

JANUARY 1961 ★ 9d

# SOLDIER



**"WAR" IN THE  
DESERT**  
(See pages 8-10)

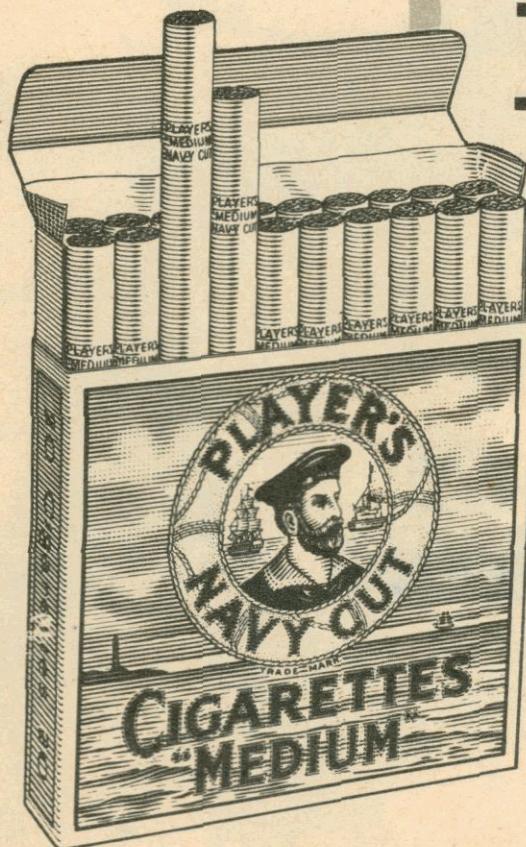
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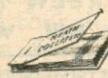
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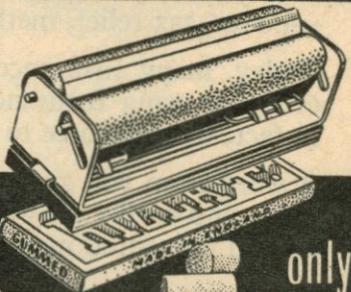
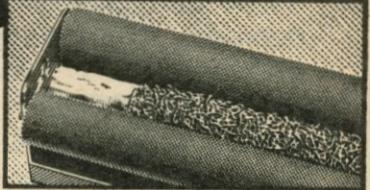
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# HONEST JOHN TAKES OFF

Trailing flame and smoke, *Honest John* leaves the launching vehicle on Salisbury Plain to explode over Ell Barrow ridge, near Stonehenge, five miles away.



On the Hohne ranges on Luneburg Heath, Germany, men of 24 Regiment, Royal Artillery, prepare an *Honest John* for firing from its mobile launcher.

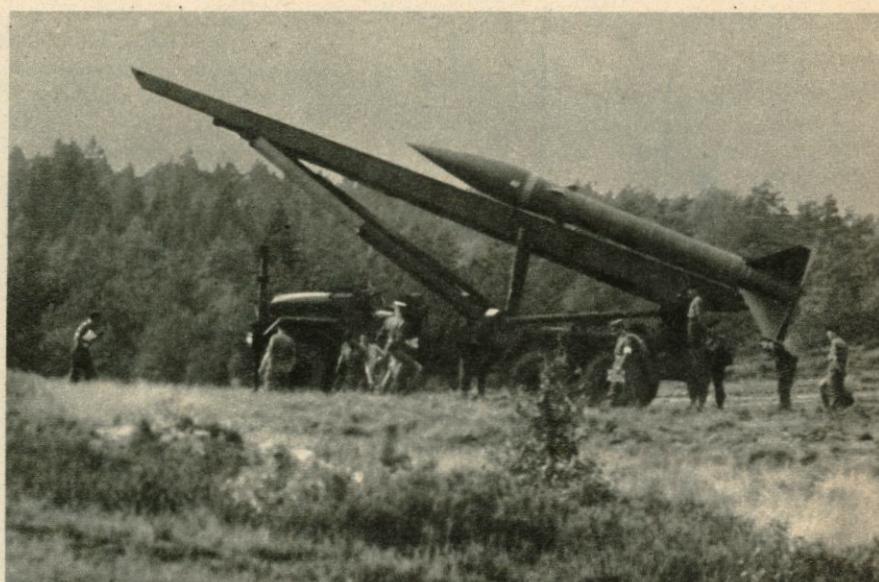
**A**GUNNER in a slit trench on Luneburg Heath pressed a button and with a mighty roar a 27-foot long rocket a few hundred yards away leapt from its mobile launcher in a sheet of searing flame.

Rapidly gathering speed, the rocket shot across the sky at 700 miles an hour and disappeared, exploding in the air immediately above its target several miles away.

The rocket was *Honest John* and it was being fired for the first time by British troops — Gunners of 24 Regiment, Royal Artillery — on Rhine Army's ranges at Hohne.

A few weeks later *Honest John*, the British Army's new divisional support weapon, made its débüt in Britain, when, its warhead filled with concrete and high explosive, it was fired at a demonstration by the School of Artillery, Larkhill. It, too, exploded and disintegrated in the air, five miles away on a ridge called Ell Barrow, near Stonehenge, only 25 yards wide and 30 yards short of the target.

*Honest John* is a free-flight ballistic missile and can carry an atomic or high explosive warhead.



At no time in the Army's history have soldiers had so many opportunities officers who, scorning the modern jet age, travelled home from

## 5000 MILES BY KETCH...

THE spirit of adventure has always burned bright in Major John E. Almonds MM and Bar, of The Gloucestershire Regiment.

In World War Two he was one of the first Commandos and a founder member of the Special Air Service Regiment; he escaped twice from prison camp and parachuted into France to hound the Germans behind the lines.

Now he has set the seal on an Army career that could scarcely have been more exciting by sailing 5000 miles from Ghana to Britain in a nine-ton ketch which he built himself.

Major Almonds was commanding the Boys' Company of the Ghana Army when he decided to sail home at the end of his four-year tour of duty in West Africa in the *Kumasi*, a 32-ft long, shallow-draught ketch which he designed and constructed for on-shore sailing and exploring rivers. Carrying four sails and an auxiliary outboard motor, the ketch was tough enough, decided the Major, to stand up to the voyage.

When they heard of the plan, two friends

—Alan Cameron, a retired district commissioner in the Gold Coast, and Gordon Robson, a former lieutenant in the King's Own Scottish Borderers and adjutant at the Boys' Company, who had recently retired from the Army—immediately signed on.

On the first leg of the voyage—to Abidjan, on the Ivory coast—the crew were violently sea-sick when the ketch ran into an electrical storm and Major Almonds broke two ribs. But the *Kumasi* stood the buffeting well.

Between Monrovia and Freetown, the capitals of Liberia and Sierra Leone, a tornado struck the ketch in the early hours of the morning, when she had all sail set. Major Almonds was then on watch alone, but had slipped into the cabin to make a cup of tea when the *Kumasi* was suddenly laid on her side with her masts touching the water. He and his companions crawled on deck and managed to get the sails down and the ketch then righted herself.

From Dakar, in Senegal, Major Almonds set sail for the Azores, but on the second day out the *Kumasi* hit a south-westerly, could make no progress and had to turn back to Port Etienne, on the coast of Mauretania. There, the town was experiencing one of its worst storms for years and the *Kumasi* had to lay up for three days until the 100-mile-an-hour gale had blown itself out.

The resumed journey to the Azores took 23 uneventful days of some calms but predominantly steady breezes. On Pico Island the *Kumasi*'s captain and crew received a tremendous welcome. They were wined and dined and their ship was provisioned free. The 1800 miles from Pico to Weymouth were covered in 21 days and, finally, the *Kumasi* sailed from there to Boston, on The Wash, in a mere 56 hours.

Now the *Kumasi* lies, stripped, on the river near Major Almonds' new home in the

village of Stixwould, between Boston and Lincoln.

In World War Two, Major Almonds joined the Guards Commando on its formation. He went out with Layforce to the Middle East—he was then a sergeant—at the beginning of 1941 and, after the siege of Tobruk, was one of 50 selected to form the Special Air Service Regiment, serving under Lieutenant-Colonel David Stirling DSO in the long range desert groups.

During a raid on Benghazi harbour Major Almonds was taken prisoner in September, 1942, put in irons as a saboteur and shipped to Italy. He and three other prisoners escaped in February, 1943, by "bashing the captain of the guard, a corporal and a sentry." They were on the run for six weeks, then gave themselves up because one of them became ill.

Later, Almonds escaped again, this time on his own, and was liberated by the advancing American Fifth Army. Rejoining the Special Air Service Regiment, he parachuted into France in 1944 and served with the Maquis until his area was over-run by the Americans.

After the war, Major Almonds was posted from the Army Air Corps, into which he had been commissioned, to The Gloucestershire Regiment, and after a period as an instructor at the Eaton Hall Officer Cadet School, he went to Ethiopia to train officers of the Ethiopian Army's 2nd Infantry Division. He was later seconded to the Eritrea Police Field Force for a year and then served for three years in Malaya, hunting communist terrorists with 22 Special Air Service Regiment.

Major Almonds won his Military Medal in the Middle East in 1942 and a bar for his escapes in Italy. For his services with the Maquis he was awarded the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star.

for adventure as today. Here are the stories of three enterprising Africa in an old-fashioned, but exciting way—by boat and horse



Left: Major Francis and Lieut. McMillan (right) rein in their horses at the Epalet frontier post between Spain and France. Right: Studying a map of French Sudan before they put their horses on a train to cross the desert.

## ... AND 3000 MILES ON HORSEBACK

WHILE Major Almonds was making his way home by sea, two other officers with an equally unusual taste for adventure—

Major Stewart Francis, of The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment, and Lieutenant Brian McMillan, of The Royal Fusiliers—were on the last lap of a remarkable journey from Nigeria to Britain.

They rode—and walked—the 3200 miles on horseback!

The journey took them nearly four months and is believed to be the longest ride ever performed by British soldiers. Even Tschiffely took two-and-a-half years on his famous 10,000-mile jaunt on horseback from Buenos Aires to Washington in the 1920s.

Both officers were stationed at the Depot of The Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment, at Zaria, when Major Francis, anxious not to leave his three wiry Afro-Barb stallions behind on his return to England and wishing to test the breed's endurance, asked Lieutenant McMillan to help him ride them home. McMillan jumped at the chance.

The two officers, on "Baako" and "Nimbus," accompanied on "Danshika" by a Nigerian who was to go only as far as Niamey, began their marathon ride laden with tinned food and set out for the French Sudan. Because of the heat (120 degrees on most days) they rode only in the mornings and evenings, averaging 30 miles a day over rocky scrub and semi-desert.

Before long they had changed their riding breeches for shorts and had given away the tinned food after discovering that friendly villagers expected them to stay to meals (generally chicken and bean cake).

All went well for three weeks and then apparent disaster struck. While the three

men were asleep one night the three stallions broke their tethers and went in search of itinerant mares.

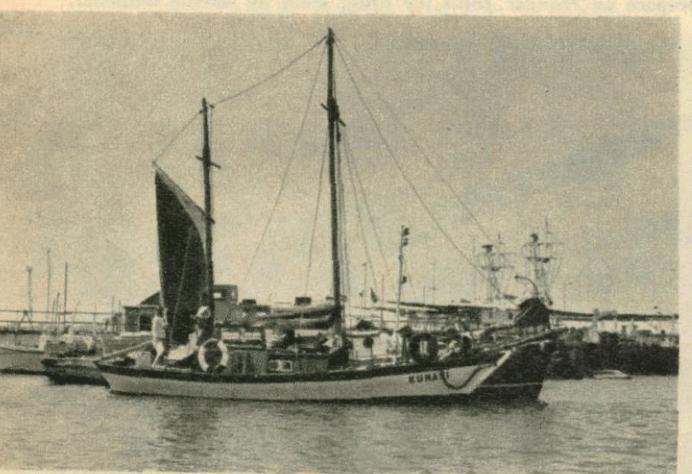
Major Francis and Lieutenant McMillan, in riding boots and pyjamas, tracked the horses for 15 miles on foot and recaptured two of them. The third, "Baako," refused to be parted from his mare, so the two officers went ahead, leaving the Nigerian to chase the deserter (weeks later they heard that "Baako" had been recaptured and returned to Zaria).

When the riders reached Bamako, in the French Sudan, they put the horses aboard a train for Dakar whence the French Army shipped them to Tangier and Gibraltar.

The two officers stayed in Gibraltar for two weeks as guests of The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire and then set off again, through Ronda, Almazan and Pamplona for France. From Madrid to the French frontier—a distance of 200 miles—Major Francis and Lieutenant McMillan walked most of the way to rest the horses which, unshod, had then covered nearly 2000 miles from Nigeria. "Nimbus" and "Danshika"



At Koumbia, French Sudan, the two British officers take a well-earned rest from the saddle. During the whole of their journey through Africa they were welcomed by friendly villagers.



The *Kumasi* in harbour at Takoradi, the port on the Gold Coast from which she sailed home. Her mizzen is hoisted; her other three sails (the jib, staysail and mainsail) being furled. Note the ketch's low lines and raking bows.



On the last leg of her epic voyage the *Kumasi*, under her jib, heads out from Weymouth making for Dover and The Wash.



Major John E. Almonds, MM and Bar, The Gloucestershire Regiment, ex-Commando and saboteur—still seeking adventure.



Dawn in the desert and the pathfinder paratroopers set up coloured flares to guide the first wave of invading aircraft to the dropping zone in the desert south of Tripoli.

# Paratroopers Pounce In The Desert

*From Britain and Cyprus, by way of Malta, paratroopers flew to North Africa and dropped into the Libyan desert to do battle over the ground where British and German soldiers slogged it out in World War Two*

Photographs: SOLDIER Cameraman PETER O'BRIEN

**I**T was late afternoon in the Libyan desert—a sea of sand which extends for over half a million square miles. The temperature was nearly 90 in the shade and gusts of air felt like blasts from an open oven. Big black flying cockroaches skimmed over the surface of the soft desert sand, like miniature hovercrafts. The sun, like a monstrous orange ball, was on the very edge of the horizon.

A small group of perspiring soldiers looked searchingly at the vivid blue sky.

"They'd better look snappy," said one officer, "It'll be dark any minute."

Even as he spoke, a faint buzz could be heard in the distance, amplifying into a roar as seven *Hastings* aircraft came over the dropping zone. Green lights rocketed like fireworks. A yellow smoke signal was lit. Within seconds the sky was full of green nylon parachutes floating like the wind-blown seeds of the willow-herb. Soon the desert was swarming with paratroopers, who freed themselves and raced to their rallying points.

Exercise *Natation* had begun in earnest. With the agreement of the Libyan Government (with which Britain has a treaty of alliance) it was held in an area south of Tripoli. Its objects were to practise rapid mounting of a parachute battalion group assault; to conduct heavy and light drops in



Raising clouds of dust, the paratroopers set off on a mobile desert patrol, only minutes after landing.

• • • • •

Desert discussion. Capt P. Istead, of the Air Control Team, briefs men of The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire and The Royal Irish Fusiliers before the assault.

• • • • •

As dawn rises, a paratrooper, his 'chute almost hidden in the mist, appears from the desert sky.



darkness; and to carry out tactical movements in desert country.

No. 2 Parachute Battalion Group had moved from Cyprus to Malta, where the exercise was mounted. There it was joined by units from 16 Parachute Brigade Group flown from England, including 41 Parachute Light Battery and 2 Troop of 9 (Independent) Parachute Field Squadron, Royal Engineers.

Troops were flown to Libya from the Royal Air Force Station at Safi in Malta, although some officers and men, including a small detachment from 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, were flown direct to Idris Airport in Libya, from Britain.

