troops—and mules—during exercises, tow targets and clear the ranges for Royal Artillery shoots and perform a variety of harbour tasks for "Q" Movements and the Army Post Office.

In this part of the world, freak weather conditions can quickly upset a routine. In 1950, Typhoon "Louise" sank a landing craft, and two years later a tropical storm sent a second landing craft to the bottom and removed the ramps from three lighters.

The original unit, 626 Company, Royal Army Service Corps (Harbour Launch), was reformed in 1948 with the introduction of locally-enlisted Chinese to become 1874 Water Transport Platoon. The first three Hong Kong other ranks to join the Platoon, Corporal Lee Chi Ming, Private Lau Chi Keung and Lance-Corporal Lau Wai Mau, are still serving with 79 Company, which assumed that title in 1952.

Like the Singapore unit, 79 Company has a mixed establishment of Hong Kong other ranks, Chinese civilians, one British civilian, and British officers and other ranks of the Royal Army Service Corps.

Staff-Sergeant V. Tye typifies the old brigade of water transport. He joined the Royal Navy before World War Two, served in motor torpedo boats, destroyers, monitors and the cruiser *Birmingham*, then enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders.

In Singapore, he transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps, became coxswain to the C-in-C, Far East Land Forces, and is now coxswain of a landing craft of 79 Company, which he joined when it was formed. He has now served 15 years in the Far East.

*Above: Alness, a fast launch operated by 79 Company, RASC, showing off its paces in Victoria Harbour's cluttered roadstead, against the background of the Hong Kong waterfront.*



*Left: S/Sgt V. Tye, the Company's veteran, at the helm of his tank landing craft. He is married to a Chinese. Their 12-year-old son attends both a Chinese and a British school.*

### THE ARMY'S "AIRCRAFT - CARRIER"

**O**NE of 79 Company's responsibilities is maintaining and crewing the Army's only fire float—that of 43 Army Fire Brigade, Royal Army Service Corps—on Stonecutters' Island.

The float, converted from an aircraft landing boat by the Royal Navy, used by the Navy as a fire float and subsequently sold to the Army, is crewed by Chinese civilians. Its fire appliances are manned by five Hong Kong soldier-firemen under the command of a British soldier, Warrant Officer J. M. C. Rollo, Brigade Superintendent, who is on his second tour with the Brigade.

In an earlier location in the New Territories, 43 Army Fire Brigade received a citation for its help in fighting a village fire and during the floods of 1956 its crews carried out major rescue work.



*Hong Kong Chinese soldier-firemen man the float's main "armament" of twin 2½-in. bow monitors.*

## ★ ADVENTURE: 1

# FROM SANDHURST TO THE

Following in the tracks of the wartime Long Range Desert Group, officer-cadets from Sandhurst and Cranwell drove hundreds of miles across the wastes of the Sahara Desert on an expedition to the oasis of Kufra. Their adventure, during a vacation, lasted three weeks and cost the cadets only £10 a head

In the heart of the Sahara Desert the cadets go for a dip in the salt lake at Kufra, once a Long Range Desert Group base.

All the pictures on these pages were taken by the expedition leader, Captain G. L. D. DUCKWORTH, RTR.



DURING the expedition, which covered much of the ground roamed by the Long Range Desert Group, the cadets carried a wooden mascot (above), an effigy of a Desert Group soldier. It had been loaned to them by Lieutenant-Colonel D. L. Lloyd-Owen for whom it was made when he fought with the Long Range Desert Group during World War Two.



THE Land-Rover's wheels spun uselessly, remorselessly burrowing the vehicle into the soft, burning sand of the Sahara Desert. As the convoy ground to a halt, the crews of five other Land-Rovers—fellow cadets of the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell—sprang out to give a hand.

Behind the vehicles stretched 400 miles of open desert and between the cadets and their goal—the oasis of Kufra—lay the most formidable obstacle to their expedition, the Sand Sea.

Their route took the cadets across one of the Sand Sea's narrowest stretches, but every foot of the 30-mile-wide neck challenged drivers and vehicles alike. Continuous crescent dunes,

30 to 40 feet high and some razor-edged, frequently barred the way.

Sand channels were used constantly and on two occasions the cadets had to employ, as a last resort, an ingenious hub winch to free their vehicles. A tow rope was wound round a special hub capstan fitted to the wheel of the bogged Land-Rover and cadets held the loose end while the

vehicle simply winched itself out of the sand.

The 12 cadets from Sandhurst, chosen from more than 100 volunteers, and the four from Cranwell, were led by a Sandhurst instructor, Captain Geoffrey Duckworth, of the Royal Tank Regiment, with another instructor, Captain Christopher Adam, as administrative officer. Both have served in North Africa with their regiments and Captain Duckworth had previously taken cadets to Tripoli and Timbuctoo.

A Royal Air Force Vickers and a Varsity trainer from Cran-

Left: On the way to Kufra, Senior Under-Officer I. Tomes works out the route with the sun compass. At the wheel is O/Cadet R. J. Liddon and, behind the mascot, O/Cadet W. S. Bale.



Right: Getting stuck in the sand was no problem. The cadets tried out a new idea—using a hub capstan and a rope to winch the vehicles out.

# SAHARA

Even in the desert you can have a cup of tea in bed! Two cadets get a pleasant surprise as SSM M. Maloney, of the Royal Signals, wakes them with a brew.

well flew the Kufra party to North Africa. At Benghazi, the expedition was made up to a strength of 30, including a medical officer, Lieutenant A. G. Nicol, of 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, and equipped with its Land-Rovers, three three-ton lorries and a Royal Signals wireless truck, all "desertised" with sun compasses, sand channels and radiator condensers.

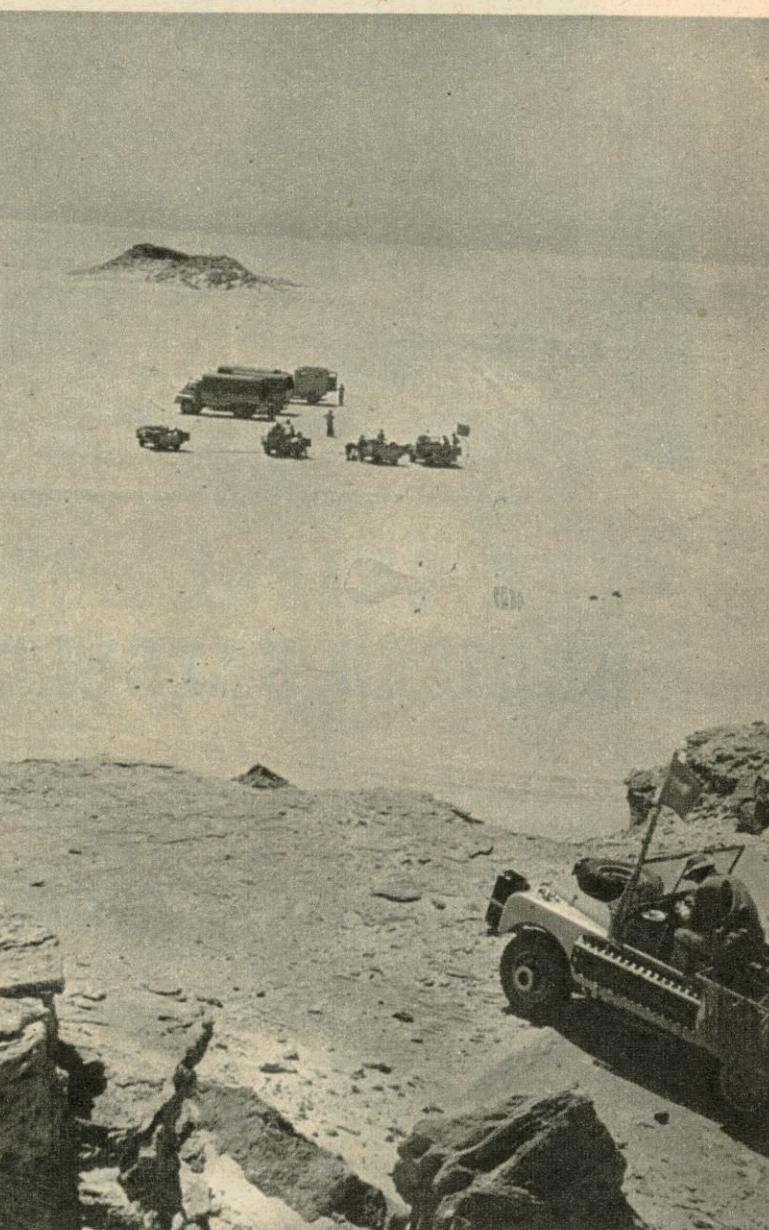
After a day's driving across the bumpy, stony desert near the coast, an inhospitable area known to thousands of wartime soldiers, the expedition struck south through Agedabia on to the *serir*, the gravel plain stretching to the Sand Sea. At Augila, an oasis about 150 miles from the Mediterranean coast, the cadets collected petrol from a dump previously established there, as part of their desert training, by Royal Army Service Corps soldiers in Benghazi.

Two days later, following a route indicated by the red markers of other British Army desert expeditions and patrols, the cadets reached Bir-el-Harasc,

a group of palm trees on a sand dune just north of the Sand Sea. Here they dug for water, finding it four feet below the surface under a huge palm tree, and put to use again a wartime shower-bath made from petrol cans by the Long Range Desert Group.

Leaving the heavy vehicles at Bir-el-Harasc, the cadets then drove on in their Land-Rovers across the Sand Sea and through a moon-like country of black conical hills rising from reddish-brown bowls of sand, to their goal, Kufra. Here they found another relic of the Long Range Desert Group in a Honey tank which was still in good condition although the Arabs had long since stripped its interior.

As the expedition had to be completed in three weeks (during a Sandhurst vacation), the cadets could spend only two days



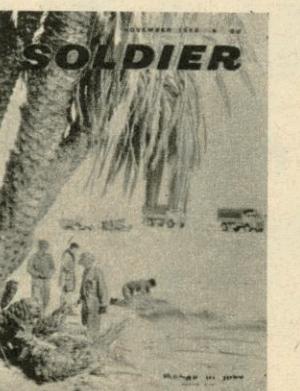
At a rocky outcrop near Bir-el-Harasc, the expedition halts for lunch. During their arduous journey the cadets passed through the vast Sand Sea and followed routes once used by the Long Range Desert Group patrols.

