

JULY 71



DUKES' DIARY

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

One of the aspects of our four month tour in Belfast which has worried me is that our families and friends at home do not get a realistic enough picture of the sort of life which we live in the city. This can only lead to rumour and worry; the object of this Diary therefore, is to break through the sensational reports on the television and in the newspapers with a fairly realistic, if light-hearted account, of our activities. We hope that in future editions we shall be able to include a supplement on news from Catterick so that the information is two way.

I can assure you that, although we are all working long hours and do not have much time to relax away from our jobs, everyone is in good heart. I am continually surprised by the cheerful way in which everybody accepts the infuriating frustration they come across in their day to day jobs. It is not really much fun to stand for hours on streets guarding a march, to watch ill-mannered and at times downright beastly crowds jeering and chanting as they pass "flash points", or to patrol the alleys of the city in search of wrong-doers. We have been fortunate during our first month to have had the opportunity to settle down and to learn our way around without having to deal with any serious outbreak of violence. There have been several occasions when it has only been by the cheerful, good humoured patience of the Yorkshireman that we avoided more serious trouble. I know many of you will be worried about the situation here; I can only assure you that everyone is as well prepared as they can be to cope with anything with which they may be faced.

My best wishes to you all.

C R Hixtable

Lt Col
Comd

COMMAND COMPANY - GIRDWOOD PARK

It's not so much a question of where's the Aggro, more a continual worry of when's the next Disco night? Life is most confusing one must agree though, if it's not the Paddies leading us astray there is the problem with our own attached personnel. Witness the poor unfortunate Horse Guards NCO who reported to the Company Office and gave his name. Reading the note later it would appear that a fiendish Irish Cpl O'Horsehill had been visiting. In fact he was a Corporal of the Horse called Mill! Never mind boys, keep trying.

"Morale's high though" say the men from the stores, so it should be with pin-ups like that on the wall. Infact morale is so high with some people that they don't want leave, or so it would appear from the response to the call for money for flight tickets. No cash no leave, was the order, some are taking it literally hoping they needn't go on leave.

This, of course, brings me back to the opening theme of these notes - there must be something to be gained at the Disco! Experience?

OPS ROOM

There can surely be no more medical term than operations room. A vision is conjured up of steely eyed men issuing crisp, decisive commands. The operations officer, a telephone in each hand, is taking notes with a pencil held in his teeth. With his prehensile toes he moves magnetic symbols on the map. His eyes, which have been trained at the Army School of Opticians are working independently. One of them is asleep after a hard day; the other is scanning the latest operation order. Between the calm lies an air of tension outside his head the rumble of gunfire.

The operations SMO is feverishly fighting an ever growing pile of paper. Runners arrive from every corner of the Battalion area leaving sacks full of INCREPS, BANTONREPS, ARRESTREPS, FINDREPS, CREPREPS, GASREPS, CROWDREPS, AND even REPREPS. Each is filed and passed to the operations officer for action, He is forced to wake up his other eye which instantly clicks into action, devouring the closely packed words for their essential content.

The operations clerk is fighting a private battle of his own. Through blood and bullets he struggles with grim expression and steadfastness of purpose. Although he knows that there may be an IRA man behind each tree, and round every corner he battles on; his coffee is excellent, and the nearest tap is 50 yards away.

It's all a dream of course. The operations room is really only a place where idle officers sit working out their leave dates.

SIGNAL PLATOON

The platoon is now well and truly settled into the routine here and we hope all our unfortunate teething troubles are now over. The state of communications has been good and all members of the platoon have worked very hard to keep their sets on the road. The voice procedure of all users improves daily.

We believe L/Cpl Brook has now run out of ideas for more improvements to the CO's Rover, though we hear he has written to Rolls Royce for a bonnet - badge! Incidentally have you noticed the thick rubber soles of the CO's boots!

The Asst RSO, Sgt Basu and Sgt Bowen got a shock when they found themselves taking turns in the Ops Room in Battalion HQ in addition to their normal jobs. Rumour has it that Sgt Bowen is branching into PR, though a little birdie told us he was really only ESCORTING Major Nash.