The "enemy" included two companies of The Royal Irish Fusiliers, who are stationed in Tripoli; a squadron of tanks from 2nd Royal Tank Regiment and men of The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, stationed in Gibraltar.

At 4 a.m. that day, in the pitch dark, the pathfinders' stick of 1 Guards Independent Company descended on the dropping zone, lay up in the sand dunes unobserved by patrols and laid the "T" enabling the first lift to fly in accurately.

By the time the next, and larger, wave arrived the sun had set. The blazing desert had become within seconds an ocean of inky blackness, as though someone had flicked a master-switch. Eight *Beverleys* appeared,

unloading 240 paratroopers and 12 platforms, each with a Land-Rover and trailer on it. Within minutes paratroopers of "A," "B" and "C" companies of 2 Parachute Battalion had assembled and begun their ten-mile march towards their desert objective.

It was assumed that a mythical desert country had been invaded and that a captured scientist had to be rescued by the airborne force. They then had to hold the enemy at bay long enough for a landing strip to be made and their valuable "boffin" whisked away in an *Auster*.

The enemy had much to their advantage. SOLDIER found them miles from the dropping zone, so well dug into the sand and so well camouflaged by close-woven, sand-coloured scrim that they were barely discernible, even at close quarters. Machine-gun nests were deployed around the area where the "boffin" was supposed to be in captivity, and frequent patrols were sent out to report activity. On both sides about 20 umpires, in touch with each other by short-wave radio, reported progress and assessed the casualties which would have been likely if the fight had been a real one.

At midnight came another heavy drop, this time of 150 men from three *Hastings* and a *Beverley*, and at dawn the following day more paratroopers floated down to join in a heavy assault on the enemy. The attacks encoun-

SOLDIER



## COVER PICTURE

SOLDIER'S cover picture, by Staff Cameraman Peter O'Brien, shows a Saracen armoured car of 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, with its British and Ghanaian crew, on the look-out for aircraft. The Ghanaian soldiers, of the Ghana Independent Reconnaissance Regiment, were attached to 2nd Royal Tank Regiment for the exercise and fought as part of the defending force in attacking and harassing the invaders.





The defence is broken and paratroopers charge over the scrub-covered dunes to clear enemy emplacements.

tered numerous enemy patrols, but succeeded in storming the encampment and rescuing the "boffin"—Capt. A. J. Jones, of 1 Air Control Team—who was whisked away in an *Auster* piloted by Captain Robert Hogarth, of the Army Air Corps.

Over 2000 men of the Libyan Army—two units of armour and artillery and some staff from Libyan Army Headquarters—watched the operation from slit trenches, while on broadcast apparatus a running commentary in Arabic explained the purposes of the operation, the course it was taking and the equipment being used.

The main mission accomplished, the paratroopers set off on a 60-mile trek to the coast, protected by a rearguard using

machine-guns and 4.2-inch mortars to crush opposition encountered between themselves and the sea. As they neared the coast, naval gunfire support aircraft directed salvos from the destroyer which, theoretically, lay offshore.

Meanwhile the desert and the roads criss-crossing it evoked memories of the desert campaigns of World War Two. *Saladins* and *Saracens* tore along the roads, patrols wriggled through the sand to the cover of the dunes, Land-Rovers bumped over the scrubby ground, sending up immense clouds of fine dust. At one time the paratroopers were immobilised for 30 minutes by a howling, blinding sandstorm.

From the enemy side, as the battle neared

the coast, SOLDIER saw that the paratroopers would have had, in active war conditions, a far from easy task. The Royal Irish Fusiliers were so deployed behind tufts and sand dunes that, although they could see for miles they were themselves hidden from view and would have remained so until the paratroopers were on top of them.

Summing up afterwards, Brigadier Napier Crookenden DSO, in command of 16 Parachute Brigade Group, expressed satisfaction with the results achieved and the lessons learned. "For many of the men," he told SOLDIER, "this was their first jump in desert conditions, and they took it splendidly."

DENNIS BARDENS



Above: A Saracen speeds along the desert coast road, covered by a dug-in bazooka.



Above: Scavengers of the desert. A REME recovery team moves in with its vehicles to clear up the debris after the battle.



Dug in among the sand dunes, men of The Royal Irish Fusiliers get ready for an attack as paratroopers are sighted over a nearby ridge.

# THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR

A FABRIC shelter, supported by its own air pressure, writhed like a gigantic slug until it stood upright and rigid in the wind, ready to receive hundreds of tons of military stores. It had taken only an hour to erect.

Nearby, smaller shelters—including one inflated in three minutes by a pump operated from a motor-car battery; another ready for spraying with foam rubber to become a permanent stores shed, an office or even a small bungalow; and another, intended as a missile, gun, radar or helicopter camouflaged shelter which could be lowered in two seconds—sprang up like mushrooms as senior officers of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps arrived at the Central Ordnance Depot in Bicester to inspect them.

For all their differences in shape and size, the shelters had two important features in common. They were air portable and easily and quickly erected, vital requirements in the rapid establishment of forward ordnance stores depots in any future war. In World War Two these depots often took weeks to set up; in future they will have to be in operation within days of the outbreak of hostilities.

The inflatable shelters, which may be one

of the Army's big problems in any future war will be how to speed up the erection of stores depots so that the forward troops are kept fit to fight. Part of the answer may be found in the use of air-portable shelters which can be inflated in minutes to become stores sheds, offices, camouflage covers and even bungalows

Photographs: SOLDIER Cameraman ARTHUR BLUNDELL

of the answers to the Army's need for speed in keeping the forward troops fit to fight, were on display during the Director of Ordnance Services' annual exercise which, appropriately, dealt with the problem of maintaining two brigade groups in action in a limited war 3000 miles from Britain.

The giant stores shed which attracted most attention was the 30-ft. high, 40-ft. wide and 80-ft. long Irvin air shelter which has a storage capacity of more than 40,000 cubic feet. This semi-spherical shelter is made of a strong, lightweight nylon fabric and is inflated and maintained at correct pressure by electric or petrol motor "blowers." Tests have shown that it can stand up to winds of more than 75 miles an hour.

Another remarkable exhibit was the Frankenstein rigid foam shelter. After being inflated it can be sprayed inside with a com-

pound which hardens like stiff rubber and enables the shelter to be towed over sand or snow and floated. Windows and doors can be cut into the foam with a knife!

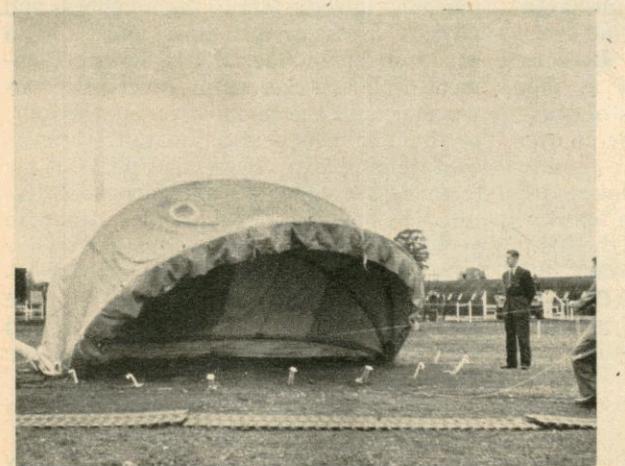
Also on display were the Clamshell, which is designed for protecting and camouflaging weapons and equipment and can be collapsed in two seconds; high pressure air frames on which tarpaulin covers can be fixed; and Numax inflatable huts which can serve as offices, living accommodation, small stores sheds and even an emergency hospital ward. When deflated, the Numax hut can be packed into a car boot!

Other new equipment which has recently been introduced or may soon be in use in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps was shown in action at a forward stores depot of the future laid out by the Central Ordnance Depot, Bicester.

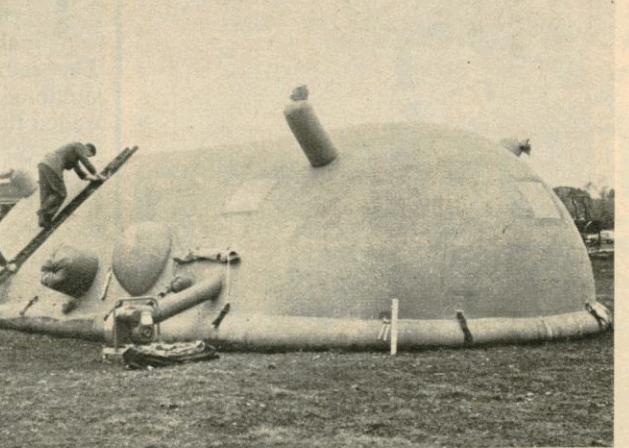
OVER...



Above: The Irvin air shelter which has 40,000 cubic feet of storage space. It takes an hour to inflate.



Left: The Clamshell which can be collapsed in two seconds, leaving the weapon it camouflages free to fire.



Right: The Frankenstein. Windows and doors can be cut into it after the inside has been sprayed with foam.

It included a new and quicker freighting system—called cargoisation; an improved tractor, crane and fork-lift vehicle—the Michigan; a more efficient, air-conditioned mobile industrial gas plant for use in support of operations in the field; and a new and improved method of transporting and storing ordnance stores—the Bicester binned container.

In the cargo freighting system a lorry is fitted with steel rails along which a pre-loaded container on wheels is pushed aboard and secured. At the delivery point the container is simply wheeled off, leaving the lorry free to take on another container or return unloaded.

The Bicester binned container—the result of an investigation carried out by the Work Study Branch of the Central Ordnance Depot at Bicester—is a wooden container housing three sliding rack units, each with four shelves.

Designed mainly to overcome the need for specialist store-carrying vehicles, to be air portable and parachutable, the new container system enables detailed stores to be handled more easily and delivered ready for immediate issue. Containers can be carried in almost all vehicles and trailers, and two three-ton lorries could transport in this way as much as three three-tonners can by the present method.

E. J. GROVE



French paratroopers, in camouflage smocks, returning to base from a patrol on the Beacons. The French acted as "enemy" on the first course exercise.

## Will-o'-the-Wisps On The Beacons

*Taking notes in the lecture room and living rough in the open, officers of all arms learn the arts of combat survival. A final exercise takes them on a gruelling course over the wild Brecon Beacons*

**T**WO bedraggled Army officers, roughly-dressed and unshaven, plodded across a bleak, wind-swept shoulder of the Brecon Beacons. The rain beat down mercilessly as they stumbled over stones and clumps of grass, waded through runnels and clambered over slippery rocks.

They were cold, hungry, almost exhausted, and alone—hunted men in "enemy" territory. Patrolling troops denied the roads to them and hopes of escape lay only in a furtive trek across the inhospitable Beacons.

One slip—a snatched rest in a lonely barn, a too open move by day or a momentarily relaxed alertness—and they would be caught and whisked away to a prisoner-of-war compound.

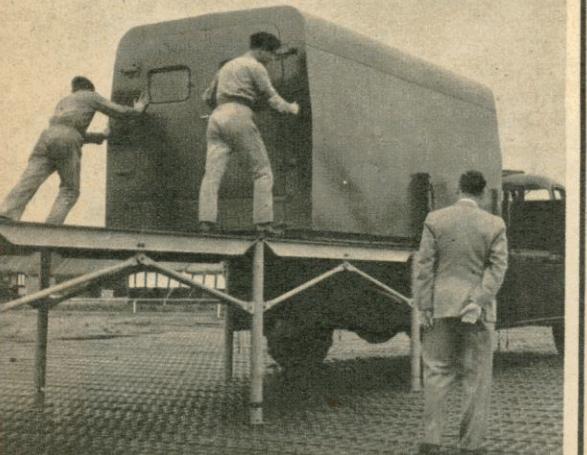
For many of the 25 students this escape

and evasion course was an abrupt and revealing introduction to the toughness and physical fitness of their hosts and tutors, a squadron of 22 Special Air Service Regiment. The final exercise on Brecon Beacons was not unlike a modified version of some of the Regiment's selection tests over its own training area. In the first phase of the fortnight's course the students were lectured on how to be self-reliant and how to avoid the pitfalls of interrogation. They were shown improvised clothing and equipment, such as jackets and trousers made from sacking, boots of slit packs stuffed with straw, and inspected examples of the gadgetry of prison camp escape.

Then they moved out to put theory into



Above: This inflatable hut can be blown up in two minutes by a motor-car battery and packed into a car boot. Below: The cargo freighting system demonstrated by two soldiers pushing a loaded container on to a waiting lorry.



*Pictures by SOLDIER Cameraman PETER O'BRIEN*

practice by living in the open. There they built themselves *bashas*, constructed rafts, fished, set game traps and cooked a variety of food from six sheep to snails and frogs!

Finally came the gruelling practical test, a 53-mile cross-country escape route over the Beacons. For this the students were given a blanket and *poncho*—and fourpence for an emergency telephone call. They had to make their own packs and had no cutlery nor mess tins. Then they were dropped in pairs along a 20-mile line, handed a survey map for the first leg of their adventure and presented with an unplucked chicken.

At the first rendezvous they were sent forward with rations and a road map. Those who successfully found the second rendezvous were given more food and a rough sketch map which, though inaccurate, was sufficient to guide them to the final point.

Rain, exposure and sheer exhaustion defeated some. Others lost their way and were captured and interned. Only a handful survived the heavy odds and reached the final rendezvous.

Men of the Special Air Service Regiment, in civilian cars and on a scooter, maintained a round-the-clock road patrol, and foot patrols covered both open country and the roads. Horsemen and an *Auster* aircraft also scoured the area for signs of the escapers.

Straddling one part of the escape route were 30 French paratroopers who had been invited to study British tuition in combat survival. This was the first time since World War Two that French Regular troops have trained in this country.

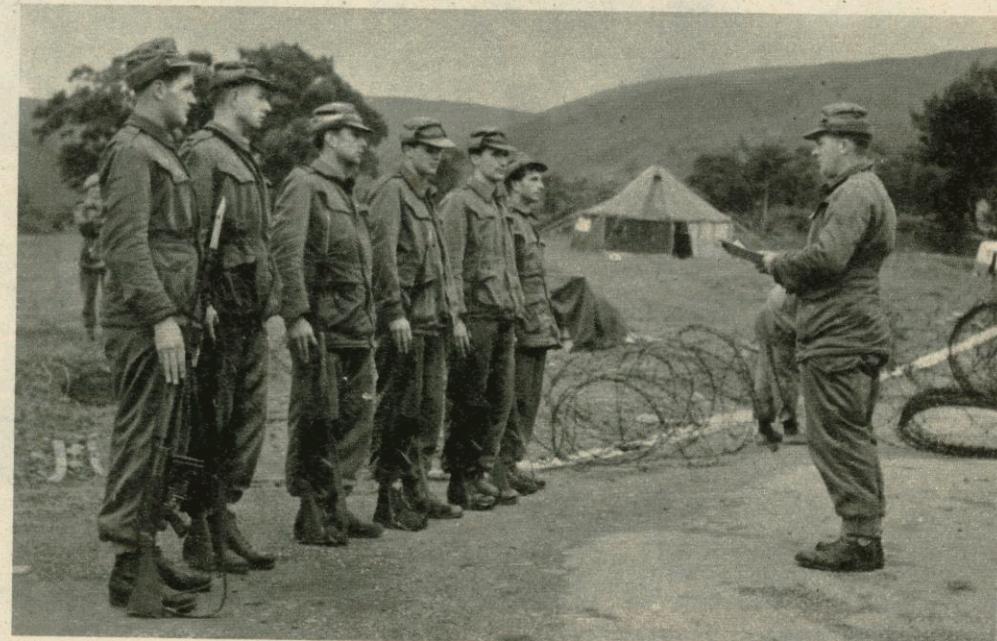
Captured students were taken to a realistic compound manned by the Special Air Service Regiment and a detachment of 160 Provost Company, Royal Military Police, dressed in combat suits. There they were relieved of their kit and clapped into "cells." A few were deliberately given chances to escape and three made attempts.