### COVER PICTURE

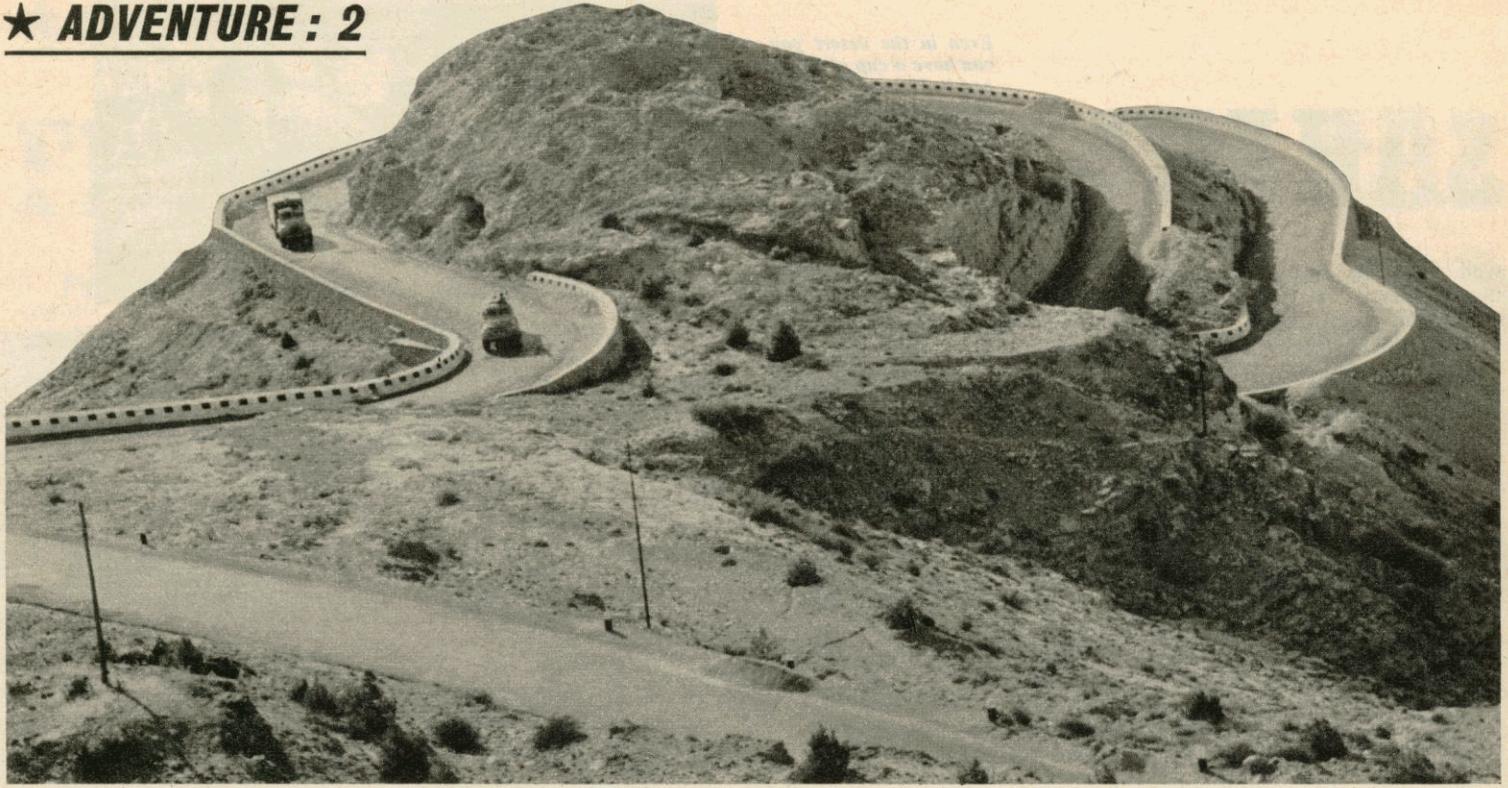
In the shade of a huge palm tree a few miles from the desolate Sand Sea, the Sandhurst cadets dig for water.

They found it four feet down and brought up sufficient to replenish their stocks and take a much needed shower bath.

In the background are some of the expedition's ten "desertised" vehicles. Only one truck broke down and that was quickly repaired by a brilliant piece of cannibalisation.



## ★ ADVENTURE: 2



Vehicles of 33 Independent Field Squadron grind up the spectacular and tortuous Garian Pass, the Gateway to the Libyan Desert.

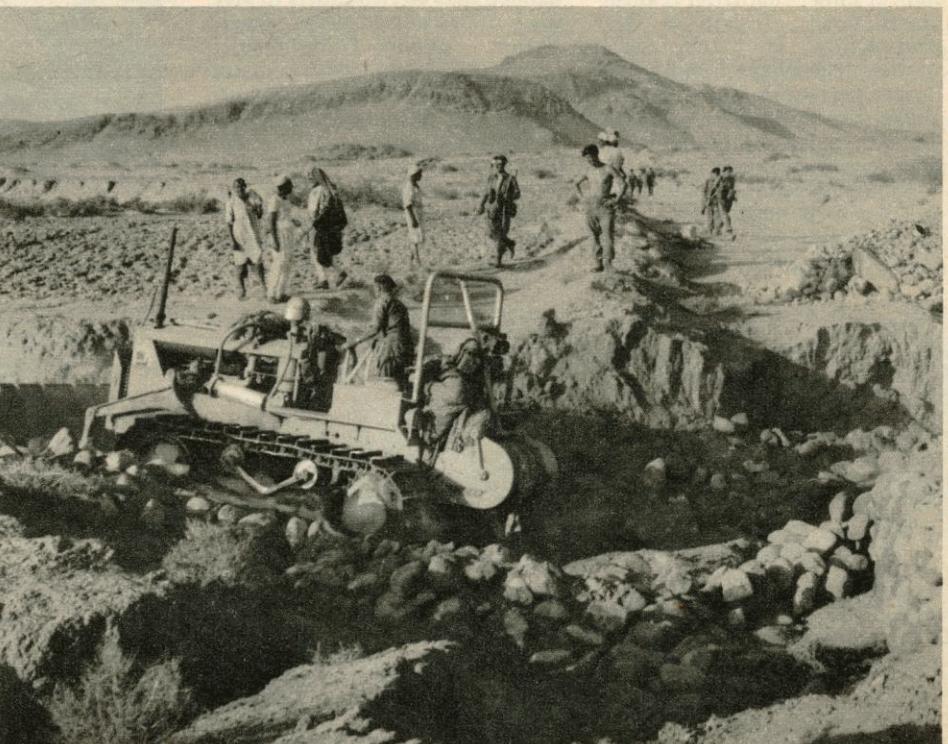
## THE GHIBLI AND BRAISED GAZELLE

IN THE LIBYAN DESERT, SAPPERS FROM CYPRUS AND MALTA BATTLED WITH A BLINDING SANDSTORM, HELD A MOCK BATTLE AND REPAIRED A DESERT ROAD

Language is no bar to Sapper G. Etchells, as he barters for eggs in the oldest language in the world.



As Cpl. K. Davies manoeuvres his bulldozer into position, other Sappers from 33 Independent Field Squadron prepare to go into action to build a culvert, one of five which they constructed on the road.



THE desert wind, which had whipped the dust into billowing clouds of white powder as the Sapper convoy left Tarhuna, 60 miles inland from Tripoli, freshened into a gale and blotted out the vehicles with sheets of razor-edged, blinding sand.

But it didn't stop them. The Sappers—from 33 Independent Field Squadron, Royal Engineers—had come from Cyprus to take part in a tough field engineering exercise in the Libyan Desert with other Sappers from the Fortress Squadron at Malta and not even the dreaded ghibli was going to stop them.

For mile after mile, crawling nose to tail at walking pace and enveloped in the all-pervading

sand clouds, the Sappers battled on, until, as suddenly as the storm had come, the wind died away and out of a cloudless sky the sun beat down on a barrier of mountains ahead. Beyond the steep, hairpin bends of the Garian Pass lay the track (leading to the heart of the desert) that

the Sappers had come to improve during a tactical exercise which would test their skill under operational conditions.

At dawn next day, the Sappers went into action, a reconnaissance troop clearing the track of "enemy"—the Malta Fortress Squadron—while behind them other Sappers cleared minefields and the main body laid bridges over culverts and huge pot holes, widened narrow bends and built a water point. It was a testing time for the drivers, too, as they gently coaxed their heavily-laden vehicles over the boulder-strewn track.

Soon, too, water found in a wadi still not completely dried up by the sun was being pumped into three 1200-gallon tanks to go through a water purifier. First samples failed the sterilisation

tests but with added chlorine the water was soon fit to drink and flowing into jerricans for the forward troops, now several miles up the track.

By nightfall 33 Squadron's advance had been temporarily checked by minefields laid by the Maltese Sappers and by craters blown in the track.

So, working in darkness, they built a 40-foot bridge resting on a central pier. Eight 20-foot mild steel girders supported the timber surfacing, capable of taking the heaviest of the Squadron's vehicles or equipment. In a few hours the Sappers were on their way again.

By the end of the exercise they had built five culverts and two "Irish" bridges and cleared and levelled long stretches of the track.

The Cyprus Squadron had been

in the North African desert for nearly a month before being joined by "B" Troop of Fortress Squadron, and one reconnaissance troop made a 1000-mile round trip into the desert, as far as the Sand Sea.

On another occasion the whole Squadron spent ten days 300 miles south of Tarhuna in one of the most desolate and testing areas in the Libyan Desert. On this trip the sun temperature rose to nearly 140 degrees and the Medical Officer was unable to shake down his clinical thermometer below 105 degrees during the hottest part of the day.

Finding water was the Squadron's greatest problem. One attempt failed after many hours' work when pumps and 163 feet of hose, sunk with considerable difficulty into a spiral well at Bir

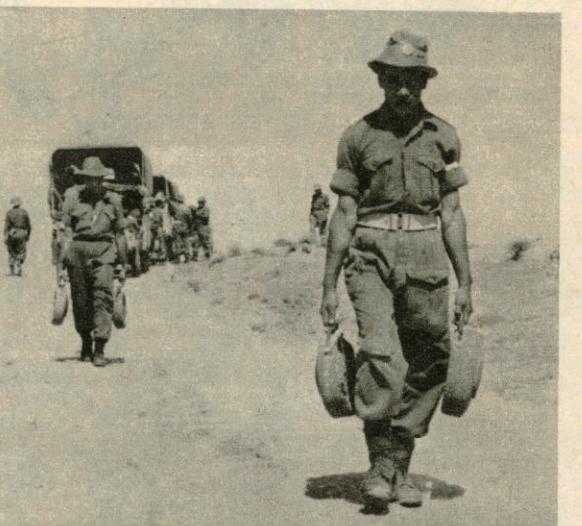
El Asma, produced water so laced with sulphur that it was undrinkable. A second attempt at Bir El Nasra was more successful, and large quantities were used for showers.

One section, travelling in a three-tonner, had to sit it out for 24 hours when their vehicle broke down many miles from base. So great was the temperature on another day that between them 18 men drank 27 gallons of water in eight hours.

Lance-Corporal Paddy Gurney, of the Army Catering Corps, produced the biggest and most welcome surprise of the exercise when, as a change from "compo" rations he presented braised gazelle for lunch one day!—*From a report by 2/Lieut L. S. WATKINS, RASC, Military Observer.*



Left: The Sappers had to find their own water—in this instance from an almost dried up wadi. The water was pumped up to purifiers and within a few hours it was fit for drinking.



Right: The Sappers from Malta—it was their first time in the desert—put down a minefield on the line of the "enemy" advance.

## ★ ADVENTURE: 3

### SAPPERS TACKLE THE SIERRA NEVADA

SOLDIERS living cheek by jowl in Gibraltar have little opportunity for adventure—unless they care to look for it.

Five Sappers from the Fortress Engineer Regiment—Lieutenant Fagan, Lance-Corporals Taylor and McAlindon and Sappers Bailey and Jarvis—and two officers from the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment—Lieutenants Thomas and Becket—decided to do just that and found adventure only 200 miles away, among the snow-covered peaks of the Sierra Nevada range of mountains in southern Spain.

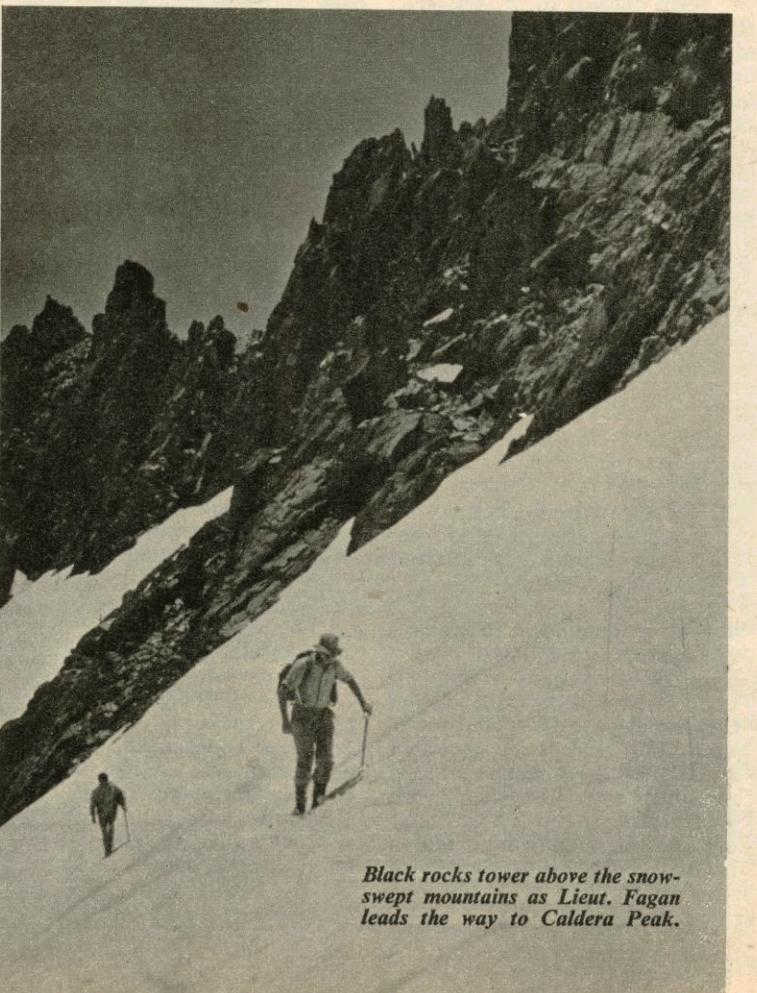
Setting out from Gibraltar in two cars, the seven drove 6000 feet up the tortuous road—the highest in Europe—which leads to the summit of Veleta (11,129 feet) and camped there for several days before attempting to conquer Mulhacen (11,400 feet), the highest peak in Europe outside the Alps.

