



*When The
Bugle Calls*

My Journey Through Life

by W.J. Rogers

Bill Rogers

The cover photo was taken on summer leave in 1950 after leaving the Army Apprentice School (AAS) and before joining the Regular Army.

I spent 5½ years as a Dukie – at the Duke of York's Royal Military School: at Saunton, Devon, from 1942 to 1946, and at Dover, Kent, from 1946 to 1947.

I was apprenticed for three years at AAS Arborfield, 1947 to 1950.

I joined the Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) as a Craftsman Vehicle Mechanic, serving 16 years from 1950 to 1965.

Then I worked for 29 years as a toolmaker at High Duty Alloys in Cumbria, 1965-1994, taking early retirement through the firm's redundancy scheme when aged 62.

This book covers the time spent as a Dukie, at Arborfield, and in the REME.

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Foreword

'When The Bugle Calls' refers to the 23 years and 6 months of circumstances and experiences served in a military environment that shaped the path of destiny on my journey through life.

All servicemen and women, no matter what arm of the services they served in, will be familiar with their daily routines being controlled by bugle calls. 'Reveille', the start of a new day. 'Cookhouse' to summon you to meals. 'Get on Parade' for inspections and duties. 'Lights out', time for bed to rest and recuperate ready for the morrow's work. This was especially so in basic Training Camps and Regimental Depots. In other establishments, the duty NCOs ruled the roost, banging cans or rattling sticks on bedposts or tipping sleepers out of their beds to wake them. Most squaddies had their own interpretation of the calls and put their own lyrics to them.

The rest of the day was spent being marched from place to place. Lights out was Roll Call to make sure there were no empty beds left by anyone going AWOL¹.

The formative years of a Dukie, aged between nine and fifteen years, spent at the DYRMS School, are in guidance and preparation for the future.

The DYRMS was formed when HRH Frederic Duke of York, the founder, laid the foundation stone in Chelsea in 1801.

In 1803, the first orphaned sons and daughters of soldiers killed in wars entered the School. Later, only boys were accepted. The early ethos of the School, understandably, had a predominantly military bias with its activities of parades, trade training and discipline. Later, more emphasis was placed on education. Most of those passing through went on to a career in the Army as Commissioned Officers or Senior Ranks.

In 1909 the DYRMS moved to its new location at Guston, near Dover, Kent, where it remains today.

Girls did not enter the School again until later in 1994, when the first 54 or so arrived to form a new house, Alanbrooke House. This was well after my time as a Dukie. Nowadays it is a selective independent boarding school for the Sons and Daughters, of service personnel, active or retired, of all services home or abroad

A recent £25-million refurbishment was completed in 2014 when new accommodation was built and old ones upgraded. New teaching facilities for new technologies were added. It became an Academy in 2010 and is now a full boarding School. Parents of entrants no longer have to have had a military background. Although the school has its own Cadet Force, I believe entering military service is optional.

¹ Absent WithOut Leave.

Dedication

I dedicate this book in memory to my father who gave his life for what he believed was his obligation to his country and his family, the protection of our freedom.

He was killed in action in Belgium, on the 23rd May 1940 just 6 days before his 33rd birthday, during the start of the withdrawal to Dunkirk.

He would never experience his children growing up or witness the advances in technology that we enjoy today, such as the modern telephone or television and computers etc.

To my mother who brought up a family of five during the war years, enduring many hardships and anxious moments in her unselfish endeavour that we would live as normal a life as possible.

To younger brother Ron who, with my elder brother George and myself, shared many adventures in our early childhood years. Sadly, he became a victim of cancer of the oesophagus in 1995.

To sisters Rita and Pam who both shared the anxiety of those war years with mum, whilst becoming almost strangers to George and myself during the time we were evacuated to N. Devon to enlist in the Duke of York's Royal Military School and later the Regular Army.

Bill Rogers of more mature years



Aged 75 in 2007. Joined Seaton Bowling Club, in Cumbria, 1998-2005, becoming Secretary, Vice President and President whilst a member. Currently researching my family history and that of the Duke of York's Royal Military School, 1800-1950.

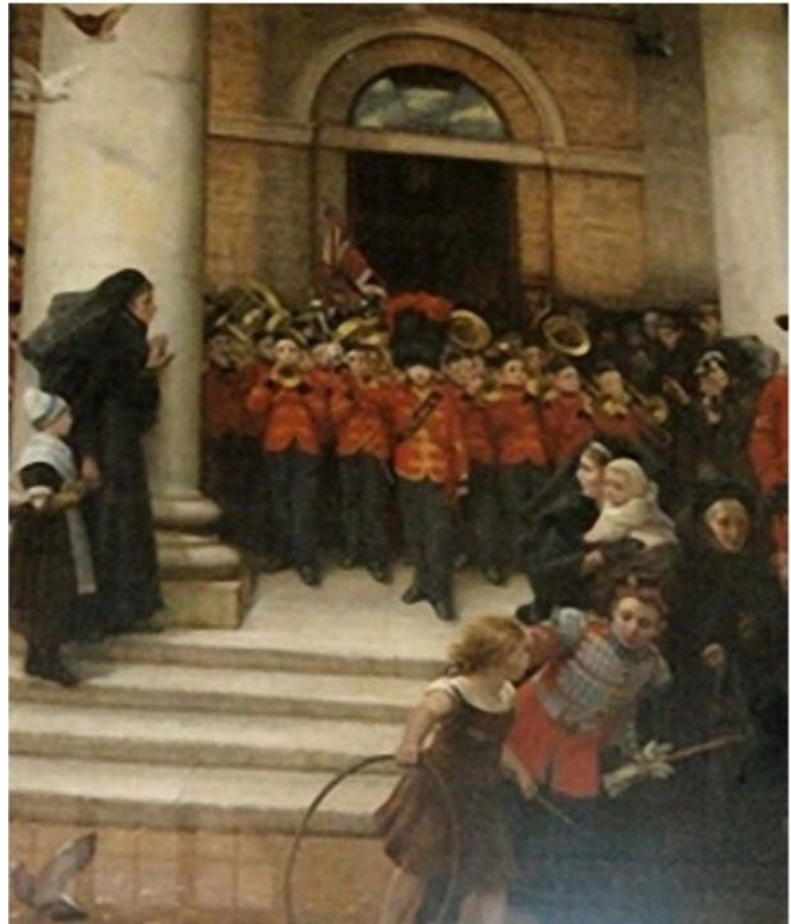
The School Founder



HRH Frederick (Augustus) Duke of York. 1763-1827
2nd son of King George 3rd of Britain.
British Commander-in-Chief. 1798-1809.

School Band

A painting in the School dining room shows the 19th-century school band at the entrance to Chelsea Barracks.



School Band 2014

A modern-day School Band on the steps at Chelsea.

“PLAY UP, DUKIES!”

We're drill'd and dress'd and disciplined,
And proud of our good name,
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!
We'll take you on at anything
And always play the game,
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!
The spirit of our soldier sires
Is round about us still,
And ev'rything we've go to do
We work at with a will;
Oh! we've got no use for slackers at
The School on Lone Tree Hill,
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!

Be it Peace or be it War, Play up, Dukies!
As your fathers did before, Play up, Dukies!
For the honour of your name
Take the torch and fan the flame,
Play the game, Play the game, Play up, Dukies!

And when we join our reg'ments and
We march and ride and shoot,
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!
You'll recognise the Dukie as
The very best recruit,
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!
For when the British soldier marches
Forth to right the wrong,
And work is at its hardest and
The fight is fierce and long,
Then the old White Rose shall lead us, and
The Dukie shall be strong.
Play up, Dukies! Play up, Dukies!

Chorus

The School Song

Written by Colonel

G. Nugent M.V.O.

Music by M.A.C.

Salmond O.B.E.

**Music Score for
School Song**

Composed by Thomas
Bidgood, Bandmaster
and Ex Dukie.

Play up, Dukies!

Words by
COLONEL GEORGE NUGENT.

Music by
M. A. C. SALMOND

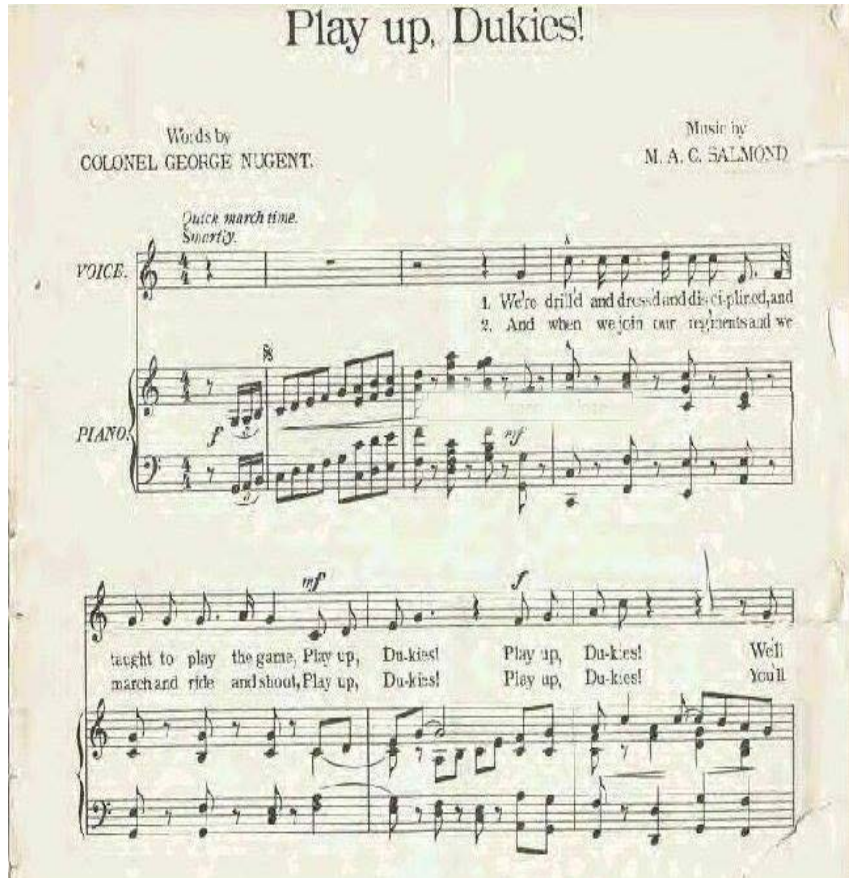
*Quick march time.
Smetzo!*

VOICE.

PIANO.

1. We're drill'd and dress'd and dis-ci-plined, and
2. And when we join our reg'ments and we

taught to play the game, Play up, Du-kes! Play up, Du-kes! Well
march and ride and shoot, Play up, Du-kes! Play up, Du-kes! You'll



The School Hymn: *Sons of the Brave.*'

*O Lord, Thy Banner floateth o'er us,
Beneath its folds we stand and sing;
In Majesty go thou before us,
Our Saviour Christ! Our Captain King!
Sons of the Brave! Our hearts now hail Thee-
Bravest of all! And cry to thee;
O Lord, make us Thy faithful soldiers,
And lead us on – to Victory!*

*We come to Thee who in Thy meekness
Did once our boyhood's peril face
That Thou might know our wants and weakness,
And all our need of help and grace.
Sons of the Brave! We would be worthy
Of this our name in fight for Thee;
O Lord, make us Thy faithful soldiers,
And lead us on – to Victory!*

*We come to thee for thine assistance
Our foes are fierce – the battle long;
Alone, how feeble our resistance!
With Thee beside us we are strong,
Sons of the Brave we know can never
Uplift a prayer unheard by Thee;
O Lord, make us Thy faithful soldiers,
And lead us on – to Victory!*

*We come to ask Thee that Thy blessing
May rest on comrades far away,
May they each day, Thy Name confessing,
Still find in Thee their strength and stay,
Sons of the Brave! may all be gathered.
Bravest of all! At last to Thee;
O Lord, with all Thy faithful soldiers,
Give us the palm of Victory.*

Amen.

Written for the centenary of the School in 1901
by the Rev. G.H. Andrews.
Music by J.H. Maunder

The Old School Badge

Pre 2014.



The White Rose of York.

New School Badge

Introduced in 2014.



1. Pre-War Years

Born on the 6th of August 1932, the second eldest of a family of three boys and two girls, I led the life of a typical thirties' child living in world of fantasy. A world dictated by the story book adventures of the heroes of our time. Robinson Crusoe on his desert island, Robin Hood and his band of merry men, the adventures of Biggles the aviator hero, the pirates of Treasure Island and the Count of Monte Christo.

At our age we gave little thought to world events or how politics of the day would affect our lives, we lived only for the day as it came. Days were never long enough when you were engrossed in an adventure or a game. The only regret being that the arrival of night would put an end to the adventures of the day. No matter how the hours of free time were spent in enjoying ourselves, it was that nightfall was the closing of a black door which locked the enjoyment of the day into memories of the past.

Our school playgrounds, as did probably hundreds throughout the country, witnessed many pretend gun battles or sword fights. The shooting with imaginary rifles or pistols and the thrusting and fencing with sticks as imaginary swords. This was usually a prelude to after school activities, especially at weekends and during the long light evenings of the summer months.

During those early years of my boyhood, entertainment was what you made it and this was so for the children of most families throughout the country. The boys of the local area, avenue or street, formed themselves into gangs and made up their own adventures according to the most popular theme at the time. Girls always did their own thing, though the tomboys amongst them preferred to join the boys who always seemed to be having the most fun. Memories tend to become hazy during the autumn years of our lives but the ones that you are able to recall are the ones that maybe had some special significance for one reason or another.

Dad was a good darts player and played for his local pub team, the Mitre, in Richmond. He won many trophies in individual and local team championships which was evident by the number of cups and shields he had at home. When I visited Uncle Jim, dad's brother, recently (February 1998) after having not seen him since the 1950s, I discovered he also had a lot of trophies which he had won at darts. It must have been a family trait which rubbed off on George, Ron and me, because we were always playing darts. I liked the game and often played it throughout my army career. The living room door, on which the dartboard had been hung at Cornwallis Ave, bears proof of the game's popularity by the number of holes caused by the many badly thrown darts during those early years.

Midday each Sunday, dad often took us all to the Central, a local pub about a fifteen minute walk from home. There he'd meet his mates for a pint and a game of darts. Sometimes mum came too and was able to catch up on the local gossip with the other wives. We tucked into soft drinks and crisps in the room set aside for families. On those occasions when mum stayed home to prepare the dinner, without having us under her feet, dad would take a bottle of brown ale home. We then enjoyed a brown ale shandy with our dinner as a special treat to wash it down. Mum

carried on this Sunday dinner treat for us all as often as she could whilst dad was away in the army and throughout the following years whenever George and I were home on leave and the family were together again. Mum did not take us to the pub of course but bought the bottle of Worthington brown ale whenever she passed the local pub whilst out shopping.

I remember dad once brought a young Alsatian dog home and often took us on walks with it. We did not keep it for long though as it was too playful and was always jumping up at the table at mealtimes. It kept knocking the youngest and smallest of us over. Mum thought it was getting too excited and might become a danger to us so dad gave the dog to a friend of his.

There were hardly any vehicles on the roads in those days. It was horse drawn carts that delivered the milk, bread, vegetables and coal etc. Even the bus service had not yet reached Cornwallis Ave; we had to walk to the next street. It always fascinated us how the horse would follow the delivery man as he went from door to door with his basket of goods, always knowing where to stop and where he was most likely to be given a piece of bread an apple or a carrot. Often, seemingly as a thank you, he'd leave a heap of manure behind as he went on his way. This was collected and used on the garden. In the late evenings it would be the call of the peas pudding and faggot seller that was eagerly awaited, with the promise of a delicious supper to be had. This was the pattern of life over the following years leading up to the start of the 1939 to 1945 World War 11.

Dad had joined the Regular Army in August 1925, serving as a Linesman in the Royal Engineers on an engagement of 6 years with the Colours and 6 with the Reserves. He completed the 6 years with the Colours in August 1931 and was transferred to the Reserves. It was whilst he was stationed at Brompton Barracks, Gillingham, Kent, that he met mum. They married in April 1930. They spent a short time with mum's parents at Brompton, where my elder brother George was born on July 26th 1931. Dad had found employment at the local Water Works and by now had moved to Grange Road, Gillingham, where I was born on 6th August 1932. Some time later we settled at 121 Cornwallis Ave, Gillingham, Kent. It was here that younger brother Ron was born on September 27th, 1934, elder sister Rita on May 14th 1936, and younger sister Pam on July 26th, 1939.

Cornwallis Ave, on the outskirts of Gillingham, formed one of a number of tentacles radiating out from the town centre. The road terminated at a golf course in a dead end. It was linked to the adjacent Beatty Ave by a narrow road known locally as Skinny Lane. The children of the adjacent streets formed gangs and the inevitable no-go areas were soon established as each gang sought to deny access to children from another street. To enter another street invited trouble unless you could outrun your pursuers. On any occasion you might be with an adult you simply thumbed your nose or stuck your tongue out at them.

On our side of the road the houses had been built right up to the end where the golf course formed the boundary, but not on the other side.

The result was a clear area of ground opposite the last two blocks on our side. The houses were built in terraced blocks of eight, our house being fourth from the right in

the last but one block. In later years a number of single storey Prefabs were built on this open ground. Some years later, elder sister Rita was to meet her future husband who had moved into one with his parents.

The spring and summer months enabled us to roam the fields and woods, living out the adventures of books or films of the day. Hunting for bird nests, memorising their hiding places and returning to see if any eggs had been laid or chicks hatched. Looking for lizards sunbathing on warm stones or fence posts and which when caught, would shed their tails and scurry away. Vainly trying to catch some of the many different coloured butterflies with our home-made nets. Red Admirals, Peacocks, Meadow Browns, Tortoiseshells, Painted Ladies, Small and Large Whites and Skippers, to name just a few. We searched the links for golf balls which we often took to school to exchange for foreign stamps, cigarette cards, or anything that might be of some use to us.

I spent many a peaceful hour lying on my back in one of the many hollows on the golf links, hidden by the tall grass which acted as a wind break against any cold breeze. I'd gaze up at the sky and watch the clouds scud by as, engrossed in my own world of fantasy, I'd try to imagine what each shape reminded me of. Maybe a face or a sailing ship in full rig, perhaps a monster, a plane, a car or whatever came to mind.

During the war years, it would be large formations of bombers on their way to carry out raids on German factories. They were so high that it was only their vapour trails that betrayed their presence, making no sound as they slowly and silently passed overhead. Their numbers seemed endless.

Each large formation was made up of a number of smaller ones of about five planes in an arrowhead (>) formation. The sight of so many planes was impressive with their white vapour trails streaming out behind them, especially against a clear blue sky. I can still visualize the sight of those planes even today.

I did hear some time later that, during one of the many dog fights over Kent, a Spitfire had to make a forced landing on the golf links. I was at Saunton Sands at the time, but the story was told by many of the neighbours I spoke to when I was home on leave later.

That part of the golf course running from Beatty Ave, past the end of Cornwallis Ave and north to the railway line, had been fenced off and allowed to grow wild. The links and the narrow strip of woods on the other side also served as the local battle areas where many a skirmish took place between street gangs. There were several bunkers on this part of the links nearest the two Avenues. Two of these, one 'C' shaped and one 'E' shaped, were in line with our street and midway between it and the woods. We the 'Corny-ites' claimed these as ours. The Beatty-ites claimed the bunkers near Beatty Ave as theirs.

The bunkers formed the perfect defence positions for each gang and were jealously guarded against all comers. They became our H.Q. and defence positions. When a raid was imminent, word went out to prepare for battle. Each gang member set about arming himself with a dustbin lid, spears or bows and arrows, catapults or slings, a six to eight-foot pole, or their mum's clothes prop for use as a battering ram,

plus a plentiful supply of stones and pebbles. Many a mum wondered where her clothes prop had gone or why there was no lid on the dustbin.

Considering the variety and number of weapons used, no serious injuries ever occurred. Most of us sported the odd bruise, cut or bump as evidence of a skirmish and tried to make all sorts of excuses of how we came by them. On one occasion George received a lovely black eye courtesy of an old rugby boot thrown by someone on the opposing side.

2. Hitler declares war. 1939

At the start of 1939 the radio and newspapers carried news of the build-up of troubles in Europe. Hitler began his invasion of neighbouring states and in May made a pact with Italy. Britain, France and Poland signed an alliance of mutual assistance in August. On 1st September Germany invaded Poland, an act which was to force Britain and France to declare war on Germany. Things moved rapidly as a result.

Although dad had finished his 6 years in the Reserves in August 1937, it was on 2nd of September 1939 that he was one of the many thousands to be mobilised after the Reserves had been called up. He rejoined the Royal Engineers at Gosport. Mum was upset and worried about what the future had in store for us as a family. Dad, of course, tried his best to put her mind at rest saying everything would be all right. On the 5th of October 1939, his Unit embarked for France as part of the British Expeditionary Forces.

Meanwhile everyone was issued with a gas mask because of Hitler's threat to drop gas on England. As Pam was only a few months old, an incubator type mask was issued in which we had to place her whenever we wanted to take her anywhere. It was heavy and cumbersome and made bus travel awkward. Gas masks had to be carried everywhere. Identity cards were also issued and had to be carried at all times. No one shouted about civil liberties or it being a police state then. Security was paramount and if you did not show your ID card you were likely to be arrested. Our generation had the sense to realise that these cards were for our own good rather than Big Brother tactics. There was talk about enemy agents and fifth columnists at work throughout the country.

Workmen dug a 'V' shaped trench, a tank trap, on both sides of the golf course. On our side, it ran from the railway line at one end to the main road at the other. It was a mile or so long. There was a break in the trench where it met our road and then continued on the other side. Two large concrete blocks about six foot square and six foot high were placed in this space to act as antitank barriers, blocking access to the street. The other trench was dug just inside and the full length of the woods on the other side of the links.

An Army Camp had been built at the edge of the woods and on both sides of the road leading down to the railway line. An Anti-aircraft Unit stationed there had Ack-Ack guns, searchlights and barrage balloons operated by soldiers and some women A.T.S. crews. The balloons were raised on long steel cables so as to entangle low flying enemy aircraft passing overhead. Sometime later another battery of Ack-Ack

guns was set up on the golf links. These were rapid firing guns similar to Boffor guns.

The trench, which had been dug in chalky soil, was about eight- to ten-foot deep and about ten foot wide. Once the excavated soil had been piled on either side, the final height would be some twelve to fifteen foot high. As we were between three and four-foot-six high, these tank traps seemed enormous. Once, whilst trying to pole vault over using a clothes prop, Ron broke his arm and ended up in plaster for a few weeks.

This happened after George and I had been evacuated to North Devon. We only found out when mum wrote to us later.

The bombshell that was to affect the whole of our family was soon to fall. It arrived in the latter half of May 1940 in the form of the dreaded "Telegrams" sent by Ministry of Defence to notify the recipient that a husband or other serving member of a family was missing presumed killed in action. The Telegram informed us that dad had been killed on the 23rd of May 1940. He had only been in France five months. Mum was devastated by the news of his death, more so that he should die just six days before his thirty third birthday. It was not until August 1940 that we were to learn of the circumstances under which dad had died. Mum received a letter dated 3rd June, from a Lt. Hanson, his section Officer, who was with him at the time he was killed.

The following is an extract from that letter:

"The Company were taking part in a Counterattack with the rest of the 225 & 7 Field Companies Royal Engineers and Black Watch Regiment, a few miles north of Warnington and south of Ypres, in Belgium. Our Section was moving into the attack and your husband and I had worked our way forward to a position immediately confronting the enemy. He was then shot next to me and died instantly from a burst of machine gun fire".

Not only had mum lost her husband, but she now had a family of five young children to bring up. She was still young at thirty-two but now, with the war on, it was going to be a hard time for her. Dad's wages were now replaced by a War Widows Pension of just £2.2s plus 11/- child allowance for Pam and 9/6d rent allowance a week (£3.2s.6p). (£1 = 240p pre-decimal). This equalled £7.50p decimal. There was also the problem of food rationing which everyone had to cope with and make the best of.

House holders were encouraged to grow vegetables in their gardens or set up allotments. Rabbits and chickens were kept as a source of meat and eggs. The trouble was you got attached to them and it was a bit upsetting to see one or two of them killed at Xmas time. Mr Jackson, a family friend and neighbour who worked at Chatham Naval Dockyards, usually did the grisly deed. Holding the rabbit up by its back legs and delivering a swift chopping blow to the back of the neck with the edge of his hand, so breaking the rabbit's neck. It was then bled and gutted, and small pointed sticks placed to keep the stomach cavity open. It was then hung in the under-stair cupboard for a few days until fully bled, after which it was skinned and prepared for cooking. Skins were sold to the rag and bone man who frequently called.