Lieut R. E. Collins, 5 Training Battalion, RASC, shows an SAS officer how he escaped under the perimeter wire of the compound.



An instructor of 22 SAS shows this home-made bush saw to two students, Lieut I. G. Jack, 3 RHA, and, right, Lieut B. P. Dewe-Matthews, 21 SAS.

Sgt D. W. Trattle briefs his men of 160 Provost Company, CRMP. They acted as guards of the prisoner-of-war compound during the final exercise.



The only student to escape successfully—Lieutenant R. E. Collins, of 5 Training Battalion, Royal Army Service Corps—was left alone in a tent, handcuffed to a rail. He slipped the handcuffs, unfastened the back flaps of the tent, crept down a ditch and crawled through the fence unnoticed by the guard on the compound tower.

At the end of the exercise came the final reckoning—a debriefing, with no holds barred, from which few emerged unscathed. Among the sins pointed out were compromising a rendezvous, attempting to use roads in broad daylight, talking too freely in the compound and not trying to escape.

There was a bouquet for the resourceful pair who acquired railway uniforms and deceived even the staff of a rendezvous. And a brickbat for another pair who laid up in a farmhouse, drying out their clothes, and could have been surprised naked.

Above all, it was emphasised, a soldier must keep himself always at the peak of physical fitness. This, the students had already learned, should not be the prerogative of specially trained troops.

So they left, some limping, most of them weary, but all full of enthusiastic praise for the course and of admiration for their hosts.

PETER N. WOOD



A Blaw-Knox grader puts the finishing touches to a new road leading down to the Sappers' tented camp on the beach.

## VERSATILE SAPPERS AT FORT GEORGE

*Switching from jungle road-making, 410 Independent Plant Troop erected a camp at Fort George and then built a rifle range and airstrip*

STORIES BY STAFF WRITER PETER N. WOOD  
PICTURES BY CAMERAMAN FRANK TOMPSETT



Above: A massive tractor-towed scraper levels the approach road to the rifle range firing point. Below: Mixing concrete for the floor of a NAAFI store in camp. Cement was not easily come by, but sand was plentiful!



**W**HEN the Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group's new Malayan home at Fort George, near Malacca, is completed, 410 Independent Plant Troop, Royal Engineers, may be only a vague memory.

But there will remain in the airstrip and rifle range two permanent reminders of the Troop's contribution to the base.

The Troop—the only one of its type in the Army—is prouder of these two tasks than any of the many diverse jobs which it has done in Malaya, for these Sappers were the pioneers of Fort George.

For two and a half years they had been working in northern Malaya, helping to hack 52 miles of road out of primeval jungle, in Kedah, near the Thailand border (SOLDIER, April, 1958). When they were brought in to start the project in Malacca, after the jungle, the prospect of working at Bukit Terendak, as Fort George was then known, seemed almost civilised. But the Sappers were quickly disillusioned, for on moving 350 miles south from their permanent camp in Penang, they discovered they had literally to start from scratch.

Versatile as ever, the Troop turned itself into a works services unit, an advance party

cutting down trees, building a tented camp along the beach, making an access road, constructing drains and laying on water. A prefabricated hut brought from Butterworth served as an office and concrete foundations for cookhouses and a NAAFI canteen grew from "scrounged" cement and beach sand. NAAFI turned up trumps by arriving 30 minutes before the advance party and opening up a mobile canteen within the hour!

A few weeks later the remainder of the Troop arrived, less a small detachment busy building playing fields in Johore Bahru, and work began on the airstrip and range.

It took three weeks to clear the wooded airstrip site. Bulldozers pushed over hundreds of small trees and winched out the larger trunks, cutting a swathe 870 yards long and 100 yards wide. Then a hump in the centre of the strip had to be reduced by some seven feet before the final grading and surfacing with laterite—a mixture of red shale and sandstone.

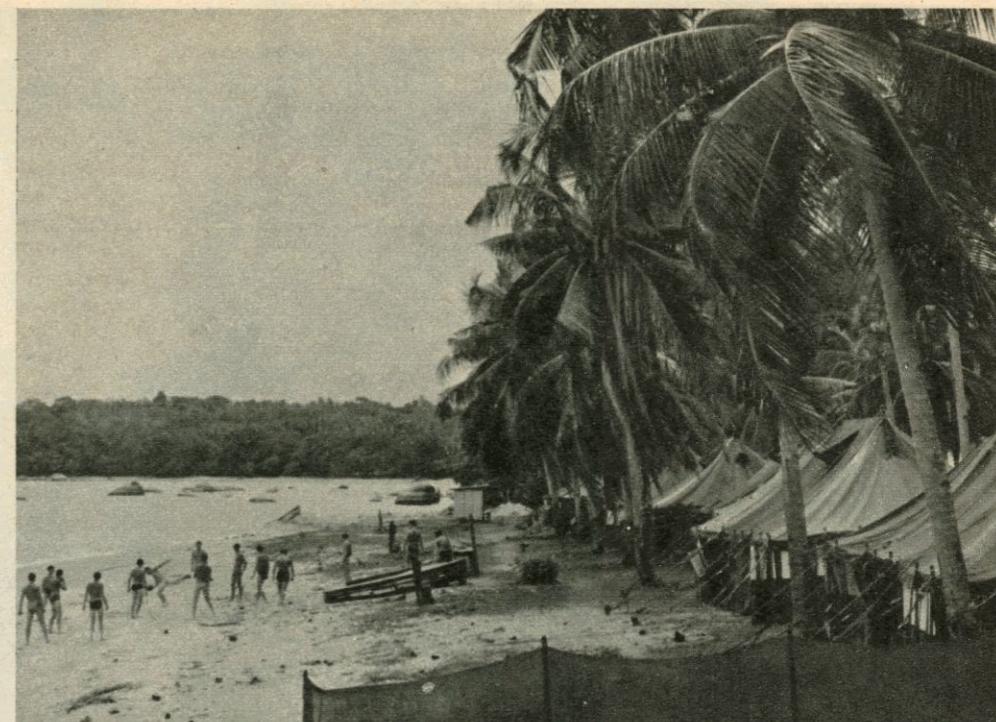
Building the 600-yard, 12-target rifle range on the side of a hill was an even bigger task. It meant cutting 30 feet into the slope and moving 60,000 cubic yards of soil to level the site and form the stop butts. Then

the Sappers had to build a road for three-ton lorries to drive up to the butts.

Work went on steadily for month after month—five days a week on the projects and the sixth on maintenance. Most of the Sappers—half of them had previously worked on the Kedah project—spent their evenings on guard or relaxing in camp; a few occasionally visited Malacca or a cinema five miles away at the Malay Federal Army camp. One week in every six the married men returned to their families in Penang, 350 miles to the north.

Perhaps life was a little tedious in those early days at Bukit Terendak, but it certainly had its exciting moments. There was the time when a Sapper on night guard saw a movement in the undergrowth—and killed an armadillo. There was a hair-raising moment for the storeman who found a six-inch black scorpion in a clothing crate.

An operator of the Troop had perhaps the narrowest escape when the movement of his dozer disturbed a python which had apparently coiled itself up in a tree. The python fell, catching the Sapper a glancing blow on the arm, and was run over and killed by the dozer's tracks. The python was 11 ft 6 ins long.



Swaying palms, golden sand... The camp setting seems to be ideal, but jellyfish lurked below the surface to threaten the unwary bather.



Below the balcony of the men's NAAFI, the corporals relax in their beer garden.

## The Corporal Leaves

The junior ranks club provides a modern background for the ubiquitous juke box.



## His Mark



The privates' restaurant, games room, billiards room and lounge open up into a large dance hall and overlook, from a balcony, the bright sun umbrellas of the corporals' beer garden. (Before his call-up, Corporal Blake worked on plans for modernising public houses!)

The walls of the club are of cool, local limestone and the contemporary design makes colourful use of Malayan woods and pastel paintwork—greys, whites and blues relieved by splashes of yellow and green. The corporals' club has its own bar and a lounge with a wood-block floor for dancing.

On the project, Corporal Blake worked with a team of three civilian Asian draughtsmen and a Sapper corporal draughtsman.

OVER...

One of the Company's star dogs, *Fourth*, makes a sleeve attack on the training ground. This Alsatian has been trained to tackle three men at the same time.



The dogs have their own obstacle course at the Company headquarters. Here, *Jan* jumps clean through a hoop. He won the unit's obedience trials.

## "Dirty Dogs" of Singapore



**B**ECAUSE some Malays regard them as unclean the Army's guard dogs in Singapore are an even greater deterrent to would-be thieves.

The dogs—there are more than a hundred of them—belong to 5 Dog Company of the Corps of Royal Military Police and they guard 3 Base Ordnance Depot, the Royal Army Medical Corps' Command Medical and Equipment Depot, the armoury and keep of General Headquarters, Far East Land Forces, and 443 Base Ammunition Depot where there is a permanent detachment.

The Company was formed in December, 1958, from a Royal Army Veterinary Corps

unit and trains its dogs—all but two are Alsatians—at its headquarters on the site of an old 12-inch gun battery.

Every member of the Company can handle a dog and 90 regular handlers are detached for periods to the ammunition depot or form night guards at the other depots. Men and dogs on night duty patrol from 6 pm to 6 am and return to camp for feeding and grooming before standing down. Later in the day the handlers take their dogs out for exercise.

Attached to the Company is a Royal Army Veterinary Corps team of an officer and ten other ranks. As the only Veterinary Corps representatives on the island they have a busy time off duty treating at an "out-patients" clinic the pets of the garrison soldiers and their families.

One of this team until recently was Staff-Sergeant C. R. Deacon, on his second tour in Singapore. He could successfully handle all but two of the Company's dogs. The two were *Tully* and *Franz*, both of which took a violent dislike to him. *Franz* bit him twice, in the arm and thigh. On his earlier tour, Staff-Sergeant Deacon took the first Army dogs up into Malaya to track terrorists.



Obedience to a handler's commands is one of the most important points in training.

# **Cheap, Quick And Safe**

Small articles, like these cups, pack neatly away in cupboards or in drawers.

Right: Two containers — one lorry load — hold the furnishings and fittings for an other rank's married quarter.

Plester, and Major V. A. Newbury, commanding 2 Sub-Depot, put their heads together and brought out a scheme for pre-packing a complete officer's or other rank's quarter in wooden containers.

The Depot made its own containers, designed for loading by fork-lift truck on any type of three-ton lorry. Two containers hold all the 26-cwts of an other rank's quarter.

Crockery, cutlery and other small items are first carefully packed at the Depot and tucked away in cupboards and drawers. The pre-packed furniture can then be loaded into an empty container in only half an hour. At the quarter it can either be left outside

or the contents unloaded direct from the delivering lorry.

Containers for Fort George cannot be sent by road and rail because the charges are too expensive, so they are carried in tank landing craft of 37 Company (Water Transport), Royal Army Service Corps. There have so far been hardly any breakages, although one container fell on a landing craft while being loaded. Most of the containers have been up to Malaya and back without being damaged.

The saving on transport by sending the items piecemeal in this way has already more than paid for the containers.

**A**BRIGHT idea thought up by officers of 3 Base Ordnance Depot in Singapore is saving the Army both time and money.

The problem was to move married quarters' furnishings quickly and inexpensively from Singapore into Malaya, particularly to the Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group's new base at Fort George.

All the furniture, furnishings and household equipment had previously been sent in bulk and broken down at the other end. It was a lengthy and costly job. So the Deputy Commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel F. G. Hayward, his Packaging Officer, Major J.

How is this task to be accomplished?

One way, the Army has decided, is to woo the women of Britain—the mothers, wives and girl friends who, often prejudiced by ignorance of how the Army has changed for the better and of the fine opportunities it offers for a career, discourage their men from joining up.

It is astonishingly true that many still regard the Army as a retreat for down-and-outs and dunces and tend to look down on the soldier as a man who could not get a job in civilian life. There are many, too, who still think of the Army in terms of bullying sergeant-majors, disinterested officers and irksome fatigues.

To overcome this prejudice will not be easy and much will depend on the way the Army sets out to create in the public eye the authentic image of the soldier as a well-educated, respectable member of the community, living an honourable, worthwhile and adventurous life.

The Army will have to draw back the curtain and, honestly and fearlessly, show the public (after all, as taxpayers, they are entitled to know what goes on) what life in

# SOLDIER to Soldier

the Army is like and what the Army has to offer. And it must use every modern device—television, the Press, films, posters and (perhaps more importantly) the example set by every soldier—to sell itself.

by every soldier—to sell itself. Already the Army has taken an experimental step in the right direction by buying space on television advertising programmes, and the results have been encouraging. Equally commendable is the scheme adopted by the Green Jackets Brigade of inviting young men to spend a weekend at their Winchester Depot, learning about the Army at first hand. There would seem to be no good reason why all other brigade depots should not copy the idea. And why not carry it a stage further by inviting the dads and mums and girl friends, too?

The Army knows that these kind of efforts will not alone produce all the recruits it wants and is conscious of the need to make the soldier's life even more attractive by giving him a new uniform, new weapons and equipment, speeding up the building of more married quarters and barracks and injecting a greater sense of purpose and more adventure into his training.

It knows, too, that the best advertisement for the Army is the soldier himself—proud and content, well-paid, smart and well-behaved and deeply interested in his job as a guardian of the peace.

**I**N a recent debate in the House of Commons Brigadier Sir John Smythe VC said the Army had become used to doing everything in far greater numbers than before—an implied criticism of those who say that the new all-Regular Army will be too small to enable Britain to meet all her overseas commitments.

"Before World War Two we had little garrisons in all sorts of out-of-the-way places," he said, "and I believe we would shudder at the thought of putting them there in such small numbers today."

There is some validity in his argument. Although the Regular Army before World War Two totalled some 190,000, it did have many more overseas garrisons—like Palestine, Sudan, Egypt, Ceylon, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, India and Burma—to fill. It was also a poorly-equipped army by modern standards, with few tanks and armoured cars and capable of only a fraction of the fire power of the Army of 1963.

If the Brigadier is right the Army must set about getting used to doing with fewer men without delay.



More and more soldiers are flying—to the Middle and Far East and now to Germany. But when a major unit moves overseas it still travels in the traditional way—by troopship



A balloon bobbing on the ocean is a very small but a satisfying target to hit. Note the tethered rifles! Below: First-class cabin passengers take it easy on the promenade deck.



Football helps to keep one fit and there is always a keen rivalry in the inter-troopdeck games. Below: Off Port Said the "bum-boats" men bring the shops to the ship in their rowboats.



Pictures by Lieut-Col J. F. Willcocks, RA.

## GUNNERS ON THE HIGH SEAS

**E**YES down, look in," shouts the housey-housey barker from his vantage point on the foredeck. Dutifully a hundred pairs of eyes concentrate on the cards, oblivious to the gulls wheeling overhead and to the flecked sea creaming past the troopship's bows as she steams steadily onwards.

The babble of idle chatter dies away and, side by side, veteran hammock-slingers and youngsters who have yet to find their sea-legs wait in expectant silence for the first number to come up.

Housey-housey, morning rounds, the tug-o'-war, target balloons capering astern in the

wind, Sunday services, lifeboat drill... these for decades have been a traditional part of life aboard a trooper.