Carrying 30 lbs a man, the seven first scaled Veleta and then set off towards Mulhacen, picking their way gingerly along the ridge, with a 4000-ft drop into a river on one side and a 2500-ft fall into a semi-frozen lake

on the other. The going was tough and slow—insurmountable peaks had to be avoided by glissading down sleep slopes and detours made round crevasses two wide to jump—and by dusk the party had advanced less than a mile which meant bivouacking the night in the shelter of rocks.

Early next morning the seven soldiers renewed their assault on Mulhacen but were again held up by hard going. On the way to Caldera Peak two men were injured by falling stones, a third began to feel ill and food was running short. Sadly, with Mulhacen only some four hours' climb away, the party decided to turn back to the base camp.

Though the seven did not achieve their goal they had made a courageous attempt.



Black rocks tower above the snow-swept mountains as Lieut. Fagan leads the way to Caldera Peak.

"ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE," BOASTED THE GERMAN PRISON COMMANDANT—BUT TWO BRITISH OFFICERS CALLED HIS BLUFF WITH A DARING PLAN



"... aching in every muscle and half-suffocated by the stench of putrid fish, they waited for the German soldiers to move off..."

## HE GOT AWAY WITH THE GARBAGE!

IT was a sweltering hot day on 31 May, 1941, and the overpowering smell of rotting fish was borne on the breeze from the stinking rubbish dump just outside the main gates of Stalag XXI D at Posen, in Poland.

Fifty yards away, the trigger-happy German guards gazed bitterly at their prisoners for, to inmates and guards alike, Posen was a grim place indeed—a ring of underground forts built during the Napoleonic Wars and never used since except as a prison. Its dimly-lit corridors dripped moisture and were alive with great rats, the huge iron gates creaked on their hinges and a massive drawbridge over a

rotting vegetable peelings, lowered the drawbridge and waved the men through, watching them closely as they emptied the containers on the dump.

The guards were not the only interested spectators. On the Stalag roof other British prisoners were waiting for the two guards and some other German soldiers who were sun-bathing to move out of sight of the rubbish dump. For there, inside two sacks which the orderlies had smuggled past the guard, were two British officers—Second-

Lieutenant Peter Douglas, of the 8th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and Second-Lieutenant J. Cocksedge, of The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Doubled up, their heads between their legs, the two officers peered through slits in the sacks, waiting for the signal from the roof that the coast was clear. But the Germans were in no hurry to move and, aching in every muscle and well-nigh suffocated by the appalling stench of the heap of fish on which they had been unceremoniously

thrown, the two officers hung on. At last, after more than an hour, the sunbathers moved off and the two guards disappeared on patrol. Scrambling quickly out of their filthy sacks, Douglas and Cocksedge clambered from the dump and set off walking away from the Stalag on the first stage of the road to freedom.

They had achieved the impossible—at least in the opinion of the German camp commandant who, after finding a half-finished tunnel, had called all the prisoners together and roared: "Nobody ever escapes from Posen. And if by some miracle you did get out where would you go? There's no cover around here. There are armed guards at the ports and Switzerland is 600 miles away!"

But there was much more to do before they were completely free and neither of the officers thought much of his chances as, in broad daylight, they tramped south, Douglas wearing a coat he had tailored from an Army blanket in prison and a pair of battledress trousers dyed blue in a mixture of ink and indelible pencils! Luckily they met no one and in the early hours of the following morning reached a railway track. Once again fortune smiled for soon afterwards a passenger train passed slowly by and Douglas and Cocksedge leapt aboard and stowed away in the guard's van.

All went well for the next 100 miles but then, soon after the train had stopped at Ostrow, came near-disaster. Suddenly, the door of their hiding place opened and a German civilian entered and raised the alarm. In a flash the two officers leapt from the train and separated. Douglas got clean away in the early morning mist, but never saw his companion again.

Knowing that the hunt was now on, Douglas hid in the woods by day and travelled only at night. But he was in good spirits and had time to reflect on his adventures since being captured in France in June, 1940. The lorry journey to Cambrai had been near-luxury compared with the train ride into Germany when 70 men were crowded into each cattle truck, without food, water or proper sanitary arrangements. They had arrived at Oflag VII C/H at Lauffen, Austria, dirty, verminous, exhausted and many suffering with dysentery. Once this large five-storey stone and brick building had been the palace of the Bishop of Salzburg; now it was a hateful place where bullying, bragging German guards took special pleasure in humiliating their British prisoners.

The starvation diet at Lauffen and at Posen had undermined Douglas's stamina and, crouching in damp woods and exposed to the cold at night, he now felt his ordeal begin to tell on him. But, like the trained soldier he was, he thought constructively. Not for nothing had he been mentioned in dispatches

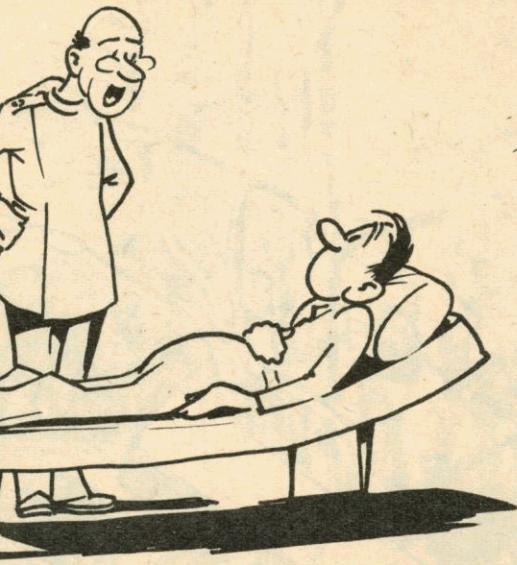
for his work with the French battle patrols in the Saar before the fall of France. He had faith in his luck and in himself, so, chancing his arm, he tried approaching isolated farms for water and then, if the occupants seemed sympathetic, for food.

It worked. Many Poles were overjoyed at the chance of helping a British soldier. They told him how to avoid German troop concentrations and one Polish peasant woman gave him four marks—little enough, but a fortune to her.

Ten days passed. Plodding steadily on and now moving eastwards, he reached the railway line again but as no trains appeared he had to take cover by making himself known to some Poles there. For two days, at grave personal risk—Poles were especial victims of Nazi brutality and revenge, and torture and death would have been their punishment had they been discovered—they sheltered the officer, giving him food and allowing him to sleep in their barn.

At last, on the 13th day since his escape, Douglas smuggled himself into the coal-wagon of a goods train and arrived, eventually, in Danzig. He found the docks heavily barricaded with barbed wire, but with endless patience he discovered a weak spot, manoeuvred the wire until there was a hole big enough, clambered through and reached the quayside.

But his troubles weren't over yet. The quayside was heavily guarded and a German soldier challenged him. In desperation Douglas used, sparingly and alternately, the only two German words he knew—"Ja" and "Nein." Puzzled, the German consulted another guard and to both, Douglas persisted in his monosyllabic answers. Astonishingly, the guards then lost all interest in him, except to tell him he could understand some



"This noise you get in your ears every morning—it's called 'Reveille'!"

spoken German) that he was obviously idle and could not expect work without a work ticket, and walked away.

Here was a heaven-sent chance which Douglas was not slow to take. Noticing that everybody kept clear of the cranes and winches, he moved among them and approached a Swedish ship—the *Polcirkeln* on the far side of the dockyard. Finding the quayside there almost deserted, he walked calmly up the gangplank—smack into the arms of a Swedish sailor talking to a German! Even in this situation, he did not lose his head.

With a swift, meaningful look at the Swede, which the German could not see, he motioned him aside and said he was an escaped British officer. To his astonishment and delight the Swede replied in perfect English: "I

cannot help you stow away, but I will turn my back and not notice what you do!"

Douglas took the hint and lost no time finding a hiding place.

The next day he was discovered by an angry mate, and taken to the Captain who, luckily, was pro-British and gave him food and dry clothing. And he conveniently "forgot" to send a radio message to Stockholm to say he had a stowaway on board. He knew that if he did this a German E-boat would certainly intercept his vessel before he reached Stockholm and demand Douglas to be handed over.

In Stockholm, Douglas was quickly released and flown to Leuchars, near Dundee, and then, to his chagrin, instead of being allowed to contact his family at Midlothian nearby, was put under polite—but firm—arrest until cleared by security. But fate had a surprise in store.

Next morning, under escort, Douglas boarded a train for Edinburgh and, as it pulled up over the Forth at Dalmeny he was amazed to see, in a group of Wrens on the platform, his own sister! In a flash he leapt through the carriage window and seized her in a bear-hug which gave her the surprise of her life.

Lieutenant Douglas as he was in World War Two. After his daring escape, for which he received the DSO, he trained Norwegians in "cloak-and-dagger" work. He now lives in Rhodesia.



After King George VI had presented Douglas with the Distinguished Service Order for his gallantry in escaping, he spent half an hour chatting to him about his adventures. Later, as a major, Douglas trained Norwegians in "cloak-and-dagger" operations and when King Haakon returned in triumph to Norway in June, 1945, Major Douglas was at the pier at Oslo to greet him.

Now, after five years with an English aircraft company, Major Douglas has a nice, quiet job—farming 5000 acres in Rhodesia.