Chickens had their necks pulled and then bled until ready to pluck and prepare.

An area of land, actually a part of the local cemetery, behind our gardens and separated from us by a lane, was set out as allotments. Many years later the cemetery eventually took over the whole of the area up to the golf links. From the rear bedroom window, you could look out over this land, past the railway line and out to the river Medway.

A man from an adjacent street, who we only knew as the Railway Man, often passed our house on his way to his allotment. As we were often outside playing in the street, he would greet us and say hello to mum. Eventually we offered to help him weed and water the vegetable patch and generally clean up any rubbish. For this he would give mum some potatoes, tomatoes, runner beans, peas and cabbages and maybe fruit. This was obviously a great help with five children to feed.

Mum sometimes did some domestic cleaning work for the family doctor. The extra money did help a bit and charitable groups gave children of fathers killed in the war trips out occasionally. They also organised parties and shows at Christmas time or on other festive occasions. I still have mum's 1953-54 ration book and her identity card. Rationing was still in effect although the war had been over for almost ten years.

Clothes posed the biggest problem. With five of us growing up fast we constantly required new items for school or play wear. With the aid of Co-op Divi-Coupons, in use during the war years, mum managed to keep us well turned out. Some items, of course, were handed down to the younger ones of the family. Mum made sure they did not always lose out, as they did get some new items of clothing or new shoes. New jackets, shorts or shoes were usually kept for Sunday best and you felt on top of the world showing off your new clothes. These were worn whenever we visited our relatives in Richmond, Surrey. They were dad's side of the family and lived in quite a large house at 3, Adelaide Rd, near North Sheen railway station. These Sunday best would gradually be relegated to second best and used for school wear. Today's fad for wearing scruffy ripped jeans had no place during those war years when everyone took pride in their turn out no matter what the family circumstances were.

Living within a couple of miles of the river Medway also posed another problem. The German pilots used the easily seen rivers Medway and Thames to guide them towards the Chatham Dockyards and London. If they met too much flak from the guns of the Ack-Ack units, now situated in the woods on the other side of the golf course and under their flight path, they would just shed their bombs and run for home. One bomb landed near the railway line at the rear of our house.

We had been staying at our grandparents in Adelaide Road at the time so did not hear about it till later when we returned home to Gillingham. Our neighbouring street, Beatty Ave, also received a couple of direct hits causing some casualties.

As the war progressed, the Council sent teams of men to help householders dig out a part of their garden farthest from the house and erect Anderson Air-Raid Shelters. These were placed so that about two thirds of their height would be below ground level then covered by the soil excavated to form a mound. Being so much under ground, they soon became dank and attracted insects. Bunk beds were also

issued, and some shelters were made quite comfortable. Many householders, though, never used them. They preferred to shelter under the stairs instead during an air-raid. Some householders opted for the Morrison shelter, a steel cage type which was placed in the living room. The heavy steel top acted as a table and the steel mesh sides protected against falling rubble if the house ever collapsed.

The siren, we called it Wailing Willie, controlled our lives no matter what time of day or night it was or whatever we might be doing. At school, lessons would be interrupted, and we would all have to file quickly and quietly to the nearest shelter.

Some streets and town areas had communal shelters so that those out shopping or travelling away from their homes at the time of a raid could take cover. Unfortunately, many of these shelters became tombs upon receiving a direct hit during a raid. There might be as many as fifty or more people taking shelter. Several shelters of this type did in fact get totally destroyed in the worst ravaged cities. In the London area, many people sort shelter in Underground Stations which were deemed to be the safest place. Parties and singsongs kept their spirits up.

In the early years of the war, these were usually only practice raids as Jerry preferred to do his bombing at night. During the last couple of years though, this was not so. Jerry now had the infamous V1 and V2 flying bombs and would send these over at any time, day or night, to terrorise and break the people's spirit. To be woken at night by Wailing Willie was an experience not to be forgotten by those of us who lived through the war years. To suffer the indignation of stumbling around half asleep whilst trying to grab something warm to wear, or a torch to light the way to the shelter, only to hear some A.R.P warden shout, "Put that bloody light out".

To us as young children who never really understood the dangers, it became a bit of a bore and a nuisance. All we wanted to do was to go back to sleep again. But for mum and of course other parents who also had children to look after, it meant harrowing times and sleepless nights. Always on edge waiting for that accursed siren to disrupt yet another night's sleep. Often a householder, who was an only occupant, would share a neighbour's shelter for the company and gossip. It was better than being alone at such a time. On one such occasion, mum roused us and led us stumbling in the dark to a neighbour's house four doors away. Apparently, they were related to us in some way though I never discovered how.

We made our way into the shelter in the garden and settled down for night not knowing what might happen next. The adults usually spent the time catching up on everyday events whilst we fell asleep into our own dream world. Suddenly there was a terrific bang followed by what seemed to be heavy rain falling on the roof of the shelter and all of us being thrown in a heap. It was the concussion of an exploding bomb which had disturbed our sleep, and the heavy rain was the shrapnel raining down on us.

It was just after the "Telegram" had arrived that mum had a visit by an Army Officer from dad's unit at Brompton Barracks. Younger brother Ron and I were playing marbles in Skinny Lane when a man in uniform, who we had seen approaching, stopped and asked directions to No. 121. After indicating the house, he wanted, we carried on with our game. Later we saw him returning. When he reached

us, he stopped and asked if our names were Rogers. When told it was, he gave us a silver coin each and a pat on the head. After wishing us both good luck, he proceeded on his way.

We had a sense of foreboding and curiosity so we went home to find mum in tears. The Officer had been to see her to ask if she was okay and whether she needed help with anything. He had also told mum about a military school where the sons of serving soldiers, or of those who had been killed in action, could be sent. Mum said she had decided to ask that arrangements be made for George and myself to go to this school as it would be safer and she would have two children less to worry over.

She had also thought of sending Ron but decided that as he was under six years old, he was too young. I think he would have enjoyed it as much as George and I, had he joined later.

During the early years of the war, before the advent of the V1 and the V2, Hitler introduced another of his terror weapons, the land mine. This was a huge bomb attached to a parachute which allowed it to float silently down upon the unsuspecting bomb dazed Londoners. Later, at my grandparent's home in Richmond, I was to see the devastation caused by such a bomb.

Windows had been criss-crossed with sticky brown tape to help cut down the danger from flying glass and at night would be shuttered and heavy curtains drawn. For added protection mattresses were also stood on end and placed against the windows. The living room was in the basement and as the top of the window was at street level, this would allow us some protection against bomb blast. It was our assembly point at nights. About twelve of us gathered together in this one room, our family of five, grandma, four aunts and two cousins. We read books or comics, told stories, played card games, or even learnt the intricacies of knitting from one of our aunts to while away the hours before it was time to settle down for the night. On one such occasion we had hardly closed our eyes for what seemed a few minutes when we were rudely awakened by the wailing of the air raid siren. The adults were reassuring us that it might be a false alarm when suddenly there was a terrific explosion that rocked the house so much that we thought it was about to collapse on top of us. We thought our street had received a direct hit as the sound of the explosion seemed so close.

Next morning, when it became light enough to see, we went outside to find out the extent of the damage. Apart from shattered windows in most of the houses, all those in our street were still standing. It was only after going further afield that we found one street of houses on the south side of Sheen road had completely disappeared, not one was left standing. On either side of the street where each house had stood was just a pile of rubble. This was the total devastation that could be caused by Hitler's infamous land mines. Many Londoners were to lose their lives through these silent and deadly killers.

After each air raid we'd scour the streets looking for pieces of shrapnel from the German bombs or the shells fired by the anti-aircraft guns. Often, during an air raid, we would hear pieces landing on the roof or hitting the sides of the house and the

amount littering the streets showed how dangerous it was to be outside during these raids.

It was now 1942, two years since dad had been killed in action in France. Of the three boys, mum decided that as Ron was under 8 years of age and George and I were the two eldest at 11 years and 10 years old respectively, only George and I would go to the Military School. We both accepted her decision not knowing what the future had in store for us. It was to change our lives and set us both on the road to a military career.

The school was The Duke of York's Royal Military School at Saunton Sands, North Devon. The emblem of the White Rose was to play a leading part in our lives for the next 5½ years. On the 19th of March 1942, George and I were to be entrained to London to meet up with a number of other children also going to Saunton Sands. With a packed case and each wearing our best clothes, we were off. We had been to London before but no further, so the journey ahead would be something to look forward to.

We were met at Waterloo Station and put aboard the train for our next stage of the journey. We settled down and got to know our fellow travellers. Sandwiches and tea had been laid on, so plus the cakes etc. mum had provided, we had plenty to eat.

3. Doodle Bugs and Rockets

Between early 1944 and March 1945, Hitler bombarded London and the surrounding cities and towns of Kent with his new terror weapons the V1 (the Doodle bug) and the V2. The V1 was a pilot less winged flying bomb containing some 2000 lbs of explosives and powered by a propulsion unit. Some 8000 of these bombs were launched during this period killing over 5500 people. Spitfires were sent to intercept them over the Channel and would shoot them down or use their plane's wing tip to flip the V1's wing causing it to turn and crash into the sea. Quite a lot of the V1s were destroyed and a lot of lives saved by the courage and skill of the Spitfire pilots.

As the V1s passed overhead you could hear the spluttering of their engines. When the sound stopped you dived for cover as this was the signal that it was going to plunge to earth. You just held your breath and prayed it was going to hit somewhere else.

September 1944 saw the introduction of the V2s, which superseded the V1s, and also carried 2000 lbs of explosives but were faster and silent. There was no warning of their approach. They were rocket propelled missiles fuelled by alcohol and liquid oxygen. They were feared most because their silent approach prevented warnings being given in time. This of course resulted in an increase in the casualty rate. Records show that at least 4000 were launched against Britain before the Allied Armies overran their launching sites in Germany. The death and destruction caused by these two weapons was devastating. Whole areas of cities and towns were reduced to rubble. London, Coventry, Liverpool and Birmingham all suffered terribly in these attacks. The "V" stood for "Vergeltungswaffe", German for "Retaliation or revenge Weapon".

On May 7th, 1945 Germany finally surrendered.

On May 8th the official celebrations began throughout the UK. Many communities built bonfires on any local waste land and held parties to celebrate victory over Germany. (See Page 22.)

On August 6, 1945, (my birthday) an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, but Japan refused to surrender. A second bomb was then dropped on Nagasaki. This was the first time this type of bomb had been used in any war. The awesome power and destruction caused by such a weapon forced Japan to surrender. Although many thousands of Japanese civilians lost their lives, the decision to drop the bombs was made in order to bring a rapid end to the war and prevent further military casualties. It was during the holiday break that summer that Japan surrendered on August 14th 1945, ending the war in the Far East. It was all finally over and everything could now return to normal.

My father as a young Recruit.

Aged 18 in 1925. He Served 6 years with the Colours and 6 years with the Reserves.





As a Reservist

Father, aged 26. 1933. Now a Reservist and Waterworks worker.

On Salisbury Plains.



Dad aged 32. On Salisbury Plains, Prior to Embarking for France with the British Expeditionary Forces. 5.10.1939.

Mum and Sons



Elder brother George (L). Mum. Myself (R.).
Summer 1942.on first leave from Saunton.

Saunton Hotel.



Home of the DYRM School during WW2, 1940-46.
Taken at a reunion, March 2001.

Braunton Rail Station.



A familiar sight to those Dukies arriving at Braunton Station
feeling a bit apprehensive about what lay in store for them.²

² Beeching closed the line, which had been open since 1874, in 1970 during his rail cuts.

4. Saunton Sands, 1942-1946

After quite a long train journey we eventually arrived at Braunton rail station. This was the furthest we could go by rail. Here we were greeted by driver Ley, of the RASC and attached to the School, who helped us to board the School's army vehicle, of which he was the driver. We then travelled the last 2½ mile or so to the Saunton Sands Hotel, the Military School's base. It was a large white concrete building situated on a cliff top overlooking Bideford Bay and the Taw Estuary, and was to be our final destination. Below the cliffs stretched a long sandy beach with dunes beyond the shoreline. We were to know these dunes, The Braunton Burrows, quite well during our stay. On clear days we could see as far as Lundy Isle, Hartland Point and Westward Ho. The Dukies, their emblem the White Rose, were to be our guardians for the next five and a half years.

The School had been evacuated from Guston, near Deal, Kent, in June 1940 for War Office use as a transit camp for troops on their way to France. The Dukies were first boarded at Benhall Farm, Cheltenham from July to December before arriving at their new accommodation in N. Devon in February 1941. This was to be the first class hotel at Saunton Sands where some 360 boys were to be sent. A further 160 or more were to be amalgamated with the Royal Victoria School at Dunblane.

I was duly registered into the Dukies as No 16339 and placed in Haig House, the Junior House ran by CSM Justice and Matron Mollie Brennan, as was my brother George (No 16338). All Newchies, as we were then called, spent their first 3-6 months being indoctrinated into the school's system. They then entered one of the Senior Houses. George and I joined Wellington House. We remained there until our "Passing Out" from the Dukies to join the A.A.S. at Arborfield. My new number was now WN 28, a number which was to be my identity for five and a half years.

The first few days were spent settling in. This entailed being allocated to one of a number of rooms, single, double or family size set on either side of a long corridor, swapping our civvies for a uniform (short trousers), and being introduced to communal living. The rooms had bare boards which were soon to echo to boot clad feet. Gym shoes were worn after work hours. The doors and carpets had been removed sometime earlier and stored in the basement until after the war when the hotel would be handed back to the owners. The light now passing through into the corridors made the interior look quite light and airy.

The rooms at the ends of the corridors were living quarters of the House Master and his family. His wife was also known as Matron. Several wooden bunk beds, determined by the size of the room, dictated how many boys would be in each room. This would vary between four in the smallest to ten or more in the largest. George and I joined those in the larger room where two vacancies existed. This room also had French Windows which opened onto a balcony. Being in a large room meant you could make more friends, but you could also make more enemies. Each room had one or two washbasins according to its size. There were also one or two bathrooms situated between those rooms which had been en suite in the time of the hotel's normal use. About 360 boys were to make this their home until the end of the war in

May 1945.

The hotel had four floors, including the ground floor, and a basement. The offices, dining room, kitchen and function hall were on the ground floor. The swimming bath in the basement was empty and boarded over and used as a storage room. The school was divided into Houses named after famous generals. Haig (H), Kitchener (G), Roberts (F), Wolseley (E), Wellington (D), Clive (C), Wolfe (B), Marlborough (A). The first, second and third floors were divided up with each section allocated to a House.

The rooms were quite stark really but then we could not expect carpets when we would be running in and out with boots on etc. Extra kit was kept in a box under the beds. Some of the rooms on the sea facing side opened onto balconies. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors each had three spaced along its length. Those on the 2nd and 3rd floors were shorter than the one below and placed centrally above it. The consequence of this was that it was reasonably easy to clamber from one balcony to another, up or down. I cannot recall anyone falling or being injured when doing this as the result of a challenge. To be caught was to be punished with six of the best where it hurt most, on your a***.

The foyer of the hotel was some five or more steps below the entrance level. They were full width of the entrance and divided by a handrail, thus forming two sets of steps. One side up and one side down. That section of the rail dividing the two lower steps served another purpose as some boys were to discover. The House Master of a boy to be punished would straddle this section of the rail with his back to the stairs so that he was facing the foyer. The boy's head would be placed between the C.S.Ms legs who then grabbed hold of the waistband of the victim's shorts and pulled upwards stretching them as tight as possible. This of course prevented the old dodge of placing an exercise book down your pants prior to reporting to the office. Six of the best would be duly administered. Being caught smoking was another punishable offence. R.S.M. (Spra) Jones performed his own special routine with much fervour using a cane, chosen by the unfortunate victim from a collection of many at his disposal. C.S.M. Dick Granger often assisted at these rituals.

Although we were between the ages of eight and fifteen, we were just like the Regular Army in our discipline and training. We were boy soldiers who still had a lot of schooling to do. The food was just about acceptable though lacking in quantity for growing boys involved in plenty of physical activities. A mug of milk and something to eat was provided each mid-morning break time.

The education was good and army exams, passed whilst a Dukie, helped to put you one step ahead of other new recruits when you eventually went on to the next stage of an army career. The military training was the same as the Regular Army in all aspects even to shooting on the range with .22 rifles. We would not have been able to handle .303 rifles anyway. Parade drill was the full works, Trooping of the Colours, no less.

It was during the earlier stages of the war that a large area of the beach, uncovered when the tide was out, was planted with large wooden posts about nine inches square. They were placed upright into the sand with about six foot or more

standing above and formed part of the coastal defence. Placed in a staggered pattern and several yards apart so that when the tide was in, they formed an unseen obstruction to hinder any landing craft that might attempt to beach during any invasion in this area.

A doctor's surgery was set up in one of the houses about a couple of hundred yards from the school on the way to Croyde. A medical inspection was carried out quite regularly by the M.O. Major Hart-Smith and his assistants. All boys duly bathed would line up in the corridor with only a towel draped skirt fashion and wearing canvas shoes.

One by one we entered the room provided for this occasion, marched up and halted in front of the M.O, removing the towel and shoes and raised our arms. Names were checked against the company muster roll whilst the doctor checked our feet for fallen arches and asked you to "cough" whilst lifting your scrotum with his hand. A strange ritual it seemed to us adolescent youngsters until enlightened by the older boys. I am certain that on one or two occasions a woman doctor carried out this ritual.

When you consider that our ages ranged from 8-15 years and that some of the boys were quite big in more ways than one, it's a wonder no one became embarrassed. Anyone reporting sick had to attend the Surgery up the road. One of the boys from my room was knocked down by a car and suffered a broken arm whilst walking to the Surgery. In those days there were hardly any vehicles on the road. It must have been his unlucky day to go sick and be hit by one of few cars using that stretch of the road.

I suffered from mastoid problems and was sent to the North Devon Infirmary at Barnstable. Nowadays this problem is treated with antibiotics instead of an operation and a period of recovery. I was placed in a Military Ward, in which I noticed most of the beds were occupied, and told to have a bath and get into bed ready for the M.Os visit. Later I was told to put on one of those split gowns worn by patients due for the theatre and given a sleeping pill.

I came to after the operation in an extremely nauseous and disorientated state and could hear someone calling my name. It was the nurse checking that I was regaining consciousness. As it was already nighttime, I began to doze off again with a blurred vision of the nurse sitting by my bedside watching over me in case I should be sick.

I awoke sometime later still feeling the aftereffects of the anaesthetic. I was now lying on my side and as my blurred vision focused on the bedside chair I realised it was now empty. I shifted my gaze to the next bed, my fuddled brain trying to put together the scene I was now looking at. The occupant was sitting up in bed having a smoke as he leant against the bedhead. I could hear the sound of what seemed to be muffled voices in conversation. I then realised he was talking to the nurse who was also sitting up in bed with him, having a smoke and occasionally glancing towards me to see if I was all right. I then drifted off to sleep again, the nurse unaware of what I had seen.

Considering there were quite a large number of boys at the Dukies there did not seem to be much illness around. One or two did try to pull a fast one by reporting sick

with obscure symptoms or fake pain. The crack was you could eat a bit of soap or sip a drop of polish to get a temperature. They were soon rumbled by CSM Harder or the medical orderly and usually got a dose of some vile medicine that was reputed to cure all, especially skivers.

5. Sport and Education

Sport played a major part in the character-building years up to adulthood. The firm wet sand of the beach, when the tide was out, provided the ideal parade ground and sports areas for cricket, football, rounders or whatever you wished to play. There was always plenty of supervised swimming and surfing in the sea, though you did have to treat it with respect and not get out of depth. We used the tops of the wooden posts mentioned in the previous chapter as diving off platforms. They were a bit small, but we managed to climb onto them and dive off unless we lost our balance first. We had these facilities of beach and sea to ourselves and we made the most of them.

We also had the use of Drury's field opposite Saunton post office, about a mile down the road towards Braunton, as a sports field where we played football and hockey, did PT and gymnastic displays, Trooping the Colours parades and held Drumhead Services. I remember several occasions when 50 to 60 boys would trot onto the display area to the tune of the Cancan played by the band. We then performed a synchronised PT exercise routine to the Skaters Waltz. This was on the Annual Sports Day and the spectators loved it.

Many of the popular boyhood games were played on the open sea facing areas on the cliff top in front of the School. Weekends and the long light evenings saw groups of boys playing games of tag, chase, hide and seek, or taking part in pretend battles against enemy troops hiding on the cliffs and lobbing grenades (large stones) at them. Catapults were used to shoot down paratroopers. These were handkerchiefs with one end of a length of string tied to each corner, and the other ends then tied to a stone or some other weight and thrown off the top balconies. First we waited until they floated away from the hotel before firing at them, so that the missiles went towards the cliff and beach. The price for breaking a window was the cane.

Boxing was, in army terms, voluntary compulsory. As it was properly supervised, it did not do anyone any harm apart from a black eye, cut lip or a bent nose. Mine is still bent showing evidence to having received a few well aimed straight lefts from my opponent. It proved an invaluable asset to have been taught boxing. I was able to defend myself later on in the services when one or two barrack-room bully types, thinking I was a pushover, ended up with a bloody nose. My many thanks to C.S.M. Dusty Miller and C.S.M. Goodwin our boxing coaches and PT instructors of those days. Both were ex-Army Champions. Boys were paired off by age and height and boxed three one-minute rounds. It was certainly intimidating to be told your opponent had a reputation for scrapping and it was with much foreboding that you entered the ring and weighed up your opponent. You had to decide whether to try and keep him at arm's length with constant left or right jabs or get in close and prevent him from swinging punches at you. Having been well versed in the not too gentle art of

fisticuffs by Dusty, it was now time to put all that newfound knowledge to use. At the sound of the bell you left your corner, quickly touched gloves, and fought like blazes. You had to make it clear to your opponent you would not be a walkover. Afterwards many would sport a black eye or flattened nose. Yes, there was a bit of blood loss and one or two of the timider ones did contrive to take a dive.

The band practice room was next door to the gym and whilst we were being put through our paces on the mat or the wooden horse, we were serenaded by the band practising the scales, first up then down, playing each note three times before proceeding to the next. Each section of the band played its own particular practice piece, then all would join in until the whole band was playing. The endless renditions of Do, Do, Do, Ray, Ray, Ray, Me, Me, Me, etc., haunted us as we struggled to master the art of doing cartwheels, forward rolls, handstands, through and astride vaulting over the Horse etc. The Bandmaster of those years was Mr W.J.Clancy. He was assisted by C.S.M Rayson. Much later on in life I often wished I had taken up music.

I am sure everyone would agree that the education was good with many subjects being taught. Many Dukies left the school having passed the Army Certificate of Education Class 2 in Mathematics, Geography, English, Imperial Military History and Map Reading. French was taught, but I don't think many liked the subject, though I can still remember a lot of the grammar and phrases and wished I had taken it more seriously. Hindsight is a wonderful thing when remembering the past.

The troubles in Europe formed the bases of the Current Affairs subject in school hours. Newspaper articles about the war were followed with much interest to the extent that most of us compiled Scrap Books. The sketches showing the Allied Army's front line as they advanced across France and Germany were much sort after, as were the descriptive details. I still had mine after I had left the Dukies but lost them sometime later. I think mum got rid of them when I joined the Regular Army.

Geography and map reading, taught by W.O. Snooks, proved extremely interesting to most boys because I think we related the maps to places of adventure. These were Ordnance Survey maps of Salisbury Plains, Shorncliffe and Folkestone areas. Several boys took more than a normal interest in the ability to read and orientate a map in order to put their newfound skill to the ultimate test. These were the boys who were later to abscond and make their way home, being homesick or fed up with the regimented routine of army life and discipline. They were usually caught by the police and returned or sent back by their parents. One or two habitual absconders did eventually get expelled or removed from the Dukies by their parents.

The ability to read a map and fully understand the information shown on them plays an important part in a soldier's army life. During training and at least once a year most regiments carry out manoeuvres on one or more of the many training areas throughout Britain. Travelling in convoy via different routes to these areas, relies a great deal upon this ability, especially if you have a strict timetable to adhere to and are the one in charge. It was not unknown for one or two drivers to get lost whilst travelling from A to B and so become the recipient of much banter from his

mates or suffer the wrath of his superiors. Usually he received both once word had got around.

As a Platoon Commander or Section Leader in charge during an exercise attack on a position, the ability to relate what you see on the map to the ground features in front of you is obvious and important. I always enjoyed the subject of map reading, working out whether a person at A could see a person at B by drawing a cross section feature map using the contour lines and their respective heights. It was made interesting and easy the way Mr Snooks taught it.