Although air trooping has now snatched half the Army's migrants, the long sea voyage is still far from becoming merely an old soldier's reminiscence. Major units, with their families and stores, still travel by sea and from distant stations.

Typical of today's sea trooping was the recent return of 26 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, to its old hunting ground of Malaya. The Regiment sailed from Southampton, lining the decks to wave a personal farewell and for the traditional send-off by

distinguished visitors while the Royal Artillery Band played the regimental marches and *Auld Lang Syne*.

The Gunners sailed in the 20,586-ton *Oxfordshire*, built in 1957 and the newest of the remaining troopers. Once aboard, the veterans were quick to appreciate her up-to-date amenities—the bunks, self-service restaurant, air-conditioned hospital and the anti-roll stabilisers.

The tyros, unmoved by tales of the old days of hammocks slung over the tables in crowded mess decks, as quickly appreciated that once they had found their sea-legs and their bearings, life aboard a trooper is much the same as in barracks.

The ship's orderly room, little different from any other, answers the queries—"Where do I get stamps?" and "Where is 'A' deck aft?" There are pay parades, sports fixtures, entertainments, fatigues—and 24-hour guards, on the lookout for fires or a man overboard. The younger soldiers rapidly



Volunteers look after the younger children and for an hour or two their elders can enjoy a little peace.



The ladies' cricket match is a popular attraction. Local rules limit the temptation to sledge by making a ball overboard minus six and out.

learn that ship's orders are there to be read—and obeyed—and that it is unwise to appear at emergency stations with a badly-fitting lifejacket.

Soon,

with Gibraltar, the apes and a

glimpse of a Spanish bullring now a memory,

the *Oxfordshire* steams through the Mediterranean. On deck the Gunners sprawl in the sun, with bodies of new angry red and occasional undignified white vying with the seasoned hues of pale brown to charcoal. At night they sleep under the stars; preferring the discomforts of planking to an unbearable heat below decks.

Although there is no regimental band aboard, a skiffle group gets together to play at the dances and troopdeck sing-songs, and under an awning of stars the open-air cinema screens the genius of *Guinness* and the intricate gyrations of *Monroe* as the *Oxfordshire* cruises at 17 knots through the night.

A team of soldiers, under the indefatigable Master-at-Arms (ex-Regimental Sergeant-Major Jones, of The Cheshire Regiment)

clears away the debris of children's sports

and the fancy dress parade (voted an equal

attraction to the ladies' cricket match) and

puts up awnings, stalls and bunting for the ship's fair.

"Roll up, roll up! All down and a prize," roars a bombardier who three weeks previously was packing his gun stores. "Eyes down," shouts the housey-housey barker. In the midst of the babel the adjutant quietly sells raffle tickets. By cajoling and badgering he produces the impossible sum of £75.

Shrieks of derision greet the unfortunate goalkeeper on the football pitch. "Hockey was never played like this," moan the Gunner officers as men of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, travelling with the Gunners, whip eight goals past them in as many minutes.

Fortunes are restored on the cricket pitch where in the final game of the voyage the officers at last defeat the ship's crew, it being tacitly understood that the unavoidable absence of the Master is the sole reason for this victory.

Daily, except on Sundays, the stentorian voice of Ship's Regimental Sergeant-Major E. Guest reverberates throughout the 609-foot length of the *Oxfordshire*: "The Master's inspection is due to begin in ten minutes." Troops give their areas a last-minute polish,

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**D**URING the last 100 years, 26 Field Regiment has been stationed at home for only 35 years—28 of them at Shorncliffe. In the past 30 years it has spent only five years in Britain.

From 1946 to 1951, the Regiment served with great distinction against the Communists in Malaya, fighting as Infantry and killing or capturing 127 terrorists, a number exceeded by few British Infantry battalions.

A former commanding officer of the Regiment is Colonel Frank Weldon, the international horseman.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

troopdeck sergeants glance anxiously around for a stray sock or an "idle" boot and stand ready for the appearance of Captain N. F. Fitch, the Master.

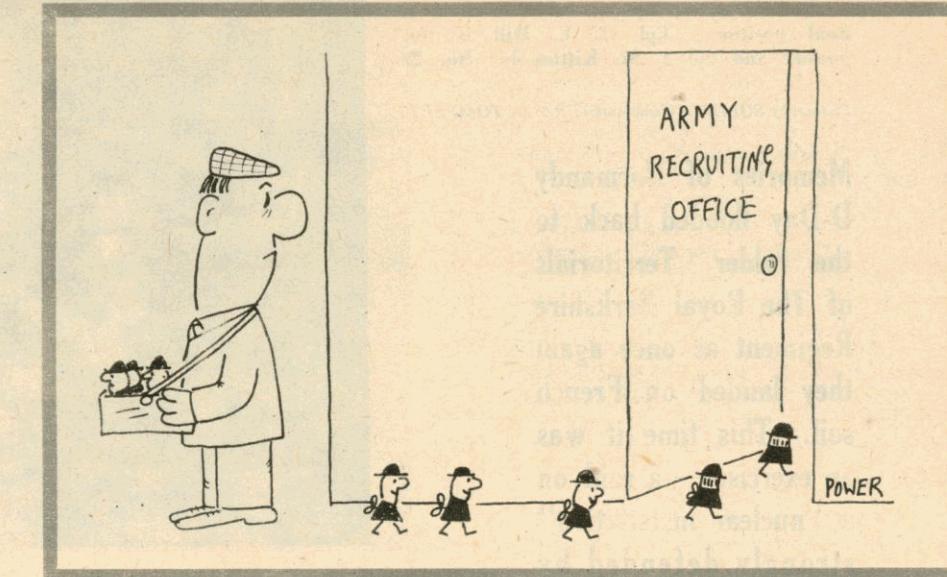
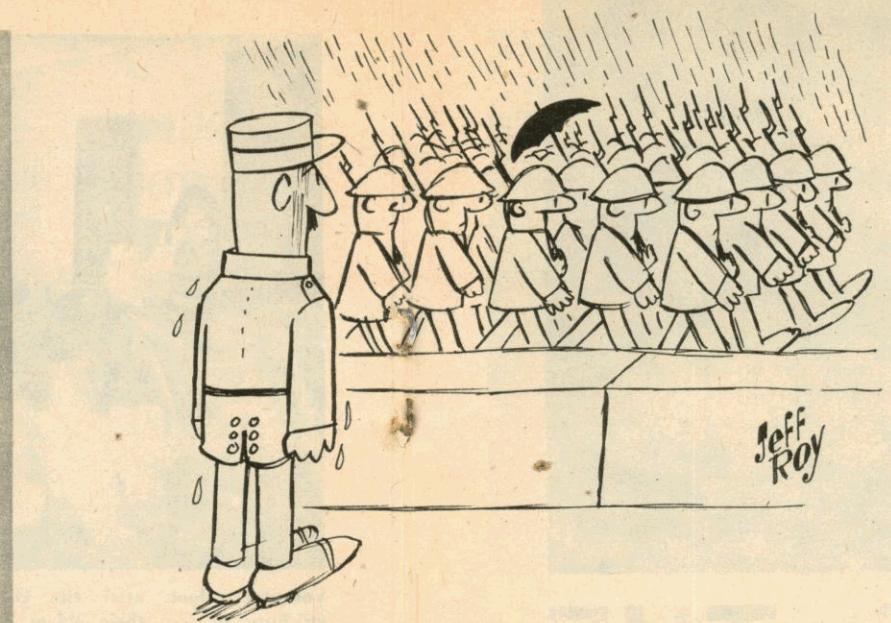
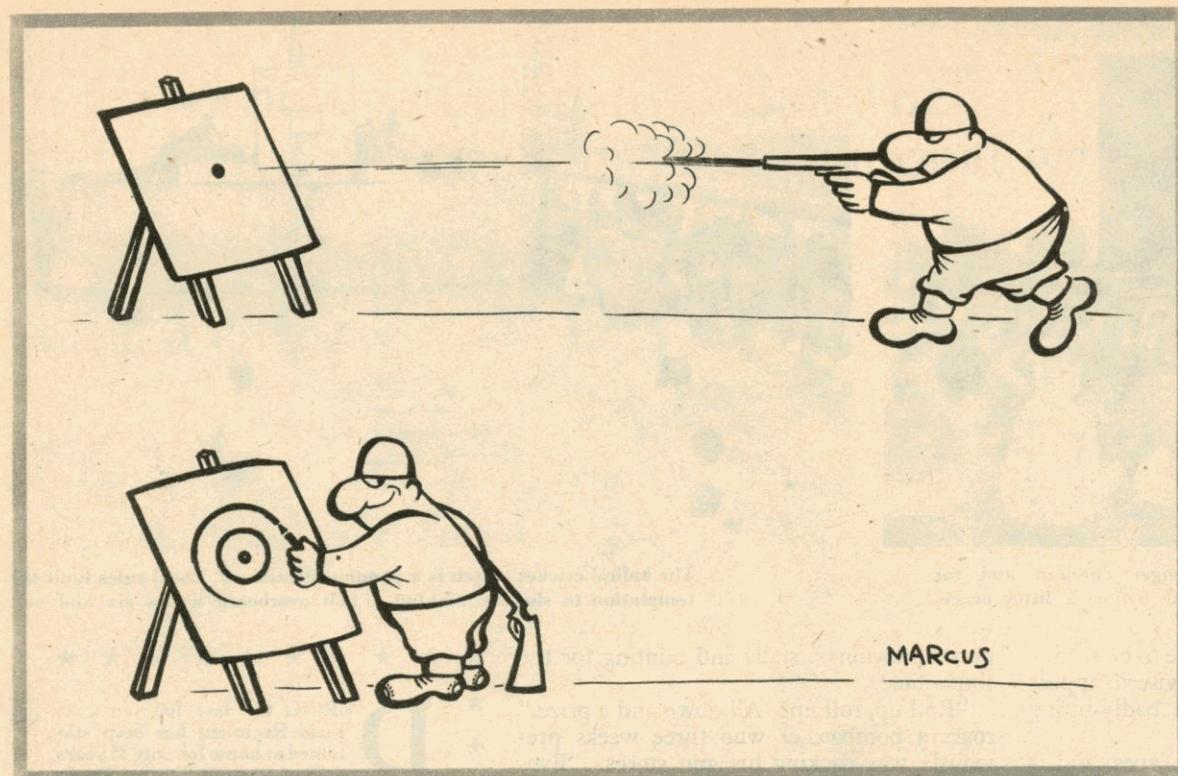
Military training wedges itself between formidable programmes of inter-troopdeck sport and entertainment. In the sergeants' dining saloon soldiers wrestle with the mysteries of Third Class education. Officers give talks on tropical and specialised subjects. The Regiment's Medical Officer, Lieutenant E. O'Daly, lectures everyone on diseases and hazards of life in Malaya, on jellyfish and stingrays, centipedes and spiders. Rifles crackle as the troops try to shoot down the balloons trailing astern.

The children, for hours quiet in their classrooms, now erupt on deck. "Davy Crockett" chases "Wild Bill Hickock" through the centre of a middle-aged and forbearing game of deck tennis. Only at Port Said are they overawed—dumbfounded by the "Gully-gully" man solemnly producing chickens from thin air.

So through the Canal, down to Aden's Steamer Point and across the Indian Ocean. Now the *Oxfordshire* slowly steams into Singapore's roads, and soon the band of the 2nd New Zealand Regiment plays the Regiment ashore.

Ahead lie a train journey up country to Tampin, and a fresh chapter to be opened in its history as 26 Field Regiment, back in Malaya again, proudly becomes the first regiment to move into the new Commonwealth cantonment at Fort George.—From a report by Lieut C. A. Harris and Lieut J. M. Mesch, RA.

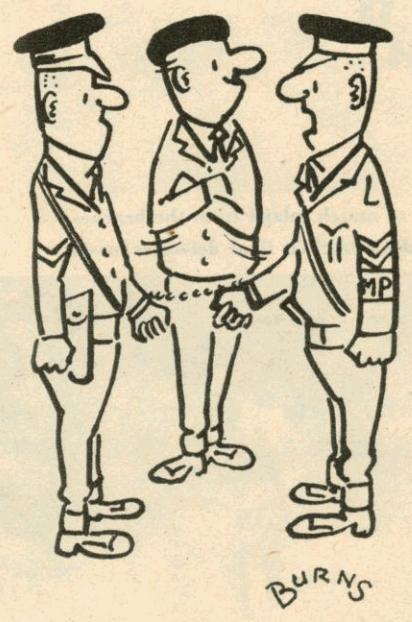
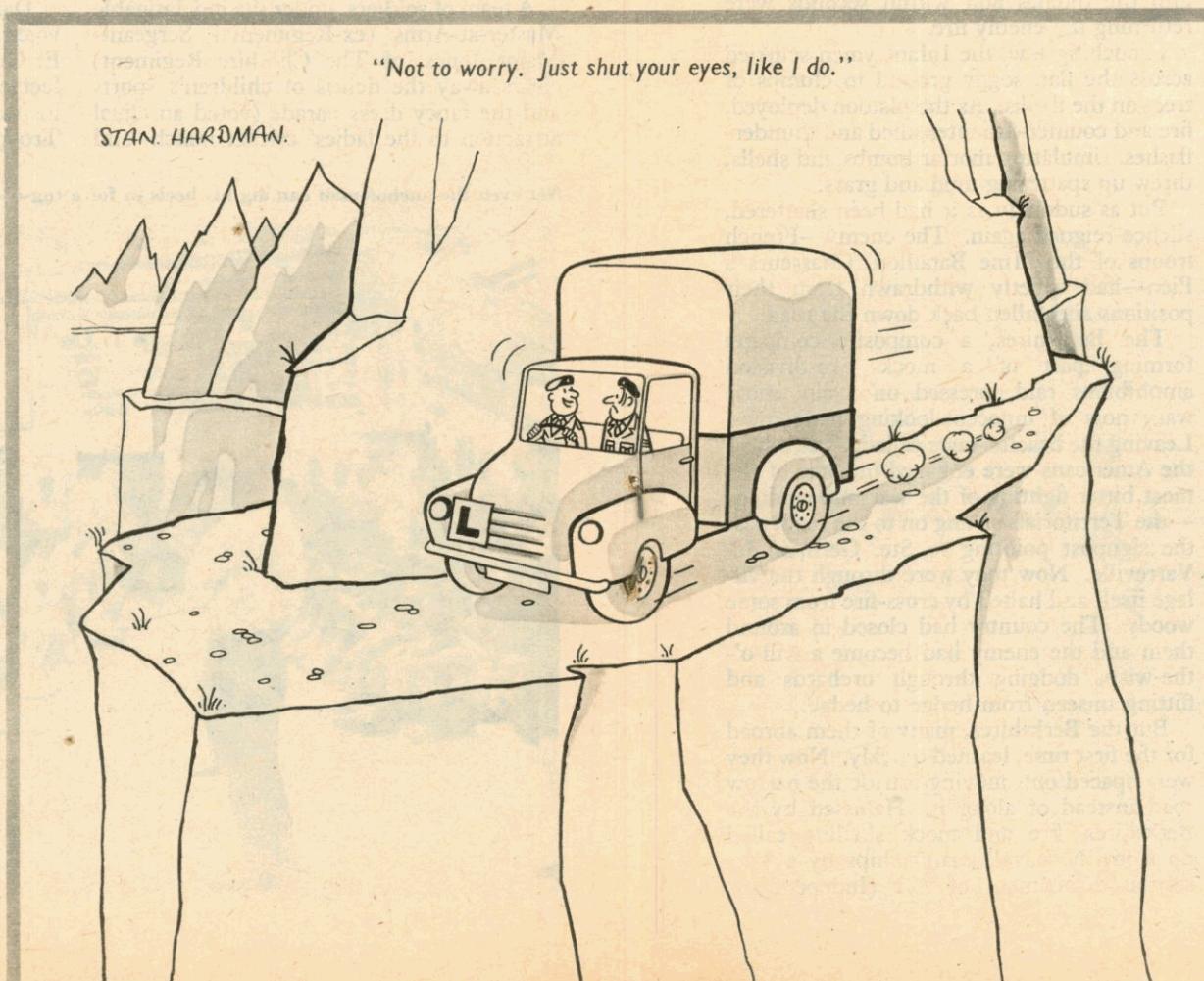




## SOLDIER HUMOUR



"I'm afraid I have bad news, Private Heathcote."