# British Army orders **VIGILANT** for trials

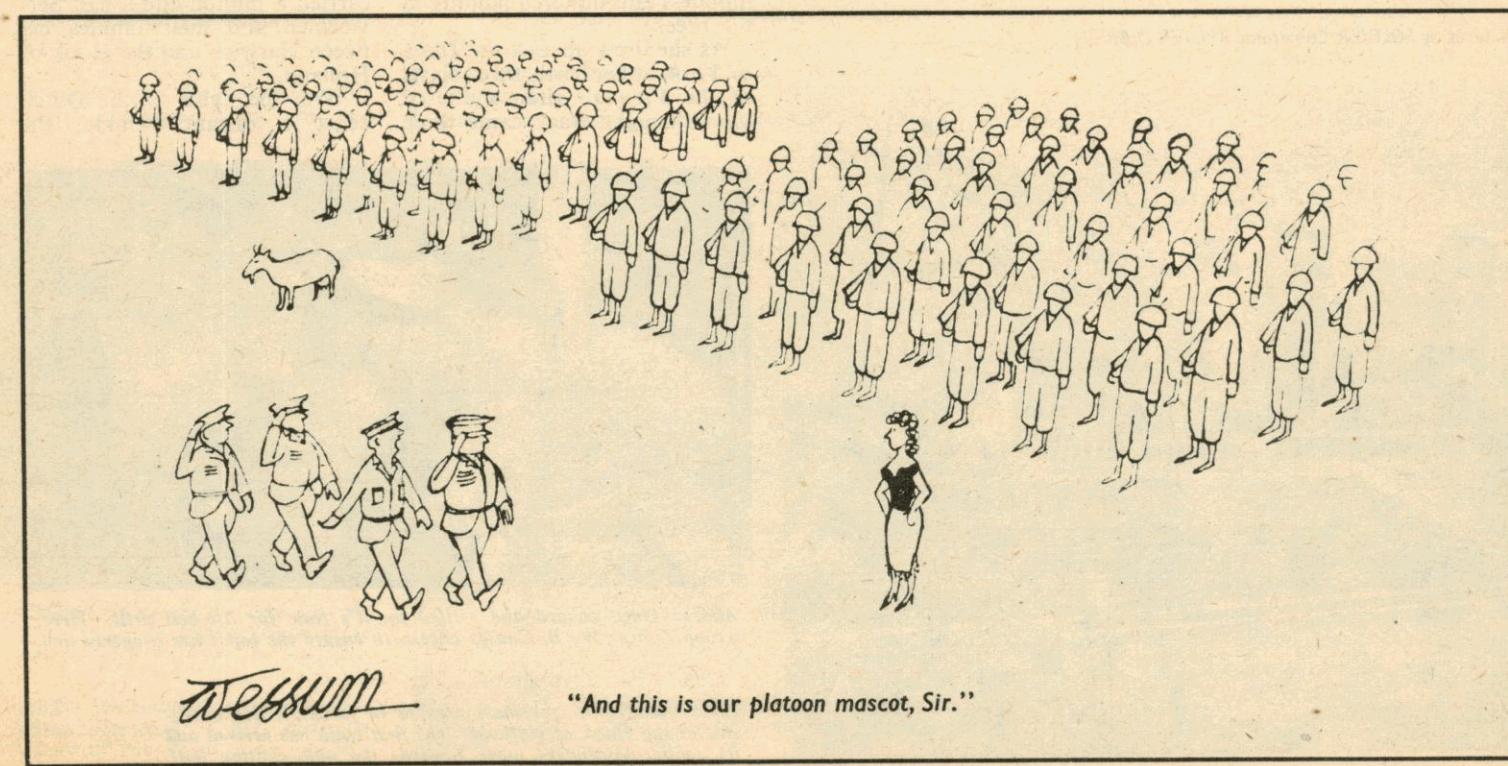
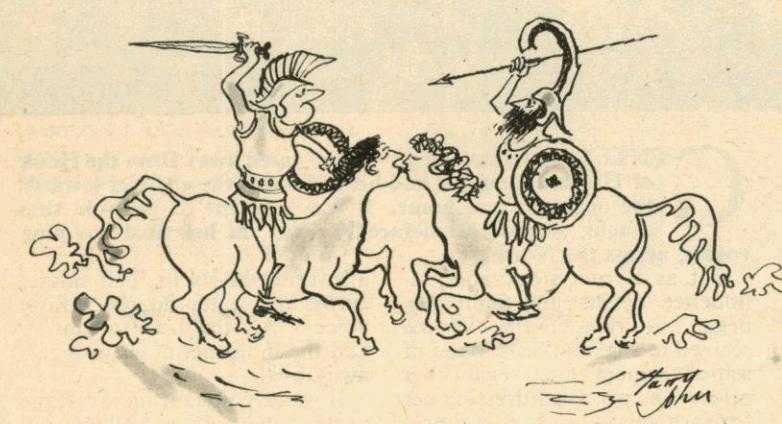
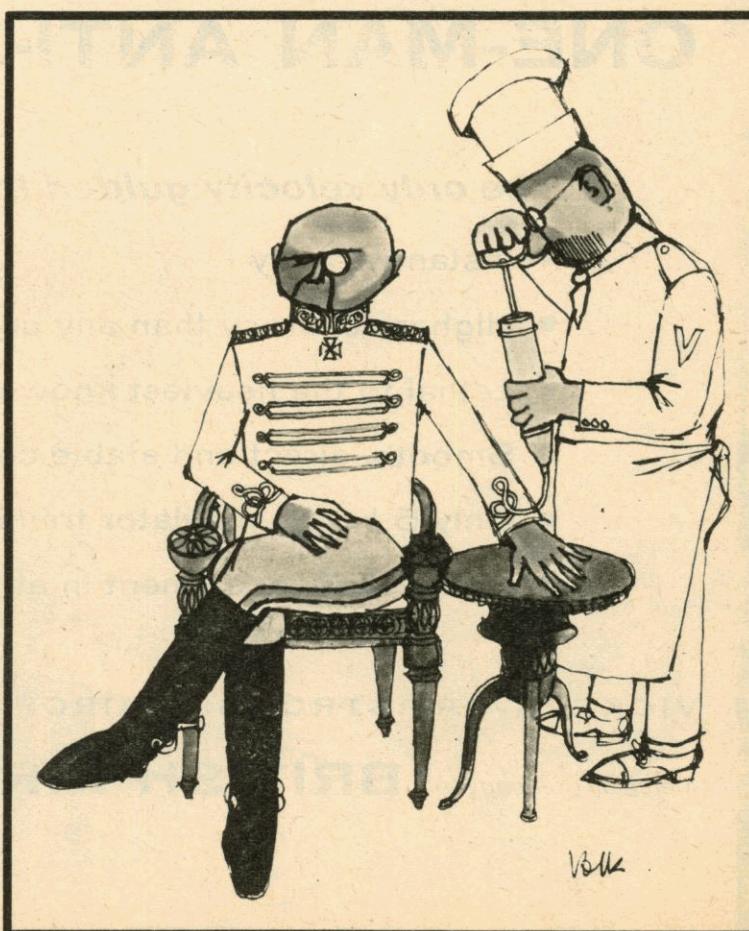
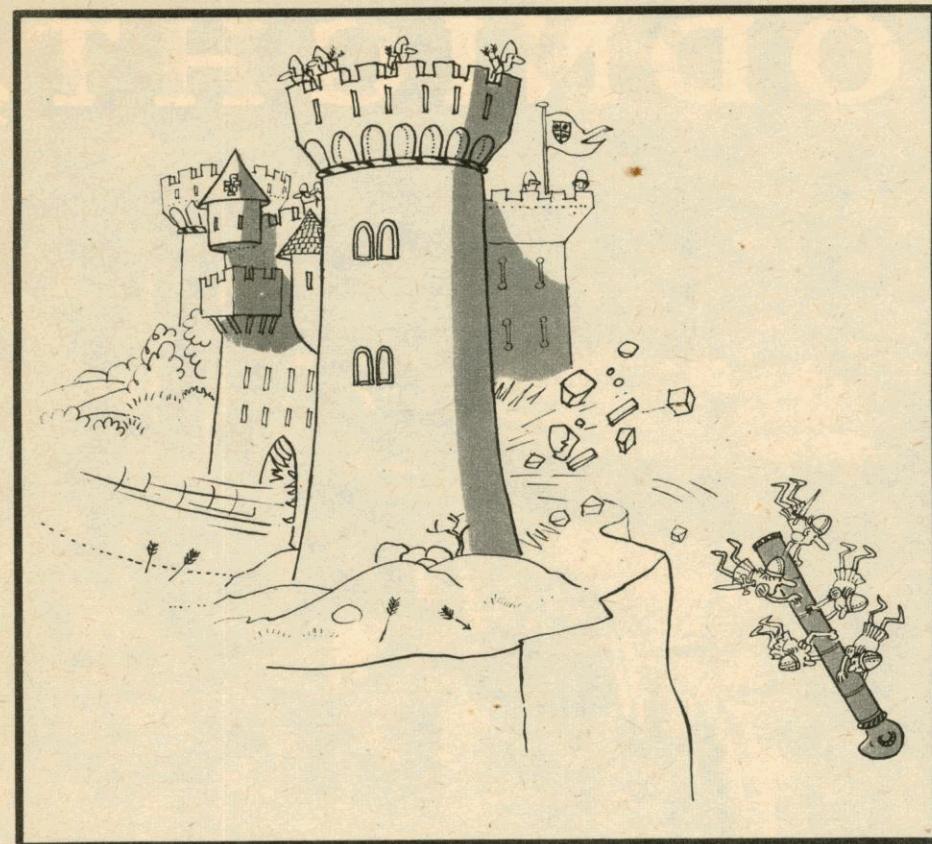
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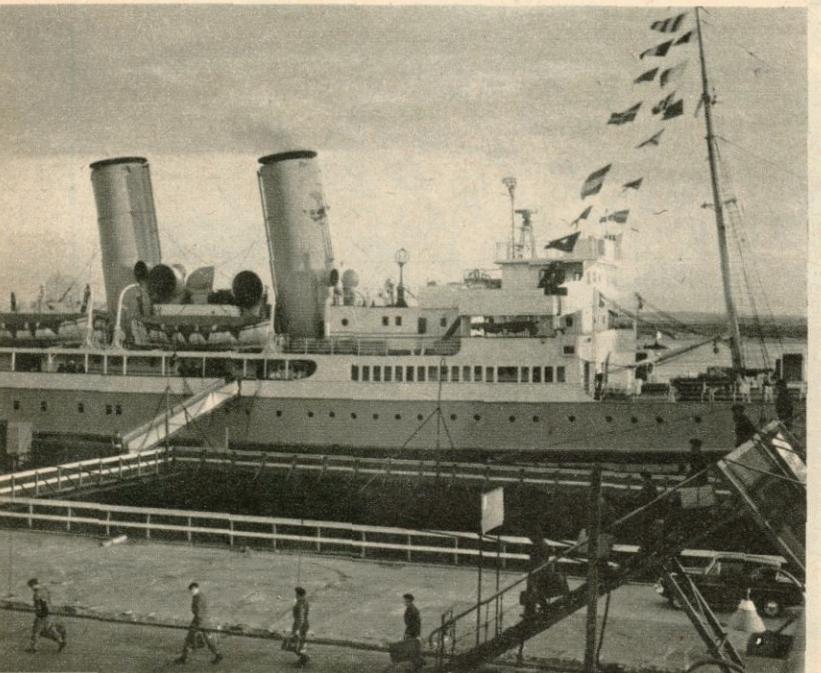
# "GOODNIGHT, VIENNA!"



Dockside cranes, twinkling lights on quay and station and the lighthouse beam recede as the SS Vienna leaves the Hook on her final voyage.

The old troopships are disappearing one by one. Latest victim of the growth of air trooping is the Vienna, retired from service after carrying a million and a half Servicemen and their families between Harwich and the Hook of Holland

Pictures by SOLDIER Cameraman PETER O'BRIEN



Above: Once aboard and settled in, it's time for life-belt drill. Here, Troop Officer W. B. Causer checks to ensure the tapes are properly tied.

Left: Vienna, her foremast dressed in farewell, lies alongside at the Hook of Holland. The first train has arrived and its soldier-passengers move towards the embarkation hall.

# "VIENNA!"

Vienna paid her last respects to the Hook, hooting her thanks to the pilot cutter and all the Dutch pilots who had taken her safely in and out of the river over the years.

Most of her Army and Royal Air Force passengers had turned in for the night before the Vienna cast off and only a few—those who had previously sailed in her—shared the sentimentality of the crew's farewell to Dutch workers gathered on the quay.

But it was a leave-taking tinged by more than sentimental acknowledgement of a happy ship and a true *entente cordiale*. The withdrawal of the Vienna, heralding the advent of air trooping to Germany, foreshadowed, too, the possible eventual dismissal of her sister troopers, Empire Wansbeck and Empire Parkes-ton, and the demise of the transit camps at Hook and Harwich.

As the Vienna throbbed through the night, her crew relived the excitements of her career as they went about their tasks for the last time or joined parties quietly celebrating in the sleeping ship.

Troop Officer W. B. Causer recalled the highlight of his seven years aboard when 17 military prisoners broke through a bulkhead door and found temporary solace in a wine store. Captain R. Good, for four years the Vienna's commander and a sailor for 45 years, remembered a night three years ago when the Vienna, sighting a fire at sea, sent out an SOS which, misinterpreted by the Press as coming from her, caused a flutter in hundreds of British homes.

There was, too, that better-forgotten incident when, leaving Harwich in fog, the veteran trooper collided with the Suffolk Ferry.