The School also did its bit towards the war effort by sending work parties to a local farm to help the land army girls out with crop weeding and harvesting. I did not know that this was a regular occurrence until many years later when I received a letter from an ex Women's Land Army girl who used to go to the School to collect them. I also believe seaweed was collected from the rock pools to make Penicillin.

6. Button stick and boot polish

All parades meant the inevitable copious amounts of "Bull", and '*Spit and Polish*' became an acquired skill. The practice of melting polish onto the toe and heel cap of each boot, then boning them with a toothbrush handle, was learned from previous intake members willing to pass on their likewise gained knowledge. The art of dipping a cloth covered finger into a tin of boot polish and doing little circles on the orange peel surface of the leather, took many months to acquire and perfect. Many an old soldier would envy the owner of such a pair of highly bulled boots with their black chrome like finish. The Dukie uniform was quite smart really, though I think we would all rather have had long trousers instead of the short ones we had to wear, even up to the time we left. These were always kept smartly pressed, without irons, by wetting the creases and placing cardboard and brown paper between them. After folding them carefully, we then placed them on another sheet of cardboard between the mattress and bed springs. The weight of your body plus the warmth passing through the mattress usually resulted in a well pressed uniform. Mind you, there was often evidence of someone having had a restless night by the number of extra creases that appeared where they were not wanted. Knowing this method of pressing your uniform was another string to your bow in later army life

. The uniforms were of the standard khaki serge service dress in use before the battle dress was introduced into the army later. The tunic buttoned up to the neck. Black leather boots, knee length khaki socks and a side cap completed the outfit. We each had two uniforms, best and second best. The best for Trooping the Colour and church parades, the second best for everyday use.

Route marches, every Saturday morning to Croyde-1.6 miles-or Saunton- 3/4 miles-, gave us a change of scenery and a surprise for the locals. It must have been a novelty for them to see all the khaki clad boys marching along behind the band.

The Americans, who had set up camp down the road towards Saunton sometime in 1943, certainly enjoyed it whenever the Dukies marched past their camp.

The Brass section led whilst the Fife and Drums section, placed in the centre of

the column, took turns to play throughout the march. Sometimes we marched to Drury's field at Saunton, where a Drumhead Sunday Service would be held, and then marched back again swaggering with pride whilst whistling or humming to the band. It was on the 25.6.1942, after one such route march and whilst the School was assembled on the parade area overlooking the beach, that C.S.M. J. Arbuckle of Wolfe House was taken ill. He collapsed and was carried into the R.C Chapel where he died a short while later.

Trooping of The Colours was also carried out on Drury's field. We always had plenty of drill practice. All that left and right inclining on the march, forming column of rank on the left or right and advancing in review order, saluting to the front, left, and right. I little realised at the time, that all those hours of practice spent getting everything right, would make it a doddle doing these same drills later on when I joined the Army Apprentices School at Arborfield in September 1947.

Most times this drill practice was carried out on the cliff top grounds in front of school overlooking the beach. Full '*Dress Parade*' rehearsals of the Trooping of The Colours were also carried out on the beach when the tide was out.

The damp sand was quite firm though it prevented our boots from making much sound when marching. This of course made it difficult to keep in step, much to the consternation of the R.S.M., (Spra) Jones, and the C.S.Ms. However, everything always went like clockwork on the '*Big Day*'.

Everyone joining the Regular Army completes a basic training period, usually six weeks. Many a drill instructor who thought he was dealing with a raw recruit, soon came to realise he had someone in his squad who knew all the tricks of trade as far as spit and polish and drill was concerned. This was entirely due to the grounding in the army way of life that every Dukie experienced. The unfortunate spin off was that a lot of the junior instructors classed you as a know all and often tried to make a fool of you in front of the other recruits. The result was you played your knowledge down a bit. I don't know if other ex Dukies experienced this when they joined the Regular Army.'

Trooping the Colours' was an annual parade on the occasion of the Sovereign's Birthday. This was the full ceremony as carried out by the Guards Regiments. These parades were carried out on Drury's field and watched by many of the locals and visiting parents of some of the boys.

The School formed up in companies and performed the full Trooping of the Colours as set out in the Army Drill Manual. The Inspecting Officer would be preceded by two '*stick boys*' with their swagger canes, highly bulled boots, white blanched belt, pouches and straps. Their job was to lead the Inspecting Officer through the ranks whilst slow marching to the beat and sound of the band. Only the smartest boys were picked for this honour, and it was an extremely proud boy if chosen. To march with the band playing a rousing military march made you proud to be a Dukie. It made all the hours of practice and bull worthwhile.

Those remaining at Saunton during the holiday period soon had plenty of work to do to keep busy. One of the first jobs was to strip all the beds and bundle up the bed linen for laundering. Next was to roll the blankets into bundles of ten before storing

them in one of the large rooms and then placing all the mattresses in another. Over the next few days each room was scrubbed out and wash basins and baths cleaned. The boys remaining behind moved into one of the larger rooms so that they were all together in their own house section.

The rooms containing the stored bedding proved too much of an attraction for us in our leisure time. Dens would be built amongst the piles of mattresses and games of '*King of the Castle*' played, pillow fights to knock the *King* off his castle passed many an hour.

Having done the chores, we could spend our leisure time exploring the cliffs and dunes. We often walked to Saunton, just down the road, or walked to Braunton, about two or three miles away eastward. sometimes we'd go westwards, following the coast round to Croyde, or take the short route over the hill at the back of the School.

Mum often sent us pocket money if she could afford it, and this, together with our trade and service pay, enabled us to buy odd goodies or whatever. This was spent on cakes, sweets or small loafs of bread. Postal orders were cashed at Saunton post office about a mile down the road. During these holiday periods or at odd weekends during the term we might be lucky and get transport into Barnstaple to have a look around. Ilfracombe was too far away and visits there were discouraged.

Weeding Party.



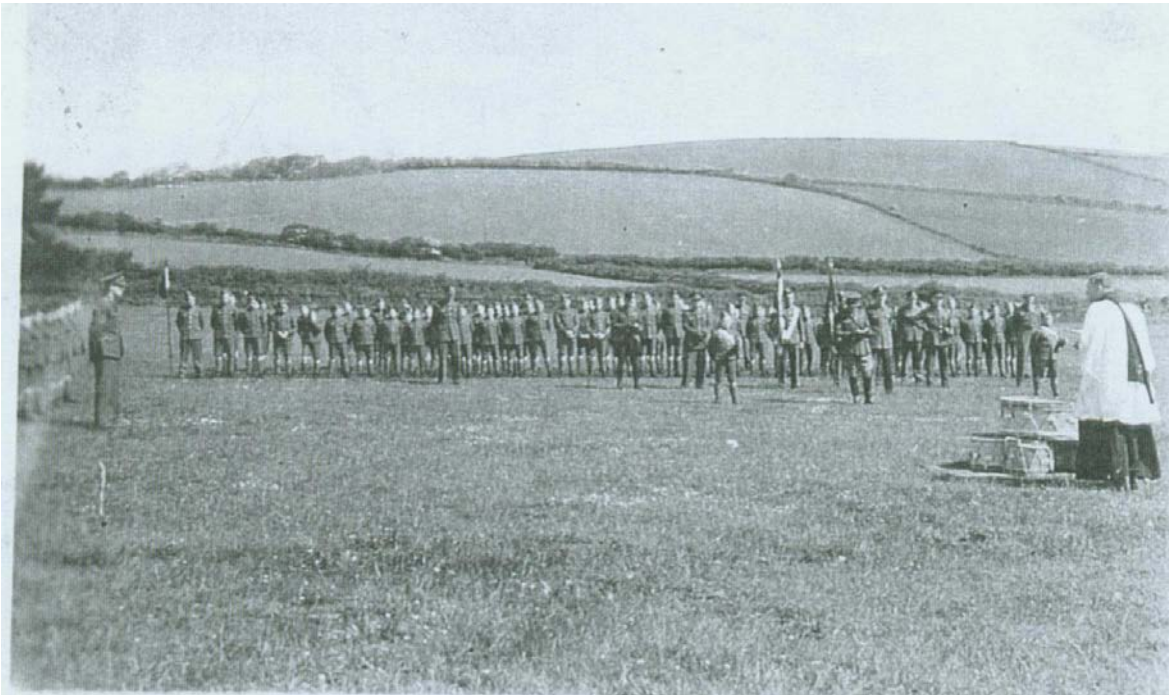
CSM 'Dusty' Miller sending some lads off to Sandy Lane Farm, Braunton. to do some weeding etc. 1942-46.

Boxing with CSM 'Dusty' Miller.



CSM 'Dusty' Miller coaching some lads during an outdoors boxing lesson within School grounds. 1942-46.

Drumhead Service.



On Drury's Field, Saunton. 1942-46.

The March Back.



The Brass Band leading the march back after the annual Drumhead service held on Drury's Field. RSM (Spra) Jones, leading. 1942-46.

Route march to Croyde and back.



Wellington House. On a Saturday morning route march. Marching back from Croyde-1942-46. I'm 5th from left front row. George 2nd left middle row.

Sometimes mum managed to send a parcel to share between George and myself. Usually, if anyone received a parcel, the contents would be shared with your room mates. It was common practice and accepted by most of us.

Everyone was encouraged to write home and the gist of most letters would be a plea for a parcel. There were regular letter writing periods when you were encouraged to extol the virtues of your life at Saunton. The common form of some letters are claimed to have been written in a joke ditty form, e.g.

*“Dear Mother, how’s brother?
Finished parcel send another
I remain just the same
Too much fag to write my name.”*

I could well believe it when some said they actually did send such a letter home. When notified a parcel had arrived, you reported to the office and signed for it.

The last few days of any holiday were spent, by those who stayed behind, remaking the beds for those returning from leave. This chore was not as bad as it seemed. We would be rewarded, with cakes or sweets, by those who were glad they had a readymade bed to turn into. Those arriving back late would be even more grateful.

Anyone who had given you a bad time during the term would find himself trying to get into an apple pie bed. This was an ideal way of getting your own back. This type of bed was made by folding the sheets and blankets in such a way that, although it looked properly made on the outside, was impossible to get into and had to be stripped and made again. One or two who may have been a bit bossy or obnoxious towards you during the term, or someone you had a grudge against, would suffer this indignity.

At weekends, after dinner, you had the rest of the day to yourself providing you had not been “gated” for doing something wrong or other. Bread rolls were provided with the dinner meal and these, with whatever else you could scrounge, were saved for use afterwards. Often the remnants of a recently received parcel would be added to your food store. The Saturday’s ‘Desperate Dan’ cow pie or the Sunday’s Lyons fruit pie usually did not survive the hunger pangs to be saved for later.

On some of the excursions to the local post office, lengths of braided clothesline were purchased. We never divulged the reason for spending our limited amount of money on such items but would simply return to the school with the lengths of line secreted about our person. These clothes lines would be stashed in our secret hideaways under the floorboards for use later.

A group of three or more of us often spent some of our spare time walking along the cliff top towards Croyde. On these occasions we would collect our clothes lines from under the floorboards and wrap them around our waist underneath our jackets. After walking until out of sight of the hotel we searched for a suitable place from which to climb down the cliffs. Two of the lines were twisted together to make a strong enough rope to bear our weight. One end was tied to a stake hammered into

the ground with a large stone. This was a safety precaution in case the rope slipped from the grasp of those holding it whilst one of the more daring of us climbed down to explore the cliff face looking for gulls' nests. We sometimes climbed down to the rocks below using a much easier route and looked for caves, pretending they were old haunts of pirates, and search for treasure.

We then made our way round to Croyde by clambering over the rocks whilst keeping close to the foot of the cliffs, just in case we had to make a rapid climb out of reach of the tide. Searching the many rock pools for stranded fish, or any other form of sea life, provided many an hour of enjoyment. Sometimes we missed our tea because we were so engrossed, and time had passed so quickly. Thank heavens for those saved bread rolls etc.

On one such cliff top excursion, we came upon a film crew setting up film props on the cliff and rocks below. They told us they were shooting a film called "Twin Sons of Syracuse", a sort of comedy film set in Rome in the days of Caesar. This was about 1943-44, I think. Sometime later, the film "A Matter of Life and Death" starring David Niven, was filmed on the beach. He was the pilot of a plane shot down in aerial combat over the sea. Having floated ashore and then been found by a goat herd boy sitting on one of the dunes gazing out to sea as he played his flute. These were the opening scenes of the film released sometime in 1946.

The cliff face in front of the hotel had become well-worn with the constant climbing up and down by many boys over the years. The sandy mix of soil had been worn into many slides reaching from top of the cliffs to the beach at the bottom. Using thick pieces of cardboard or steel sheet with the front edge bent up to form a hand hold, we careered down these slides to the bottom, often scattering those climbing up for another go. Although this appeared to be dangerous, I don't recall anyone being seriously hurt. Some of us received minor scratches maybe through crashing through the odd scrub bush dotted about the cliff face.

An accident did occur, whereupon one boy lost an eye, a part of one arm below the elbow, and had his face badly scarred with shrapnel. We latter found out he had picked up an anti-personnel grenade causing it to detonate. I don't think it was found on the cliffs in front of the School because the Americans would not have been allowed to use such items so close to the areas used by the us. I would hazard a guess that he found it amongst the dunes. (See chapter 7 DANGER AT PLAY.) I think the lad's name was Bettison or Benson and was from Clive House.

We did not hear much of what had happened to the boy till quite some time later. He did return to the school after his hospital and recuperation period. He was still able to take part in a lot of activities, including swimming. I can recall that on one or two occasions I saw him swimming in the pool at Dover.

7. Danger at play

This brings me to the occasion when several us went exploring the dunes some way up the beach during one of the holidays when we stayed behind. Beach combing was a favourite pastime of most of us and many groups of boys could be seen scouring

the high tide line endeavouring to be the first to find something of interest. It is inevitable that boys with time on their hands will get up to all sorts of mischief which can only be classed as silly, idiotic or downright dangerous. I leave you to make up your own mind about the following.

Having saved some bread rolls from the dinner meal and adding them to a few goodies from a previously received parcel, we set off up the beach searching the shoreline for the glass floats used on fishing nets. Many of these would be washed up after rough weather. These were collected and taken back to the School. Our House Master C.S.M. (Mickey) Finn collected them for his garden, though I cannot remember where this was.

We searched half the length of the tide mark before deciding to head for the dunes ever aware that there were mine fields amongst them. These were fenced off and had warning signs with the red skull and cross bones on them. I found out later that CSM 'Dusty' Miller had the job of trying to prevent us from doing just that. Ever careful to make sure we kept well away from any fenced off area, we proceeded to search around.

At the end of the war in 1945 the Americans did clear these minefields, but I believe a few remained because of the action of the shifting sands. We often heard the odd explosion and later learned that someone had been injured or killed during a mine clearing operation or that someone had inadvertently wandered into a not yet cleared zone.

Whilst continuing with our search of the dunes we found some ammunition boxes partly hidden in the sand. The strong onshore winds that sometimes blow across the dunes must have uncovered them. Inside we found some blank and live ammunition. We also found some booby trap triggering devices. These were like the "L" shaped shot bolts you see on household doors, but spring loaded. The short leg of the "L" locked into a recess and was held against spring pressure. If flipped up, the bolt shot forward striking whatever it was held against. Putting these items in our pockets we headed back to the School. Once in our room we hid them amongst our bedding or in hiding places under the floorboards. There must have been hoards of stuff left in such places when the School finally left Saunton. I often wonder if any of it was ever found and what the finder must have thought or did with it.

The wooden uprights of the bunk bed frames had extra holes in them which did not seem to serve any purpose at all once the beds had been assembled. We discovered that a blank was a perfect fit when pushed into these holes up to the rim. These blanks were filled with cordite and the end, where the bullet would normally have been fitted, was crimped in.

Priming the trigger against spring pressure, we held it against the cartridge percussion cap and released the bolt. The bang when it detonated took us by surprise and scared the living daylights out of us. So much so that we rapidly made ourselves scarce in case a staff member came to investigate. If any of the staff had had any idea that we had these items they would have had a heart attack. Especially if they had known what we were doing with them and doing it in our rooms. After we recovered from our shock and surprise, we took our ammo and the trigger devices

down to the beach.

Here a concrete pillbox had been built on the beach not far from the cliff. The observation slits faced out to sea. An opening at the rear allowed access to a fairly roomy interior. When I visited the beach in July 1970, whilst on honeymoon with my wife, I noticed the pillbox had become almost completely filled with sand. The sand had also piled up at the rear making it impossible to gain entry. My elder brother who visited the beach in May 2010 with his wife and grown up children said the pillbox had been blown up leaving large chunks of concrete all over the place which now looked unsightly. In time the sand would have buried it.

By placing a cartridge on the sill of the slit and using a heavy stone to hold it down, we were able to use the triggering device to detonate it. Some locals, who were on the beach at the time, heard the bang but could not see anything or work out where the sound had come from as we were inside the pillbox. Having set off several blanks we now wanted to set off some bullets but could not manage to keep them still. Finally, by pushing them nose first into the firm moist sand and holding the triggering device against the percussion cap, we set them off. This resulted in an even bigger bang and a cloud of sand showering us as the bullet itself was driven deep into the firm damp floor of the pillbox. Deciding that doing this was too dangerous we packed in and went back to climbing on the cliffs.

Our classrooms, situated in the school grounds, provided another venue for further experiments. By removing the bullet nose and collecting the cordite, we were then able to make *swizzles*, a rocket type of fire work.

These were manufactured by rolling 3-inch widths of paper around a pencil to form a tube. One end was sealed as tight as possible then filled with the cordite. The other end was sealed by loosely twisting it sufficiently to prevent the cordite falling out. Laying the firework on a flat surface or a tabletop, we then lit the loosely twisted end. Emitting a loud whoosh, a cloud of celluloid smelling smoke and a spurt of flame, the rocket whizzed around the room changing directions unexpectedly as it cannoned off items of furniture until expended, whilst everyone scrambled to get out of its path. There followed several minutes of panic-stricken activity as we frantically threw open the windows and endeavoured to rid the room of the evidence of our mischief before a teacher arrived. They must have sensed something was up but never asked questions.

The hill at the rear of the hotel provided the ideal place for tobogganing. Using sheets of cardboard or tin as sledges, and with one or two of us on board, we set off down the gorse covered slope gaining speed all the time whilst holding on for dear life. The sledge, now travelling so fast, it crashed through the hedge at the bottom and bounced along the road. Luckily not many vehicles used that stretch of the road. Again, it's amazing how nobody sustained any injuries; we must have had charmed lives. The best sledge we ever had was a shield shaped shop sign advertising Fry's chocolate bars. Its bowed shape was perfect for sitting in and it went down that hillside like a bullet, the faint hearted jumped off before it reached the bottom.

The hillside was riddled with rabbit warrens, so we often went rabbit hunting amongst the gorse bushes, trying to sneak up on them as they dozed by their

burrows. We never did catch any though. Searching for slow-worms, lizards and snakes (adders) proved more interesting. Adders are poisonous, so we had to treat them with respect. Mostly they would disappear before we got to them, having been frightened away by the slightest noise or vibration of the ground as we stomped up and down amongst the gorse.

One infamous and not easily forgotten night a group of lads decided to go scrumping. Carrying a kit bag and a torch, they sneaked out of the School and made their way to an orchard adjacent to Drury's field opposite Saunton post office.

Two of the group climbed into a tree and began to pass apples to those below who placed them in the kit bag. Being so engrossed in their work and hardly able to see much in the dark, they failed to notice the farmer creeping up on them. When those on the ground realised someone was coming, they yelled a warning and scarpered leaving the two in the tree to whatever fate would befall them. The farmer confiscated the kit bag.

The next day the farmer arrived at the School and the R.S.M. was duly informed and the two culprits made to report to the office. A kit bag containing apples was placed on the table as evidence, it also had the owner's name on. The farmer claimed it contained 28lb of apples stolen the night before. After admitting their guilt, each boy was awarded six of the best.

They did not grass on the other members who had got away. After the caning, and because it was now impossible for the two to sit down, they had the rest of the morning off. They spent the time on the beach until the pain had subsided sufficiently for them to return to normal duties. The number of apples scrumped that night was not as claimed by the farmer; they only just covered the bottom of the kit bag.

How do I know? You may well ask. Well! I was one of the two who got caught and I am certain there were not that many apples collected that night. That cane certainly brought tears to one's eyes. Those weals, which curved right round both sides of the thighs, were visible for several weeks after.

Those who could not contain their curiosity often asked to see the cane marks, looking on them as war wounds. What they saw served to remind them of what they themselves could expect in similar circumstances.

Nobody made a big issue over corporal punishment in those days. There must have been a record kept of such canings though I doubt if it was ever made public. I am not sure whether parents were informed of any crime and punishment. I often wondered if and when it was eventually discontinued. It certainly would have been frowned on today.

Many years later, I found out that a certain amount of corporal punishment did occur in one form or another. It was whilst researching my Family History, that I chanced upon a newspaper article about the Dukies at Dover. I then decided to search for similar articles printed in newspapers in Devon, London and Kent, covering the period 1800 to 1950. I amassed hundreds of interesting snippets covering all aspects of the way of life as experienced by Dukies of that period. I am now in the process of collating them into some sort of chronological record.

Saunton Burrows



Looking towards Westward-Ho, Bideford Bay and Taw Estuary, 1942-46.
The Burrows and surrounding areas were used by the Americans
for training purposes prior to the 'D Day' landings.

Saunton Beach.



Viewed from the cliff top in front of the School. 1942-46. This was
our main play and parade area when the tide was out.

8. Our American Allies

In early 1943 several counties in the south of England saw the arrival of American Air Force units which were to be stationed at one or more of the various airfields there. The Air force was equipped with the large Flying Fortresses with which they were to carry out hundreds of bombing raids on Germany. Many were shot down with the loss of many of the air crews who gave their lives in support of Britain's struggle against Hitler's tyranny.

To the British men folk though, the Americans became a threat in competition for the local girls who made a beeline for the dance halls and clubs frequented by the G.I.s. As far as the British chaps were concerned the American soldier was over here, over paid and over sexed. It was inevitable that some friction existed between them because of this. The G.I.s did their best to integrate into the local communities. They helped out as much as possible by arranging parties and treats for the children of the nearby locals. The women could now get perfume and silk stockings whilst the men enjoyed spirits and cigarettes, all of which were in short supply because of the war and our rationing system. The Americans were well known for their generosity.

The south coastal counties, stretching from Kent in the East to Devon and Cornwall in the West, were to play host to the thousands of Americans troops who also arrived and were encamped there. Many training areas were set up and it became quite common to see large numbers of troops in convoy from one place to another.

History was to record some of the tragedies that happened to some of these troops who were destined to lose their lives before the D-Day landings ever took place. They had arrived in England for the rehearsal of the landings on the Normandy beaches and many tented camps were set up. This was to be the D-Day invasion on June 6 1944.

As the beaches of Devon were similar to those on the north coast of France, they were to be the ideal training grounds. Those at Slapton Sands on Devon's south coast were similar to the beaches, code named Utah and Omaha, at Normandy. Because of this some 3000 local civilians were moved out of the area and sworn to secrecy. The area was sealed off and only those with special permits were allowed in. Rehearsals during March and April did not always go as planned and as D-Day was getting nearer there was an urgency to get on with them.

The Americans, stationed down the road from the School, used the Braunton Burrows for their manoeuvres. During one leave period, not a summer one, those of us who had stayed behind watched a large number of landing crafts approaching the beach. They stayed offshore instead of beaching and began firing their multi rocket launchers, aiming the missiles towards the dunes. Sometimes the odd aircraft would pass over heading for the dunes strafing them with machine gun fire. I don't know how it came about but on one occasion several bullets went through the Cookhouse windows.

No one was injured though it was a bit of a shock at the time. It was said that the gunner might have been clearing his guns before the plane landed nearby, at

Chivenor Airfield. We never did find out.

One incident involved troops landing on Slapton Sands whilst under fire from other troops acting as defenders. Live ammunition was being used but was fired over the heads of those landing on the beach.

Observers at vantage points were there to see that everything went according to plan and to report back if there were problems. It soon became apparent there were problems when some of the live rounds began to hit the men landing from the assault boats. As soon as the observers saw there were casualties and that their numbers were increasing, they tried to inform those in command of the assault but were ignored. The exercise had to go ahead whatever happened, as time was running out.

As much realism as possible was required if D-Day was to be a success. There are always a percentage of casualties allowed for on an exercise such as this but 29 men were killed or wounded.

A second incident occurred when the landing times had been changed but all units did not receive the message in time. As the assault forces were landing on the beach, a blunder caused the naval bombardment to fall short amongst the troops already on the beach.

War records show that the D-Day landings were to have taken place much earlier than June 6th 1944. A third and more serious incident was to take place a couple of months earlier on the 27th of April; this was so catastrophic that the invasion was cancelled. There were some 900+ casualties this time.