"He's not called Slippery Smith for nothing, Corporal. Watch him."



A Vickers opens up against the enemy's final position. Cpl H. C. Hill is the gunner and Cpl J. M. Kittles his No. 2.

Pictures by SOLDIER Cameraman FRANK TOMPSETT.

**Memories of Normandy**  
D-Day flooded back to the older Territorials of The Royal Berkshire Regiment as once again they landed on French soil. This time it was an exercise — a raid on a "nuclear installation" strongly defended by French soldiers of the 21me Chasseurs à Pied



## BACK TO THE D-DAY BEACHES



The Berkshires form up in platoons, ready to march inland from the beaches.  
Below: Men of the Chasseurs à Pied withdraw to their final defensive posts.



FROM the sand dunes backing the Normandy beach, a deserted road, flanked by water-logged ditches, pointed across windswept and rain-sodden fields towards a wooded slope. Along the road, their boots crunching on the gravel verges, marched Territorials of the 4th/6th Battalion, The Royal Berkshire Regiment.

Suddenly, crackling rifle fire and the stutter of a machine-gun burst from a hedge-row a few hundred yards ahead. The spearhead and leading sections flung themselves into the ditches and within seconds were returning the enemy fire.

Crouching low, the Infantrymen scurried across the flat, soggy ground to clumps of trees on the flanks. As the platoon deployed, fire and counter-fire intensified and thunder-flashes, simulating mortar bombs and shells, threw up spattering mud and grass.

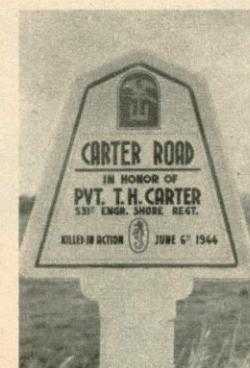
But as suddenly as it had been shattered, silence reigned again. The enemy—French troops of the 21me Bataillon, Chasseurs à Pied—had quietly withdrawn from their positions and fallen back down the road.

The Berkshires, a composite company forming part of a mock two-division amphibious raid, pressed on again, more wary now of innocent-looking hedgerows. Leaving the beach—once called Utah, where the Americans were engaged in some of the most bitter fighting of the wartime landings—the Territorials swung on to the road, past the signpost pointing to Ste. Germain-de-Varreville. Now they were through the village itself and halted by cross-fire from some woods. The country had closed in around them and the enemy had become a will-o'-the-wisp, dodging through orchards and flitting unseen from hedge to hedge.

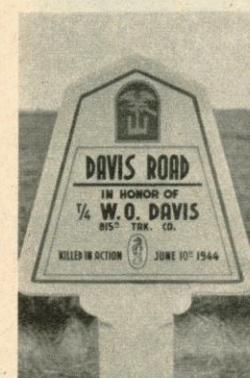
But the Berkshires, many of them abroad for the first time, learned quickly. Now they were spaced out, moving astride the narrow road instead of along it. Harassed by the Berkshires' fire and mock shelling called up from the naval assault ships by a Territorial detachment of 881 (Independent)



Lieut J. P. M. Hamill, RN, Gunnery Officer of HMS *Finisterre*, leading a night patrol of the destroyer's own landing party.



Right: Lieut-Col L. J. L. Hill MC hands his Battalion's gift to Commandant Deschars of the 21me Battalion, Chasseurs à Pied.



Left: The debris of war has long disappeared from around Utah beach but these two roadside memorials recall the grim battles of the USA advance.



Berkshires, and Commandant Deschars, of the 21me Chasseurs—pin-pointed its lessons. Outside, General C. D. Maurin, Commandant le Groupe de Subdivisions de Caen, inspected the front rank of a hollow square of Chasseurs, Berkshires, Gunners, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and welcomed the British to Normandy soil.

Then Lieutenant-Colonel Hill presented to Commandant Deschars—his battalion was due to leave a fortnight later for service in Algeria—a framed replica of the Berkshires' badge and colours. In return the Commandant handed to the Colonel his own regimental badge, bearing a hunting horn and the devil which gives the Chasseurs their nickname of "Blue Devils."

Finally, after a get-together in a happy mêlée of wine, canned beer and thunder-flashes, the British left by lorry to spend the remainder of the day on leave in Cherbourg.

The Berkshires and Gunners had embarked at Portsmouth in the *Finisterre* and *Loch Fyne* but the original plan to make an amphibious assault in Normandy had to be modified. A tank landing craft developed engine trouble and was unable to sail with the destroyer and frigate, and, because of breakers and a gale-force wind, an alternative plan to land the troops in Royal Marine-manned Gemini light assault craft was abandoned at the last minute. Instead the force landed at Cherbourg and travelled by lorry to start the exercise from Utah beach.

PETER N. WOOD

FOR most of the Territorials both France and sailing with the Royal Navy were a new experience. For a few it was a nostalgic return to a country where they had fought in World War Two.

Drum-Major A. G. Jones landed in France in 1939 with the Regiment's 1st Battalion and returned through Dunkirk, wounded. Four years later he was back again, landing on D-Day with the 10th Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry. Company Sergeant-Major B. Beckley, of "C" Company, was also in the Normandy landings, serving with the 2nd Battalion, The Essex Regiment.



# AND THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS FELL

BHURPORE, SYMBOL OF INDIAN PRIDE AND DEFIANCE, WOULD NEVER BE CONQUERED, SAID THE JATS. BUT IT FELL TO LORD COMBERMERE AFTER ONE OF THE MOST BITTER SIEGES AND DESPERATE ASSAULTS IN BRITISH MILITARY HISTORY



"Soon, the bottom of the gorge was filled with writhing bodies . . ." An artist's impression of the scene near the Juggenah Gate as men of the 58th Native Infantry and 1st European Regiment, and Gurkhas, slaughtered hundreds of Jats.

## IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS FELL

**I**T was eight o'clock in the morning on 18 January, 1826. On the towering ramparts of Bhurpore, in Central India, 25,000 men of two of India's most warlike races—the Jats and Pathans—peered into the mist, suspicious of the silence after a month of incessant artillery bombardment.

From the British trenches there was no sight nor sound of movement. The besiegers might have melted away in the night.

At that moment 10,000 pounds of powder, buried deep under the north-east bastion, exploded with a deafening roar. Masses of earth, shattered masonry and bodies shot into the air.

Behind the pall of dust a band began to play "The British Grenadier" and then a mighty cheer drowned the music as British and native troops swarmed into the breach and headed for the heart of rebel power in India.

Within a few hours Bhurpore, the impregnable, had fallen.

The fortress had long been a thorn in Britain's side. Twenty years earlier Lord Lake's army had been repelled with over 3000 casualties after four attempts to take it by storm. Then, in 1825, the Rajah of Bhurpore died and his six-year-old son, Bulwant Singh, succeeded him. Within a month the boy lay in prison and his rascally cousin, Durjan Sal, had taken his place.

Sir David Ochterlony, Resident at Delhi, promptly sent a force against Bhurpore only for the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, to censure him and recall the troops. Ochterlony resigned and shortly died—from a broken heart, it was said.

To the rebels this was another sign that the British were afraid of attacking Bhurpore but, ironically, within a few weeks of Ochterlony's death, Lord Amherst decided to meet the challenge. On the Duke of Wellington's advice, Lord Combermere was appointed to lead a mixed force of 27,000 King's and East India Company troops against the fortress.

All India held its breath as Combermere led his men out of Agra and across the 32 miles of jungle and plain to Bhurpore. There was to be no failure this time. With the army were 112 heavy pieces of artillery and 50 lighter guns, the native cavalry was bolstered by two illustrious British regiments—the 16th Lancers and the 11th Light Dragoons—and the 12,000 Infantry included 2000 men of the British 14th Foot (now The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire) and the 59th Foot (now The Lancashire Regiment).

Bhurpore stood, massive and seemingly impregnable, in their path. The fortress, standing on a level plain, was eight miles



The assault by the 59th, led by Captain Carmichael, after the huge mine had breached the wall. Before the assault, Captain Carmichael, with a Sapper officer and six Gurkhas, gallantly reconnoitred the breach made by the guns and brought back vital information which decided Combermere to attack without delay.

in perimeter and its outer walls, supported by 35 bastions, were 60 feet thick in places, strengthened by tree trunks buried upright. Since Lake's defeat an extra bastion had appeared, built, said the Jats, on the bones of the British dead. Surrounding the outer walls was a continuous ditch, up to 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep, which could be flooded by the defenders, and the solid stone walls of the inner citadel reared 114 feet above the plain.

The British force moved into position around Bhurpore in the last weeks of 1825 and an enemy attempt to flood the ditch was brilliantly forestalled by the 16th Lancers and Skinner's Horse, who held on until relieved by the Infantry.

Lord Combermere now decided to concentrate his assault on the north-east bastion and, thanks to fine work by the Engineers, the 3/3 Bengal Foot Artillery (now 57 Medium Battery, Royal Artillery), was able to bring two batteries into action on 23 December.

A third battery was set up only 250 yards from the bastion on Christmas Day, and next day began to pound the wall. Daily, fresh batteries were thrown in, and by 4 January the north-east angle was ringed by 75 heavy-calibre guns. So rapid was the rate of fire that 150 native Infantry were employed non-stop to carry up ammunition.

For 26 days the Gunners of eight companies of Bengal Foot Artillery poured shot and shell into the wall. For three weeks it seemed that they were merely wasting their ammunition but, at last, a small breach appeared and daily the concentrated barrage enlarged it.

Each day the anxious British commander studied the breach. Was it large enough to take a storming party? Dare he risk an assault and possible disaster?

Captain Carmichael, of the 59th, gave him the answer on 16 January. With a Captain Davidson, of the Engineers, and six Gurkha volunteers, he walked in daylight up to the

breach. Lord Combermere, who had to be restrained from leading the assault, followed them into the breach and himself planted the British flag high on the wall.

The 14th surged through the gap, swung right along the ramparts and ran full tilt into the survivors of the 800 defenders of the north-east angle, at least half of whom had been blown up in the explosion. Gradually the enemy were forced back to the lip of a 60-foot gorge.

On the far side another group of defenders fought despairingly against a force of Gurkhas and soon the bottom of the gorge was full of writhing bodies, many with clothing ablaze from point-blank musket fire.

The 59th went through the breach without firing a shot, turning left along the rampart and smashing down the defenders. One party plunged into the town and the rest swept round the rampart until they met the 14th. Meanwhile Brigadier-General Adams, with his Bengal battalions, had burst through the Muttra Gate, on the far side, and also moved into the town. Now, Lord Combermere brought up two 12-pounders to blow in the gate of the inner citadel, and the threat prompted a speedy capitulation. Bhurpore, the invincible, had fallen.

The Jats suffered 14,000 casualties, and 7000 horsemen who escaped from the fortress were killed or captured by the Cavalry. The 8th Native Light Cavalry achieved the day's final success, capturing Durjan Sal and his bodyguard as they attempted to race to safety through the jungle. British casualties for the whole campaign were about 1000, most of them suffered by the 14th and 59th.

For once, there was a rich reward for the victorious troops, all of whom shared in the £480,000 prize money. Lord Combermere received £60,000—and was later robbed of every penny by a dishonest banker!

After the battle the young rajah was restored to his throne by the British and the fortifications of Bhurpore were destroyed.

In 1936, exactly 150 years after Bhurpore, No. 6 Mountain Artillery, which the 3/3 Bengal Foot Artillery had become, was awarded the battle honour "Bhurpore." A handsome bronze gun, presented by the Government of India to the Bengal Artillery in honour of its work at Bhurpore is now on display at Woolwich.

• An old Jat legend said that Bhurpore would never fall until a *khumbir* (alligator) had drunk the water in the ditch. Lord Combermere's name was close enough to *khumbir* to satisfy the Jats that the prophecy had been fulfilled.

K. E. HENLY

### FIRST AND LAST

THE Battle of Bhurpore produced a notable "first" and "last" for the British Army.

It was the first occasion on which the Gurkhas fought with the British, and the fiery warriors won a well-deserved battle honour.

The Gurkhas were in the thick of the fighting inside the fortress and throughout the four-week campaign had acted as sharpshooters. Their fire was so accurate that, according to an eye-witness, "scarcely a single enemy dared to raise his head over the parapet of the ramparts."

Bhurpore was also the last occasion on which British Grenadiers went into battle carrying the weapon that had given them their name. In the assault, the 59th carried grenades that were provided with fuses but not loaded. Lord Combermere's theory was that a grenade with a burning fuse terrified the enemy just as much as a loaded one, but was far less dangerous to the thrower!

# DEVONS AND DORSETS IN THE DESERT

**A**S five British Army vehicles churned through the drifting sand deep in the Libyan Desert one of the soldier passengers rubbed his eyes and peered into the shimmering distance.

"Look," he shouted, "a mirage!"

But the palm-trees round the huge salt lake and the mud houses behind were no mirage. They were part of Kufra, the world's largest oasis on the edge of the Sahara, and the end of a six-day journey for 20 men of

The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment and Inkerman Battery, Royal Artillery, who had driven 750 miles from Benghazi on a desert survival and navigation expedition.

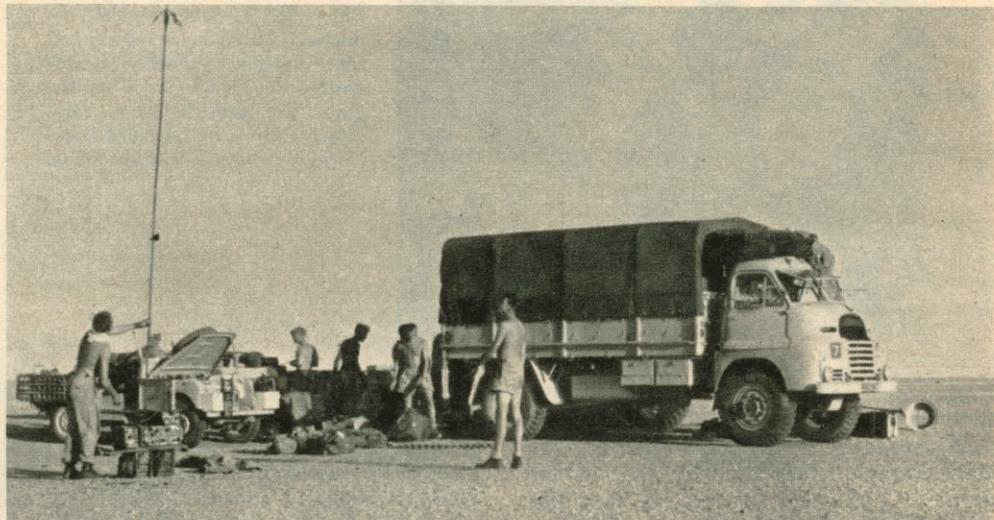
Led by Captain T. Essame, of the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, the party left Benghazi in two three-ton lorries and three Land-Rovers, navigating by sextant and sun compass and travelling some 130 miles a day in sweltering heat. Time and again the vehicles became bogged down and had to be

dug out and re-started on sand channels.