Those of you who are still wondering if you really heard L/Cpl Tolson's voice answering up for Somme, the answer is you did. We've got him tommying at last.

Cpl Taylor is to be congratulated on his discovery of a new way to amplify our extension speakers. His idea is going to be put forward for the Award Scheme. The FRT reported our sets in good order and thanks to Cpl Wicks for his assistance throughout. I'm sure Cpl Wicks must be finding it strange having to get back into uniform again after cabbying half way round Belfast in a Mini and wearing Civvies throughout his attachment.

SIGNAL PLATOON/Continued

Congratulations to L/Cpl Verrall and L/Cpl Brook on their good Warminster reports and L/CPL Brook's, Cpl Waqabaca and Sgt Kench's promotion, belated congratulations to Cpl Bowler for his 'B' Grading on the RSI's Course. The following also deserve congratulations on their recent marriages, Cpl Barnett, Pte Thackeray and Pt Cone. Finally we would like to wish L/Cpl and Mrs O'Shea all the best in civvy street.

RECCE PLATOON

The feelings of the platoon are summed up in the ditty below. Appart from the normal functions of the platoon our specialist activities have included providing a guard round the cathedral where the Prime Minister was reading the lesson and also a guard for the Ammunition Technical Officer (Bomb disposal for the uninitiated).

Company Commanders are loath to admit
That with their consent the Recce hit
The cowardly terrorists who plant their bombs
Under cover of darkness to conceal their wrongs.

Throughout the Battalion all is quiet
Not even the hint of a Unity Riot
The calm prevails in the New Lodge and Buffer
In silence the respective Company Commanders suffer
Hopefully they wish for a little more action
An incident or Disco to relieve their frustration.

EAR TO THE GROUND (or to the headset)

1. Which QM told his wife that he had to wear his flack jacket and a cricket box in bed on the Maidstone?
2. Which QM sent his wife a photograph of the ship miles out to sea and told her it was difficult to 'go ashore'.
3. Heard on the 2nd day of the Advance Party "I find this tour is begining to drag".
4. OC Recce to SUNRAY - There is a band approaching but I cannot recognise them.

SUNRAY - Are they the Girls band?

RECCE - Wait, Yes, Sgt Stansfield recognises that they are Girls.

(BULLY FOR SGT STANDFIELD)

WHOOPS

5. The Ops Officer sent a signal on Engineer works and copied it to 3 Queens at BALLYKINLER. Somehow the 3 became 1. Back came a reply from 1 Queens as follows:-

R 281510Z JUNE
FM 1 QUEENS
TO 1 DWR

UNCLAS N SUBJECT ENGR WORKS IN 1 DWR AREA REF YOUR N1/POS/6 OF 20 JUN 71.
YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS IN SENDING US A COPY OF REFERENCE IS MUCH APPRECIATED BY THIS BATTALION. AS FAR AS WE KNOW WE ARE NOT VISITING YOUR PART OF THE WORLD IN NEAR FUTURE. PERHAPS YOU HAVE INSIDE INFORMATION QUES. ANYWAY WE PREFER BERLIN.
TRY 3 QUEENS OR 2 QUEENS DOWN THE CORRIDOR IN BAOR.

THE BOMBS AND THE COLONELS BOOTS

It is said when an Irishman shoots
That the English Lads care not two hoots,
But they lose their aplomb
at the thought of a bomb
When their Colonel takes off his boots.

In Girdwood 'tis Commonly said
(And the source of this info's the head,
though some Sceptics may scoff;)
That the bombs will go off
If the Colonel retires to his bed.

If nightly an explosion shocks
Then the CO is changing his socks,
For when he gets his boots off
The dynamite shoots off
And all of Belfast City rocks.

It is whispered behind each closed door
That the Colonel's not raising a snore;-
It's for fear of the whangs
And the clangs and the bangs
That he daren't go to bed any more.

The rebels on each Belfast street
Are finding that life's not so sweet,
Because just to bemuse them,
Frustrate and confuse them,
The Colonels boots stay on his feet'.