A large assault force, code named Exercise Tiger, of 8 L.S.Ts loaded with men and equipment and landing crafts was assembled. They were to sail in convoy under cover of darkness. It was to be a full rehearsal for D-Day. The convoy was to sail east along the Channel then double back to a rendezvous point about ten miles off Slapton Sands ready for zero hour.

Unfortunately all this activity had not gone unnoticed. A fleet of 'E' boats, fast torpedo boats, which had slipped out of their base in France unnoticed, was patrolling the Channel looking for targets off the English coast.

The 'E' boats intercepted the invasion convoy as it neared its rendezvous off Slapton and attacked. The troops had no idea whether this was just another exercise or for real. The convoy was to have had two naval escort ships but one had to return to port because of problems.

The attack took everyone by surprise as there was no warning from the remaining escort ship or radar monitoring stations situated along the coast. It was discovered later that different radio frequencies were being used, compounding the confusion. Two of the L.S.T.s were sunk with most of men still below deck. Those who were on deck and had dived overboard were drowned or killed when they landed in the sea with their equipment on. A third L.S.T. was badly damaged in the stern but managed to return to base and beach itself. Most of the men died in the fires whilst trapped below deck. Almost 750 were killed and 300 wounded. The bodies were conveyed in secrecy to an undisclosed place of rest.

When the Americans finally landed on 'Utah' beach on D-Day their casualties were less than one quarter of those lost off Slapton Sands. The beaches were constantly

combed for bodies and articles of equipment washed up. This incident was so serious that no news was ever allowed to leak out in case the Germans found out. It was classified secret until revealed in documents some 50 years later, after the war.

A freak storm one night in 1947 exposed a gully on the beach. A local man, Ken Small, who was a retired policeman who had moved to Devon in 1969, ran a hotel which overlooked the sands. Searching the area with his metal detector, he discovered a hoard of spent and live ammunition, buttons and numerous items of clothing and equipment.

He discovered a W.W.II. American Sherman tank on the sea bed 60 feet down and about a mile out to sea, after hearing local fishermen had damaged their nets on an underwater obstacle. In June 1984, he finally managed to raise the tank and winch it ashore. After 10 years of fighting Government red tap both here and in America, the US Government sold the tank to him for a nominal \$50.

Visitors to Tor-Cross, on the south coast of Devon and east of Slapton, can see this tank set on the beach as an official memorial to all those American soldiers, almost 1000 in total, who lost their lives on a British beach or in British waters.

9. Trades

Every Dukie had the choice of learning one or more of several different trades. I opted to do tailoring, signalling and wireless procedure. Others did cobbling (boot mending) or became members of the School Band. I decided tailoring would be most useful in the Regular Army. It meant that I would be able to keep my uniform and other clothing in a good state of repair. Turning my shirt collars when they became worn on one side or making a new collar by cutting a piece off the shirt tail. Doing this saved me money. The reason for this was that your initial issue of three shirts was free, thereafter money was docked from your pay each week until any new item was paid for. The same applied to socks. You either bought cheaper civvy ones or darned your army ones. I was also able to sew my own stripes or shoulder badges on my jackets when I was promoted in the Regular Army.

I also became a dab hand at darning and mending thanks to Mollie Brennan, the Haig House Matron. All the clothing repairs and manufacture of white aprons for use in the Cookhouse and dining room were made by the school tailoring section. The sowing on of stripes on the upper right sleeve and service chevrons on the lower left sleeve, provided the tailoring section with plenty of work. The chevrons on the left sleeve represented one for each year of service in the D.Y.R.M.S. Some of the old sweats would sport five or six plus trade badges. These earned them a few extra pennies each week.

I can still remember some of the radio network procedure and most of the Morse Code after leaving the Dukies so long ago in 1947. The use of the Morse key, heliography (reflecting the sun with mirrors), signal lamp and semaphore (using flags or your arms) were all taught. There are some things you just never forget. C.S.M. (sticks) Davey. Clive House and C.S.M. (Mickey) Fynn. Wellington House were our instructors.

At tailoring, we'd sit cross-legged on six-foot tables, two to a table, practising row upon row of cross stitch, back stitch, and blanket stitch. A piece of thick black cloth was given to each boy and was the medium on which you practised the various stitches. Any mistakes or inferior work resulted in it being unpicked and redone. You then repeated this procedure until you got it right. If the instructor thought you were good enough you then progressed to making buttonholes. I am quite proud to say that I have made or repaired a few buttonholes since those days. The training and all that practice has stood me in good stead over the years.

Many years later, my daughter who was attending the local Junior School, came home with some green cloth, and a pattern sheet. She also had a letter from her teacher informing parents that their child was to take part in a school play and could they please make a suitable costume dress. My wife, who often heard me talking about my tailoring in the Dukies, passed the letter to me. The play was the "wizard of Oz".

I duly set to and produced a skirt with matching bolero type jacket trimmed with gold braid along the collar and jacket edges. Making the hand sown buttonholes was no problem at all, thanks to those many cross legged hours on the table tops at Saunton and Dover. I am sure that our master tailor, Mr Miller, would certainly have been proud of my work. I believe the outfit is still used to this day, many years later in other plays. Trade pay was a few pennies a week. This was saved to buy goodies or other items in Braunton.

The battle dress blouse is a notorious shapeless thing to wear and look smart in. As such it is the first item of clothing to be doctored by every soldier at the earliest opportunity. Cutting the stitches on the waistband at the back and smoothing out the extra pleats. Folding and ironing in the new box pleats and stitching every thing back together. Bingo! One smart box pleated perfect fitting battle dress blouse. I earned myself a few bob doing this and other tailoring jobs.

I often wondered why I never had an inkling to take up tailoring professionally. Through my family research, I discovered that a few of my ancestors had been tailors.

10. Entertainment

I give full credit to the school staff. They did do their best to give us as much preparation for the future as they could. This meant getting the boys involved in as much activity as possible. A whist drive or dance evening was often arranged whereby the house masters and their wives, matrons and other invited guests, would do their utmost to teach us the rudiments and intricacies of the various ballroom dance steps. We eventually discovered we did after all have only one left foot and one right foot, contrary to what others may have said. The Waltz, Military Two Step, Paul Jones, Quickstep, Fox-trot, etc. did pose a bit of a problem for some of the smaller boys dancing with the larger of their matronly partners.

Chalk, sprinkled on the floor, helped the rubber soles of our plimsolls to slide more easily instead of jerking to a sudden stop when you placed your foot down during

some of the more energetic dances. The spot prize dances resulted in a mad rush for partners. Then a beeline for the most likely spot on the dance floor you thought the compare was looking towards. This usually resulted in more than one couple trying to dance on the same spot. Whist drives were popular and the first introduction to card playing for most boys and I am sure we all enjoyed those evenings. Tea and cakes were usually served afterwards, adding to the attraction. Films were also shown courtesy of the A.K.C. Army Kinema Corps. All this activity helped the winter months pass quickly.

Walking to Saunton on Saturday and Sunday afternoons would take us past the American Army Camp just down the road from the School. They always enjoyed chatting to us and often invited us into their camp. The fact that we were also in uniform seem to make everyone buddies. They plied us with umpteen packets of chewing gum and cigarettes. Lucky Strike, Chesterfield, and Camel, to name just a few of the brands. They had so many different named flavours of gum that it started a craze to see who could collect the largest number of different wrappers. The cigarettes were kept hidden. To be caught smoking or in possession meant a close encounter of the painful type with 'Spra' Jones.

It amused the Americans to see us in our well pressed uniforms and polished boots. Even more so if we saluted any of their Officers who happened to pass. Some would turn back for another salute just because it surprised them the first time. They said we paid them more respect than their own troops did. They showed us some large-scale models of tanks and aircraft that they used for recognition purposes. They would have been terrific for our pretend war games on the dunes, but they said they could not give them to us even had they wanted to.

The Americans knew they were at Saunton to train for the build up to the D-Day, June 6th, 1944, invasion of Europe, and many expressed their anxiety about the outcome for them when the time came to move on. I am sure they knew something big was about to happen. We reminded them of their families back home and they were only too happy to hear us talk about our own families and life in England rather than about the war.

One of the Americans gave me a gas cape which you cover yourself with and then squat down, so that the edges are on the ground. The top section was transparent so that you could see all around you. The whole of you including your kit and rifle was covered. He never explained how he was supposed to fire at the enemy if the opportunity arose. I used to hide under it in our pretend war games when we played on the dunes.

We celebrated VE (Victory in Europe) Day (May 8th, 1945) by building large bonfires on the golf links near the woods. The abundance of fallen trees and brushwood enabled us to keep the fires going for some time. Bags of spuds and boxes of apples, recently harvested, were provided by local farmers. These were roasted on the fires and enjoyed by all. The celebrations went on well into the following day.

Three months later, on August 14th, the Japanese surrendered after having two nuclear bombs dropped on Japan. It gave cause for another day of celebrations.

Celebration bonfire



11. Return to Dover, 1946

With the war over I wondered what the future held for the D.Y.R.M.S. The School fully expected to start the process necessary for the move back to Dover when the war ended in the spring of 1945. After a large scale clean up, repair and refurbishment it was hoped the site at Dover would be ready and the move completed by the end of the year. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Unforeseen delays meant the move was put off till Easter the following year, 1946.

At the end of the Easter holiday all boys were to report back to the School at Dover. The permanent staff members and those boys who had stayed behind, cleaned and packed up for the journey home to the old School site in Kent. At last, on Friday 29th March 1946 with everything packed and ready, we entrained at Braunton for Dover. It was an uneventful journey that could not end soon enough for us because of the excitement and anticipation of what we might find at the end of it.

When we arrived at Dover Priory rail station, we found that army transport had been arranged to collect us and take us to our final destination. Once our kit had been sorted out, we settled into our respective House accommodation. After a meal we made our beds and retired. The rest of Easter was spent exploring what for us was a new site.

As was usual for those who did not go home at holiday time, it meant a busy time getting the dormitories cleaned up and beds sorted out. It would be the first time a larger number of boys would be together in one room, some 16 to 20 or more?

Once the routine of school life was back to normal everyone settled into their new surroundings and had that glad to be back feeling although it would be the first time at Dover for the majority of us. Some of those who were evacuated from Dover in 1940 probably never returned to it in 1946, having moved on from Saunton to the next stage in their careers. It must have been a great moment for R.S.M. Jones to set foot on familiar ground again. He was also one of only a few of the staff to have

served such a long time with the School, twenty five years in fact, 1934-1959. No wonder it was hard to pull a fast one on 'Spra' Jones, he having seen every trick in the book and heard every excuse that a Dukie could think of.

The layout of the School site soon became familiar to us during our first term. The main road lay in a North West to South East direction between two main gates, Guston at the N. West and the road to Deal at the S. East. A second road curved in an arc on the N. East side to join the main road near each gate to form a 'D'. A gate house flanks either side of each gate. On the inside of the 'D' and parallel with the curved road runs a third much narrower one, its ends also joining the main road. Eight buildings in the form of a 'H' and equally spaced on the strip of land between the two curved roads formed the accommodation blocks or Houses, as they were more commonly called.

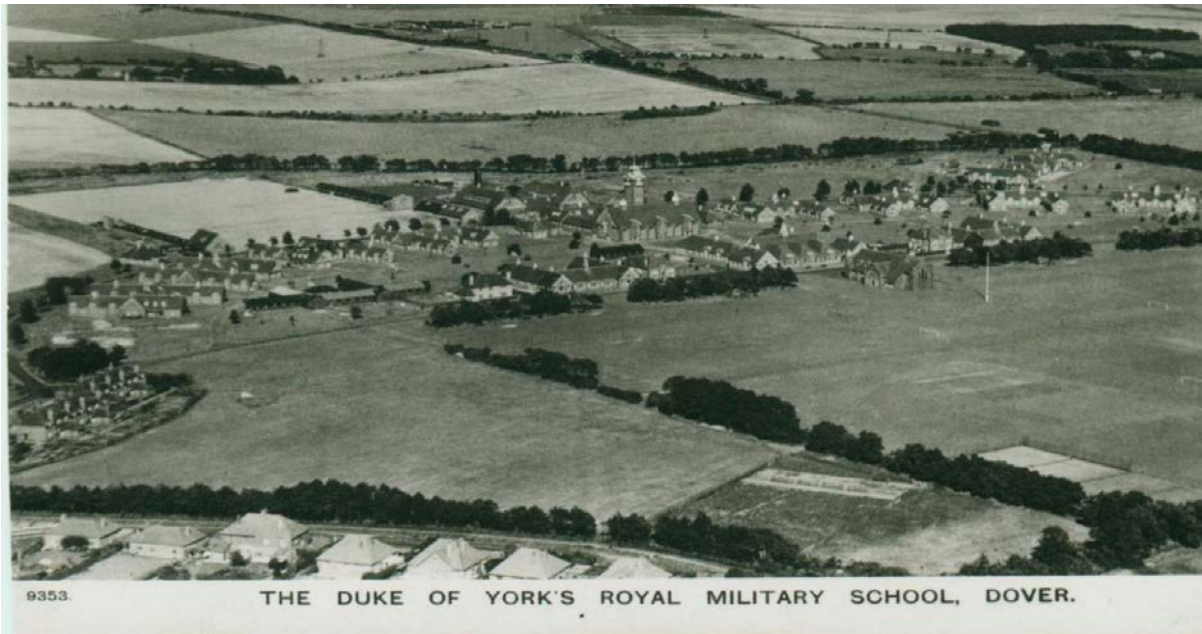
The Cookhouse Block with an integral Dinning Hall and Clock Tower at its S. West side is situated between Houses 4 & 5. In front of the Dining Hall an Assembly square separates it from the Education block adjacent to the main road. On the left of this road and opposite the Education block is the School Chapel. Behind this are large grassed areas used for sports and parades. Inside the 'D' area are the Assembly Hall and Administration Block.

Other new buildings have since been added over the years to account for new activities and technology. Behind Houses 5 & 6 is a large hard surfaced square used as Hockey Pitches, Drill and Parade Square. On its N. West side is the Band Practice Room and behind this the Indoor Shooting Range. On its S. East side directly behind the Cookhouse are the Indoor Swimming Pool and Gym, behind these the Indoor Cricket School building. A group of Staff Houses are situated outside the 'D' area near the Guston end and a Sanatorium and other Staff Houses at the Deal end of the School site.

The Houses are named after famous Generals. Starting at the Deal end they are (A) Marlborough, (B) Wolfe, (C) Clive, (D) Wellington, (E) Wolseley, (F) Roberts, (K) Kitchener, and (H) Haig, the junior intake House, where Newchies usually spent their first six months to a year.

The Houses were constructed in the style of Bungalows of 'H' formation facing towards the centre of the 'D' formed by the two main roads. The inner road passes the front of each House. The left hand wing was the House C.S.M's quarters, the right hand and two rear wings were dormitories sleeping 16 – 20 boys. The middle section connecting the wings formed the day room and games room. The ablutions and cleaning room was situated behind the day room and between the two rear dormitory wings. Sometime later the C.S.Ms were replaced by civilian housemasters.

Aerial view of the School.



The DYRMS returned to Dover from Saunton in the Spring of 1946.

The School 2014.



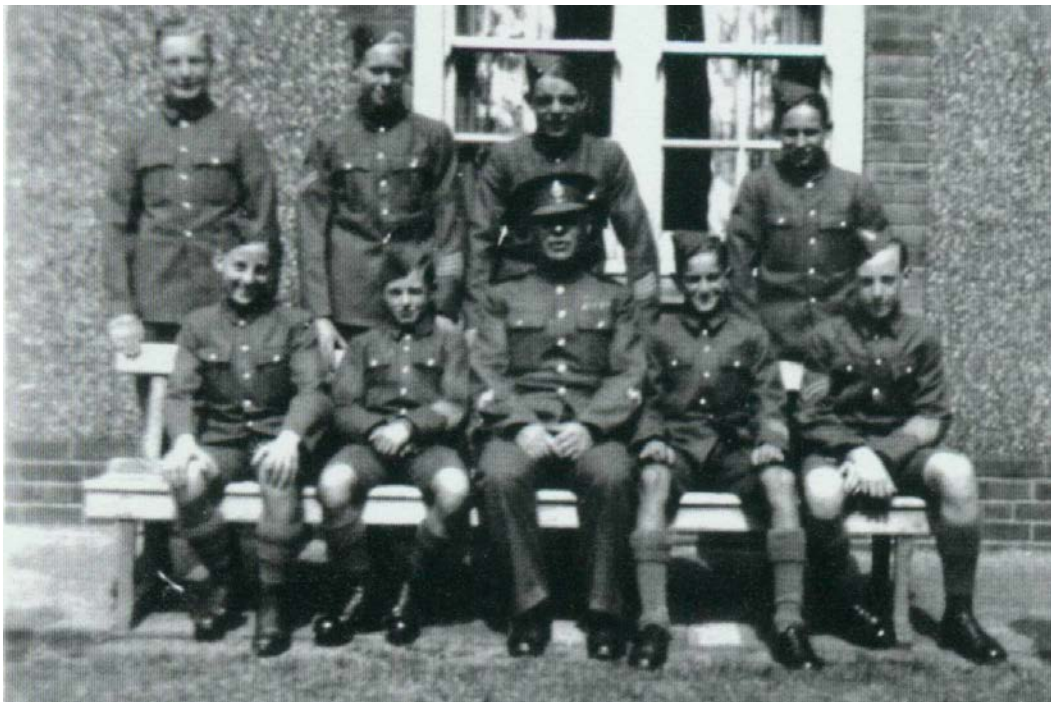
Several new buildings are shown as the result of a recent £25 Million refurbishment.

Members of Wellington House. 1946.



After the move from Saunton to Dover, March 29th, 1946. I'm standing 4th right.

Summer leavers. 1947.



CSM Finn, Wellington House with those leaving for pastures new.
I'm sitting on left front row.

Wellington House, being next to the dining hall meant that I did not have far to go at meal times. After parading outside we were marched to the assembly square outside the hall and dismissed to file into the dining hall in an orderly manner, to your

place at the table. Orderlies then collected the food containers from the kitchen serving hatches and dished the meals out. These were usually the boys at the end of each table.

The wood panelled walls of the Hall displayed Rolls of Honour, listing the many ex Dukies to have lost their lives in the wars since the School was formed. Panels also listed each year's winners in the various sports played and of the Champion House.

Large paintings of the famous Dukes and Generals represented by each House name also graced the walls. To spend time reading and viewing all these panels and paintings was like stepping back into the past, trying to visualise what the owners of the earliest recorded names must have been like or the lives they led all those years ago. I suppose the Dukies of today, reading the later additions to those same panels of names, wonder what it must have been like for those of my generation who joined in the 1940-1945 years at Saunton. Perhaps they have not been updated for the events of those years. Sports were not played on the same level as had been at Dover.

During the long summer evenings and at weekends a large number of boys used the small assembly square, next to the clock tower, for a variety of activities. Marble competitions was favoured quite a lot as was roller skate racing. It was usually the more well-off boys who brought skates back with them from leave. Even so they shared their skates which enabled teams to be formed and the races to take place. Often fancy routines as in ice skating would be learned at the expense of grazed knees and elbows. We never had the luxury of the fancy protective clothing of today's roller bladers. A rub and a bit of spit was all the pain killer we had.

Amongst other activities at Dover I always looked forward to the .22 shooting. This was taken by C.S.M. Fry. This brings back the memory of one incident at Saunton. The School grounds had a lot of stray cats roaming around and it was decided that these would have to be reduced in number. One afternoon C.S.M. Fry got several of us to round up as many as we could and chase them towards a place on the cliff top where he was in hiding. He then managed to shoot quite a few.

The bodies were then buried well away from the School area. The rest of the strays took the hint and scampered. With the many hours of practice, I became quite a good shot which stood me in good stead later on in the services. Under C.S.M. Fry's instructions I managed to score several quarter-inch groups with five rounds.

One mate who I got to know quite well was a chap called Morton. I have often wondered what happened to him since our Dukie days. Unfortunately, we did not exchange addresses when we left. We got on well together and often spent a lot of our leisure hours exploring the area around the School at Saunton and then at Dover. We often walked into Dover on Saturday or Sunday afternoon to have a look around and perhaps buy some cakes. I did eventually meet him one Grand Day at Dover in year 2000.

George and I, with our wives, met Tony Massey, ex-Wolseley House, and his wife Maureen, at a Travel Inn in Ashford, Kent, where we had arranged to meet prior to attending the Grand Day. My sister Pam, who lived at Gillingham and Hazel, my younger brother Ron's wife, also met up at the Inn. Whilst we Dukies attended the

Grand Day Parade at the School, the wives went to Dover to look around and shop.

On any of the weekends we stayed in we would sneak round the back of the Indoor .22 Range and make off on what we called journeys of discovery. Keeping to the hedgerows we walked for what seemed miles looking for blackberries or wild damson trees or perhaps an orchard. I always kept in mind what happened on the ill-fated scrumping expedition at Saunton, thus we were extra careful in keeping a good lookout. We'd cut across the rail line at the tunnel entrance near Guston end of the School and head for the pylons in the distance.

On the way we skirted round some cultivated fields of carrots and turnips. Helping ourselves to a few of each we proceeded on our way. On reaching the pylons we decided it would be a good thing to climb up and have a look around. The climb was quite easy and after reaching two thirds of the way up we stopped and wedged ourselves against the uprights and cross braces for a breather. After a few minutes looking out over the surrounding countryside, pangs of hunger brought on by the recent activity, decided the fate of the purloined vegetables.

A penknife made short work of peeling and scraping them clean enough to eat. Secure up our lofty perch and with an air of nonchalance, as of a King surveying his domain, we sank our teeth into the crisp and juicy flesh savouring the raw tangy taste as we munched away. I still have a yearn to eat most vegetables raw even today. It is the only way to experience their true flavour.

We were not sure as to whether or not these were electricity pylons we had climbed. The cables appeared to be fairly thick and heavy, of the type seen at quarries or coal mines for carrying buckets overhead. As we were several feet below them, we did not think we were in any danger.

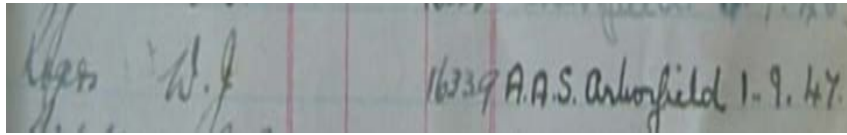
There were no notices at the foot of the pylons to say they carried a high voltage current.

All Dukies seem to acquire an inbuilt food clock. I think it is because our lives were ruled by the periods of time that regulated our daily activities. The regular mealtimes instilled a pattern of time into us so that our stomachs knew when the next meal should be about due. Mine was telling me it was now time to head back for tea. After climbing down, we retraced our steps back home whilst discussing what sort of culinary delight might be awaiting our taste buds.

I would like the reader to believe that I never once ever regretted my early and formative years spent in service as a Dukie. Yes, I agree they were regulated and regimented to a degree that you would say it was not much of an existence, but the camaraderie amongst us all was something you would hardly find in Civvy Street. You also became self-confident, self-disciplined, self-reliant, self-satisfied and above all you had your self-respect. No, I would not have wanted it otherwise. Your abilities gave you independence.

You have only to look at youths of today and their inability to fend for themselves to realise the grounding that the Dukies gave us. It was in August 1947 that I and several other boys were told we would now be leaving the School for pastures new.

Entry in School Register



When leaving the School at Dover for Arborfield.

Badge of the Army Apprentices School



12. Arborfield, 1947-1950

After the summer holidays I was to report to the Army Apprentices School at Arborfield, near Reading. George, who was a year older than I, had already joined the A.A. School in the Summer of 1946, so I was able to find out what the School was like and what to expect. I travelled to Arborfield with George so there was no problem about finding my way there.

Having booked in as Intake 47B, I was kitted out and shown to the new intake's Accommodation Block where we were to stay for the initial six weeks training. We also received our new Regular Army Number. This was to be 21126324 and my identification until I was demobbed in August 1965. Arborfield was also our introduction to daily routines being controlled by bugle calls³.

Throughout this training period, the Sergeant instructors who were Regular Army always tried to pull the *old sweat* routine on us, but as wise ex Dukies we never rose to the bait like the raw recruits did. Some of the instructors took umbrage at this and gave us a hard time. They seemed to resent that we were as wise as themselves regarding drill, bull and army routine.

The civvy recruits found the *spit and polish* difficult to master and were only too glad to accept the help and advice offered by the Dukies amongst them. The Drill Sergeants tried to show us up by making us demonstrate drill movements in front of

³ See Page 53 for links to several of the bugle calls.

the squad hoping we did not know the correct position or how to do it and would make mistakes. This alienated them against us even more when their ploy failed.