For all it was a wrench from a real home; for the few who could claim to have sailed on her



"Finished with engines"—and Greaser A. Halls (left) and Fourth Engineer T. Stewart, watched by Chief Engineer A. D. Williams, turn the valves.

Below: Troop Officer Causer chats with his counterpart, Major E. W. Young, Royal Pioneer Corps, who was for a year the Vienna's Ship's Commandant.



UNDER the new air-trooping plan, which was inaugurated in October, some 7000 Servicemen and their families will fly in Hermes aircraft between Britain and west BAOR each month.

Silver City Airways are to operate about 50 flights a month in each direction, taking off and landing at Manston, in Kent, and Dusseldorf and Wildenrath, in Germany.

The remainder of Rhine Army will continue to travel by troopship, on twice-weekly sailings in the Empire Wansbeck and Empire Parkes-ton between Harwich and the Hook of Holland.

THE 4326-ton Vienna, the largest cross-Channel vessel at the time of her building in 1929 at Clydebank, began life as a passenger ferry for the old London and North Eastern Railway, plying between Harwich and the Hook of Holland.

Taken over by the Ministry of Transport in December, 1939, she carried soldiers to and from France and Holland until Dunkirk. She was subsequently employed on miscellaneous duties with the Royal Navy and as a motor torpedo boat depot ship, returning to trooping in September, 1941.

Six years later the Vienna was refitted as a permanent troopship with a passenger capacity of 1048 and run by British Railways for the Ministry.

maiden and final voyages—Second Steward V. West, Purser L. J. Fletcher and Donkeyman C. H. Baker—it was a parting from an old friend.

For the Ship's Commandant, Major E. W. Young, of the Royal Pioneer Corps, and Ship's Regimental Sergeant-Major G. A. Bell, of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, the Vienna represented a brief but happy phase—and they at least were assured of another ship.

So passed the night. Now the Vienna, her foremast dressed again with bunting, lay alongside at Harwich, enjoying for the last time the bustle and joy of a home disembarkation as she disgorged her complement of Servicemen and families to the waiting trains.

Later, stripped of her stores, she drew out to her mooring, her future undetermined, but her past a glorious record of faithful service.

PETER N. WOOD



Pensively, Captain R. Good eyes the quayside as he brings Vienna in to her Harwich berth for the last time.



Right: Disembarking soldiers hand in pillow slips to RSM Bell, ex-Drum-Major of The Royal Scots Fusiliers.

# "THE HAMMERS" STOOD FIRM AT CAMBRAI

HOURS  
OF  
GLORY  
35

**A**s a weak and watery sun rose over the devastated battlefield at Moeuvres, near Cambrai, the heroic survivors of "D" Company, 13th Battalion, The Essex Regiment, wearily took post in their shattered trenches and peered grimly through the morning mist.

Battered by German guns and mortars and attacked time and again by waves of field-grey Infantry from all sides, they had held out for nearly 24 hours against overwhelming odds. Now, utterly exhausted and almost out of ammunition, they braced themselves for the inevit-

able end, determined to fight to the last round and the last man.

Suddenly, swarms of Germans, firing as they came, loomed out of the mist on the flanks and in the rear, pressing forward yard by yard as the gallant remnants of "D" Company poured their last volleys

into them. Momentarily, the Germans faltered, then drove on again and in a last mass charge burst into the trenches.

In the annals of military history no feat surpasses the epic stand of the Essex in the Battle of Cambrai in November, 1917, when the 13th Battalion played a vital part in saving the British line from disaster.

The 13th Essex, raised in West Ham and nicknamed "The Hammers," were appropriately part of the 2nd ("Iron") Division when they went into action astride the Canal du Nord, south-east of Moeuvres, to take the shock of a desperate German counter-attack.

The battle opened in the early hours of 30 November when, after two hours of intensive shelling, "B" Company, commanded by Captain F. R. Keeble, with "A" Company in reserve,

came under heavy Infantry attacks. In spite of an acute shortage of ammunition, the Essex flung back the Germans, inflicting heavy losses.

In a sunken road, three sections of "B" Company, supported by a Vickers machine-gun, played havoc with another attack by some 600 Germans from the north-east. Here again ammunition was short but a search in a dug-out produced 300 rounds—replenishment for the magazines of the glutinous Lewis guns. The welcome find was soon in use.

At 10.30 a.m. another north-easterly attack developed, and "B" Company met it with magnificent stubbornness as, in the nick of time, a platoon of "A" Company, led by Second Lieutenant E. C. Hall, came to the rescue, bringing another small supply of ammunition.

**WHEN THE GERMANS LAUNCHED  
THEIR COUNTER-ATTACK AT CAMBRAI,  
THE HEAVIEST BLOW FELL ON THE  
ESSEX REGIMENT WHO WON IM-  
MORTAL GLORY IN AN EPIC STAND**



PAGE 26

*As the Germans swarmed into their shattered trenches, the men of "D" Company rose to meet the onslaught.—An artist's impression of the last stand at Moeuvres*

Now, under a relentless bombardment, other British troops at some distance to the Essex's right were forced to give ground and "B" Company, themselves suffering many casualties from a storm of shot and shell and having expended their last rounds, withdrew along the sunken road. Quickly, the Germans occupied the abandoned territory.

In the turmoil of battle companies and platoons became intermingled. The 40 survivors of "B" Company linked themselves to "A" under Captain H. J. Duff, and a mixed contingent, led by Captain Keeble, ensured that Germans who ventured beyond the sunken road were driven back into it. Men of the 2nd South Staffords assisted in this operation, as they did in the holding of Canal Trench after a British bombing expedition had failed in the face of murderous machine-gun fire.

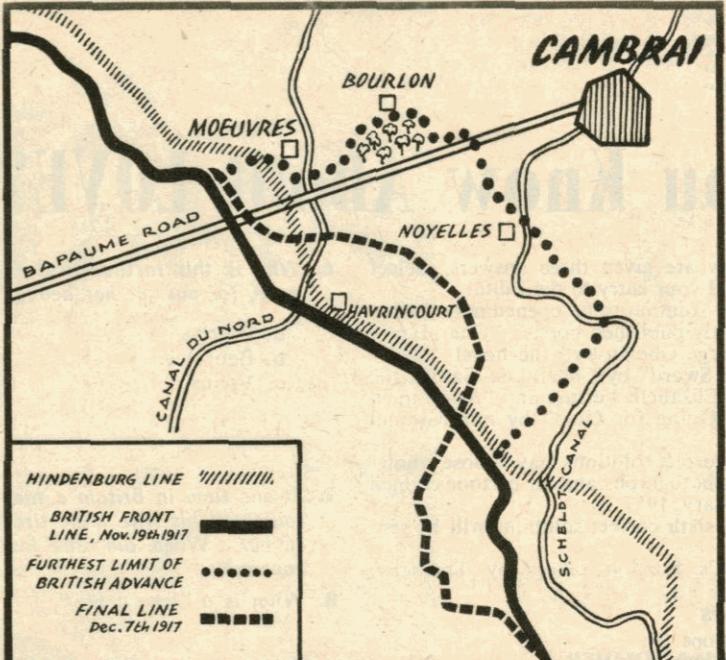
By now, the ammunition problem had been overcome, for .303 rounds and grenades had arrived in large quantities. Time and again the enemy attacked; time and again he was driven off and in the evening the Essex and the Staffords were even able to take the initiative, attempting twice to recapture the sunken road. The crisis had passed and when the 22nd Royal Fusiliers relieved the battered "Hammers" on the right bank of the canal, the situation had been stabilized.

Heavily as the storm had broken on the Essex right, it raged with even greater vehemence on the left.

When the Germans attacked from the west and north-west, half of "C" Company, fighting alongside The King's Regiment (Liverpool), faced them unflinchingly. The British casualties were heavy and almost all the Essex were killed or wounded. The other two platoons of the Company were forced to retire after fighting sturdily in the open against overwhelming attacks from three sides, but they were not finished. They made three efforts to retake the lost ground and in the last of these courageous sallies, with the Staffords and the King's, drove the Germans back. But a bombing raid by 40 of the Essex met with disaster and by 4 p.m. only two officers and 15 men of "C" Company were left in the fight.

Meanwhile, "D" Company, on the western bank of the Canal, were fighting their heroic action. Undeterred by heavy shelling, enemy Infantry launched a massed frontal attack, wave after wave advancing slowly towards the British line. Then, when the Germans were only 200 yards away, "The Hammers" struck furiously, twice forcing the enemy to retreat with heavy losses.

Now the Germans tried weaving in small groups towards their objective by way of the sunken roads and the Canal. But the Essex were more than equal to the manoeuvre and kept the enemy off, time and again break-



*This sketch map shows how the British front line was thrust forward in the victory at Cambrai and then forced back by the German counter-attack.*

ing up his groups and forcing them back in disorder.

Gradually, however, the Germans pushed in the British line on either side of "D" Company and began to threaten both the Essex flanks, finally—at mid-day—completely surrounding them. Yet, despite their precarious situation, "D" Company launched a counter-attack, captured 13 prisoners and flung back an Infantry attack on the left and bombing parties on the right.

But, by early afternoon "D" Company's position was desperate. Ammunition and grenades were in short supply and casualties mounted but still the Essex hung on, making sure that every shot found its target.

At 4 o'clock, after the Company Commander, Captain H. T. Jessop, had been wounded and

communications with the rest of the Battalion had been destroyed, the two remaining officers, the company sergeant-major and five sergeants held a council of war and decided to fight to the bitter end. They knew that if help was not forthcoming they were doomed and called for volunteers to break through the German

lines to Battalion headquarters. Sergeant L. S. Legg and a private stepped forward and at dusk set off on their dangerous journey. They got through safely, but there was little the rest of the Battalion could do to help. Again and again other companies tried to reach beleaguered "D" Company, only to be thrown back each time by the now well-established Germans.

That night the doomed survivors of "D" Company waited and hoped—in vain—for the rescue to come and as dawn broke they knew their fate. But they did not flinch. At 7.20 a.m. the Germans launched their last attack and the epic stand of the men from Essex had ended.

In 1842, at Gandamak, the 44th Foot (later the 1st Essex) had fought to the last against hordes of Afghans. At Cambrai, the standard set by their ancestors had been proudly maintained by "D" Company of the 13th Essex.

Although fighting continued at Cambrai into December, 1917, it was of a limited nature and died away within a week. The British withdrew to Flesquieres but at no point had the Germans made any real impression upon the Allied line. They had, however, thwarted the great British armoured enterprise in which 340 tanks had been unleashed in the first action of its kind.

Both sides at Cambrai suffered some 45,000 casualties. That was the price paid for the rude shape, forged on the anvil of Cambrai, of the pattern of the battles that led to final victory in World War One.

A. H. GREEN

## A NEW DIVISION IS BORN

5th Division flag—a white "Y" inside a black circle—was hauled down and replaced by the new 1st Division flag—a white triangle on a red background.

Appropriately, the two divisions had close links during their 150 years of distinguished service. Both formed part of the Duke of Wellington's Army in the Peninsular, fought together at Waterloo, in the Crimean and South African campaigns and in World War One. After World War Two, 5th Division formed part of British Army of the Rhine until 1948 when it was disbanded. Ten years later, however, the title was revived on the re-designation of 7th Armoured Division.—From a report by Sergeant Brian Dexter, Military Observer.



*The massed bands of five regiments "play in" the birth of the British Army's senior division.*

PAGE 27

# What Do You Know About LOVE?

To each of the questions below are given three answers. Select those you think correct and send your entry to the Editor.

The sender of the **first** correct solution to be opened may choose any two of the following recently-published books: "One Man in His Time" (the memoirs of Serge Obolensky); the novel "Anna" by Norman Collins; "The Edge of the Sword" by General de Gaulle; the crime novels "The Sleeping Dogs" by Elizabeth Ferrars and "Assignment in Iraq" by Allan Mackinnon; and "Going for Goal" by international footballer Peter McParland.

The senders of the **second** and **third** correct solutions may choose whole-plate monochrome copies of any two photographs and/or cartoons which have appeared in SOLDIER since January, 1957.