The moral of this tale's a bite
of nitro PE and Cordite,
Of our CO in bed
(Fully dressed it is said)
With his bomb-firing boots laced up tight'.

BEM

4 JULY 71.

July the fourth was yesterday -
A bad time for the RGJ,
Two soldiers wounded in the Falls
in Belfast town, the memory galls.

The Dukes look on incredulous
And wonder why it was not us,
Yet one more time for them to rue -
Like '67 and Kophinou !

BEM

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY - THE MAIDSTONE

The majority of the Company arrived on 16 June at Donegal Quay and was transported to HMS Maidstone - our home for 4 months. Hms Maidstone was built in 1938 and served as a Submarine Depot Ship during World War II. In 1958 she was reconstructed as a Nuclear Submarine Support Ship and in 1967 she was put on the scrap list. In 1969 she was towed to Belfast and has been used since then as an accomodation ship for the Security Forces.

It must be pointed out that 'Maidstone' is unable to move under her own power despite stories that go around about quick overnight trips to the Isle of Man. The ship is only a few feet of the bottom (reputed to consist of gin bottles and beer cans!) and if she sank we would only get our feet wet.

Life on 'Maidstone' is pretty hectic despite what those 'up front' seem to think. It certainly is a useful administrative base not only just for us but for all units. The ship, in fact, is a gigantic transit camp. CSM Conley spends most of his time working out escorts, guards and fatigues and everyone does his fair share. It is not unusual to see the Company Commander dashing off on his PRO duties with an all - REME escort! Apart from the daily ships guard, the Company also provides a guard for the Crumlin road Prison once a week.

The Recce and Mortar platoons are also on board but we don't see very much of them because they work mainly at night. Next week the Vigilant platoon arrives.

At the time of writing the Families Officer is here on a visit, not only to bring us news from home but to give most of us a rocket for not writing home often enough. Come on you lads, get writing.

We miss our families and trust that our wives did a little housework during Wimbledon fortnight!

Finally on behalf of the whole Company I would like to congratulate the QM Capt. Walter Robins on being awarded the MBE in the Birthday Honours List.

MT PLATOON

There are a fluctuating number of about eighteen real drivers on the MAIDSTONE, and they are roughly shared out as follows:-

4 Ton Section:- L/Cpl. Withers, Pte's. Hanson, Hustwick, Lawrence, and Robshaw.

LRV Section:- Cpl. Robinson, L/Cpl. Parkinson, Pte's. Backhouse, Connor, and Furness.

PL HQ:- Sgt. Pearson, Cpl. Jamieson, L/Cpl. Locket, Pte. Morris.

REME:- Sgt. Plomer, Cpl. McDowell, L/Cpl's. Bamford, Foster, and Lancaster, Cfn. Beattie, and Bramley.

When I say quite roughly I mean just that, because all of the above mentioned take it in turn to drive all manner of details; from laundry to leave truck, from QM's stores to passion wagon. In addition to this, Bob Morris doubles as MTO's bugler and No 1 on the typewriter. The only semi-permanent jobs seem to be those held by L/Cpl. Derek Parkinson and John "Rubber bumpers" Hustwick. Fred Lawrence, "Googie" Withers and Roy Hanson also volunteer to spend the odd weekend driving with the Coys, just for the break.

Sgt. Plomer and the "Screamy" REME, with Cpl. McDowell as interpreter roam the backstreets most nights on recovery detail, and still manage to look chirpy whilst working 25 hours per day.

Looking round the Battalion, I think that all the drivers are doing a good job except for the occasional bump. And those of them on 'Maidstone' send their best wishes to all at home and to their less (?) fortunate colleagues driving with the Companies.

We have been on board HMS Maidstone for a little over 3 weeks and have now settled down to giving our usual immaculate service to the troops.

Each Thursday a fishing trip is organised by Q Waltham on a navy launch for 9 to 10 men. Unfortunately the first trip had to be cancelled owing to the launch breaking down. (Sabotage by persons not picked for the outing has not been ruled out at this stage). However the second trip went off as planned and a fine days fishing was had by all.