At the end of this period we were shown some instructional films and sat a Test Paper based on the films we had just seen. The logic of this seemed obscured to us but at the end of it, all was revealed.

It seemed that this was the method of determining which company you were to go to and what trade you were to learn. One film was "The Otto Cycle" about the working principles of the Automobile Engine and what made it tick. I got 98 out of 100 for this test and was duly assigned to be trained as a Vehicle Mechanic. George was already being trained as a Gun Fitter and was therefore in a different company to me, 'C' Company. I was glad when this six-week period was over, and we moved to our trade company. This would be 'B' Company for me.

As well as trade training there was also drill and education to contend with. Basic Black Smith, Tin Smith, Welding and general Workshop Practices were taught. Eighteen months file bashing during which numerous Test Pieces had to be completed satisfactorily to gain the required pass marks for the final pass result.

Trade Training took place in a large building subdivided into sections. One contained several class areas where Trade Theory was taught. One for the Workshop Practice and file bashing, and one, containing several decommissioned vehicles, for hands on practical dismantling and assembling work. Some Instructors and several of the more proficient senior Tradesmen Fitters were involved in the construction of a small-scale working model of a Locomotive Engine. I think it was between five and seven feet long. Most of the wheels and chassis seemed to have been completed and work was continuing on the boiler assembly. I wonder if it was ever completed and put into use or was merely for display purposes. Later, I heard it was in the REME Museum at REME Headquarters, Arborfield.

The work on it must have been in progress for quite a long time and probably involved apprentices from many of the intakes passing through the School. I would have liked to have seen it in full working order.

Everyone who passed through the various Apprentice Schools will probably still remember the Bedstead Knuckle Joint, Steel Plate with Square or Triangular Steel Plug which had to be a three-or-four-way fit, the Metal Cube with chipped, sawn, filed and scraped faces, just to name a few. At the Black smiths you made a set of punches, at the Tin smiths, a metal toolbox to put them in. Finally, you made a small Adjustable Spanner, Stud Wrench and a Scriber and Block during the file bashing months. I still have these tools though the toolbox disappeared many moons ago.

Life at Arborfield was still the regulated and regimented routines experienced at Saunton and Dover. However there seemed to be more purpose about everything. This was the next important stage as we approached adulthood. Decisions for the future now had to be made as to a career and trade. Contact was with an older group of people, new friends to be made. A more responsible attitude was required and more incentive to achieve better results. All in all, it was time to get the proverbial finger out.

The endless drill and parades posed no problems after having already

experienced them for the past five years, it was second nature.

As for sport, there was football, rugby etc., but boxing we discovered was purely voluntary. Cross country running though, was the inevitable activity you practically always ended up on and in all sorts of weather. It was deemed the best way to a fit body and a healthy mind.

Accommodation for approximately 120 persons was in Spider Blocks, so called for obvious reasons. The centre block, the Ablutions, (wash basins, baths, showers and toilets), formed the body. Six barrack rooms, three on each side of the Ablutions block, formed the legs and were all connected by corridors. Each barrack room contained a separate room about 6 feet by 8 feet for the room NCO. The rest of the room could sleep up to 20 men. All self-contained, under the one roof. If each block had had its own Cookhouse and dining room it would have been heaven. The rest of 'B' Company were the 3 officers and 7 permanent staff regular army instructors.

As it was, the Cookhouse was situated centrally on the main road side of the square. Four Spider Blocks were situated on each of the two sides adjacent to the Cookhouse so that the blocks faced each other across the all hallowed square. To be caught crossing the parade ground for any reason except when on parade was to evoke the wrath of R.S.M. McNally.

In wet weather the occupants of the blocks furthest from the Cookhouse would trudge through the corridor linking each block down the line until they finally reached the dining hall. This of course aggravated the permanent staff senior ranks in charge of those blocks as all the water and muck was being trudged over their previously cleaned and polished floors.

Because of the large numbers, mealtimes were staggered. Each company had its own time on a rota basis. This was open to abuse by the *old sweats* who tried to sneak in whenever they could get in on the blind side of the Officer or Sgt on duty at mealtimes. Seniority was another hurdle for the newcomer to overcome. An unofficial pecking order, though not accepted or condoned by the permanent staff members, did exist but usually only in the dining hall.

Everyone progressed from a naive raw recruit to a wise and experienced member of the School, so moving further up the ladder of privileges. It meant I could now go for my meals knowing I did not have a long wait before I eventually reached the front of the queue which sometimes wound along the four sides of the hall. It entailed moving up the queue two or three places at a time whenever the duty Sgt.. was looking the other way. Queue jumping, or *gypping in*, was done by everyone at one time or another as they progressed through Arborfield.

It was accepted in general though not liked by those who ended up further back in the queue, and it did sometimes lead to arguments. There always seemed to be a lot of Polish chaps in some of the Intakes and they were usually big blokes. One lad in my Intake, who had done a bit of boxing in youth clubs before he joined the A.A.S., took umbrage and objected to a large group of Poles who were trying to gyp in. One or two he did not mind, but when five or six tried it on, he objected. One of the Poles challenged him to *step outside*. The lad flattened him with a couple of swift punches that Dusty Miller would have been proud to see. He never had many passing him in

the queue after that.

Fatigues were carried out by each company in turn a week at a time. Some were a full day's work so other normal activities took second place. Cookhouse fatigues were much sort after although it entailed scrubbing kitchen pans and utensils, peeling spuds and cleaning vegetables etc. It gave you the chance to put trays of choice food away for your own meals which were always taken after everyone else had had theirs. Duty squads looked after their own interests, otherwise you ended up with leftovers. The cook Sgt knew this went on but turned a blind eye providing you did your job properly.

Ben Cook's fatigues was another fairly cushy job, if you played the game with him. He was an Army Captain who ran the smallholding supplying most of the produce for the Cookhouse. He worked two great shire horses Hercules and Samson for ploughing and other agricultural jobs. At mid-morning bait time he'd send two lads to the Cookhouse for a bucket of tea and a tray of fruitcake. This would be for six to eight persons. He always made sure you ate well but he also made sure you earned it. Spud picking and cabbage picking, topping and tailing turnips, weeding etc. were all hard graft.

One particular time, I and two others were sorting and bagging spuds. The other five lads had skived out of some of the work and were having a crafty drag (smoking) behind one of the sheds. Ben Cook caught them and sent two off to collect the tea and cake for break time. Whilst they were away, he unhitched the two horses and led them to the place where the workers usually rested and had their break. When the unsuspecting pair returned and had collected their mugs, they went to get some tea and cake.

"Hold on you two", shouted Ben, "That's not for you skiving b*****s".

"The horses have been doing all the work", he continued, "whilst you idle b*****s have been smoking and watching them". With that he collected the tea and cake from them, gave our group our share, then took the rest over to the horses and watched whilst they gorged themselves.

The camp roads were lined with almond trees and each autumn Ben would send a squad of lads round to collect the nuts from them. Whether they ended up in the Cookhouse or he sold them we never knew. He used to ride a large sit up and beg type of bicycle wherever he went, sometimes with a bag of spuds draped over the crossbar. Some years later the tale was that he had got drunk and fallen off his bike and died. This was never verified.

The duty company also provided a Fire Piquet and Prowler Guard. The piquet was fully trained in fire drill and would be on standby throughout their tour of duty. The Prowlers simply patrolled the camp area during the night doing two on and four hours off stints. They also checked that the boiler in each block was still alight. If not they had to re-light it. There was hell to pay if there was no hot water in the morning.

Those on duty on the four to six o'clock morning shift had the unenviable job of doing the early calls. This was to wake the duty cooks and NCOs who had to sign the book to say they had received their calls. Woe betide you if you missed anyone.

Many a wrong chap was woken up and asked to *sign the book*, which he usually

did whilst still in his befuddled half-asleep state. The genuine recipient of the early call, if he was lucky, woke up later having a frantic rush to get ready and a mad dash to his place of duty. What he threatened to do to the early caller was unprintable.

One large building was for multi-purpose usage. It had a stage at one end and a sloping floor at the opposite end. It was used as a cinema at weekends, a Church three Sundays a month and a Gym throughout the weekdays. Plays were regularly performed there, usually at term end. The difference in usage meant chairs constantly had to be set out and removed and the place swept out ready for the next function. This chore fell to the duty company and meant that at the end of each evening's show NCOs had to go turfing lads out of bed to get sufficient numbers to do the work.

One Sunday a month was a Ceremonial Church Parade, in best bib and tucker, on the square before being marched to church. One was a normal parade, not ceremonial, and then marched to church. One was a Company Assembly on the road outside the billets, and then marched to church. The last Sunday was free to do as you pleased.

Our uniforms at Arborfield were the new issue Service Dress similar to that of the Dukies but of a finer and better-quality material, similar to officer's dress, plus long trousers of course.

Each Saturday morning was 'Drill Parade' practice and inspection. During one of these drill sessions when all companies were lined up in parade order, RSM McNally was standing in front of the saluting base and letting it be known that he was not satisfied with the turnout and standard of drill. He was shouting at the top of his voice when suddenly his false teeth shot out and landed on the ground several yards in front of him. It was extremely difficult to keep a straight face. He made a frantic dash to retrieve them before all companies marched over the same spot as they passed the saluting base prior to leaving the parade ground.

The Company Commanders could choose to inspect anything they wished. The favourite was to tell everyone to remove their boots and socks. Anyone with dirty feet or holes in their socks had to parade in the afternoon for extra drill by the duty Sgt. This could last at least an hour. Feet and socks would be inspected again.

My darning and mending skills saved me from being caught out many times. Boots would be checked for state of repair and number of studs. I think each boot had 15 studs - in one row of 3 and 3 rows of 4 across the sole starting from the front. A steel tip was fitted at the toe and heel. Badly worn or split boots were handed in to the stores for repair which meant wearing your best highly bulled up pair for a week or more. Thus you walked around as if you were in stocking feet trying not to damage the hard worked for immaculate shiny finish.

There were also regular room inspections. Spare clothing such as vests, shirts, underpants, PT shorts, towels etc. had to be folded in a 9"x9" square and placed one on top of the other to form a square block and placed on the top shelf of your locker. This was achieved by folding each item around a 9" square of cardboard. The army issue Holdall containing toiletry items was laid out on the bottom shelf. The contents of the Army Housewife (sewing kit) was checked to see if it contained sufficient

needles, cotton, buttons, darning wool and white tape for clothing repairs. Once every 6 months or so there was a complete Kit Check and Inspection. Every single item of clothing and equipment was laid out on the bed and thoroughly checked for serviceability and repair. This prepared us for the army's Annual Admin Inspection later in the Regular Army.

The stores Quarter Master Sergeant made a list of all items to be replaced. These had to be taken to the stores and exchanged. Your original kit issue was free, after that it had to be paid for with weekly deductions from your pay, (49/-) a week. It was in your own interest to keep everything in good condition. Uniforms had to be smartly pressed and hung in the wardrobe side of the locker.

At Arborfield I received my first Army Pay of 49/- a week. Now we were getting a wage, George and I had an Allowance of about 21/- deducted each week and sent home to mum. It was a lot of money in those days, equal to £1-5 pence decimal. Each end of term meant it was holiday time. 10 weeks leave, 2 at Xmas, 2 at Easter and 6 at summer, was the norm each year. You saved throughout the term for the holidays. With this plus pay for the leave weeks and a daily ration allowance of 3s 5p (17p decimal), it added up to a fair bit. The ration money was for food at home so was paid to mum. We also paid extra towards our keep. After all we were growing lads with big appetites.

Reveille on the last morning of each term was a jazzed-up version of 'Charlie, Charlie, get out of bed'. It was played by the duty bugler and a couple of trumpeters of the school band. Practically everyone was already up, dressed and packed, ready to get the transport to the rail station by then.

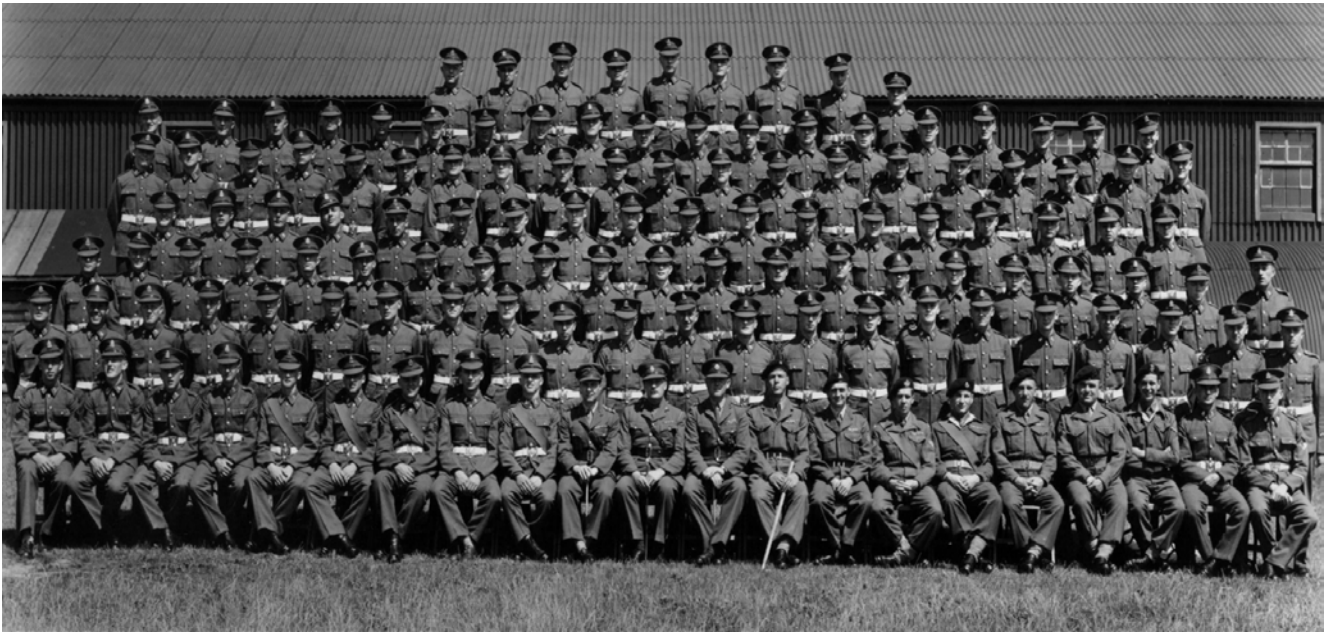
The three years Apprenticeship soon passed and before I quite realised it was time once again to move on. Having passed the VM. 111. Trade Test and 1st class Cert of Education, I now awaited my posting instructions. These I received prior to the 1950 summer holiday. A 'Passing out Parade' is the great occasion of the final Summer Term, ending with the Grand Dance. Next morning, I left Arborfield for the last time on the journey home for 6 weeks leave.

Six months prior to leaving Arborfield we were issued with the battle dress uniforms of the Regular Army. These were hastily doctored as described earlier in Chapter 9.

Each senior Intake wore their Battle Dress uniform on their Passing out Parade. I was now leaving Arborfield for good, so all my clothing and equipment had to be taken home as I had to report to my new place of posting in uniform immediately after leave.

Brother George had already preceded me into the Regular Army as a REME Gun Fitter/Turner, and soon joined the 16th Ind. Para. Brigade. He served many years in Egypt before joining the Air Despatch Research and Development unit at Old Sarum, Salisbury. Unfortunately, he was discharged as unfit because of damage to his knees caused by parachute jumping. Fortunately though, he was re-employed as a civilian doing the same job as before, eventually receiving an BEM in July 1960 for his work. Our paths never crossed during our service.

Intake 47B, 'B' Coy. AAS Arborfield.



Motor Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.1947-50. I'm standing 4th L, 2nd Row.

Badge of The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.



Motto - Arte Et Marte. By Skill and By Fighting.

13. The Regular Army. Warminster, 1950

Having completed the three-year Apprenticeship at Arborfield, Reading, I joined the Regular Army as a R.E.M.E. (Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) Craftsman. My first posting was to 27 Command Workshops, Sutton Veny, Warminster, in Wiltshire. The camp was situated about 1½ to 2 miles from Warminster between the villages of Longbridge Deverill and Sutton Veny. Once a week we paraded at 7.30am and marched to the workshops. This was considered to be our weekly exercise taking us about forty-five minutes at a steady pace. Half a dozen of us from 'B' Company A.A.S. ended up in the same billet at Warminster so it was like old times,

only now we were in the Regular Army.

Our first objective was to upgrade to VM class 11 by taking the Trade Test within 8 weeks of arriving. This proved to be a doddle after having just had three years studying at Arborfield. We all passed with flying colours. As V Ms we had to have a driving licence, so the next step was a driving course.

Whilst at Arborfield, all of us had completed a one-week basic course in driving. Vehicles used were an Austin Tilly 5 cwt car and a Morris Quad 4x4 15 cwt, a light gun towing vehicle. Bedford 3 ton 4x4s were used at Warminster and after a week we passed. Now with a VM 11 Trade Test and a 'B' Vehicle license, obtained at Warminster, there was no stopping us. Life at Sutton Veny was fairly good.

Guard and fire picket⁴ duties accounted for a couple of nights a month. On one of these stints of guard duty it was my turn to be the Main Gate Sentry. Half way through my two hour shift I heard what sounded like owls screeching or a rabbit caught by a stoat, so just assumed that's what it was.

A short while later, I saw someone approaching and challenged him and asked him to identify himself.

"I'm the duty officer" he replied, as he came closer. "Have you anything to report?" he asked.

"No sir." I said, lowering my rifle.

"So, all is quiet and well then." He said.

"Yes sir" I replied, wondering what was coming next.

"Did hear anything unusual at all?" he asked.

"Well I did hear an owl or some animal screeching, but that's all." I said.

"Well, that was your prowler guard blowing his whistle for help. You should have called the guard to 'stand to' and sent someone to find out why he was blowing his whistle, he could be dead now." He said.

"It certainly did not sound anything like a whistle sir, it must be a faulty one" I said.

By this time those inside the Guard Room had roused themselves and were alert as the officer entered.

"Is there anything unusual to report? He asked.

"No sir, except what the sentry reported earlier." replied the Guard Commander.

"Oh! Well keep on your toes." he replied and wondered off into the night.

Apparently, some rifles had been stolen recently by the IRA from an army camp at Arborfield and all camps were put on alert. Ammunition was issued but it had to be kept in the Guard Room and only issued to members of the Guard if there was a raid on the camp. The sentry on the Gate carried a rifle but had no ammo which seemed pointless.

The prowlers wore plimsolls and carried a baton and a whistle. The duty officer had met the prowler at the far end of the camp near the clothing store and had asked him what would happen if he blew his whistle.

"The guard will turn out Sir." He had replied.

"Good, then blow it." He said.

⁴ A squad of 6-9 men as required for these duties.

When there had been no response after 10 minutes had passed, the officer decided to check at the Guard Room expecting to find everyone asleep. Camp guards such as ours would not have stood a chance had there been a full-scale raid. By the time you dashed into the Guard Room for ammo, it would have been too late.

The fire piquet slept in a separate building which had its own garage for the tender and towing vehicle, a Ford 15 cwt. The fire drill was exactly the same as that carried out at the A.A.S. so we knew it off by heart.

I always endeavoured to keep my nose clean as much as possible by knuckling down and getting on with whatever I had to do, but sometimes you get caught out by the most stupid things. One such as keeping a check on your hair and getting it cut regularly. This one misdemeanour resulted in my one and only term of seven days jankers or being confined to barracks for one week. This entailed parading with the Fire piquet behind the Guard each evening at 6.0 pm dressed in full scale marching order (F.S.M.O.). This meant wearing a full set of webbing equipment.

After being inspected by the Duty Sergeant, you were then given an hour of fatigues. If you passed the inspection, he normally let you off the fatigues. The next parade was 10 pm. It was more of an inconvenience than anything else so you always made sure you did not get caught out again.

A week prior to this bit of misfortune I had written to my grandma, who lived in Richmond Surrey, to arrange to visit her at the week end. I had to send a Telegram to say I had urgent duties and could not therefore visit her. On the Saturday morning parade of that weekend, the C.S.M. thought my hair needed cutting so he put me on a 252 (a charge) to see the Company Commander.

On Monday morning at 10 am I was marched into the office. When he asked what I had to say, I replied that I had only recently had it cut and thought I did not need another until the following week. He made my mind up for me and gave me 7 days CB (confined to barracks). Thereafter I always kept my hair short, even nowadays. It's amazing how things rub off on you.

Weekend excursions were trips to the local town of Warminster to view the talent or visit the cinema, have a few drinks and then call at the Sally Ann (Salvation Army) hut for tea and sandwiches, then back to camp. Now and again we'd go to Trowbridge or Bath.

In the long sunny days of summer, it was nice to laze around on the grass outside the billets during off duty hours. On one such occasion we saw the Bristol Brabizon, the largest airliner at that time, pass over head on one of its many test flights. It seemed so slow and ponderous that it might suddenly drop out of the sky. I don't think it ever flew as a passenger plane,

In the dull dismal winter days, the camp looked bleak. The billets were of brick construction and could house about 20 men. At one end was a separate room for two, usually the NCOs. In the centre of the larger room was the standard army pot-bellied stove fire with its chimney, supported on an arch of bricks, above it.

The 1st of October was the official start of winter period and therefore the time when fuel was issued. Each billet had a galvanised tin bath in which the fuel (coke) was collected. This had to last the week, so the fire was only lit at nights and

weekends. Wood and coal could also be used but these had to be scrounged by fair means or foul. Most cold evenings were spent huddled around the fire sipping tea and making toast.

The top of the arch into which the chimney fitted had an access chamber, for cleaning purposes, which was closed off with a small cast iron trapdoor. Some bright spark suggested this was the perfect way to heat up tins of food. One evening, after having scrounged extra bread at teatime, a tin of beans was placed on a ledge inside the chamber to heat up.

The general idea was to heat up the beans whilst we were making the toast by holding the bread against the glowing sides of the stove with our forks. The problem was, the chap who had placed the tin of beans in the *oven*, had forgotten to puncture the top of the can. Consequently, just as we were getting the toast laid out to put the beans on, there was an almighty bang which blew the trapdoor off, just missing the nearest person. A smell of burnt food wafted over everyone as we fell over each other scrambling to get out of the way.

After things quietened down and the smoke cleared, we looked in the chamber for our beans. We got the tin out but there was nothing in it, for the beans were splattered all-round the inside of the chimney. We had no beans on toast that evening though we did learn an important lesson about heating food using this method.

Recalling incidents such as this often brings a smile to one's face when thinking of past experiences whilst serving in the army.

My first job at the workshops was in the Overhaul Department. This entailed stripping down all types of equipment from trailers to motorcycles. Each part being cleaned in the steam cleaning tanks then inspected. Any worn or damaged parts were replaced. The rebuilt item was then repainted and graded to a Class 11 standard. These were then sent to vehicle storage depots as a pool of equipment ready for reissue, usually to TA Units for use during their annual summer camps.

Next was a spell in the Engine Department. New engines went through a process of waterproofing and preserving prior to storage.

A special anti-corrosion liquid was sprayed into each cylinder through the spark plug hole whilst the crankshaft was turned by hand. All openings were then sealed to prevent ingress of moisture or dirt.

Not technical stuff you might say, but it did give you an insight and familiarise you with all types of equipment you might come across later on as a vehicle mechanic.

Most regiments have a Regimental Shooting Team that takes part in various competitions with other regiments throughout the summer months. I was soon to become a member of our regiment's team. During the yearly weapons and range firing courses that each soldier must attend and pass, I qualified as a marksman with the rifle and first class shot with the Bren gun. This entitled me to wear crossed rifles on my jacket sleeve but not to extra pay unfortunately.

I put my success down to the good grounding in rifle shooting by C.S.M. Fry whilst in the Dukies.

One of the biggest annual rifle shoots is held at Bisley, Surrey, and is attended by

teams from all over England and lasts for several days. Although our teams did not win, we were not bottom. I took the Trophy for the under 21s champion shot.

It was during the Regiment's 1951 Annual Summer Training Exercise at Chickerell Camp, near Weymouth, that we heard the news of the loss of the ill-fated submarine Affray whilst on sea trials off Portland Bill. All crew members and civilian inspectors lost their lives.

On one exercise, carrying out a simulated platoon attack, I noticed one of my boot laces was undone. I bent down to retie it when I had a sudden heavy nosebleed. The haversack and pouches worn during these occasions tend to restrict movement and had caused a build-up of blood pressure. An umpire who witnessed this marked me as a casualty and sent me back to base before the exercise had even started.