The senders of the **fourth**, **fifth** and **sixth** correct solutions will be sent SOLDIER free for 12 months.

All entries must reach SOLDIER's London offices by Thursday, 29 December.

## RULES

- Entries must be sent in a sealed envelope to:  
The Editor (Competition), SOLDIER,  
433, Holloway Road, London, N.7.
- Each entry must be accompanied by the "Competition 30" panel printed at the top of this page. No other correspondence should be enclosed.
- Competitors may submit one entry.
- Any reader, Serviceman or woman and civilian, may compete.
- The Editor's decision is final.

★The solution and names of the winners will appear in SOLDIER, February 1961.

1. Which famous general once said: "Marriage interferes with work because it involves a divided loyalty?"

- Duke of Wellington.
- Lord Kitchener.
- Lord Montgomery.

2. Which country has the highest marriage rate today?

- United States.
- Hawaii.
- France.

3. What nationality was Cupid, the God of Love?

- Greek.
- Roman.
- Persian.

4. Which of these great loves started a war?

- Anthony's for Cleopatra.
- Napoleon's for Josephine.
- Paris's for Helen.

5. When were rings first used to signify marriage?

- In ancient Rome.
- In mediaeval Britain.
- In 10th-century China.

6. Who is this mythological female, famous for her beauty?

- Psyche.
- Beatrice.
- Venus.



7. At one time in Britain a man could sell his wife if he tired of her. When did this last happen?

- 1385.
- 1833.
- 1138.

8. What is a "love apple"?

- The apple Eve picked in the garden of Eden.
- A tomato.
- A pure gold apple given by the Shah of Persia to his bride.
- Daisy.
- Lily.
- Rose.

9. Which flower is the oldest symbol of love?



10. This famous figure of love adorns a London statue. Who is he?

- Peter Pan.
- Eros.
- Mercury.

11. What does "monogamy" mean?

- Bored with marriage.
- Having only one wife.
- Married three times.

12. One of these flowers is more commonly known as a pansy. Which?

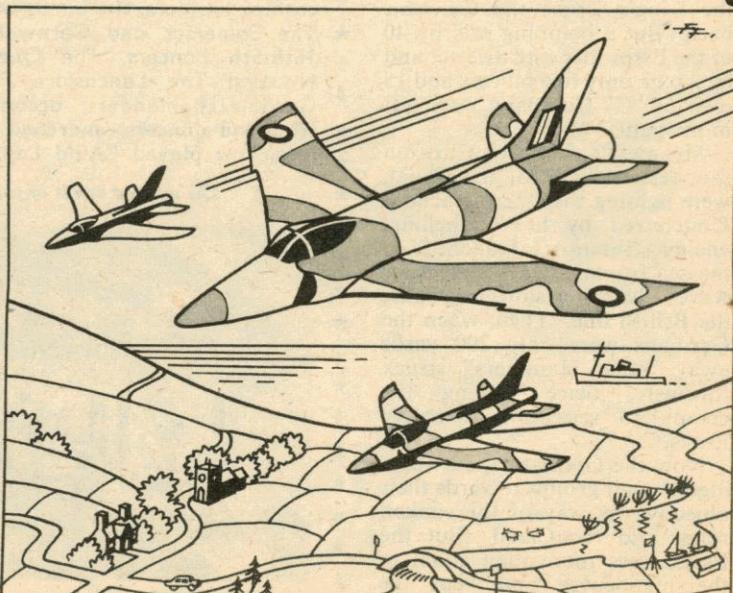
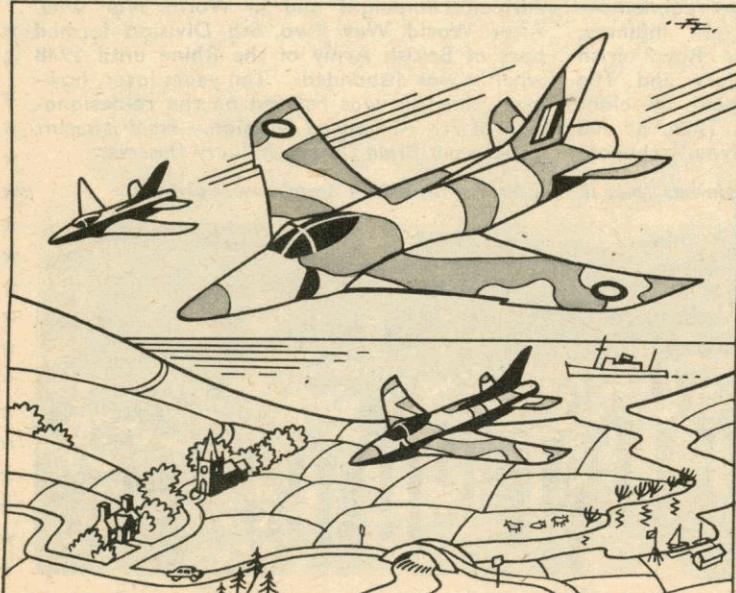
- Love-in-a-Mist.
- Love-lies-Bleeding.
- Love-in-Idleness.

13. In which country did heart-sick lovers throw themselves from a rock called "Lovers' Leap"?

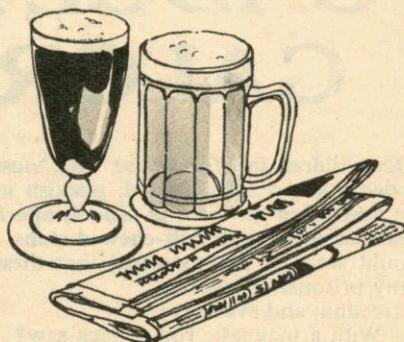
- Greece.
- Britain.
- India.

These two pictures look alike, but they vary in ten minor details. Look at them very carefully. If you cannot detect the differences see page 38.

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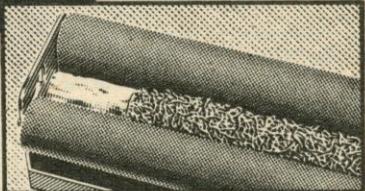
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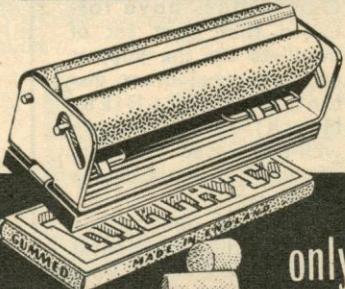
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# GADGETS GALORE

London children in World War Two must have been mightily puzzled when a middle-aged, puckish and vaguely fanatical man descended on them in school, offering them new pencils in exchange for their half-chewed stubs.

They could scarcely have guessed that these pencil-stubs would enable many prisoners-of-war to gain their freedom and even save their lives. With a magnetic rod inserted in place of the lead they could, when placed in water, be used as compasses.

The nice, kind man was Major Clayton Hutton, who had fought in World War One and worked until the outbreak of the next as a journalist and film publicity director. He was selected in World War Two to devise gadgets which would enable prisoners to escape—mainly because, in early youth, he had once issued an (unsuccessful) challenge to Houdini, the famous escapologist!

For this strange task he seems, by temperament, to have been well equipped. Restless, combative, imaginative, unorthodox and technically-minded, he invented tiny compasses which fitted inside fly-buttons or the ends of razors; non-rustling silk maps which could be sewn into the lining of clothing or concealed in a shoe or cavity; and even a pocket gun, cheap to produce, which fired a gramophone-needle with deadly effect. The last gadget was never adopted by Britain, though the author claims that it was used by the Resistance in occupied France and wrought considerable havoc among the Germans.

Major Hutton's questing mind found the unlikeliest answers to the most unusual or intractable problems. How to conceal a

hack-saw? His answer was a *Gigli*—a flexible length of saw-toothed wire, specially hardened, with loops at each end through which rods could be inserted to make handles. Until Major Hutton came along, they were used by surgeons to cut through skulls! He made them cut through one-inch steel bars as well. They were concealed inside bootlaces, the tabs of which were magnetised so that they could be used for compasses. Even razor blades were magnetised so that, suspended by string or cotton, they would point north.

Other creations of Hutton's fertile mind were playing cards concealing a map behind a false back, a shave ha'penny board with a concealed radio inside, a cigarette holder which contained a powerful compass and—extremely popular with Royal Air Force escapees—a flying boot with a concealed knife with which the prisoner could cut away the top part, leaving a civilian shoe in its place.

The RAF ration pack, Mark IV, Evaders, was another of Hutton's brain children. It contained a map, 12 Horlicks tablets, a tube of dairy cream, a packet of water-purifying tablets, a bar of chocolate, adhesive tape, compass, 12 benzedrine tablets to fight fatigue, matches, needle and thread. Empty, the pack was a handy water container. Its stopper concealed not only a compass, but a watch as well.

Another brilliant inspiration was the reversible uniform. Officers and men were entitled to receive new uniforms in camps. The trick uniform enabled the lining to be detached, revealing a civilian jacket on the other side.

COLLECTORS of badges and other militaria will be interested to know that Langridge's Military Publications, 13 Oxford Street, Cambridge, have followed their first set of booklets on the subject of regimental dress distinctions (SOLDIER, March) with similarly well-illustrated booklets on four more Cavalry regiments.

The new publications are on the regimental dress of the Queen's Bays (12s. 6d.), the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards (12s. 6d.), the 7th Queen's Own Hussars (5s. 6d.) and the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) (12s. 6d.).



One of Major Hutton's brilliant ideas was a pocket gun which fired a gramophone needle. But it was never used by Britain.

What stands out a mile in this absorbing account ("Official Secret," by Clayton Hutton, *Max Parrish Ltd.*, 18s.), is that Major Hutton would have got nowhere without drive, enthusiasm, imagination, patience and a supreme gift of improvisation. These last two qualities were more necessary than anyone unfamiliar with the number and complexity of war's demands might realise.

By-passing the "proper channels," Hutton descended like a corsair on anybody who had what he needed for the production of his "toys," as he called them, whether it was the managing director of the dairy firm with stocks of fresh cream or the engineering firm with the supplies of steel strip so desperately scarce and so urgently needed for his compasses. He admits to a ruthless opportunism which did at least produce results—and, no doubt, its occasional embarrassment for others.

His sense of speed and constructive outlook are at times as amusing as they are impressive. Once, needing 20,000 empty "flat fifty" cigarette tins for his RAF food packs, and unable to get them empty, he bought a million

cigarettes. He got his tins—and easily disposed of the loose cigarettes.

A brilliant example of his flair for improvisation was the occasion when the Germans rumbled his fly-button compass. All such gadgets have a limited life, for once detected by the enemy they are useless. "Don't worry," said Hutton, "our fly-button compasses can still be used." He simply had the thread reversed, so that when the Germans tried to unscrew the buttons, they screwed the compasses in more tightly.

The chapters dealing with Major Hutton's attempts to get permission to publish his reminiscences make unhappy reading. He was once curtly told to return any objects he might have of his own invention, although, he claims, these were freely available to the public through war surplus stores. A prosecution under the Official Secrets Act was withdrawn, but only after some militant lobbying on his part.

Whatever the merits of that controversy, Major Hutton has written a really worth-while book, adding a few colourful pieces to the complex mosaic of war history.

## BEAUMAN'S DIVISION

After Dunkirk, about 100,000 British troops were still fighting in France, but since no official communiqués were issued at the time, few people in Britain knew of their activities.

One group was known as Beauman's Division, perhaps the only British division to be called by the name of its commander since the Peninsular War.

Brigadier-General A. B. Beauman gives its little-known story well-deserved prominence in the pages of "Then a Soldier" (P. R. Macmillan, 13s. 6d.).

As an acting major-general, he commanded the Beauman Division, which was made up mostly of scratch brigades. Its fighting battalions included

some of Pioneers and some improvised from reinforcement camps. They acquitted themselves gallantly in a fighting retreat of 170 miles to Cherbourg whence they were evacuated.

The author started World War One as a subaltern and ended it as the British Army's third youngest brigadier at the age of 29. The war over, he reverted to his substantive rank of captain and climbed the ladder to a brigadier's stars again. He retired in 1938 and was recalled for a line of communications command in France. His book recounts his adventures both as a soldier and horseman.