The expedition carried its own "compo" rations but drew water from wells en route. Halfway to Kufra the party met men of 329 Engineer Detachment, United States Army, who were surveying the area.

After spending a day in Kufra the expedition turned round and made for Benghazi again, reaching it four days later in spite of a severe sandstorm.—From a report by L/Cpl J. K. Howell, Military Observer.

Halfway across the Libyan Desert the Devons and Dorsets, with the Gunners, set up a radio station to speak to the base nearly 400 miles away in Benghazi.



## SNAP SHOTS

## SOLDIERS SCALE THE MATTERHORN

**A**N impressive sort of place," said Second-Lieutenant John Longland, of 229 Signal Squadron (Berlin), as he flicked a cigarette end into Switzerland.

Beside him, Driver Michael Roberts grimaced as he swallowed the last mouthful of a dried banana and flung the skin into Italy.

The two British soldiers, with a Royal Air Force junior technician, were sitting on top of the famous Matterhorn, 14,680 feet up in the Swiss Alps, resting after an arduous and often dangerous climb in just over four hours from the base of the Hoernli ridge. They were the only members to reach the summit of a party of seven British Servicemen stationed in Berlin and spending two weeks climbing in the Alps.

In the first week, the climbers conquered seven Alpine peaks and, when the weather improved, tackled the Matterhorn. Roped in pairs they set off before dawn, climbing quickly over steep, slippery rock, and two hours later had reached the Sotray Refuge; then up through steeper, snow- and ice-covered rock to 14,000 feet at the top of a long snow-slope above which reared the summit.

Using the permanent ropes on the mountain, the three men selected to try for the top hauled themselves slowly and painfully up, swinging into space at each step. The final climb to the summit was over snow-plastered slabs from which many climbers have fallen



on to the glacier, 5000 feet below, since the mountain was first conquered in 1865.

After 15 minutes on the top the three men descended, rejoined their comrades and made their way back to the base hut.

With the Matterhorn towering above them, members of the expedition rest at the Hoernli ridge before making their final assault on the summit.



## COLOURS FOR THE ROYAL TANK REGIMENT

IT was a proud day for the Royal Tank Regiment when, on a lawn in the gardens of Buckingham Palace, their Colonel-in-Chief, the Queen, presented standards and guidons to five Regular and three Territorial Army Regiments.

The standards handed over to the five Regular regiments—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th, all now serving overseas—and to the 40th/41st Royal Tank Regiment (TA) were the first colours to be given to the Royal Tank Regiment and the guidons presented to The North Somerset Yeomanry/44th Royal Tank Regiment and the Westminster Dragoons (2nd County of London Yeomanry) replaced their old guidons.

During the parade, the commanding officers and regimental sergeant-majors of the eight regiments were presented to the Queen who also spoke to Captain P. J. Gardner, who won the Victoria Cross when serving with 4th Royal Tank Regiment at Tobruk in 1941, and to other former members of the Regiment. They included 79-year-old Mr. S. C. Bullock, who fought in the South African War with the North Somerset Yeomanry, and Lieutenant V. Huffam, the first officer to be selected from volunteers to serve with tanks. He fought in the first tank action at Flers in 1916.

Beside the drums on which the new Colours were piled, the Queen addressed the eight regiments in her gardens at Buckingham Palace.

## MEDALS FOR THE GIRLS IN GREEN

HISTORY was made in a drill hall at Hindhead recently when Major-General D. S. O'Connor, commanding Aldershot District, presented the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to four members of the Women's Royal Army Corps School of Instruction.

It was the first time four members of a unit have received the award the same day.

The four "old soldiers"—Warrant Officers Two Jessie Forbes and Mary Polley, Sergeant Mary Deans and Corporal Hazel Bell—share 78 years' service since joining the wartime Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Warrant Officer Forbes, who joined up as a clerk in February, 1940, and is now Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant at the School, has served in Germany, the Far East and Cyprus; Warrant Officer Polley, enlisted as a cook in June, 1940, is now Quartermaster Sergeant-Instructor in cookery.

Sergeant Mary Deans, who also received from the General the British Empire Medal, joined the ATS in November, 1941, and for the last four years has been the only NCO in a cookhouse staffed mainly by young, inexperienced cooks. Corporal Bell is a cook who joined the ATS in June, 1941.



Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor Mary Polley joined the ATS in 1940 to be a cook.



Regimental Quarter-Master-Sergeant Jessie Forbes now has nearly 21 years' service.



Sergeant Mary Deans, who also received the BEM. She joined up in 1941 as a cook.



And this is Corporal Hazel Bell, who for 19 years has served on the School staff.



Cheung Lai-Ho looks wistful as Lieutenant-Colonel R. Leith-Macgregor presents the plaque to the Hon. Michael W. Turner, President of the Society for the Relief of Disabled Children.

## FIGHTING FIFTH PLAY THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

CHEUNG LAI-HO, a seven-year-old Chinese girl has reason to be grateful to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, for the "Fighting Fifth" is her fairy godmother, donating each month 100 Hong Kong dollars for her welfare.

The girl occupies a bed, adopted by the Battalion, in the Sandy Bay Children's Convalescent Home, Hong Kong.

Recently the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Leith-Macgregor MC DFC, presented the Children's Home with a regimental plaque to commemorate the link with his Regiment. It now hangs over Cheung Lai-Ho's bed with similar plaques presented by The Green Howards and The Lancashire Regiment which also adopted the bed when they were serving in Hong Kong.—From a report by Private B. J. Hickman, Military Observer.

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# NEW ZEALAND ARMY

## FREE PASSAGES TO NEW ZEALAND

Vacancies exist for few ex-Servicemen in following trades only: Catering, Wireless Operating, Telegraph or Keyboard Operating, Surveying, Ammunition Examining, Gun Fitting, Instrument Repairing, Electrical or Electronic Repair Work, Artillery Technical Assistants. Applicants must be single British subjects of European parentage born between 1 June, 1921 and 1 January, 1943 who have had two years military service. Starting rates of pay are between £9 and £16 per week all found, plus £16 per year clothing allowance.

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# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BATTLES?

**S**TART the New Year well by winning a prize in **SOLDIER'S** quiz about battles.

All you have to do is answer the questions below and send your entry to the Editor.

To each of the questions are given three alternative answers, only one of which is correct.

The sender of the **first** correct solution to be opened by the Editor may choose any two of the following recently published books: "The First World War" by Cyril Falls; "Poles Apart" by Richard Pape; "Archaeology in the Holy Land" by Kathleen Kenyon; "Battle: The Story of the Bulge" by John Toland; "The Outlaws of Partinico" by Danilo Dolci; "Berlin Blockade" by Max Charles; the thriller "Killer's Payoff" by Ed McBain; and "English Cooking" by Rupert Croft-Cooke.

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

The senders of the **fourth**, **fifth** and **sixth** correct entries will be sent **SOLDIER** free for a year.

All entries must reach **SOLDIER**'s London offices by Monday, February 20, 1961.

## RULES

1. Entries must be sent in a sealed envelope to:

The Editor (Competition 32), **SOLDIER**,  
433, Holloway Road, London, N.7.

2. Each entry must be accompanied by the "Competition 32" panel printed at the top of this page.

3. Competitors may submit only one entry.

4. Any reader, Serviceman or woman and civilian, may compete.

5. The Editor's decision is final.

The solution and names of the winners will appear in **SOLDIER**, April, 1961.

1. A famous soldier once said: (a) Julius Caesar.

"Nothing, except a battle lost, can be half so melancholy as a battle won." Who was he?

(a) Bannockburn, 1314.

(b) Edgehill, 1642.

(c) Balaclava, 1854.

2. In which battle were English soldiers fined a shilling each time they swore?

(a) Londonderry.  
(b) Agincourt.  
(c) Crecy.

(a) Dettingen, 1743.  
(b) Fuentes d'Onoro, 1811.  
(c) Second Ypres, 1915.

(a) Mons, 1914.  
(b) Loos, 1915.  
(c) Mareth Line, 1943.

3. In which battle did the Black Prince win his spurs?

4. In which battle was the first gas attack launched?



5. This statue commemorates a stirring action in which the London Irish Rifles took part, dribbling a football across No-Man's-Land. Where did it happen?

6. Which battle inspired the foundation of the International Red Cross?

(a) Solferino, 1859.  
(b) Zurich, 1799.  
(c) Minden, 1759.

7. Which battle introduced into English the word "diehard"?

(a) Albuhera, 1811.  
(b) Balaclava, 1854.  
(c) Lexington, 1775.

8. In which battle did the "Old Contemptibles" go into action?

(a) Mons, 1914.  
(b) Verdun, 1916.  
(c) Gallipoli, 1917.

9. In which war did war correspondents make their appearance?

(a) Agincourt, 1415.  
(b) Crimea, 1854.  
(c) South Africa, 1900.

10. In which World War One battle did the British Army suffer 60,000 casualties in a single day?

(a) Marne, 1914.  
(b) Loos, 1915.  
(c) Somme, 1916.

11. The Zulu War of 1879 is memorable because one of these was used for the first time:

(a) The Sam Browne belt.  
(b) Telescopic sights to rifles.  
(c) The machine-gun.

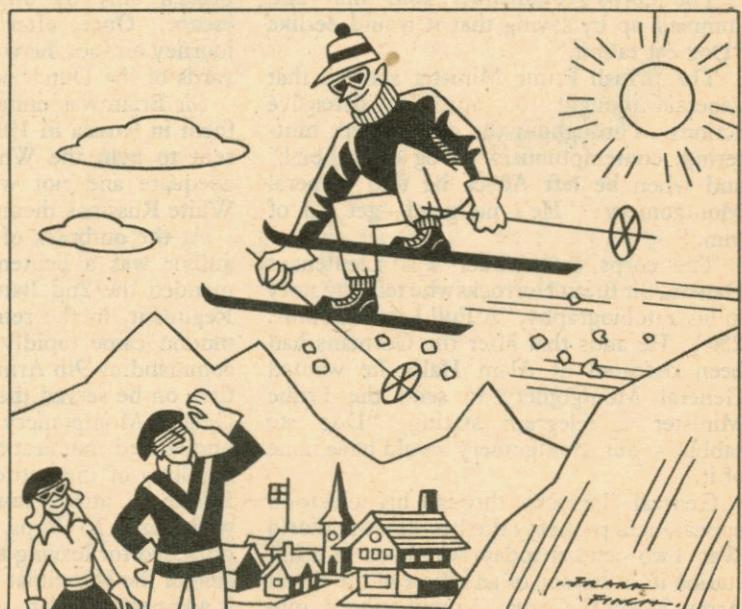
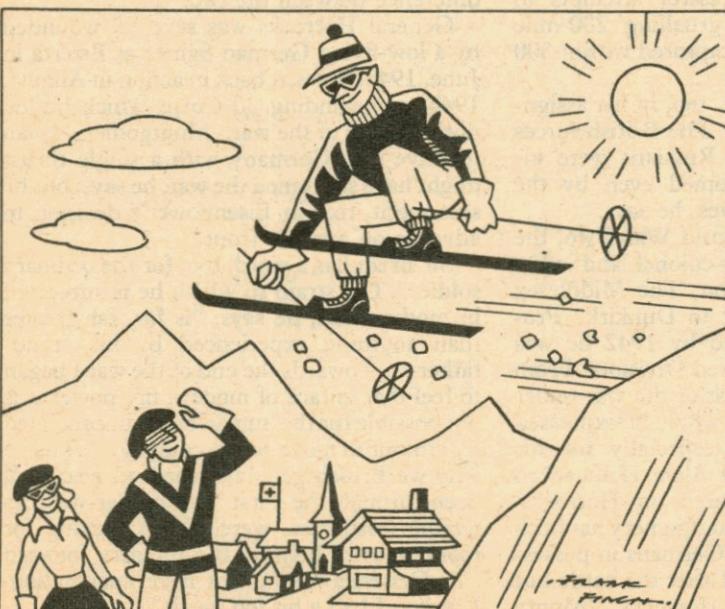
12. Which battle is the subject of a poem which begins: "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note"?

(a) Blenheim.  
(b) Inkerman.  
(c) Corunna.

13. Which battle in British history involved the enemy in the longest retreat?

(a) Valenciennes, 1918.  
(b) Second Battle of El Alamein, 1942.

## HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?



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.



## Sartorial Splendour

THE history of the British Army is a rich mixture with something in it for everybody. It is even richer when the Colonial and Dominion regiments which have served, or are still serving, the Crown are added.

Major R. Money Barnes is a historian who knows how to skim the cream off the mixture. He established his reputation with one book on the regiments and uniform of the British Army and another devoted to the Scottish regiments. Now he widens his scope with "Military Uniforms of Britain and the Empire" (*Seeley Service*, 42s.), a handsome and lavishly illustrated volume.

Among the most glamorous soldiers in the pictures are the officers of Skinner's Horse and Probyn's Horse, those famous regiments

of the old Indian Army, in full dress, the first in blue, the second in yellow, closely followed by a member of the Nizam of Hyderabad's Cavalry in emerald green. The most unexpected is an African drum-major of The King's African Rifles in kilt and tarbush, and the most fantastic an officer of the Royals in a cocked hat of 1808 which appears to go from below his nose to below his shoulders. The drawing is not a caricature.

Illustrations apart, this book is a treasury of out-of-the-way information. Here are some items gleaned from it:

The Neuchatel Regiment of de Meuron was composed of Swiss who served the Dutch East Indies Company for 15 years and fought against the British until their employers could no longer pay them. Then the Regiment offered itself to, and was accepted by the British Army, fought at Seringapatam, was stationed in England and went to Canada, where it was disbanded.

The cost of a Hussar officer's uniform in 1829 was £300 to £400, according to the regiment, which would now be some thousands of pounds.

Indian potentates' armies often had a kind of self-propelled artillery in the form of camel-guns. These were a cross between a light Elizabethan naval gun and a 1939 anti-tank rifle. They were carried on camels which, in battle, knelt down and had the guns fired from their humps.

A New Zealand Volunteer unit which once received a bad report held an indignation meeting and passed a vote of censure on the



Just over a century ago the kettle drummer of the 2nd Life Guards was dressed like this—popinjay feathers and all.

general who had made the inspection.

And here is the author's description of a soldier's hair-do in the 18th century: "Large quantities of candle-tallow, or lard, often with a rancid smell, were kneaded into the hair, and it was heavily powdered over this. It was strained back into the 'queue' or 'club' at the back of the neck . . . so tightly that it was said that if the man did not shut his eyes during the operation, he would not be able to do so afterwards. Hours were spent on this irksome duty, and there were stories of hungry rats, in second-class billets, gnawing the hair of sleeping men to get a meal from the grease!"



"It's not much, but it's home."

## The Too-Imaginative General

BEFORE the battle of Alam Halfa, the prelude to El Alamein, Mr. Winston Churchill visited the newly-formed Eighth Army and asked a corps commander how he was going to fight the battle to come.

The corps commander told him and summed up by saying that it would be like "Dog eat rabbit."

The British Prime Minister snorted that generals thought too much of defensive actions. Throughout the day he kept muttering, contemptuously, "Dog eat rabbit!" and when he left Africa he told General Montgomery: "He's no good—get rid of him."