In June 2004, our Bowling Club, Seaton, Cumbria, visited Weymouth on a one-week Bowling Tour playing matches against five local clubs. These were played in the afternoons, so we had plenty of time to tour Weymouth in the mornings. It had not changed much since 1951.

The majority of my postings lasted about 18 months before going on to pastures new. I preferred it that way to spending years in the same station. You saw more places, different regiments and an assortment of equipment as used by various sections of the army.

L.A.D.s were Light Aid Detachment Workshops attached to regiments to carry out every day repairs that usually could be carried out on the spot or in a reasonable short time, much like today's small garages. Anything requiring lengthy repairs or overhauls was sent back to the nearest major R.E.M.E. Workshops such as 27 Cmd Wksp. Warminster.

During my time at Warminster, I got itchy feet and decided I wanted to see the rest of the World. This meant pestering the Company Clerk for a postings' application on which 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices were always given as Far East.

After filling in these applications regularly over a period of several months I finally got my wish. I think they got fed up being pestered and wanted rid of me. In September I rose to the dizzy heights of Acting Unpaid Lance Corporal and was posted to the Army Motor Transport School at Bordon, Hants. It is a nice part of the country and I enjoyed my time there.

The workshops had been set up in a disused gymnasium and still had the wood parquet floor down although it was a bit the worse for wear. The carpenter and painter were civilians and I got on well with them both. They had their own section at one end of the building. At the other end next to the entrance was a small room housing drilling, shaping and grinding machines. A separate hut nearby housed a small lathe.

Senior ranks and officers from all over the country and from abroad, attended courses on how to run the Motor Transport Section of their regiments. Basic vehicle maintenance and documentation instruction formed the major part plus upgrading to higher driving qualification, from driver class B111, to B11, to B1, etc.

Late one evening, after having gone to bed a bit earlier than usual, I awoke sensing something wasn't quite right. I could hear muffled giggles and as my eyes

became accustomed to the lights, I realised someone was bending over me. It was a woman dressed in uniform and she was about to pull the bedclothes off of me.

A couple of roommates, who both had their motorcycles at camp, had been out to Bordon and had met some ATS girls from a local camp. After sneaking them into our billet, they thought they would play a prank and give me a surprise by getting the girls to pull the bed clothes off of me. It had nearly worked but my subconscious mind had woken me up in time.

The No1 Regimental Training Unit for REME personnel had moved from Tuxford in Nottingham to Bordon, Hants, and was established in an empty barracks nearby.

In September 1952 I was sent there for a four weeks refresher course. I did not mind as I could see their barracks from my billet at the Army M.T. School and knew it would not take more than half an hour to take my kit there. I loaded it onto a borrowed hand cart and walked up the road to the unit's Admin Office to book in.

There were other squaddies queuing up to book in and, as I passed them, I saw some ex Arborfield lads who had been with me at Arborfield in the queue. Ivor Stead, Sands and Slade, all three had also been in the same billet as me at the AAS. What a small world. Apart from them and one other chap later, I never met or saw any others during my fifteen years in the army. After catching up on our past experiences we settled down to the course routine, the four weeks soon passed. I attained a B pass and a medal for tie of 1st place, which is considered to be quite a good result.

18 months later after more applications for a posting overseas I was on the move again. In August 1953, I was posted to the REME Depot Transit Camp, Popperinque Barracks, at Arborfield.

After spending several days here in overcrowded billets a group of us were kitted out for the Far East. I never understood the logic of some the military decisions encountered in my army career. I had to remove my L/Cpl stripe, being acting unpaid, yet one of the group was made up to L/Cpl as a postings NCO. His job was to keep an eye on us and be a general run-around and to make sure we got to Hong-Kong.

The trip over, in September, was on the Troopship S.S. New Australia, renamed from the ex Empress of Bermuda. It was a 3 week trip calling at places such as Gibraltar, Malta, Aden and Suez, Ceylon, Singapore then Hong-Kong. Shore leave at these ports opened one's eyes to a far different experience to that of being in the UK.

This was my dream come true, of visiting these places for free that many tourists paid thousands of pounds to see. Here were the mysteries of the East brought to life and never to be forgotten. As we pulled into the dock side at Hong-Kong we were greeted by the sound of a military band playing. A large crowd waving and shouting was something quite out of the ordinary, but it made a nice finale to our 10-thousand-mile trip over.

REME LAD, Army MT School, Bordon, Hants



I'm standing Centre, Back Row.

S.S. New Australia.



Departing Southampton for Hong-Kong. 1. September 1953.

14. The Far East. Hong Kong, 1953

As the ship edged nearer the dock, those of us crowding the rails searched the throng of faces below. Suddenly I spied someone standing near the gang plank gazing up at us. There was no mistaking that portly figure dressed in tropical khaki. It was Otty, ex Arborfield 47b intake and ex Big Base Drummer of the Pipe Band. After our group had disembarked, I found out he had come to collect and take me to my new unit.

He explained I was going to 27 Inf. Brigade H.Q, near Fanling in the New Territories, some 28 miles away. Transport was a Ford 15 cwt into which I loaded my gear. The journey via a shorter route known locally as The Twisk (Tai Wan-Sek-Kong), over hilly terrain, took about 40 minutes instead of the usual one hour by the coastal route, during which we exchanged news about each other since leaving Arborfield.

The L.A.D Workshops, to which I was to be attached, consisted of a number of Nissan huts at the edge of a dusty piece of land used as a vehicle park. Home was shared with 16 other R.E.M.E chaps who made up the L.A.D (light aid detachment) team. After reporting next morning at the workshops, I was introduced to everyone and shown the general layout of the place.

“Know anything about Chore Horses?” asked the WO11 (Warrant Officer 2) in charge as he gazed down at the ground in front of him. I had not heard the term before but realised he was referring to the collection of various sized machines spread out in front of us. “I haven’t worked on these sort of things before”, I replied.

“Well, - I want you to check them over and see if you can get them started as there’s a Brigade Exercise on next week,” he said, “We’ll be needing all of them, so see what you can do.”

The machines were 300 watt and 1260-watt generators which had been left in store in the same state as they were when last used by the operators. The 300s were ¼ HP air cooled, single cylinder 4 stroke engines attached to a generator and enclosed in a steel frame which also housed a one-gallon petrol tank. With magneto ignition they were extremely reliable but did not like being neglected. Failure to keep them well maintained could prove disastrous when needed most.

A simple test of trying to start them by using the pull cord, as with a lawn mower, proved there was no compression in the cylinder - valves probably stuck open. The 1260s were larger 1 HP engines with a larger petrol tank but were just as temperamental.

These machines were used to recharge the batteries used by the wireless operators during an exercise. The 1260s were often used to run a lighting system at night for the H.Q and Command Post. I knew that if left as they had *stopped running*, the valves invariably stuck open, valve seats became rusty, and spark plugs ‘furred up’ and magneto points became dirty. I therefore took the cylinder heads off, gave each engine a *de-coke*⁵, reground the valves in, cleaned the spark plugs and magneto points, replaced the head gasket, changed the engine oil, put in some

⁵ Removing caked carbon deposit from the underside of the cylinder head and top of piston.

petrol, started each one and let them run for about a minute.

After re-tightening the head bolts and checking there were no leaks, and that each machine's valves were in the closed position, I reported back to the W.O that all machines were now in working order. He seemed impressed and I myself was quite pleased and thought it was a good job done. I had been allowed to work on my own at my own pace; I was pleased that my first real job had gone well. A week later the WO11 approached me as I was checking some more Chore Horses,

"I have just been reading your posting orders and note that you were an unpaid L/Cpl before you were posted here. Why aren't you wearing your stripes?" he asked.

"I was told to remove them as I was unpaid and not posted as a L/Cpl, they even made another chap up as posting NCO just for the trip out from the UK" I said.

"Just bloody typical", he said. "By the way, I have just received a letter from REME Records; you have been promoted to Substantive Corporal backdated to May 1953". "You had better see the Q M (Quarter Master) at the stores and get your stripes on" he said. "Oh! - and congratulations" he added.

That meant I should have been a full-blown corporal when I was at the Army MT. School at Bordon and before being posted to Hong-Kong. I was as surprised as he was. The other lads were even more surprised. I had started the day's work as a Cfn. (Craftsman, REMEs lowest rank) and by midday had become a substantive corporal. This meant I was now entitled to more pay with quite a bit of back-pay.

A couple of months later, in March 1954, I was on the move again. This time it was a posting to 32 Medium Regiment, RA, stationed just down the road at Sek-Kong, about 10 to 15-mile journey from Fanling.

The billets here were better, being of white plastered brick construction with large open plan windows on one side overlooking a 4½ foot wide veranda. The roof overhung the veranda thus providing some protection from the monsoon rains.

Two large fans, one at each end of the billet, provided the air conditioning. After the usual introductions I soon settled in and did repair work and inspection of the regiment's 'B' vehicles. These were BSA and Matchless M/Cs, 5 cwt Ford Willy Jeeps, Bedford 15 cwt medium vehicles, Austin and Bedford 3 tonners and the 10 ton AEC Matadors. The best part was road testing the vehicles after repairs. It gave you the opportunity of having a look around the local area and maybe visits LAD Wksps in other localities.

As a working unit we were left much to ourselves and were only involved with the Regiment on occasions of the big Administration Inspections carried out once a year.

This involved a special team of inspectors checking the whole of the Regiment. Inspections of all sections of the Wksps, Stores, Armoury, AFG 932 Inspection of Vehicles and Guns, to check for correct records of repair etc. Personnel and their Billets were inspected with each person's kit laid out on their beds. This was my first experience of this type of Inspection and I was glad it only came round once a year.

The Regiment consisted of two Batteries, 74 The Battle Axe Battery and 98 The Bell Battery. 74 Battery were serving in Korea, supporting the Americans. 98 Battery and HQ were in Sek-Kong, New Territories. They had 5.5in guns and large 10 ton AEC Matador gun towing vehicles.

27 Inf. Brigade LAD Wksps. Fanling



Billets and Vehicle Park, New Territories, Hong Kong. 1953-1954.

In April 1954, I was posted to Korea and travelled with 98's advance party to take over the Wksps prior to the main party arriving. We travelled by Troopship from Hong-Kong to Kure, Japan, where we were kitted out in special winter clothing and shown umpteen films warning us of the dangers of going with the local talent and catching VD etc.

Our tropical kit and civvies that we had with us had to be put into storage in Kure as there was no way we would be permitted to keep them with us in a theatre of war..

We travelled to Seoul Korea on a small cargo ship, the SS E-Sang. We had a large number of Australians as companions.

I only spent one month in Korea, but it was an experience I will never forget. It was wintertime and being under canvas made it seem colder. 500-gallon drums outside, held water for washing, if you managed to break the ice first. The tents were heated by Space Heaters. These were stoves with a metering device set to let diesel oil drip into a pan of sand every second or so. They were efficient but took a while to get the flow of oil just right to maintain a good heat. Often the flow was too fast, and the stove would slowly become glowing red. If not turned down in time it resulted in the whole chimney getting red hot.

A metal plate through which it passed was supposed to protect the canvas roof but even this became so hot that one or two tents caught fire. Latrines were a 20-

seater Thunder Box, so called for obvious reason.

REME LAD, 32 Med. Regt. RA, Sek-Kong.



At Sek-Kong .New Territories, Hong-Kong. 1954-55.
I missed out on this one.



Off to Korea

With 98 Bty advance party, 32 Med.
Regt. RA. The conflict started on 25
June 1950 and ended on 27 July 1953

Two back to back, rows of 10, with Hessian curtains which gave a bit of privacy. I was informed that the most important machine was a huge Generator used to supply power to the camp cinema and Wksps. Tents were lit by Tilly lamps.

I was glad we had American style cold weather clothing though I was told that this was only issued to our troops much later on in the Korean campaign. Apparently, our forces were poorly clothed at the start must have been frozen. The Americans ran the Baths and Laundry Unit and supplied a change of clothing.

Their rations were always top-notch food with plenty of it. Often our cooks swapped some of our rations for theirs. Butter, ham, peanut butter etc. was always plentiful. They certainly knew how to look after themselves.

I often visited the OP (Observation Post), Robin's Nest, to look out across North Korea, taking a few photos whilst I was there.

I had just completed the hand over from 74's REME representative, Sgt Brown, when I was told that I should not have been posted to Korea and would have to go back to Hong-Kong with 74 Battery. I said I was prepared to stay now that the Wksps had been handed over to me, but it made no difference, I had to go back.

In May 1954, I embarked with 74 Battery on the S.S.Dunera for the return to Hong-Kong. We stopped at Kure to de-kit and change back into tropical gear before continuing. Our other kit would be loaded from storage and be collected later. I checked my suitcase when I finally collected it in Hong-Kong and found that it had been rifled and many items stolen. Many others had lost gear but it was no use complaining as nothing was done about it. I often wondered at the low life who would rob their own countrymen in such a situation.

I guess it takes all kinds to step so low. Back at Sekong, life returned to the comfort of the normal routine which had been disrupted by the trip to Korea. Although it was May, it was hot and dry during the day and cool and comfortable in the evenings and at night. You could wear a jacket without getting clammy.

Time in the evenings was spent in Yuen-Long, a village not far from camp - maybe a 10-minute Rickshaw ride away. There weren't really much there, one or two small shops and a couple of cafés where you could have a beer or two before heading back to camp. The daft thing was we'd pay the Rickshaw owners the fare - tell them to get in - then pick up the shafts and race each other back to camp. It must have been the easiest couple of dollars they'd ever earned. It was 1s-3d to 1\$ HK, about 6p in today's currency.

Fanling was a much larger village having more shops. Tailor shops, Gift Shops, and Cafés - cum-Bars, etc. Most weekends off time was spent there if you were not going into Kowloon or Hong-Kong when transport was laid on as it was a 28-mile trip taking about an hour. There was the much shorter and faster route via the 'Twisk', an apt description of the narrow winding road over the steep hills which joined the slower coast road as it entered Kowloon. It was really only suitable for Jeeps and 15 cwts during the day and certainly was not recommended at night. A Signals Gin Palace, an elaborate name given to a service and repair vehicle, came to grief returning from an exercise. It had almost finished its trip when the driver lost control on the long steep descent towards Sek-Kong. The 3-tonner was a write-off but the

driver and crew got away with only slight injuries.

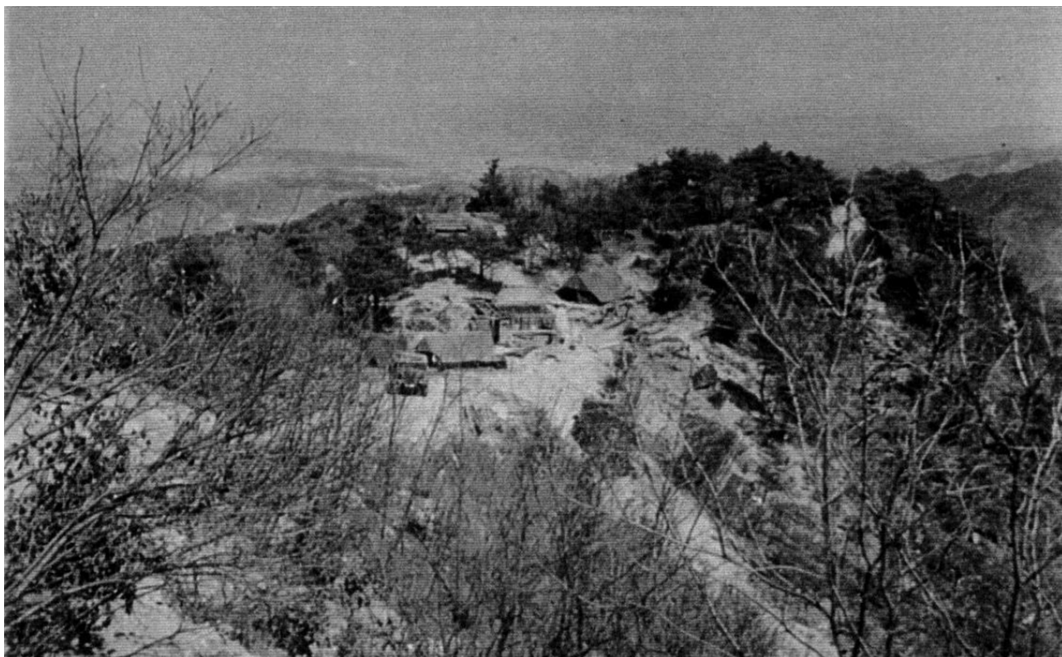
Clothes were cheap. A pair of shoes could be bought made to measure for \$16 to \$20 (£1 to £1.5s) old money, a suite bought for \$60 (£3-15s), measured in the morning, a fitting in the afternoon and collected in the evening. White Cashmere jackets costing \$40 to \$50, £2.10s - £3.2s.6p, were the vogue over the cooler winter months. You could of course pay \$100 to \$150, (£6.5s - £9.7s.6p), for a better-quality suite but there was not much point when you only wore civvies for such short periods. Each camp had its own Au-Wa-Lam Dhobi (Laundry) and Gift Shop. These employed dhobi wallahs, cobblers, tailors and shoe/equipment cleaners.

Camp at Kansas Lines



Viewed from Robin's Nest O.P, Kamak-San, S.Korea. 1954

Approach to Robin's Nest Observation Post.



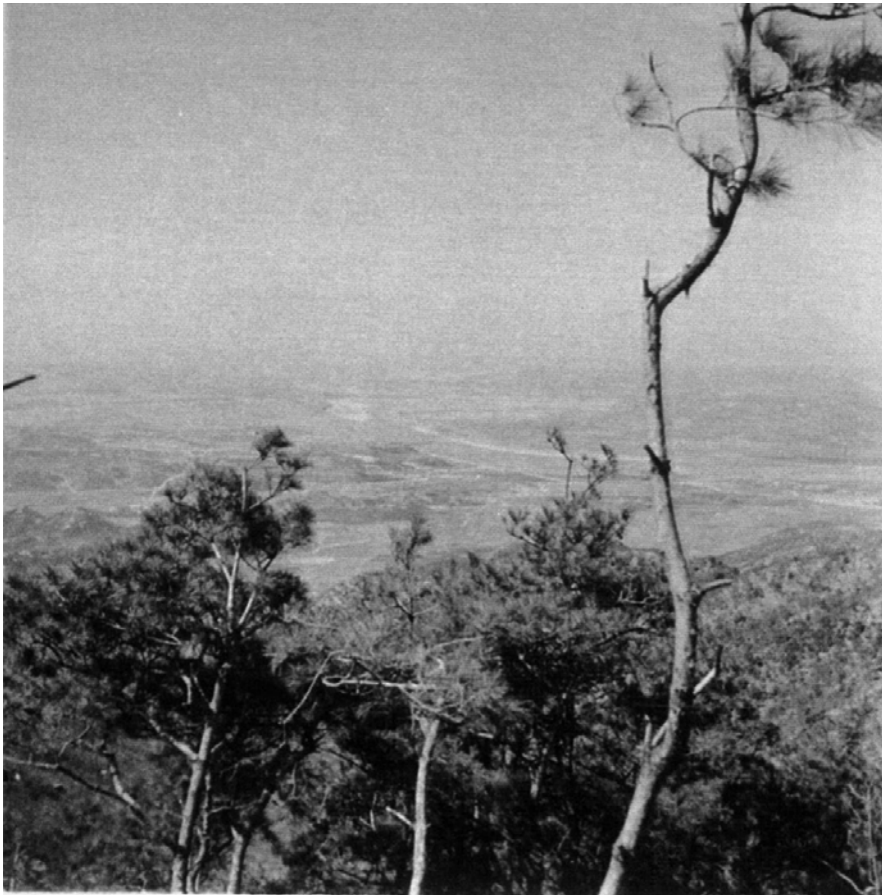
Kamak-San, S.Korea. North Korea towards top of photo. 1954.

Camp at Kansas Lines S. Korea 1954.



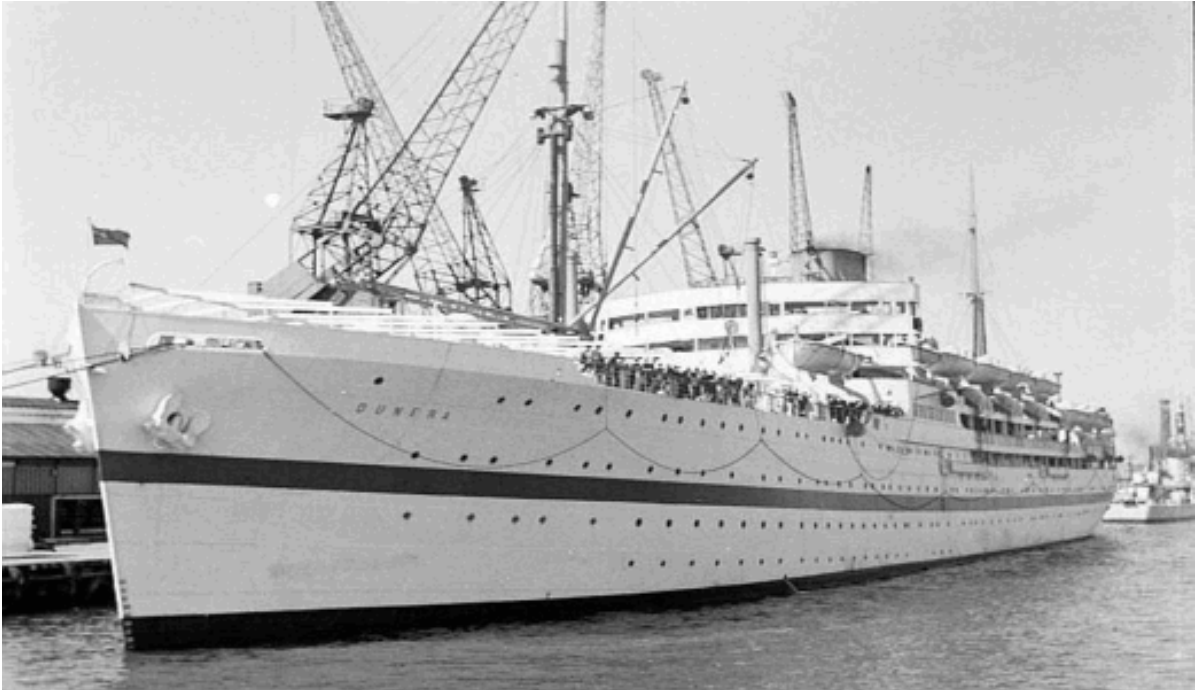
74 (The Battle Axe Bty) 32. Med. Regt. RA.
5.5" and 155 mm guns and Tractors are on right.

View over North Korea



From Robin's Nest O.P. Kamak-San, S. Korea. 1954

S.S.Dunera.



74 Bty. Returns to Hong-Kong from Korea. 2 May 1954.

The Armourer Sgt. decided to form a R.E.M.E. Shooting team of which I became a member. A local version of the Bisley Army Shooting Championships was to take place on Lo-Wu firing range situated amidst nine hills known as the Nine Dragons, from which Kowloon gets its name. (Gau Lung - or Kowloon). We entered as a team and as individuals. I was successful and won the cup for the under 21 Champion Shot. I was also a member of the winning team in the Bren Gun Competition shoot. In between competitions we watched the large airliners passing overhead towards Kiatak airfield nearby. Because of the surrounding hills, the runway was built on reclaimed land out to sea.

Life at Sek-Kong settled into a routine of vehicle inspections and workshop repairs or visiting other local units to assist in theirs. One such unit was 1900 Flight AOP, an air spotter unit for the Artillery and reconnaissance, at Sha-Tin New Territories. Another corporal and I were sent to carry out an annual AFG 932 inspection of all vehicles.

The RA Officer pilots offered to take us up one at a time, to give us break from the inspections. This was too good a chance to miss to see the New Territories from the air. I soon had my opportunity when aerial photos of a nearby area were required. The planes were mono winged Asters and seemed deceptively fragile. Taking off from the short runway was quick and soon we were circling around the area to be photographed, after making the workers in the paddy fields at the end of the runway dive for cover. The pilot had said he was going to give me a go at piloting the plane but once airborne he indicated that the intercom was not working and could not give verbal instructions.

Having got the handheld camera ready, he indicated that I was to hold the joystick

whilst he, leaning over the side, took the photos. It was quite an experience as we were fairly low with the hills seeming to whiz by only yards away. It was only after we had landed that I was told the pilots had a sweep going on how many passengers they could make airsick. Luckily it had not bothered me.