BOOKSHELF—CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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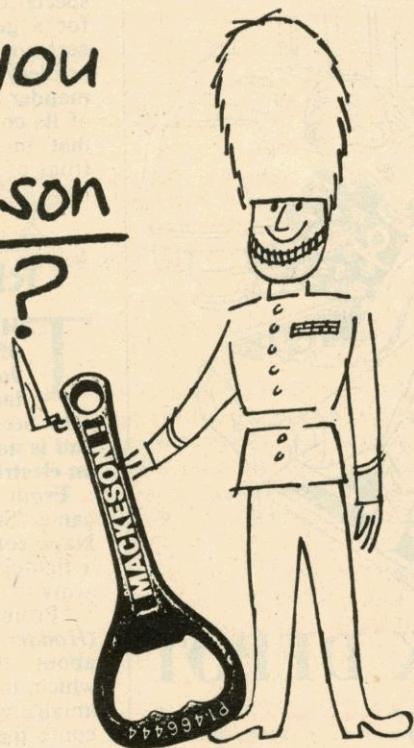
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# THE DESERT WAR —From The Other Side

**O**N 13 May, 1943, the last German units in Africa laid down their arms and 13,000 German soldiers marched off to join the thousands of Italians in captivity.

The new prisoners were an odd mixture of gloom and cheerfulness, truculence and subservience. Their jubilant captors of the Eighth and First Armies gazed at them with considerable respect—the Germans had fought bravely and mostly kept to the rules—and more than a little curiosity.

What had these men been like when they were on the other end of the guns? How did they look at war in the desert?

After 17 years, "The Foxes of the Desert" (Macdonald, 30s.), by Paul Carell (translated by Mervyn Savill) gives some of the answers.

The author, a German journalist, is said by the publishers to have interviewed more than 1000 combatants in the search for his material. The result is that incidents in the North African campaign are seen through the eyes of the private as well as the general's.

Here and there the author is tiresomely inaccurate about the Eighth Army. For example, the 11th Hussars will be surprised to read that they had a brigadier-general as commanding officer

and boasted a "reserve battalion" in Cairo. The author confuses the Long Range Desert Group and the Special Air Service Regiment and describes them both as Commandos. He writes, too, of a rose-garden in General Auchinleck's Cairo headquarters, which was certainly never seen or heard of by his junior staff-officers in that

## TWO-GUN GENERAL

**T**HE rip-roaring, two-gun general, of whom the late General George S. Patton was an outstanding example, is a rare bird in the British Army.

No doubt that is why a British author, Richard Bickers, goes to the American Army for the hero of his novel, "The Guns Boom Far" (Hutchinson, 15s.).

General Lyle Straker's catch-phrase is "Punch through," and that becomes his nickname. His compulsion in battle to "mix it as

maze of mouse-holed flats.

Not surprisingly, in this account, it is the Germans who perform the most valorous deeds—no ex-Desert Rat will deny that the Desert Foxes deserved a bouquet for their bravery—and who suffer bad luck when things go wrong. It is not always bad luck, however. "Treachery" is the cry when Rommel's moves are forestalled, and more often than not it is the Italians who are blamed.

For all that, the author pays a generous tribute to the Italian soldiers, who fought courage-

## GENERAL

though he were a ruddy private" distresses his British liaison officer.

In battle and among his troops, the General's methods meet success, but the art of generalship is practised in wider spheres. The brash and simple soldier is out of his element in the civilian intrigues of wartime Algeria and Italy. A kindly author (once a Regular officer of the Royal Air Force) cushions the general's downfall at the end of a lively and interesting yarn.

ously and well when they could. Their many failures he blames on their inept officers and pathetic equipment.

The general impression the author gives is that the German Army in Africa was always inadequately armed and equipped for what it attempted and that its victories were gained by the quick thinking of its generals no less than the gallantry of its men.

On the subject of generals in the pre-Montgomery phases, he compares the British unfavourably with their German counterparts. He accuses the British of arguing, dilly-dallying and waiting for orders in headquarters well to the rear: "There is no single will there, no confidence in victory, no fire—only cold, old-fashioned strategy concocted in Cairo and translated into boring orders."

On the German side, Rommel was forever dashing gallantly among his forward troops and narrowly escaping capture or death. There are stories of him driving in error through the British lines and blushing his way through the wards of a New Zealand hospital; making his escape in a captured British Army vehicle that passed a few yards from British tanks; showing his front-line Sappers how to deal with mines.

German sentimentality inevitably makes its appearance in this history: the Afrika Korps celebrating New Year's Eve by a display of flares and letting off all their weapons; a cook making a special chocolate and cream tart for a general's birthday; and a ceremonial desert parade of an artillery battery for its commander to marry, by proxy, one of its corporals to a girl who, at that moment, was standing in front of an altar in Germany.

## A DOOMED REGIMENT

**T**HE man behind a novel is often a surprise. David Johnson was once a Regular Welsh Guardsman who became an Infantry officer and is now managing director of an electrical wholesale firm.

From this unlikely source came "Sabre General," a tale of Napoleon's army. Now follows a first-class story of the French army in World War One.

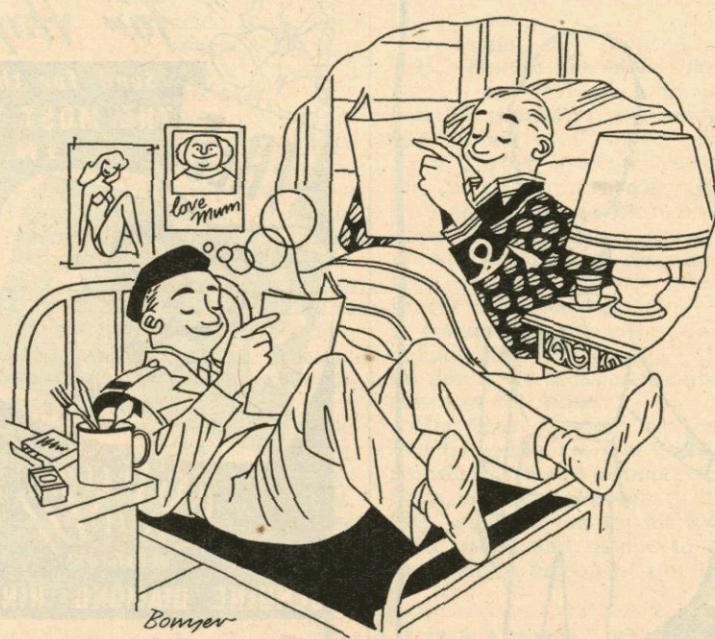
"Promenade in Champagne" (Hodder and Stoughton, 15s.) is about the Angevin Infantry, which, in 1917, narrowly escapes amalgamation, so that it can become the spearhead of General Nivelle's ill-fated offensive, the Second Battle of the Aisne.

The fattening-up and kill are seen intimately through the eyes of one of the regiment's Regular officers, who describes its loves and laughs, its tragedies and triumphs. He draws a picture of a splendid regiment which goes to its death yet lives on. Any soldier will feel that he would have been proud to belong to it.

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NORTH AFRICA

BENGHAZI (Salvation Army)

HOMS (Church of Scotland)

TOBRUK (Salvation Army)

TRIPOLI (Y.M.C.A.)

EAST AFRICA

GILGIL, KENYA (M.M.G.)

FAR EAST

HONG KONG (European

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Please send illustrated booklet which tells me about the Metropolitan Police.

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Address .....

Age .....

# 100 Miles In 4 Hours— On A Bike!

THE British national 12-hour cycling champion who won the 1960 title with an astonishing ride of 271 miles, Private R. J. Wilkins, of 28 Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, has added yet another resounding triumph to his long list of successes.

Competing against nearly 100 of the Army's best racing cyclists on a tough out-and-home course running through Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Dorset, he won the Army 100 miles road time trial championship in the fine time of 4 hrs 9 mins 41 secs—an average speed of nearly 25 miles an hour—and led his team to victory in the inter-unit event.

Wilkins, who also rides for the civilian Gravesend Cycling Club, started 60th, but inside half an hour had passed seven of the competitors who had left the start line before him. But ahead of him Craftsman B. J. Willoughby, of 3rd Training Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, was riding brilliantly, reaching the halfway mark in 2 hrs 5 mins, just 9 secs ahead of Wilkins. And behind, Private B. G. Kirby, of the Royal West Kent Regiment, was going great guns, reaching the turn in 2 hrs 5 mins 34 secs.

On the home stretch, Wilkins put on the pressure, gradually drawing ahead and overtaking man after man as he stormed to

the finish. Willoughby faded badly to sixth place, but Kirby hung on to finish second in 4 hrs 11 mins 2 secs, and out of a ruck of riders, Sergeant R. I. Cartwright, of the Infantry Junior Leaders' Battalion, shot ahead to take third place in 4 hrs 19 mins 20 secs.

The Army 100-kilometres massed start road race championship, held three days previously, was won by Craftsman Willoughby in 2 hrs 44 mins 14 secs, with Sapper H. McGuire, of 1 Engineer Stores Depot, Royal Engineers, second, one-and-a-half lengths behind and his club-mate, Sapper K. Taylor, third, half a wheel away.

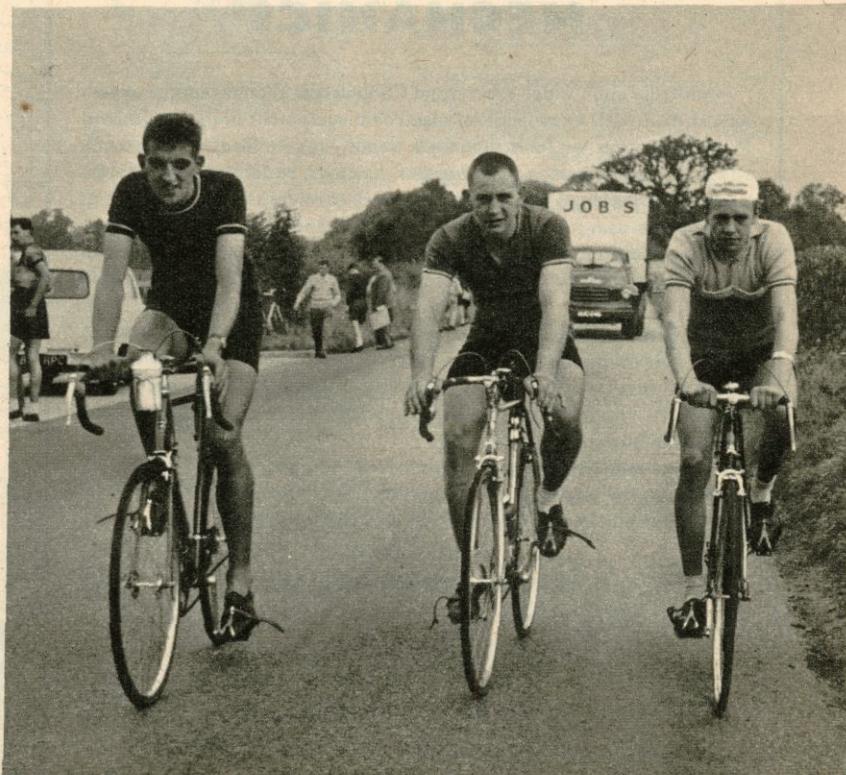
The Army won the inter-Services road race held at Blandford, supplying six of the first nine finishers. The race was won by Senior Aircraftman G. Bamford, RAF, in 2 hrs 45 mins 25 secs, with Private B. McGuinness, of 4 Training Battalion, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, second, 3 mins 20 secs behind and Craftsman Willoughby third in 2 hrs 52 mins 8 secs.

*The winning inter-unit team—Private R. J. Wilkins, Private G. Poole (centre) and Lance-Corporal J. B. Smith (right)—ride off in triumph.*

*Flat out in a final sprint, Private Wilkins crosses the finishing line to clock 4 hrs 9 mins 41 secs for 100 miles. In a 12-hour time trial he has ridden just over 271 miles.*



"What's it like in?"