The corps commander was Lieutenant General Sir Brian Horrocks who tells the story in his autobiography, "A Full Life" (*Collins*, 25s.). He adds that after the Germans had been defeated at Alam Halfa he wanted General Montgomery to send the Prime Minister a telegram stating, "Dog ate rabbit"—but Montgomery would have none of it.

General Horrocks, through his television appearances probably the best-known World War Two general today, was born in a hill station in India, son of an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Commissioned into

The Middlesex Regiment, he was in action with the BEF in France a fortnight after the outbreak of World War One, at the age of 18. At Ypres, he was wounded and taken prisoner.

He endured four years in prison camp, broken only by unsuccessful attempts to escape. Once, after a gruelling 200-mile journey on foot, he was captured within 500 yards of the Dutch border.

Sir Brian was unlucky, too, in his assignment in Russia in 1919. The British forces sent to help the White Russians were inadequate and not welcomed even by the White Russians themselves, he says.

At the outbreak of World War Two, the author was a lieutenant-colonel and commanded the 2nd Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment, in the retreat to Dunkirk. Promotion came rapidly and by 1942 he was commanding 9th Armoured Division. From then on he served the rest of the war under General Montgomery for whom he expressed unqualified admiration, especially for his handling of the battle of Alam Halfa when Rommel's attack foundered on Horrocks' well-dug-in 13 Corps. Montgomery has been criticised for leaving the Germans in possession of the Himeimat hill after the battle but it was part of a plan, says Horrocks. "Monty

wanted him (Rommel) to be able to see the dummy preparations for Alamein. While Rommel was leading his troops in person against our strongly-held defensive positions on the Alam Halfa ridge, Montgomery was planning the battle of Alamein. That was the difference between the two."

General Horrocks was severely wounded by a low-flying German fighter at Bizerta in June, 1943, but was back in action in August, 1944, commanding 30 Corps which he led until the end of the war. Montgomery's plan to drive into Germany with a single thrust might have shortened the war, he says, but he sees merit, too, in Eisenhower's decision to advance on a broad front.

Sir Brian has a word, too, for the ordinary soldier. The strain to which he is subjected in modern war, he says, "is far, far greater than anything experienced by his grandfather . . . Towards the end of the war I began to feel that in face of modern fire power it is not possible for the human body, unprotected by armour to move across country . . . That is why we British generals who had nearly all been through the First World War with its terrible casualties, were always seeking for more ways of helping the Infantry forward . . . Generals should not have imagination. I reckon I had a bit too much."

# On The Run In Rome

**W**HEN the Allies entered Rome in 1944, there were nearly 4000 escaped prisoners in and around the city.

They were organised, received orders from a commanding officer, were provided with billets (unless they were living rough in the country), supplied with money and black market food. Many of them had contributed, through the organisation that fed them, to the fund of Allied intelligence about the German forces in Italy.

The man behind all this was an escaped prisoner of war himself, a Territorial major from the Midlands. "The Rome Escape Line" (Harrap, 16s.), by Lieutenant-Colonel Sam Derry DSO, MC, is his record of the organisation's work.

Major Derry, as he then was, escaped twice from German captivity, the first time by making a dash for it in the Western Desert. In the retreat to Alamein he was captured again, and in time found himself on a train from Italy to Germany. Seizing a slender opportunity, he made a hazardous and unplanned jump from the train. Battered but whole, he hid in a friendly Italian farm and was soon put in touch with a group of escaped soldiers in the nearby hills.

His hide-out was in sight of Rome, and the local priest agreed to take a message to "anybody English" in the Vatican. The priest's first trip yielded money; the second brought a demand for the major to visit Rome.

With a load of cabbages, under which he hid at road checks, Major Derry travelled to the Eternal City, where he met Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, an Irish priest who was helping escapers from just outside the Vatican frontier. Disguised as a priest, Major Derry went into the Vatican and met the British Minister, Sir D'Arcy Osborne, who asked Major Derry to take charge of the organisation.

With the help of Monsignor O'Flaherty and the Minister's butler, John May, Major Derry was soon functioning. Administrative help was given by officers interned in the Vatican and gallant priests who had been working with Monsignor O'Flaherty helped to find billets for the escaped prisoners, guided them and carried money and supplies. Civilians, at the risk of their lives, accommodated the escapers in return for a bare subsistence allowance.

The most dangerous place for escapers in Italy was Rome, where German and Fascist control was tightest. Yet it was to Rome, with the hope of getting help from the Vatican, that most escapers went. The Vatican guards, however, had orders not to let them in. The constant stream of escapers, if they had been interned, would have swamped the little Papal state and given the Germans an excuse for violating its neutrality.

So the job of the escape organisation was to collect the escapers wherever they tried to get help in Rome, billet them temporarily, and then move them to the "country branch."

For a while all went smoothly, but the Germans and Fascists became aware of what was going on. The fault was partly that of escapers who did not obey orders (a Fascist newspaper complained that while Rome starved, British officers were dining in the most expensive restaurants!). The organisation also suffered from treachery. The author

has many tales of courage, comedy, tragedy and narrow escapes.

When things got too hot for him in Monsignor O'Flaherty's house, Major Derry was smuggled into the Vatican again and into the British Legation.

In the last days before the Germans left Rome, the organisation made frantic, but only partly successful efforts to get those of its members who had been captured out of prison before they could be transported to Germany. Then came liberation. The escapers went home, but not Major Derry and his staff. They stayed in Rome, to see that justice was done to the gallant civilians who had helped the organisation.

## An Enduring Memorial

**B**ETWEEN March, 1943, and June, 1945, Lance-Corporal Walter Stanley Robson, a stretcher bearer in the First Battalion, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, wrote almost every day to his wife, Margaret, whom he had married only two months before he was sent abroad.

"Letters From A Private Soldier" (Faber, 16s.) have now become an enduring memorial to an honest, cheerful British soldier.

Walter Robson, oldest of eight children of a working class family, left school at 14, yet he had a remarkable gift of expression. Observant, sensitive and implacable in his hatred and contempt for evil he was an idealist in his love of nature and beauty.

As a boy, Robson always set himself high standards of behaviour, and the squalor and misery he encountered in war left his bright spirit untouched. He loved life and people.

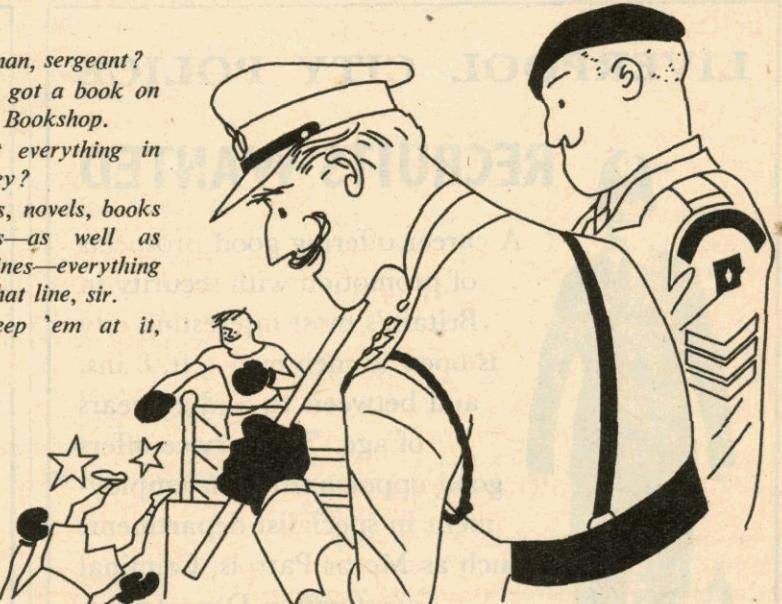
From North Africa, Italy and Greece his letters told of the fear, the misery and the humour of war. After being shelled, he wrote: *They tried for our observation post first, high on a ridge . . . we curled up half a dozen times while shots whistled over and sat waiting for the next one. Then a big flat ball of plush buzzed through—a bee looking like one of the 2s. 6d. seats at the Odeon without the ashtray.*

All the while, Walter Robson was suffering from tuberculosis, and in June, 1945, he died.

**BOOKS CONTINUED OVER**

Sgt: Knock out, sir.  
Capt: Splendid. Who's that man, sergeant?  
Sgt: Private Smith, sir. He got a book on boxing from the Forces Bookshop.  
Capt: Splendid. They've got everything in books there, haven't they?  
Sgt: Yes, sir—encyclopaedias, novels, books on sport, paperbacks—as well as children's toys, magazines—everything you could think of in that line, sir.  
Capt: Jolly good. Well, keep 'em at it, sergeant.

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# The Affair At Fort Sumter

**F**ORT SUMTER, as any American schoolboy knows, was the spark which set the fire of civil war raging across America.

The siege of Fort Sumter did not amount to much—a tiny, starving garrison holding out for 34 hours, in an engagement which cost each side only four wounded.

It was what went before the battle, and its commander's will for peace, that make Fort Sumter important to the historian and a symbol to both sides in the American Civil War.

In "First Blood" (Longmans, 30s.) W. A. Swanberg tells how, in 1860, Fort Sumter stood, unfinished and unoccupied, in Charleston harbour, one of a series of forts nominally manned by the United States Army. The small garrison lived in Fort Moultrie, on the mainland, and Major Robert Anderson was appointed to command it as the threat of war mounted.

All around Anderson's little garrison were potential enemies. Moultrie, Anderson saw, was a trap. Politically, too, it was dynamite.

As South Carolina moved towards secession, she made demands on the Union government for the forts round the harbour to be handed over. Despite corruption, treachery and incompetence, the government did not yield, but Anderson was left without clear orders about how to proceed.

On Boxing Day, 1860, he slipped his garrison from Moultrie to the island fort

of Sumter, a move viewed in Charleston with panic, since Sumter could menace shipping entering the harbour. Anderson, a Southerner himself, was a religious man with a high sense of duty, and not the man to start a war wantonly. He prepared, as best he could, to defend Sumter. His force consisted of nine officers, 68 soldiers, eight musicians and 43 non-combatant workmen employed on the defences. For 15 weeks they held on, watching the surrounding forces grow to 7000 men, with guns far outnumbering those the fort possessed.

With no food left but two days' supply of salt pork when Anderson refused an ultimatum to surrender, the Confederate guns began to fire on Sumter. A few hours later some ships of a mismanaged relief expedition were sighted outside the harbour, but they were not equipped to help the beleaguered garrison.

At last, with fires raging in his fort, Anderson was persuaded to surrender. The South Carolinians, who had cheered the garrison's resistance, gave it full honours, including the right to salute its flag. Ironically, a spark from one of the saluting guns set off a pile of cartridges and one man was killed and another mortally injured. They were the only men to die in this strange battle and the first men to die in the Civil War.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**P**ATRICK TURNBULL joined the Royal Sussex Regiment as a subaltern in India in 1928. He found the life not much to his taste and after three years took the decision—courageous because he had little money—to resign his commission and try to be an author.

A year later he was in North Africa, and "The Hotter Winds" (Hutchinson, 21s.) is his account of his life in Tangier, Algeria and Morocco in the 1930's. He experienced both comfort and near-destitution, and wandered in lands little-known to Europeans, apart from French administrators.

He records stories of the Goums, those dashing Moroccan irregulars and their

legendary officers, and tells, too, of his life with the French Foreign Legion.



**F**OR a change, here is an uncontroversial book about a controversial soldier: "Montgomery of Alamein" (Phoenix, 8s. 6d.) by Ronald W. Clark, one of the series of *Living Biographies for Young People*.

Simply and objectively written, this book praises its subject without denigrating other Allied generals. It describes the Field-Marshal's achievements in battle and his work as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and as chairman of the Western Union commanders-in-chief.

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HE FOUGHT WITH  
THE 67th AT

# KABUL

**A**LFRED HAWKER, late of the 67th Foot, proudly cut his birthday cake and showed his guests the regimental tie and cheque presented to him by the Colonel of The Royal Hampshire Regiment, Brigadier G. D. Browne.

He had good reason for pride. At the remarkable age of 102, ex-Private Hawker is believed to be Britain's oldest old soldier and the only survivor of the Second Afghan War of 1878-80 when he fought under Lord Roberts at Kabul.

Memories came flooding back as he told **SOLDIER** of his Army experiences 80 years ago. He began work at the age of nine in a corn mill, receiving only bed and board for wages. In those days work was hard to find and at 19, in 1877, he joined a draft of the 67th (now The Royal Hampshire Regiment) bound for the North-west Frontier of India.

Then, in July, 1879, the 67th marched through the Khyber Pass to Kabul to act as escort to Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Resident at Kabul, who had negotiated a peace treaty with the troublesome Amir Yakoub and was occupying the Bala Hissar, an ancient citadel housing an enormous arsenal and some of the Amir's troops.

Early one morning came news that the Amir's troops had set the Residency on fire and massacred the occupants, including Sir Louis. The 67th went into action and Private Hawker helped to hunt down the assassins.

Private Hawker took part in many of the subsequent battles against the Afghans and was in the force that relieved Kabul. On Christmas Eve, 1879, the Afghan hordes attacked the city but Lord Roberts' little force held out against odds of ten to one and sent the enemy fleeing in retreat, leaving behind 3000 dead. On that day Private Hawker's friend, Private Lever, who was standing beside him, was killed.

Mr. Hawker vividly remembers the march through the Khyber Pass when, wearing dazzling white uniforms, the 67th made excellent targets for snipers. The Regiment solved the problem by dyeing their uniforms in a solution of berry juice, tea leaves and gunpowder!



The last survivor of Kabul cuts his foot-square birthday cake inscribed: "Still going strong at 102." He also received a telegram of congratulations from the Queen and a regimental tie and a cheque from his old regiment.

He remembers, too, the intensely cold nights on the Frontier which killed some Indian troops, and a tremendous storm with hailstones as big as golf balls.

Ex-Private Hawker left the Army in 1889 with no gratuity, no pension and only £12—accumulated by saving 6d. a week—to start him in civilian life.

Mr. Hawker, who is the oldest citizen in West Ham, has this advice for all today's young soldiers: "Get abroad. It's not always comfortable but you do see life. I'd join up again if I could."



Congratulations to an old soldier from an older soldier. Sergeant O'Callaghan (left) shakes hands with SSM Lee after the parade.



## 80 YEARS SERVICE BETWEEN TWO

**I**T was a unique occasion at the Chester depot of 11th Signal Regiment, Royal Signals, recently, when Squadron Sergeant-Major Albert Edward Lee received the clasp to his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal from his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel E. A. Sinnock.

Among the 300 members of the Regiment paraded in a hollow square to do him honour was Sergeant Jeremiah O'Callaghan—at 62 one of Britain's oldest serving soldiers—who was awarded the clasp to his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1956. So far as is known, no other unit in the British or Commonwealth armies has two serving soldiers with this distinction.

Between them the two old soldiers—Sergeant O'Callaghan is 62 and Sergeant-Major Lee 51—have 80 years' Army service.

Sergeant O'Callaghan joined the Royal Irish Regiment in Cork in 1915, and after being wounded and captured in France in 1918 re-enlisted into the Royal Army Service Corps the following year, transferring to the Royal Corps of Signals in 1925. He wears the 1914-18 General Service and Victory medal ribbons alongside his World War Two decorations.

Squadron Sergeant-Major Lee, who was presented by the Queen with the British Empire Medal last November, enlisted as a bugler boy in the 27th Anti-Aircraft, Royal Engineers, Territorial Army, in 1923, and the following year joined the Coldstream Guards as a drummer. Fifteen months later he was discharged medically unfit but in six months was back in the Army, this time with the Seaforth Highlanders with whom he served for eight years before transferring to the Royal Corps of Signals in 1933.