Saturday afternoons meant a regular weekly trip by army transport into Kowloon, a 28-mile journey taking about an hour. First port of call was the Jordan café on Nathan Road, which was also licensed to sell beer, for a mixed grill. This came on a large oval platter and consisted of a lamb chop, pork chop, beef steak, liver, sausage, bacon, onions, tomatoes, mushrooms, egg, lettuce and chips for 5\$ (6s-3d). Once we managed to get to our feet we spent the rest of the afternoon shopping. It was not advisable to drink beer on a hot afternoon as the affects could be unpredictable. It was better to wait till the evening when it was cooler

Evenings were spent at the nearby NAAFI Club playing Tombola. The Naval Club HMS Tamar, on Hong Kong Island, was only a short ferry ride away if you fancied your chances at winning a bigger jackpot. A win of a couple of hundred dollars meant you could have a good time before heading back to the pick-up point for transport home.

Clubs and ticket dance halls were open in the afternoons if you fancied a change. This was also known as Taxi-Dancing. Tickets costing a couple of dollars could be exchanged for a dance with one of the many dance hostesses that worked there. You could pay more and book an hour of their time if you just fancied a chat and a drink with them to while away the time till the evening. Then it was time to visit the clubs.

An afternoon of their time cost about \$100 equal to £6.5s. You were then able to visit Hong Kong Island and be shown the best places to do some shopping, get good meals and drink without being ripped off. Maybe go to the cinema or a club- whichever you fancied.

On another occasion, whilst carrying out a road test on a Willy's Jeep, I and three other lads went up to the highest hilltop in the New Territories to have a look around and take panoramic photographs. This vantage point provided a most magnificent view over the surrounding area.

May 1955 saw the Regiment returning to the UK aboard the S.S.Nevasa, docking at Southampton. Final destination was Barford Camp, Barnard Castle, County-Durham. It was an ex Durham Light Infantry camp.

An evening out in Barnard Castle gave a choice of at least 10 pubs on the main street. Crossing over the bridge at the end of the street into Yorkshire gave access to more pubs. You could practically come out of one pub, stretch out your arms and touch the next. They were always packed with local talent, miner's daughters, always good for a laugh.

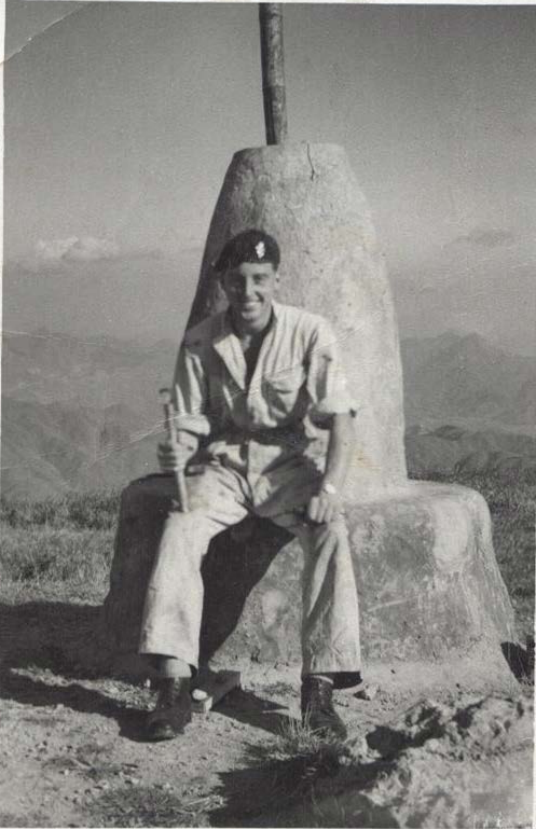
Whilst at Barnard Castle we were joined by a third Battery, 46 Telavera Battery, from a Regiment being disbanded in Hong Kong. A few months later towards the end of 1955 the Regiment moved to Durrhill Camp, Carlisle.

In January 1956 I sat and passed the V.M A1 class certificate. It was also in 1956 that I began dating one of the girls, Noreen, who worked in the camp NAAFI Club. I

sometimes met her after she finished work and even went to her home at the weekend to meet her parents and family. She lived at Distington which was a small village some 33miles west of Carlisle. We seemed to hit it off together so met regularly.

On top of the World

Whilst admiring the view from a Trig Point on the highest hilltop in The New Territories, Hong-Kong. 1954.(My initials are there somewhere.)



S.S. Nevasa



32 Med. Regiment returns to UK. 12. May 1955.

15. Return to Blighty, 1955

In September, whilst on exercise at the Otterburn Summer Training Camp, I was notified I had been promoted to Substantive Sergeant. The R.S.M. approached me as I made my way to the tented accommodation area calling out, "You are improperly dressed Cpl Rogers",

"I have just come off an exercise sir, and have not had time to change". I replied.

"As of now you are Sgt. Rogers" he continued, "Get your kit and go across to the Sgts' Mess where you will be shown your quarters".

This was the opening of a new way of life as a senior rank. It meant more responsibilities and different types of duties to those performed as a junior NCO. Being in the Sgts' Mess is like joining a club with its own social life and expenses, far different than a night out in the NAAFI with your mates. You are now expected to break from them so that there is a command barrier between you and them. It also meant I could no longer continue to meet my girlfriend, so she gave in her notice, and moved back to Distington.

An outbreak of Asian flu became severe enough that cases had to be isolated in spare billets set up as a casualty station at another camp nearby. I was unfortunate enough to catch it and had to be moved to the isolation unit. It affected quite a large number of personnel in the regiment.

After the Summer Camp and back at Carlisle, rumours flew thick and fast about the likelihood of the regiment receiving orders to move again. The Suez Crisis had begun to develop.

A month later, October 1956, word is received to prepare all vehicles etc. for shipping to Suez. Everything to be sprayed a desert sand colour and equipment packed. All drivers plus REME reps to form the advance party to take all vehicles, guns and equipment to the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netly, Hampshire on 4th November 1956, then on to Southampton docks for loading onto the S.S. Sandsend.

We were then billeted at Netly Hospital awaiting further orders.

The hospital was a massive place, used during the war for troops and casualties. Ward ceilings were twice the height of normal rooms and the corridors were reputed to be a quarter of a mile long.

During this waiting period I was granted a 48hr pass to visit Noreen and discuss the possibility of getting married. We were both sure that it was what we wanted so a special licence was arranged, and we married at Whitehaven.

Ten days later, 13th November, the Suez panic was over and we had to unload again. We never actually set sail owing to the following incident. All ships, once loaded were supposed to anchor in Cowes Roads ready for overnight departure to Suez.

Fortunately, or unfortunately for us, depending on how you looked at it, certain members of the ship's crew had been ashore getting tanked up on V.P wine etc. Unknown to us at the time, some had been down in the holds and had rifled through the 24-hour ration packs taking the sweets and cigarettes. When they finally arrived on board the worse for drink, the ship was unable to sail with the rest of the convoy.

S.S.Sandsend.

The S.S.Sandsend, one of the many ships requisitioned by the War Department to carry troops and equipment to Egypt during the Suez crisis. November 1956. The crisis started on 29 October 1956, ending in March 1957.



Waking next morning we found we were still in Cowes Roads. Everyone else had sailed for Suez. Our time on board had been used to remove and charge the vehicles batteries ready for unloading. These were placed on deck and linked the ship's generators. Sometimes we spent a few hours fishing.

All the clambering up and down ladders in soft PT shoes- boots were not allowed- caused my ankles to swell up and I had to go to a hospital in Cowes. I was hospitalized and had to have my entire kit packet and brought over to me including my rifle - which I thought was unusual. It was over a week before I was able to re-join the Regiment at Bulford Camp. Preparations had been made to unload the S.S.Sandsend and to regroup before returning to Durranshill Camp. At least this escapade broke the monotony for a couple of months. It all ended in March 1957.

Back at Carlisle, life settled into a routine of vehicle inspections and repair with the occasional exercise at Otterburn Ranges, Rochester, near Newcastle. 74 Battery had a nasty experience on one of these exercises when one Troop had a miss-fire. The shell exploded in the barrel peeling it back like a banana skin. Several of the gunners were injured and I think one lost his life.

On another occasion a gunner lost his life when a vehicle he was travelling back to camp in, after a night out in a local village, overturned. He and a number of others travelling in the back of the 15cwt were thrown out. He later died of his injuries.

Units on exercise in training areas often have to 'make camp' and 'dig in' for defence to simulate battle conditions. The REME section was allocated an area and told to get trenches dug. We had not dug far before we started unearthing live ammunition buried after some previous regiments exercise. This was odd because as most military personnel know, all ammunition has to be accounted for. Strict rules are observed when live ammo has been issued. We could not tell how long the live rounds had been buried or what else might also be below. It was a case of filling in the trenches, putting down markers and starting somewhere else.

Hygiene is also paramount when in the field as those in 74 Battery were soon to find out to their cost on the return journey to Carlisle. The convoy of vehicles set off with the REME bringing up the rear.

It was not long before we came across the odd vehicle stopped at the roadside whilst the occupants were behind the hedge relieving themselves. It appeared they were suffering from the 'Turkey Trots'. It got so bad that the officers in charge of the convoy had to call into the chemists of each town we passed through to collect medicine. The REME contingents did not suffer this scourge. Maybe this was because we always camp away from the main unit and have our own cooking facilities.

Carlisle city centre was about a 15 minutes brisk walk from camp. There was not much to see or do in the evenings. The pubs were state owned and drinking laws were strict. I think this was a throw over from the time drinking related trouble was much like it is today. The government shouts about binge drinking and rowdiness so why don't they introduce the same rules as we had in Carlisle then. You had the choice of whether to go dancing in the County Hotel, next to the rail station, or to the local Disco Hall, The Cosmo, on the main street. There were always plenty of lasses around to keep you company. At weekends there was more time to shop around or to go further afield, even watch a local football match. Darlington was within easy reach for an afternoon visit followed by a pub crawl.

It was in October 1958 that the Regiment was told it was going to Hong Kong again. As I was in my eighth year of a nine year engagement with the colours, I was told that because I only had just over six months of my nine year engagement left, I could not go with them unless I signed on for a further three years making it a straight twelve years with the colours. This I did, as I certainly was not going to miss the opportunity of a return trip to the Far East. Noreen was a bit perturbed about going so far away from her family members so we agreed she should stay, *living in*, with her parents.



H.M.T. Oxfordshire
32 Med. Regiment
returns to Hong
Kong. 7. December
1958.

16. Return to Hong Kong, 1958

December 1958 and we were on our way. A twenty-one day voyage aboard the Troopship SS Oxfordshire lay ahead of us. Our final destination was Gun Club Barracks on Chatham Road in Kowloon itself. The Camp built on and around a hilly

part of the land, known locally as Signal Hill, was just a few minutes' walk from city centre. This was perfect; it meant no more long truck journeys from the New Territories, like on our last tour here. It was now possible to go into town most evenings. At weekends there was more time to venture further afield to Hong-Kong Island a short ferry ride away to sample the clubs and restaurants there. Signal Hill is now a leisure park and children's activity area.

The Tiger Balm or Haw-Poon-Haw Gardens was a favourite place to spend a couple of hours in the afternoons. Here, Punishment to Fit the Crime, scenes using sculptured figures to depict what would happen to anyone who committed a crime against society. A butcher who cheated his customers was himself shown being butchered in a most gruesome way.

Tiger Balm, on sell throughout the Far East, is the famous cure all ointment similar to Fiery Jack or Vick that was rubbed on the chest to cure colds or headaches etc.

The Cheerio NAAFI Club was the most popular meeting place once shopping was over. It was here that the evening's programme of entertainment was decided. Usually it was HMS Tamar, the Naval Base, hoping for a big win on Tombola, then if successful, a tour round the night clubs.

Drinks were cheap; I usually preferred the cherry brandy or rum and black currant, which cost about \$1.60, or 2 shillings old money. This was pre 1972 decimal currency - 240p to the pound, 12p to the shilling.

A favourite stop on the way back to camp late at night was a bread shop well known for its delicious hot rolls filled with large slices of ham. These rolls were almost a foot long and at least three inches wide. At a dollar each, 1s.3p, they provided a substantial meal to finish the day off.

The Sgts' Mess and quarters were near the Admin, Block and the Main Gate. The quarters were on terraces on the hillside. These were all linked by steps. The rest of the regiment were billeted on the opposite side as was the REME Wksp. Married personnel accompanied by their wives or who's wives would be joining them later were housed in nearby flats. In 1959 a swimming pool was constructed on the crown of the hill just past the other-ranks quarters. Sgts. 'living in' shared 2 or 4 to a billet.

Boot/house boys, who for some reason were always called John, with their wife or daughter, looked after the cleaning of the rooms. John would collect boots and webbing and return them clean and sparkling. Again, this just cost a few dollars a week. Uniforms were washed, starched and pressed each day.

The workshops faced onto Jordan Road and often locals would enquire if any of us were willing to donate blood to the local hospital because a family member was in need of a transfusion. Apparently, it was quite common for requests to be made to any military personnel stationed in the area. Word was that blood could be sold for \$200 a time. This meant that some unsavoury characters were forcing people to give blood too often.

The LAD received a recovery call out one morning and discovered that someone had taken a joyride in the CO's Humber staff car and driven it down a flight of steps leading to one of the billets. These were built on the hillside with the access road at the back and higher. The steps led down from the road to the rear of the billet. The

vehicle was soon winched up the steps and surprisingly had little damage. I don't think the culprit was ever found.

Sunday mornings were eagerly awaited. All local cinemas had concession or reduced rates for service men. They were also air conditioned. On Sunday morning matinees they showed a lot of cartoons starting at 10 o'clock - noon. An enjoyable two hours in an air-conditioned cinema was bliss. The only problem was when you emerged into the outside world afterwards, the heat hit you like sledgehammer.

Another Saturday tea treat for those of us living in was the special curry meal laid on by the Chinese cook. Apart from the rice, whole cooked fish and prawns, was the amazing selection of side plates containing chopped pineapple, apple, tomatoes, cucumber, raw onions, hard boiled eggs, shredded coconut, raisins, peanuts, sultanas, currants, papaya. I am sure I have missed some others out. By the time a bit of all of these choices was piled onto the plate, the curry meal looked twice the size.

Corrie, one of the RA Sgts, bought a young monkey and built a pool and enclosure pen on a small part of a terrace just below our billet. Whilst he was cleaning the pen out one day, it escaped and climbed up one of the poles supporting overhead electricity cables. He tried for ages to entice it down, but it insisted on trying to walk along the cable. It seemed quite happy until its tail touched a live connector. Suddenly it froze in mid action and became rigid then lost its balance beginning to fall towards the concrete floor of its pen. Corrie, standing underneath with a blanket held out, managed to catch it. The monkey survived but was a lot quieter for a few days afterwards and never tried to get out again.

The Au-Wa-Lam Laundry and the Gift Shop nearby had all the usual services available. Tailors, Cobblers and Dhobi Wallahs etc., all awaiting your custom. It was quite common to get metallic items of kit chrome plated or the alloy mess tins and water bottles highly polished for whenever kit inspections were due. Simply hand them in to the gift shop Walla and in no time at all they were back gleaming bright. No bulling-up⁶ required.

I knew this sort of life could not go on for ever. I had been with this 32 Med. Regiment quite a long time. Usually attached personnel such as Cooks, Pay Corps, and REME etc. only serve up to three years at a time with any one Regiment. I had been with 32 Med. Regt RA since early 1954. In fact, whilst I was at Durrhill Camp, Carlisle, the Adjutant, who had been posted back to 32nd Med. Regt. in 1957, after having left it in 1955, was certainly surprised to see me.

"Blimey" he said. "I didn't expect to see you again, are you on the inventory?"

"I think they've forgotten I have already done three years with the Regiment, but I am not complaining" I replied.

Sure enough, seventeen months later, in June 1960, I was posted to Malaya where a Gurkha Army Transport Unit was being formed. European military staff were being sourced from all units in the Middle and Far East. Unmarried or unaccompanied personnel were first choice to save the hassle of moving wives and

⁶ Spit and polish.

families from one country to another.

Once I had all my kit packed and was ready, I was transported to Kowloon docks where I embarked on the S.S. Dunera for a couple of days sea journey to Malaya.

Sgts' Mess Dinner.



32 Med Regt RA, Gun Club Barracks, Kowloon, Kong-Kong. 1958-1960.
I'm 3rd left, facing.

S.S. Dunera.



Embarked for Malaya, 27. May 1960

REME LAD Wksps Malaya



34 Coy Gurkha ASC, Batu-Pahat, Malaya. June 1960-November 1961.
I'm seated 3rd right.

17. Malaya, 1960

After the S.S. Dunera had docked at Singapore and I had disembarked, I was met by the driver who was to take me to my new posting, 13 Inf. Brigade Wksps. at Kluang, on the West coast of Malaya. When I reported in, the Workshops stores were being stock checked and I was asked to assist in the stores whilst waiting to join my new unit.

The stock check was continued next day. By mid-morning the sky had become overcast and a strong wind was beginning to blow when a typhoon warning was received. It struck suddenly taking everyone by surprise. A large section of the corrugated roof lifted off and smashed against some vehicles in a car park some hundreds of yards away. A power line had been brought down and was lying across one of the vehicles. As it swayed in the wind, a shower of sparks erupted from the end of the broken line every time it touched the ground or any nearby object.

When the store check was completed, I was assigned a couple of Chinese helpers and told to check the stocks of timber stored outside. Many were damaged by termites which burrow inside the planks to build their nests. Each plank had to be turned over, thoroughly checked, and re-stacked or written off.

Now and again there would be a commotion and much shouting as the workers dropped a plank and ran like hell. Thinking it might be a snake, I cautiously approached the wood pile. It wasn't a snake but a long amber coloured centipede some 13 inches long and 2 inches broad with nasty looking pincers. No wonder the

workers scattered in panic.

Nearly three weeks here and I'm posted yet again, this time to nearby camp at Batu-Pahat, which in Malay means a Stone Quarry.

It was to be part of the REME LAD Wksps attached to 34 Coy Gurkha RASC. Apart from a few Gurkha Officers, the CO and the other Officers were European. The Gurkha was a keen, smart and proud soldier. Our only contact with them was mainly through the inspection and repair of their vehicles. The Sgt drill Instructors and Pay Corps Sgt. were also Europeans.

Every year they celebrated Dussehra, a thanksgiving to their God of Fertility at harvest time and victory of good over the demon buffalo god. A stage was set up in a hanger and decorated with large murals of scenes of their home country, painted on boards or tarpaulins and used as back drops. They were impressive.

In the afternoon they held a Beheading Ceremony of a bullock, goats and chickens. The beheading of the bullock was done with a special heavy Kukri long enough to touch the ground when held by the hilt with your hand by your side, some 30 - 33 inches or so long. The bullock's head was tied to a ceremonial post. Two or three Gurkhas then gripped its tail and pulled to stretch its neck. The Kukri was raised and brought down swiftly, severing the head from the body in one blow. The carcass was then dragged round the post. The goats and chickens then had their heads sliced off with the smaller traditional Kukri.

In the evening's celebrations, Gurkhas, dressed as women, performed fertility dances whilst others served rice and curried Dahl (goat meat), and an extremely potent brew.

At Christmas time, a fancy-dress football match was arranged between the Gurkhas and Europeans. Garlands of flowers of the Hibiscus bush Bunga Rya (Royal Flower), a national flower, were worn with grass skirts made from the tall broad leaves of a local plant. Football boots were the jungle canvass boot. A taxi was hired for a few dollars, worth 2s .4d to the dollar.

The taxi was a local farmer with a bullock and cart, who conveyed us to the football pitch. It was great fun, and everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The one thing Johnny Gurkha did not like was sea journeys. On the voyage over from Hong-Kong to Malaya there were quite a few Gurkhas and their families on board. They had also been transferred to the new Regiment. Once on the high seas they spent most of their time on deck, close to the rail (scuppers) being sick. I really felt sorry for them.

Many of the Gurkha and European Officers and Senior Ranks had their wives with them in married quarters. They also had their own Sgts Mess.

The European Sgts Mess was a large palatial building, purported to have been owned by the Sultan of Jahore. It had large storm shuttered window openings hung by the roof which prevented rain, from the regular as clockwork afternoon downpours, from entering the rooms. Thus, it was cool and comfortable at nights.

Chit-Chats, lizard like creatures, were often seen scurrying up and down the walls or across the ceiling chasing mosquitoes, flies and moths attracted by the ceiling lights in the evenings. Quite often large moths with a wingspan of several inches

would fly in and zoom around like dive bombers, crashing into everything and everyone with great speed.

Taxi!



REME Staff Football Team arriving for the Xmas Comedy Match Versus Gurkhas.
That's me at the back, far left

The Sgts' mess, at Batu-Pahat, 1960-1961



There were plenty of large and weird beetles flying around at night. Some were nearly three times the size of our common May bugs. If you were unlucky enough to get hit by one in the dark, you certainly knew it.

Most evenings were spent in the various café-cum-bars in the local village about a twenty -minute walk from camp. One evening whilst sitting at the bar by myself, I was invited to join a party of locals who were celebrating a member's birthday. It turned out they were local businessmen. The one that I was talking to was in the pawn broking business and said he was going on a trip to Hong-Kong and that I could join him if I wished. Being in the services I said I was unable to accept his offer.

After we had finished our meal, I was invited to join them on a visit to a night club. Half of the group had mopeds so the rest of us rode pillion.

On arrival we were escorted to a table and served drinks. Thai dancers were performing their traditional dances for groups of customers at their tables. Apparently, they were paid for this service. One of the chaps in our party paid for the dancers to perform for us at our table. With plenty of beer on tap, we had a most enjoyable time.

When the club closed and it was time to go home, they offered to take me back to camp. I don't know what the Gurkha sentry thought when about a dozen of us turned up at the main gate on the mopeds and he saw me approaching.

On another night out with a mate, Sgt. Ambler our stores Sgt, we visited the same café for a drink. We were in civvies drinking at the bar when a chap introduced himself and invited us to join him and his wife at their table for a meal. Seeing other Europeans had made him curious and wondered if we were working nearby. We said we would be delighted to join him and his wife. He was a civil engineer from Edinburgh and was working on a project for the Malay Government. He was delighted to meet other Europeans and interested when he learned we were service men and stationed nearby. I supposed we provided a bit of social life for them both. We were to meet him and his wife on several occasions after this.

He ordered crab served in a pepper sauce as a starter. I hadn't had crab before and was surprised how delicious it was.

Over the weeks that followed we were introduced to the local police Inspector and members of the local shooting team. We were invited to join them and take part in a shooting competition. Shotguns and a .22 rifle which could hold 16 rounds were available. Clay pigeons or skeet's and a moving target representing a wild boar pulled across in front of the firer were the targets. This was at their outdoor firing range dug into the side of a hill. The Inspector had explained to us that the firing range was too short for proper use and asked if we had any advice of how to improve it. We said we would see what we could do.

Back at camp, we asked the CO if it was possible to find a way to help solve the shooting team's problem. Unknown to Ambler and me, the CO made enquiries about assistance from a nearby Gurkha Engineer Unit. The result of this was the Unit was asked to carry out, as a practical exercise, the lengthening of the Firing Range.

After this the members of the shooting team could not do enough for us. The CO even gave permission for the Inspector and his party to have a go with our new

recently issued .762 SLR rifles on the camp firing range.

It certainly improved our social life whilst we were at Batu-Pahat. Ambler and I were often invited to Satay parties. They were like the English B-B-Q parties really. We even received an invitation to a party and dance celebrating the Birthday of the Sultan of Jahore. This was a formal party, so we wore Mess Dress.

The Sultan of Jahore



Arriving at Batu-Pahat.

A celebration Dinner and Dance was held in the evening. 1961.

No. 055.

Dinner & Dance

in honour of the Birthday of

H. H. Sultan Ismail

ibni Almarhum Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan Johore

at Bandar Penggaram Club

on Sunday 29-10-61 from 7.30 p.m. to 1.00 a.m.

BAND WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.

Single \$ 3.00

Whilst at Batu-Pahat, Sgt Bilton, the pay sergeant, and myself, applied for a Malay language course at Neesoon Transit Camp, Singapore. The course lasted one week, giving us both the chance to have a good look around Singapore in the evenings and at the weekend. I attained a 'B' pass. As most of the Gurkhas could also speak Malay, I thought it might be useful.

Later in 1961 the whole Gurkha Regiment was moved to new accommodation near Kluang, further inland.

Malay Language Course



At Neesoon Transit Camp, Singapore, Malaya.
I'm standing first left, Sgt Bilton, 2nd left.

18. Return to Blighty, 1961

After several months in Kluang, it is November and I am on the move again. My next posting had come through and I was told to report to the Transit Camp at Singapore, prior to being flown home to U/K. Apparently Troopships were no longer used. It's all air flights now.

At least you could enjoy two to three weeks at sea on previous overseas postings with the opportunity to get acclimatised to the heat whilst enjoying the many ports of call en route.

Because of restrictions about military personnel travelling between countries in uniform, civilian clothes had to be worn for the flight home to Stanstead via Istanbul, Turkey.