## THREE CHEERS FOR THEM

**S**ALUTE to two British soldiers who won bronze medals at the Olympic Games in Rome.

First, to Private Jim Lloyd, of 3 Training Battalion, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, the Army welterweight champion who earned his medal in one of the toughest sections of the boxing events. In two of his fights he stopped his opponents inside the distance and was only narrowly beaten on points in the decider for the silver medal.

Second, to Lieutenant Michael Howard, the Army sabre champion, of The Royal Army Pioneer Corps, who was largely responsible for helping the British épée team gain third place. In the quarter-finals against Switzerland, when Britain was lagging 2-4, Howard fought brilliantly to square the duel at 5-5 and then raised the score to 9-5 in his final contest.

\*\*\*\*\*

**H**ATS off, too, to the Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, from Wareham, in Dorset, on a remarkable sporting achievement.

Early this year the Regiment determined to win the Boys' Army swimming championships and, for practice, entered the South West District Men's competition. To their astonishment they won and were selected to represent the District in the Southern Command championships in which they were runners-up and thus became eligible for the Army championships, the first boys' unit to compete in the men's events.

Several weeks later they won the Boys' championship and then, at Eltham, beat all other Army senior teams except 4 (Armament) Training Battalion, REME, to become runners-up in the Army Men's championship.

Apart from two members of the staff the team were all boys under the age of 18.



To Pte Lloyd—a bronze.



To Lt Howard—a bronze.

## COLONIAL POLICE

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undertake recruitment in the United Kingdom for Police Forces in certain Overseas Territories. These generally offer good opportunities for a worthwhile career with prospects of promotion and a pension on retirement. If you are interested in making application for one of the appointments advertised, you should write shortly before your release date and return to U.K., giving details of your qualifications and experience. Full particulars of the appointment will be sent to applicants who appear suitable for consideration. Address your letter to the Crown Agents, 4, Millbank, London, S.W.1, and quote the reference number of the territory for which you are applying.

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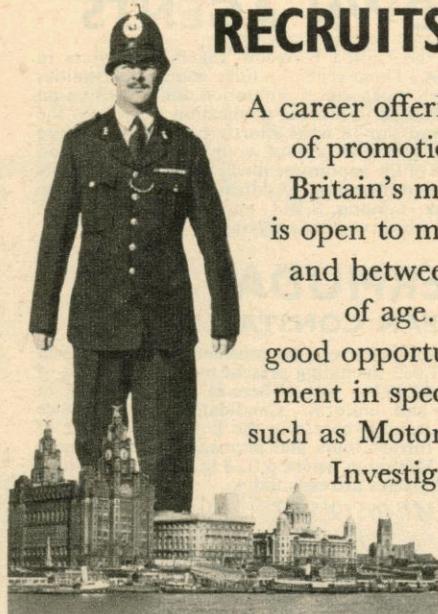
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# LETTERS



## RECRUITING

It is doubtful whether the recruit of today is influenced in any way by the current recruiting campaign.

A man contemplating a career in the armed forces is not necessarily interested in new uniforms, pay increases, leave or the opportunity to travel because civilians "have never had it so good." They are secondary considerations to the potential recruit who is looking for a career which is attractive, out of the ordinary and in which he feels he will be doing something worthwhile.

A Service career should not be dependent upon a recruiting campaign, but should be able to sell itself on the basis of its reputation and high ideals. So long as the armed forces rely on a recruiting campaign in its present form we may well find ourselves scraping the bottom of the barrel to achieve the minimum target figure for the all-regular Army envisaged for 1963.—Sergeant G. E. Stringer, 28 Signal Regiment, BFPO 34.

## STEADY, THE BUFFS!

I have searched in vain to find the derivation of the term "Steady, The Buffs!" Can SOLDIER help?—"Old Buff."

★ The first occasion on which this phrase was used is believed to have been at a military review at Ferozepore in 1838, although it is said that a colonel of The Buffs said it at the battle of Albuhera. It was also used at Malta in 1864, followed by the phrase: "The Queen's are looking at you."

The expression may have its origin in the use of the word "buff" in the 17th century when it meant "steady" as well as a colour. An epitaph of 1680 bears the inscription: "For the good old cause stood buff; 'gainst many a bitter kick and cuff."

SOLDIER has also heard it said that at a military parade years ago a commanding officer of the Royal Scots called out: "Steady, The Buffs, Halt, The Queens and let The Royals go by" to indicate the order of precedence of the first three regiments of the line.

## ACTIVE SERVICE

In how many countries have British troops been on full operational and active service since the end of World War Two?—"Six Geordies," Gateshead.

★ Troops in Malaya, Palestine, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus and Suez have all been on Active Service within the meaning of and for the purposes of the Army Act, 1881, and the Army Act, 1955.

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

Anonymous or insufficiently addressed letters are not published.

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

● **SOLDIER** cannot admit correspondence on matters involving discipline or promotion in a unit.

## RASC BIGGER

I say that the Royal Army Ordnance Corps has more men in it than the Royal Army Service Corps. My friend disagrees. Who is right?—J. Hammond, 3 Whitelow Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, Cheshire.

★ Your friend. The Royal Army Service Corps is numerically the larger.

## RAPID PROMOTION

SOLDIER states (September) that General Sir Hugh Stockwell holds the wartime record for rapid promotion, rising from major to major-general from 1939 to 1944. I think the record belongs to Major-General Wingate?—Michael McCroddan, 53 Kingsmead Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey.

★ **SOLDIER**'s reference was to living generals. Major-General Orde Wingate's promotion was more rapid. He was promoted from captain to major on 29 August, 1940, and from temporary brigadier to acting major-general on 27 August, 1943, thus rising from captain to major-general in less than three years.

## EUROPEAN

Why is it that SOLDIER (and other magazines), when writing of British troops on foreign service, refers to them as "Europeans"?

This was particularly noticeable in your story of the relief of Arrah ("Hours of Glory," August), when reference was made to the "European" Battery of the 1st/5th Bengal Artillery.

I am an old British soldier and it galls me to hear our men referred to as if they came from some European country. SOLDIER has many readers here in America, and the impression may be given that the British Army still hires mercenaries as in the bad old days!

We should be proud enough of the brave deeds performed by our soldiers to call them "British" and not to dub them "European." Sixty years ago I served in India as a drummer boy in The Royal Irish Fusiliers, who were decidedly not "European," but "British" soldiers.—John E. Harrington, 1934 Mission Avenue, San Diego 16, California, U.S.A.

★ The "European Battery" of the 1st/5th Bengal Artillery was the official designation of that unit at the time of the Indian Mutiny and the term "European" has long been used in the East to indicate race distinction.

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

This unit cannot compete with four brothers of one family on parade together (Letters, August), but we can compete in family representation.

We are a minor technical unit with a volunteer strength of 62 all ranks and can boast of three brothers of the Fitton family; three brothers of the Foster family; three brothers of the

McNulty family; two brothers of the Whitworth family and two brothers of the Falconer-Flint family.—Captain R. Hart, 882 Div Loc Battery RA (TA), Manchester Road, Clifton, Manchester.

My father and his six brothers all served in the Horse Transport branch of the old Army Service Corps. My father was a corporal and of my uncles one was a major, two were company-sergeant-majors, one a quartermaster-sergeant and two drivers.—Corporal R. Marrison, MQS Ber Village, BFPO 53.

## KHAKI OR GREEN?

Why should the new Women's Royal Army Corps uniform be green and not khaki?

Green is very nice for No. 1 dress uniform but not for normal everyday wear. In my particular trade we work in a dirty, dusty atmosphere and when we wear shirt-sleeve order at work khaki shirts get filthy. What will the proposed new white shirts look like under similar conditions?

Tunic-type tops instead of the present battle-dress style would also look very much smarter.—"22-year Regular WRAC."

★ **SOLDIER**'s fashion expert says that khaki is disastrous for all but the most perfect complexions, whereas green and white are easy to wear and always look fresh and clean.

The design of the new WRAC Service Dress was produced with smartness and comfort as the foremost essentials; it is a classic suit which will not date and yet

looks smart and feminine. Protective clothing is always issued for dirty jobs.

## ENSIGN

According to the Dictionary of National Biography, General Sir Harry Smith was commissioned in the 95th Regiment as an ensign. In his autobiography, however, he states that he was commissioned as a second-lieutenant. Which is right?—P. Brooke-Smith, 13 Dorset St, Blandford Forum, Dorset.

★ General Sir Harry Smith was commissioned as an ensign. The rank of second-lieutenant came into use when the ensign rank was abolished on 30 October, 1871.

## THE OATH

What is the origin of the oath taken by a recruit on attestation?—Captain M. J. Wilton-Steer, 4th Signal Regiment, BFPO 15.

★ An oath of attestation was officially adopted in 1689, as follows: "I swear to be true to our Sovereign Lord and Lady, King William and Queen Mary, and to serve them honestly and faithfully in the defence of their persons, crown and dignity, against all their enemies and opposers whatsoever; and to observe and obey Their Majesties' orders, and the orders of the generals and officers set over me by Their Majesties. So help me God."

The present form of oath is: "I, . . . . ., swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance, OVER . . .

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## BRITISH INDEPENDENCE

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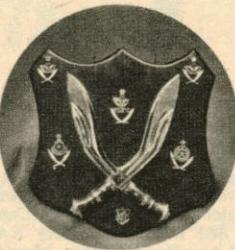
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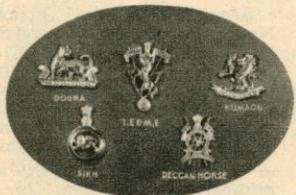
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## GUNNERS REMEMBER

The Royal Artillery Remembrance Day ceremony will be held this year at the Royal Garrison Church of St. George, Woolwich, on Sunday, 13 November; and not at the Royal Artillery Memorial.

Detachments of Regular and Territorial Army units and Old Comrades associations and standard bearers will march from the West Gun Park to the church for a short service after which the Master Gunner will take the salute and lay a wreath on behalf of all ranks. For more information please write to me—The Secretary, Royal Artillery Association, Artillery House, Woolwich Common, S.W.18.

## LEVITATION

Lieut-Colonel G. A. I. Sanders (SOLDIER, Letters, February) described the Indian levitation trick in which a boy was hypnotised and placed horizontally between the backs of two chairs, his neck resting on the top rail of one chair and his heels on the top rail of the other. The chair under the boy was then removed, the boy remaining stretched stiffly in the air,

## HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

(See page 28)

The two pictures vary in the following respects: 1. Far wing-tip of left aircraft. 2. Position of signpost on left of bridge. 3. Number of cows in field. 4. Church spire. 5. Path to church door. 6. Number of fir trees in front of car. 7. Length of ship. 8. Curve of road below left aircraft. 9. Sail of right-hand yacht by boathouse. 10. Crossroads at bottom left.

## COMPETITIONS

No all-correct entries were received for SOLDIER's "Who Are They?" competition in August.

The answers were: 1. Tyrone Power. 2. Dave Charnley. 3. Brigitte Bardot. 4. Field-Marshal Smuts. 5. Mai Zetterling. 6. Robert Mitchum. 7. Ex-King Farouk.

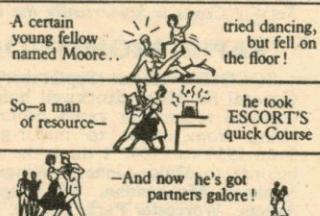
The solution and names of prize winners of SOLDIER's "Quick Crossword" competition in September will appear in our December issue.

supported only by the chair back beneath his neck.

This feat was witnessed by most of my Battalion—the 4th Bombay Grenadiers (Indian Army)—in Rangoon a few months after the Burma campaign in World War Two.

The magician was one of a touring entertainment party in the "Fauji Dilkhush Sabha," the Indian Army equivalent of ENSA. I tested with my hands over and under the boy and found there was nothing holding him in the air.

—Lieut-Colonel S. C. H. Tighe, Blackman's Bay, via Kingston, Tasmania, Australia.



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**HAYA HARAREET (MGM)**

—in "Ben-Hur"