Before World War Two he was in charge of the Army Wireless Station in Egypt from which sprang the vast wartime signals organisation in the Middle East. In World War Two he was mentioned in despatches for his work in the training and field operations of the Desert armies and in 1950 was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

# FOUR GRUELING DAYS AND NIGHTS AT

# THE WHEEL

Conditions could not have been worse for the Army's first motoring championships but few contestants failed to finish. They earned high praise, too, for driving skill

THE last of the 162 Army three-tonners, Land-Rovers and Champs drove through the final checkpoint in Bedford, its three-man soldier team red-eyed with fatigue after a gruelling 180-mile, all-night drive from Yorkshire.

It was the last stage of the Army's first driving championship—a four-day test of skill, stamina and nerve in appalling weather conditions which took the competitors over more than 1100 miles of roads in 19 counties, from Bedfordshire to Wales and up to Northumberland and back.

Organised by the newly-formed British Army Motoring Association under Royal Automobile Club rally rules, the championship proved to be a remarkable tribute to the high standard of driving in the Army. Although it rained almost incessantly throughout the four days and visibility was sometimes reduced to yards, not one of the 180 vehicles that left the start line was involved in an accident and only 18 failed to finish.

"Behaviour on the roads was excellent," the Chief Marshal, Major J. E. Raper, Royal



Foggy weather was an additional hazard during the obstacle tests on a barrack square in Bedford. Here a Champ belonging to 36 Corps Engineer Regiment drives gingerly through a narrow gateway.

\*\*\*\*\*

L/Cpl J. Tomlin (left), Sgt M. Burton and Pte M. Read of 71 Independent Company, WRAC, TA, plan the final leg.

Royal Marines are always at home when they can sling their hammocks (even if it is in the back of a three-ton lorry) and share a cup of hot tea.



Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (a Monte Carlo rallyist), told SOLDIER. "Drivers kept to their speed limits, their signals were good and they never held up other road users."

The championship was a triumph, too, for the Royal Army Service Corps whose teams won nine of the 26 prizes; and for 22 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, from Pembroke Dock, who won the SOLDIER Shield for the best cross-country performance and the Royal Artillery and Western Command trophies.

Fifty-three teams, each of three vehicles, from units in home commands and from Rhine Army took part. They represented almost every arm and included the Royal Marines and the Women's Royal Army

#### SILVER—NOT BRONZE

In SOLDIER (November) it was inadvertently stated that Lieutenant Michael Howard, of the Royal Pioneer Corps, had been awarded a bronze medal at the recent Olympic Games.

In fact, he won a silver medal as a member of the British team which took second place in the epee event. Lieutenant Howard thus became the only member of the Services to win a silver medal.

SOLDIER offers its apologies to Lieutenant Howard and the Royal Pioneer Corps.

Corps. They got off to a sticky start when, converging on Bedford by equidistant routes from York, Aldershot, Oswestry, Colchester and Blandford, they ran into thick fog. But all got through without mishap.

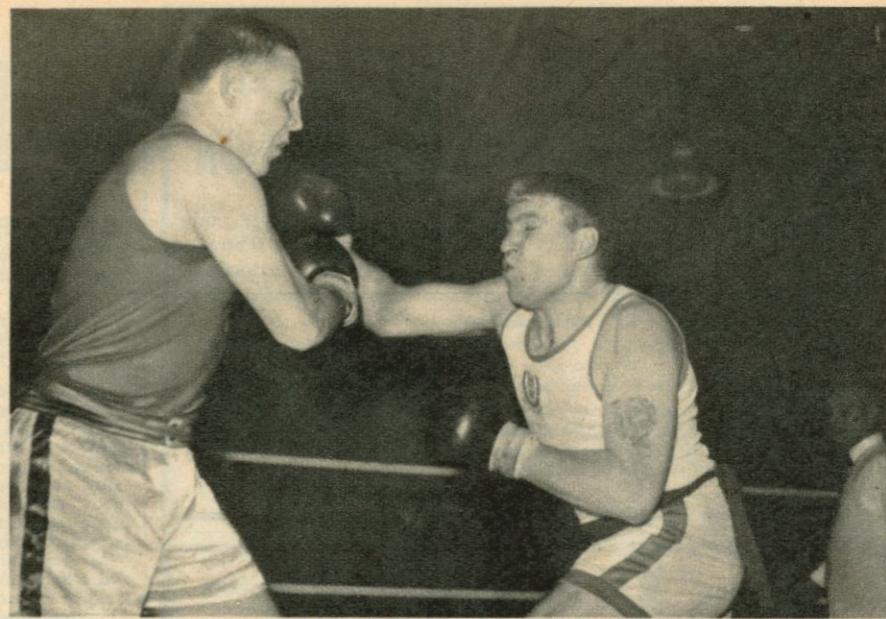
After manoeuvring tests, the contestants set out at minute intervals from Bedford for Sennybridge, the beginning of a clockwise course of nearly 1200 miles. Each vehicle had a crew of three who took turns at the wheel except during observed sections, map reading, cross-country and manoeuvring tests when only one—a lance-corporal or a private soldier nominated before the start—was allowed to drive.

The route for the Land-Rovers and Champs was mainly over minor roads and country lanes and that for the three-tonners over main and secondary roads. Vehicles had to keep to varying speed schedules and road courtesy and highway code behaviour were observed at secret checkpoints.

To complete the course on time each vehicle had to cover more than 250 miles a day—a challenging distance even in fine weather—and many had difficulty keeping up to schedule in the continuous rain which made the roads dangerously slippery. The weather was so bad that only two of the three cross-country events—at Sennybridge and Otterburn—could be held. The one at Hauxtall Moor, near Catterick, had to be abandoned after officials' test vehicles became bogged down on the water-logged course.

In spite of the difficult conditions the team from 6 Training Battalion, Royal Army Service Corps, kept remarkably free from trouble, finishing 74 points ahead of 1 Training Battalion, RASC, to win the combined team championship, with 1 Training Regiment, Royal Engineers, third, 315 points behind the winners.

Individual champion three-ton driver was Craftsman J. Machin, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' School, Arborfield (who won the team award) and the champion quarter-ton driver Guardsman N. Bond, of



Lance-Corporal Hobbs blinks as he gets home with a smashing right hook to Len James's chin during the contest against Wales.

## Demoted For Fighting!

THE Amateur Boxing Association and Army heavyweight champion, Len Hobbs, of the Grenadier Guards, loves boxing.

So much so that, when offered the choice of regimental duties as a lance-sergeant or continuing his boxing career, he voluntarily accepted reduction in rank, which explains why he stepped into the ring in the Army's annual contest against Wales as Lance-Corporal Hobbs.

But his demotion had no effect on his performance and he clearly outpointed his old rival, Len James, of Patchway.

Hobbs' win was one of the Army successes which put paid to Wales' hopes of winning the contest for the first time since the end of World War Two. The soldiers won by six bouts to four, all but one of the fights going the full distance.

1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, who also led his unit in winning the team award. The trophy awarded by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for the best performance in driving tests and observance of the Highway Code went to 9 Company, Royal Army Service Corps, from Aldershot, who also won the British Motor Corporation's prize for the best Champ.

The Coupe des Dames was carried off by three Bristol girls from 71 Independent Company, Women's Royal Army Corps—Sergeant M. Burton, Lance-Corporal J. Tomlin and Private M. Read.



Maj-General A. E. Brocklehurst DSO, Deputy-Commander BAOR, talks to L/Cpl Macdonald, 170 Provost Company, CRMP, who at that stage was in the lead.



Lieut-General Sir Harold Pyman DSO, DCIGS, presents the President's Trophy to Lieut G. Mason, of 6 Training Battalion, RASC.



Triple winners: 22 LAA Regiment, RA, from Pembroke Dock, with the SOLDIER Trophy for the best cross-country effort.

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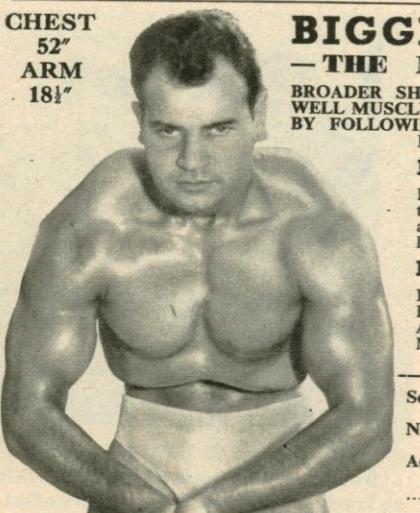
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## SIX TITOS

When the Northland Territorial unit, No. 1 Company, Royal New Zealand Army Service Corps, is in camp and a message is sent round ordering Driver Tito to report to the orderly room it is likely that six men will converge on the administrative headquarters.

The Company is in the unique position of having six drivers bearing the

"home" for thousands of soldiers and their families.

She was bombed and near-missed during the evacuation of Greece; Monty himself put up one of the many crests she wore as a souvenir of the famous regiments she carried. Goodbye, Dilwara, and good luck! — "Once a Trooper."

\* The Dilwara, 12,555 tons, was built in 1936, chartered from British India and converted to post-war trooping standards in 1954. She made her last

\* No. They are administered and paid for by the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association, an or-

**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.

The record of one of Canada's most distinguished officers—General Charles Foulkes DSO—takes some beating, too. He rose from major in February, 1941, to lieutenant-general in November, 1944.—W. A. Stewart, Librarian, Royal Canadian Military Institute, 426, University Avenue, Toronto.

## COLOURS FLYING

Apropos Lieut-Colonel Archer's letter ("Colours Flying," December) it was interesting to read in the recently-published "War History of The Royal Pioneer Corps, 1939-45" the following extract:

"To a select few units of the British Army, the City of London has given the right of marching through its streets with Colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed," in recognition of service to the capital at some period in its long and glorious history. The Royal Pioneer Corps does not enjoy that privilege, but did indeed most worthily earn it."—Freedom," Hornchurch, Essex.

## RAPID PROMOTION

One of your correspondents claims (Letters, November) that the record for rapid promotion in World War Two belonged to the late Major-General Orde Wingate who rose from captain to major-general between 1940 and 1943.

The record of General Sir Brian Horrocks is difficult to beat. He was a major at the outbreak of World War Two and, in August, 1942—less than three years later—he was acting lieutenant-general.—Major H. W. Smith, RE (Ret), 14, The Holt, Wallington, Surrey.

\* According to the Army Gradation List, General Horrocks was promoted brevet lieutenant-colonel on 1 July, 1937, to acting lieutenant-colonel on 5 October, 1939, and to acting lieutenant-general on 13 August 1942.

It is true that the 42nd received the red hackle for their gallantry on this occasion, but entirely untrue to say that it was taken from the 11th Light Dragoons, whose plume, at this period, was yellow.

The letter to which your correspondent refers is doubtless that quoted by Archibald Forbes in his history of The Black Watch, but this is full of provable inaccuracies and should not be taken very seriously.—E. J. Martin, Member, Military Historical Society, Kenton Cottage, Harrow Weald, Middlesex.

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Scripture readers are honorary members of warrant officers' and sergeants' messes and are given the status of warrant officers. There are now about 60 Scripture readers actively engaged with the Army and Royal Air Force at home and overseas, including four women who work with the women's services.

non-commissioned officers of the 1st Battalion, Military Train ... 2nd July, 1858."

What was the Military Train?—L. S. Giles, 19, Henwick Lane, Newbury, Berks.

\* The Military Train and Commissariat Staff Corps, to give it its full name, was one of the predecessors of the Royal Army Service Corps. It existed from 1856 until the formation of the Army Service Corps in 1869.

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### more letters

their kind thoughts of so long ago.—Jack Cox, Editor, Boy's Own Paper, 4 Bouvier Street, London, E.C.4.

★ The two cards were posted from Düren, Rhineland, and are believed to have been sent to a former Boy's Own Paper address at 35 John Street, London, W.C.1, from where they were recently re-addressed to the paper's Bouvier Street offices.

### BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

We can do better than 882 Divisional Locating Battery, RA (TA) who (Letters, November) have the brothers of five families in their unit.

In our Company we boast four Kelly brothers; three Pringle and three Foster brothers; two Jones and two Wilkinson brothers; and we also have two McGuinnesses and two Robsons, fathers and sons.

Can anyone beat this?—WO II T. Myers DCM, "C" Company, 6th BN, The Durham Light Infantry (TA), Spennymoor, C. Durham.

### MSM ANNUITY

I read in a newspaper recently of an old soldier who was recommended for a Meritorious Service Medal when he was demobilised in 1924 and did not get it until 1951. Now he has been notified that he is to receive a £10 annuity with the award. Why did he not receive the money before?—“Curious,” Benfleet.

★ These annuities are limited in number and are granted only as vacancies become available on the death of former holders.

### CAPS OFF

A senior NCO tells me that members of the Household Cavalry are allowed to salute when in uniform but not wearing headdress.

Is this true and if so, what is the origin of the privilege and does any other regiment in the British Army enjoy it?—Sergeant J. A. G. Joyce, Army Recruiter, Royal Signals, Army Information Centre, Fishergate, Preston, Lancs.

★ This privilege belongs to the Royal Horse Guards but not to The Life Guards. The details of its origin, believed to stem from the days when the Royal Horse Guards were King Charles II's personal bodyguard, have been lost in antiquity. Does any reader know the true origin?

### HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

(See page 29)

The two pictures vary in the following details: 1. Earpiece of skier's goggles. 2. Skier's left knee. 3. Lines on neck of skier's sweater. 4. Length of right ski. 5. Girl's belt. 6. Cross on flag. 7. Chimney on small house near church. 8. Height of right-hand peak behind village. 9. Standing soldier's left glove. 10. Circular window on gable-end of chalet.

### HOW BRIGHT ARE YOU?

No all-correct entries were received to SOLDIER'S October competition — “How Bright Are You About Dogs?”—and only three prizes are awarded to those who made the fewest mistakes.

The prize-winners were:

1. H. M. Gresty, Underhill House, 7 Old Park, Dawley, Salop.
2. Mrs. M. Jones, 45 Heol Rudd, Carmarthen, S. Wales.
3. R. Hayward, 333 Newbold Road, Newbold-on-Avon, Rugby.

The correct answers were: 1. (c). 2. Airedale. 3. (c). 4. (c). 5. (b). 6. (a). 7. (b). 8. (b). 9. (c). 10. (c). 11. Yorkshire terrier. 12. (b). 13. (c). 14. (a, b and c).

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● If you are a civilian, you may order SOLDIER at any bookstall in the United Kingdom.

● Those unable to obtain the magazine through the above channels should fill in the order form below.

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● Please send ..... copies of SOLDIER each month for ..... months

● beginning with the issue for the month of .....

● (BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE) TO: .....

● U.K. Cheque or Postal Order value ..... is enclosed.  
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**A**

ll drivers are rated on their merits—the "good" should not pay for the "bad"! The **BRANDARIS** scale their rating according to claims experience and, whilst no Serviceman is refused cover, they do offer lower rates to those over 25 years of age, driving with a full Licence and owning the smaller family-type car. The younger sports car enthusiast with limited driving experience must pay rather more; that's reasonable, isn't it?

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**D**

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**A**

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**R**

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**I**

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**S**

pace is too short here to explain all the advantages of a **BRANDARIS** Policy; why not write and let us quote and advise you generally, whether you are staying in Germany, other overseas station, or taking your car home with you? The **BRANDARIS** Offices in Germany, Jersey and England are under British management; we all understand the Serviceman's problems.

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**B**

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(rate £3.00 per £100). £.....

I do/do not wish for quotation for purchase tax/import duty contingency  
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—in "The Elsie Janis Story"