All tropical kit was withdrawn and all kit and uniforms for U/k wear were boxed ready for shipping home. I was granted 9 weeks disembarkation leave after which I

had to report to REME Transit Camp, Poperingue Barracks, Arborfield. Everything, therefore, had to be taken home.

As the flight wasn't due for a couple of days, I used the opportunity to do some last minute shopping in Singapore to use up the last of the Malay Dollars which I had not spent or managed to exchange for U/k currency.

I realised that it was November and that it would be quite cold and wintry on arrival at Stanstead. As I did not have a jacket or overcoat and would be dressed only in shirt sleeve order for the flight back home, I purchased a knee length, quilted Gabardine coat for 28\$ Malay.

At 2s-4d to the \$, it cost me about £3-7s pre-decimal currency which equals £3.35p today.

After spending the last three years in Hong-Kong and Malaya, Stanstead was absolutely bitter cold and windy. I was certainly glad I had bought that coat. My younger brother Ron, who had progressed from working on the Medway Queen, a holiday pleasure ship plying between Rochester and Southend, to cargo ships and tankers of the Merchant Navy, came home on shore leave whilst I was at home. When he saw the quilted coat, he said it was just what he needed for wearing on night watch on board ship, so I gave it to him.

My luggage finally arrived and I sorted through to check everything was alright and to check my uniform was O/k for wearing when reporting to Arborfield. Unfortunately, due to mum's cooking and an idle 9 weeks on leave, I discovered I could not get trousers or jacket on. They had not been worn during the three years whilst overseas – just placed in storage.

Three weeks before the end of leave, I received a rail warrant and instructions detailing exactly where and to whom I was to report, and in uniform. I knew it was impossible to wear mine so I wrote to the Admin Office explaining the situation. I received a form which I was to take to the nearest Burton Tailors and be measured for a new uniform. It was supposed to arrive before the end of my leave - it didn't. I explained the situation once again to the powers to be and was told I could report in civilian clothes.

Upon arrival at Popperingue Barracks and booking in, I was directed to the Sgts Mess and my room where I deposited my gear. During meal times I noticed one or two mess members giving me odd looks and wondering who this civilian was that had suddenly appeared amongst them.

The following day the RSM saw me and asked who I was. I explained the situation about the new uniform that was supposed to be arriving for me. Typically unable to accept that I might be in civvies for a few more days, he told me I had better report to the QM Stores and see if they could fit me up - they did. After a few alterations at the tailors, I was back in uniform.

Soon after, in late January 1962, I was on the move to 1 Cmd Wksps, Catterick (T.A. Vehicle Dept.). I was put in charge of a group vehicle mechanics whose main job was to check and maintain a pool of vehicles for use by T.A. Units who wished to use them on various exercises over the summer months. All equipment was checked and signed for and any minor repairs carried out. It was a nice cushy job really and

no one bothered me at all.

Again, it was too good to last though. Seven months later, in August 1962, I was posted to the Junior Tradesmen Regiment, at Dundonald Camp, midway between Troon and Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland. The coastal dunes and the famous Troon golf course were between the camp and the beach which we often visited.

This was another Training Unit in the process of being set up to train youngsters aged 15 to 17½ years old, for a life in the services. Trades taught were Driver/Wireless Operator, Driver/Mechanic and Driver. All received basic training in drill etc. before going into the Regular Army. Instructors were from all trades and regiments of the army. Three civilian instructors and I taught the working principles and mechanics of the motor engine up to class VM111 standard, the first grade to becoming a motor vehicle mechanic.

'B' Company consisted of a staff of 3 officers, 1 Company Sergeant Major, 1 Quarter Master Sergeant, 5 Sergeant Instructors and about 50 Junior Tradesmen. The other Companies were similarly staffed.

Whenever the lads returned from leave, they invariably had long hair and wore ear rings, the fad at that time, and were most upset when told to remove them and to get a haircut.

In addition to the drill and driving plus theory work in their trades, they also took part in regular training exercises on military training areas amongst the hills of Scotland, a bit like the Outward Bound courses of later years.

One such area was at Garelochhead at the northern end of Gareloch. North west of Glasgow. The lads were paired off and issued with two-man tents and some tinned rations. The weight of this kit had to be shared equally between them plus they also had to carry their own additional gear required for personal use, like spare clothing and washing and eating for example. Instructors had one of these tents each and their own gear. They had to be independent of the lads.

After carrying out a weekend exercise here involving other units, the lads set up camp, made a meal then retired for the night. Most had erected their tents by the side of one of the many streams nearby whilst the wiser ones amongst us pitched our tents on higher ground. It began to rain quite heavily during that night.

I was awakened much later by much shouting and cries of help which later proved to be coming from those camped alongside the stream.

On investigating what all the commotion was about, I discovered that the stream had become a river overnight and the water had risen and flooded the area. The occupants of the flooded tents were frantically trying to rescue their belongings and re-site their tents on higher ground. I think those lads learned a few valuable lessons from this experience.

Next morning, after having had breakfast, everything was packed and loaded on to transport. All units then travelled in convoy to an area called Rest and be Thankful, at the foot of the South-western side of Beinn Ime, a 3318ft high hill.

From here, the object of the exercise was to climb up via one of the gullies on the Southern side of Beinn Ime, pass over the dip, or saddle, between it and the Cobbler to its South, and descend down the East side towards Loch Lomond, before again

making camp.

After backpacking their gear, everyone set off. A few civilians were also doing the same climb and they were amused and surprised to see us struggling up the steep slope loaded up with our gear whilst they were lightly dressed.

As we neared the top, we noticed it was getting quite breezy, in fact it was getting difficult to stand up with all the equipment we had on. It must have been harder for those young lads who were not used to carrying such loads. We had to get down on hands and knees in order to cross over the saddle between the two hills. Descending was a bit easier though we were still being buffeted by the now very strong wind.

We were now in the valley with Beinn Ime behind us and Ben Arthur, 3036ft, and The Cobbler, 2891ft, on our right. Ben Vane, 3004ft, was on our left front. The ground here was levelling off a bit now though strewn with stones and large rocks. It was decided to set up camp.

Typically, army tents are issued with clumsy and heavy wooden tent pegs and a wooden mallet, not the meat skewer pegs of today. Because of this, most lads left them behind, relying on finding suitable heavy rocks to secure the tent ropes to. This usually worked quite well in most circumstances, but it did not this time.

The wind was increasing as the night wore on and again I was awakened by lots of cussing and shouting around me. Grabbing my torch, I went outside and shone the light around. What it revealed was utter mayhem. Lads running around all over the place trying to secure their tents and rescue their clothing which was blowing around all over the place. I tried to help as much as possible, but it was difficult trying to put up a tent in what was now a gale force wind.

Early light next morning revealed what the effects of the high winds of the night had been on the camp. Most tents were down, collapsed on top of the occupants who had simply given up and decided to sleep through it. One or two tents had blown some distance away down the valley. Their occupants had wrapped themselves in their ground sheets and tried to get some sleep. I bet many of them still remember that exercise with mixed feelings.

Monday morning back at Troon, I read in the local paper that exceptionally high winds and heavy rain had been experienced in some parts of Scotland. I know, because we had had a bad experience of trying to camp out in it.

Another training exercise was carried out at a place called Auchtermuchty on the south side of the river Firth and roughly 8 miles due west of Cupar.

The parents of Captain Clark, the officer in charge of the vehicle mechanical training section, lived on a farm there and let us camp nearby.

This exercise involved observation and detection. One unit set up a defence position in a field whilst the other section had to approach and attack the position undetected.

Two lads of the defence section and myself were lying concealed in the tall grass of the field when I said I could hear something or someone approaching. We slowly raised ourselves to have a look around when we saw this huge bull gazing at us from about 15 yards away.

Training Staff.



Captain Clark, I/C Training. 3rd left, That's me, 4th left.
3 civilians instructors (brown coats) and caretaker.

With a group of Driver/Mechanics



Junior Training Regiment, Troon.



'B' Coy, Driver/Mechanics. Dundonald Camp, Troon, Ayrshire. I'm seated 6th left.

"Keep calm" I said, trying not to let them see how concerned I was that the bull might decide to charge at any minute. Fortunately, we were only about 10 yards from the boundary hedge, and I had visions of having to outperform Linford Christie in a break for safety.

After staring at us for 5 minutes or so, its tail swishing side to side, it lowered its head and resumed grazing.

"Get ready to make a break for it" I said as I continued to watch the bull and tensed myself ready for a mad dash for the hedge.

"Do you think we can make it serge?" One lad asked.

"If he charges, we bloody well will have to make it" I replied, telling them both to slowly crawl along the ground towards the sanctuary of the hedge.

After lifting its head a couple of times to give us the once over, the bull turned and sidled off. Probable thinking it was not worth the bother having a go at us. We all had a good laugh afterwards though we wondered what might have been.

On the morning of 22nd May 1962, I was listening to the radio as I shaved prior to going to breakfast, when it was announced on the 7-o'clock news that JF Kennedy had been assassinated. I casually mentioned this as I sat down at the table. Nobody would believe me until another member joined us and also mentioned the assassination. It was quite a shock to everyone.

March 1965, and after serving 2½ years with this unit I was posted to 910 Coy, RASC (MT), T.A. at Mosley, Liverpool, as a PSI (Permanent Staff Instructor). Again, my job was to inspect all unit vehicles and carry out minor repairs. Anything requiring larger repairs was sent to local Cmd Wksp. Again, this was an easy and cushy job but could be a bit boring at times. Mostly I checked to see if the EMERs (Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Regulation Documents), were up to date – which they weren't. I had to order the necessary documents before the next big Admin Inspection. This is carried out once a year by a team of specialized inspectors on all

units to check if they are being run efficiently and correctly.

I only had 5 months service left to complete my current 15 years with the colours and was due for demob in August 1965. I decided I had had enough and was going to give Civvy Street a go.

Originally, I had signed for 22 years when I first signed on in 1950 at the age of 18. Some years later, because so many recruits were wanting to buy themselves out claiming 22 years was too long a commitment, the war office agreed and gave everyone the option of changing to 12 years straight service with the colours, 8 years with the colours and 4 on the Reserves or 9 years with the colours and the option to sign on after every three years. I took the 9-year option and signed on twice extending my service by a further 3 years each time. So plus my time at the Army Apprentices School, Arborfield, I had completed 18 years of service.

At that time I thought that 18 years was enough for anyone. I often wondered how I would have ended up after serving 22 years until 1972.

19. Civvy Street, August 1965

One month before demob I spent time in the Cmd Wksps catching up on machine work, milling and turning etc, prior to being employed at High Duty Alloys Factory at Distington, Cumbria, as a Toolmaker. Because of the grounding in all aspects of workshop practices at the Apprentices School, I managed quite well.

Tool making was a new experience for me after so long in khaki. Now it would be regular clocking-on and clocking-off on a daily routine. There was also the Trade Union respective to your trade, of which you had to be a member, to contend with.

After army life, I found it quite easy to get into the routine at work and forge new friendships with colleagues in various areas of the workplace.

High Duty Alloys was set up during the war to produce a variety of parts from cast, forged and extruded aluminium aircraft components. Wing sections, propeller blades, pistons, connecting rods were just a few. Later, parts were produced for rail industry, motor industry and many other manufacturing industries.

To produce the extruded parts, a disc of steel, called a die, had various patterns machined or cut out of it using spark erosion. These discs, once hardened, were placed into one end of a tubular container. A heated billet of aluminium was placed in the other end. A ram pushed the billet up against the die, squeezing the aluminium through the design cut into the die.

This could be a solid or hollow square or round bar, an 'I' beam, a '+' or a 'V' shape or whatever you wanted.

All the sections required to make the modern-day Greenhouse are produced by this method. If you take the top off a tube of toothpaste and place anything that has a shape cut into it against the tube opening and squeeze, you see how the process works.

Many intricate sections are produced by first making an electrode of the section required out of copper or elkonite, a tungsten and copper alloy. This is burnt through the die using what is known as spark erosion, using an electrical current whilst

submersed in a paraffin type coolant. A much more modern and faster method is to thread a thin wire through a hole in the die from one large reel above the die onto one beneath. By passing a current through the wire as it passes from one reel to the other and by controlling the movement of the die by a computer, virtually any shaped section can be produced. The die is also submersed in a coolant. A bit like cutting something from a disc of wood by using a band saw. It is the same principle.

I was of course now living in with the in-laws and things were not going as smooth as I had wished. There was always conflicts of interest and it seemed a bit crowded for me after having lived in large billets during army service. The waiting for suitable housing seemed to drag on and chinks began to appear until the inevitable happened and our marriage bit the dust in 1967. I moved into a flat and had a spell of bachelor life.

I met Ann, my present wife, in 1969 at one of the many social events held in the works own social club. We married in July 1970 and spent our first year together in the flat I was renting at that time.

In 1971, a workmate informed me that a house near him was coming up for sell. Ann and I arranged to get the keys and view the property which was being sold by Auction. This was my first experience of bidding against others, but I was determined to get the house.

Bidding started at £3.750 which was average price for the Workington area. I set a top limit of £4.250 and began to sweat a bit when £4.100 was reached. At £4.150 most bidders dropped out leaving me and one other. At £4.250 my opponent gave in and the property was mine. We moved in on 28.5.1971.

We tried Northern Rock for a mortgage, but they were not interested. Halifax granted us a mortgage on £3.500. Savings and an Insurance made up the rest. As we were both in work we were sure we could manage the £28 a month. Doesn't sound much by today's payments but my wages were £17.50 per week on day shift and £25 on night shift. At times mortgage interest reached 13.5% but we managed and even kept up the higher rate payment rather than lower it when interest rates fell. This enabled us to clear the Mortgage in 15 years.

Over the years I made many friends and enjoyed my 29 years working at High Duty Alloys. I took early retirement in August 1994, receiving a redundancy package. As demand for products changed, a workforce of over 500 when I started working there, gradually reduced to 100. In the Toolroom, a day and night shift of 30 men was reduced to a day shift of 15.

Several apprentices accompanied the time served toolmakers on machine or bench work to learn the trade. The 60s being the era of the hippy and flower power meant most apprentices had shoulder length hair and wore earrings.

The usual banter and mickey taking goes on at most workplaces, the toolroom was no exception. A lad called Trevor was always bragging about how good he was at everything, so he was asked about Kung-Fu. "Oh yes" he replied "I have done a bit of that"

One evening when a number of us had agreed to meet up at the Kirkstone Inn for a drink, Trevor said he would be there. As the evening wore on talk turned to the

martial arts and the breaking of bricks using the edge of the hand. It was decided now was the time for Trevor to show us how it was done. Bricks were set up and Trevor, having had a few beers, was game and keen to show us. He spent several minutes playing to the now growing crowd of onlookers, deciding whether he should go ahead or graciously decline.

After much egging on from the toolroom members present, he approached the bricks and lifting his right arm high above his head and brought it down in an arc towards the bricks striking them with the outside edge of his hand, but nothing happened. In the silence that followed Trevor winced at the pain and slowly his face turned bright red with embarrassment. He quickly made an excuse and rushed outside as those inside, expecting to see the bricks shatter started to boo and catcall. Next day at work he was a bit subdued and had a sore and painful hand.

During my time in the toolroom I worked mostly on the finishing and rectification process required to ensure the die tooling was satisfactory to be sent to the presses for production. Later, I spent several years on marking off. This entailed transferring the drawing, of the required section onto a turned steel blank – the die. I then had a period on Inspection and Release.

Electrodes were checked against the customer's drawing then passed to the spark erosion section. New tooling was checked then passed to heat treatment section. Tooling which had been on trial and satisfactorily rectified was released to the presses for production.

My last couple of years at HDA were spent as Toolroom Supervisor. All drawings received were processed and Job cards made out and materials for tooling drawn from stock or specially ordered, The job cards listed the order of manufacture from turning blanks, marking off, milling or turning, bench finishing, heat treatment, spark erosion, trials and rectification until released.

Eventually, most of the tooling, which had previously been produced by the toolroom, was now being made by outside manufacturers. The toolroom was finally shut down during the 1994 summer break. I was asked to continue in employment until October solely to clear out all unfinished tooling which was sold as scrap. This included several sacks of copper and elkonite electrodes accumulated over the many years.

During my 29 years I must have made hundreds of those electrodes and it was sad to see them all being chucked out. High Duty Alloys does not exist any more. It was bought out by Puchetne, a French company. I had thoroughly enjoyed my time there and never had any regrets over working there. It was one of the best paid employers in the area and kept so by watchful trade union leaders.

20. Retirement, August 1994

Management had decided the toolroom was not cost effective and that it should be closed down and all tooling made by outside manufacturers.

Toolroom staff were to be made redundant and offered employment in the extrusion department. Some worked as die fitters, some as press crew members,

one emigrated to New Zealand to work in the aluminium industry and five including myself took redundancy.

With three years to go to retirement and my redundancy payment being equal to the three years wages, I was not going to lose anything by retiring three years early, so I opted for redundancy.

I was now faced with having all the time in the world to myself though without the benefit of a reasonable weekly pay packet. Inflation moves fast and high prices soon outstrip the buying power of a pension. The annual pension increase is derisory and never really keeps pace with inflation. Now I had plenty of time to do the many odd jobs outstanding and sometimes wonder how I had time to go to work. Painting and decorating and keeping up with gardening can keep you extremely busy at times.

Whilst shopping at the local village shops sometime in June 1998, I bumped into a fellow workmate also recently retired. He asked me how I was getting on and how I spent my time. It was a Wednesday afternoon and he said he was going up to the local bowling club, of which he was a member, for a few games of bowls and why didn't I call in as a few other ex-workmates would be there. I agreed to have a look in.

Talking about one thing leading to another, I was enjoying myself so much I joined. The bowling year had just started in May of that year. I soon got the hang of things and eventually bought a set of woods, size 4 heavy, from another member. He was the Club's President and said he could not get used to them, wrong weight or bias or something like that.

Later he said the Vice President had to stand down and would I consider taking his place. I agreed to give it a go in 1999. The club officials change every year with the Vice President preceding the President, so the following year, 2000, I became the President. I was also asked to consider joining the Club Committee and did so. I also agreed to relieve the Secretary so he could have a break and ended up as Secretary for ten years till 2007.

My bowling prowess improved to the extent I was asked to join the club's Tuesday Night League. This was a group of some 25 players from which four triples (12 players) would make the team to play other club's in the Tuesday league.

In 2000 the Committee agreed the Club should re-introduce away matches for the millennium years. Coach trips to other counties during July offered a holiday break and a chance to meet other clubs. I provided a trophy shield on which to record each year's tour plus small prizes for the overall champion team.

The matches were based around the South of England as the weather there was most likely to be favourable. In fact, we experienced rain on one day only during one tour. Everyone was enthusiastic at the start and the tours were fully booked with sufficient bowlers to give each player at least five matches.

Unfortunately lack of interest and booking problems caused the tours to fade away in 2007. It was a real pity because everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The hotels were good, and the meals were enjoyable. As the matches started at 2:00 pm each afternoon, the mornings were spent shopping at the local shops or sightseeing.

During my ten years at Seaton Bowling Club I won quite a few match competition prizes and won the club men's pairs with a mate of mine, so I did not do too badly.

Susan Ann, our daughter, was born on 19.4.1977 and after gaining her 'A' levels went on to gain a 2/1 Degree at Sunderland University. She then completed a course to become a Primary Teacher. Whilst at Winsford, Cheshire, she met and married a Secondary Teacher, on 24.10.2004. They now have a daughter, Rosalyn Grace, born 29.07.2008. A second daughter, Miranda Rose, was born on 30.8.2011. As she now lives in Winsford, Cheshire, my wife and I now regularly travel down to see them. I decided to retire from bowling as match times were bound to clash with travelling times, not knowing just when you might want to be free to visit.

I also spend quite a bit of time surfing the net researching family history and writing this book. So far, I have traced an ancestor, my great-great-grandfather Alfred on my father's side back to 1814 and his father to 1791.

Although official records started about 1837, the first proper Census was 7th June 1841, It shows he was staying at the Plough Inn, East Sheen, Richmond, Surrey with a friend. Both were journeymen tailors and must have been lodging there whilst doing their apprenticeships.

The census sheet also shows that a 15-year-old Emma Audley was staying there. I do not know whether she worked there as a barmaid or waitress or was a visitor. I later discovered she became Alfred's wife in 1846.


Maternal ancestors have proved a bit harder to find, though I did find a great grandfather listed in the 1881 Census as a corporal in the Royal Engineers. He met and married Laura Kempt in Halifax Nova-Scotia whilst stationed there with his regiment the Royal Engineers. With a bit help from my niece's brother in-law I have since obtained his military service records.

I also discovered two paternal ancestors, who traded as Tailors, had been granted Freedom of The City, through patrimony, in the early 1980s, their father having also been a Freeman of the City.

Ancestor John Rogers and his father were both made 'Freemen of the City'

*Date of Father's Freedom }
1 Dec 1790*

P



Chamber of London, *18th* Day of *June* 18*40*
 Born *within* the Liberty of the City, to
 wit at *St Dunstons Lane*
John Rogers
 Son of *John Rogers*
 Citizen and *Merchant Taylor* of London, came before the
 Chamberlain, the Day and Year aforesaid, and desired to be
 admitted into the Freedom of this City by Patrimony, in the said
 Company of *Merchant Taylors*, because he is legitimate, and
 was born after the Admission of his Father into the said Freedom.
 The Admission of the Father is entered in the Book marked with
 the Letter *C* and bears Date the *1st* Day of
December in the *31st* Year of the Reign of
George the 3^d
 and in the Year of our Lord *1790*
Merchant Tailors On this day *John Rogers the Son* *Born 1804*
Admitted and sworn to the freedom of the
6 May 1840 *Merchant Tailors Company by Patrimony* *Warden.*
for J. P. Mole
W. P. H. S.

WE declare, upon the Oaths we severally took at the time of our
 Admission into the Freedom of this City, that *John Rogers*
the Son is the Son of *John Rogers*
 Citizen and *Merchant Tailor* of London, and that he was
 born in lawful Wedlock, after the Admission of his Father into the
 Freedom of this City; and that he is his Son so reputed and taken
 to be, and so we all say.

John Rogers
Robert Thomas
Charles Sewell
Peter Bodman *Master*
Richard Pugh *Warden*
William Walker

+ Robt Poolmore
+ Richd Pugh

Family Members:



Youngest Sister Pam. 26th July 1939

After school, worked in Toy Factory in Chatham Kent, worked on Chatham Hospital Children's Ward for several years before getting married and raising a family.

Younger brother Ron. 27th September 1934

Joined the Merchant Navy aged 17^{1/2} after leaving School. Working in Chatham dockyard. Served first on Royal daffodil passenger ship, UK to France then pleasure steamer, The Medway Queen, plying between Rochester and Southend. As a qualified Able Seaman, signed on for Cargo Ships travelling the high seas. Sadly died 1995.



**Younger Sister Rita June. 15th
June 1936**

Worked in Component Assembly
Factory in Rochester Kent, then
Woolworths, in Gillingham for a while
before joining Marks and Spencers
where she later became a staff
supervisor.



**Elder brother Albert George
26th July 1931**

Joined DYRMS at Saunton with
me in March 1942, leaving at
Dover, Summer 1946. to join
the AAS at Arborfield. Left AAS
Arborfield as a Gun Fitter/
Turner in 1949. Joined 16th
Ind. Para. Brgd. Served many
years in Egypt. Moved on to Air
Despatch Research and
Development at Old Sarum,
Salisbury. Awarded the BEM in
July 1960 for his work there.

MUSIC AND VIDEO ITEMS

Common bugle calls

There are two ways to play a call:

1. Click on the name of the call below. The call should then play in your web browser, and needs to be controlled from there.

2. (for most computers only, not pads or phones): Click on the bugle below the name, or right-click the bugle and then click on 'Enable Content.' The bugle will change to an audio display. To stop a call before it has ended, or to revert to the bugle symbol, right-click on the audio display and click on 'Disable Content.' (This method produces the calls quickly using audio files embedded in this PDF file.)

Reveille (1)



Reveille (2)



Cookhouse (1)



Cookhouse (2)



On parade



Sick parade



Defaulters



Lights out



The school's two military marches

Click on the printed name of the march. The march should then play in your web browser, and needs to be controlled from there.

**Slow march:
The Duke of York's**
(2 min 45 sec)



**Quick march: Sons
of the Brave**
(3 min 45 sec)



Two videos from Saunton

These British Pathé newreel items were made in 1942. Click on the name of the video clip to download it to your computer for playing in your video player and controlling it from there. (Your computer may not have a video player. One is available [here](#) for no charge.)

Band leading march
2 min 25 sec



Gymnastics
1 min 25 sec