Another one of the many duties of the Pay Office is the running of the ships Disco on Tuesday and Thursday evenings where the troops can relax and enjoy themselves in complete safety owing to the presence of our chief bouncer "George".

Cpl. Hedges who is due to leave us in a few weeks can be seen at 0900hrs each day, on his knees to the Paymaster asking to be allowed to stay with us. To date no decision has been made.

Notice has been given that Cpl. McKeown is also due to leave us early next year when he is posted to the Inniskillen Dragoon Guards in BAOR. We all wish him well at his new post.

The pin-ups decorating the Pay Teams accomodation seems to be attracting much attention especially from Capt. Fitzgerald of Recce Pl. and a pin-up count/required after each of his visits.
is

A DAYS FISHING

We had set the RV for 0900hrs. 0845 saw us gathered on the well - deck of the Maidstone. A hasty check of our equipment showed us with one radio tuned in on the local wavelength; we later found this to be BBC Northern Ireland; and compo rations for 24hrs. duration. If the job took any longer we were told 'You'll have to live off the land! An inspection of our team showed us to be composed of four R.Navy men, nine soldiers and a NAAFI man complete with elevenses. A lastminute check showed us wearing boots which were discarded in favour of plimsolls as being more favourable for swimming. A quick brief by the WO I/C , we boarded our small vessel and slipped quietly down Belfast Lough.

The operation was on. At 1020hrs. we were in position. After two radio checks we had finally lost all contact with the outside world.

After a word with the Skipper the WO I/C party gave the final brief. I'll get the first one and we will use him to get the others. So we started fishing.

True to his word the first to catch a fish was Wally Waltham, a small whiting which wouldn't have disgraced an aquarium. Then all hell was let loose - he got two mackerel, one falling off and the other rescued. Meanwhile Toddy (from QM's) was trying to retrieve his bait from a passing seagull which had taken a fancy to it. He had more trouble from this bird later on.

Tommy J (the one with the beard) shouted for the gaff - I've got a big one. When he had reeled in he found his fish was indeed a 'big un'. His tackle had tangled with someone on the other side of the boat and they were busy trying to pull each other in.

We drifted up and down off Groomsport just outside Bangor catching dog fish, a few mackerel, whiting and the occasional cod.

The time came to return to the Maidstone so we upped anchor and made our way back. Everybody had enjoyed themselves, we were all tired, so much so that one of the T/QM's staff had a lay down and sleep just after starting fishing as he found it so strenuous. We arrived back at Maidstone, to find Admin Coy lining the decks. Our failure to maintain radio contact had lead them to fear we had been hi-jacked. On one of the infrequent radio checks we (among others) were asked to keep an eye open for a green Cortina. Finally our thanks to the R.N. for the use of the boat.

QUARTERMASTERS STAFF ALPHABETICALLY SPEAKING

- A is for a corporal his surname Allen,
who runs the stores and other chores,
Ashby also begins with A but enough
about him he'll get his say.
- B is for Bannister and Captain Burke,
the first does escorts and pioneer work,
the latter, QM; on the Technical side,
sandbags and messing, on board for the ride.
- C is for Craze a Cpl and Clerk and
- D is for Davis who guards this ark,
The Eze we have none but Efs we have,
a sergeant a stalwart with T.Q. fame,
but its Efs we're after so Firths the name.
- H is for (Corporal) Hodgson and Hoyle,
a clerk and a chippy, daily they toil,
then Jay is for Jackson, the bearded dad,
our Pioneer Sergeant unaccompanied. No Glad!
- K is for Knowles who has yet to smile,
he puts the kit in such odd piles.
- L's we have none in our team,
though M's we have, signwriter Maclean.
Maidstone Mitchell rides many a mission,
from woodwork joints to Crumlin Prison.
- N is for Naiken the clerk on G Ten,
in office and guard room he wealds his pen.
Bill Northend's our man for accommodation,
your writer now lacks good inspiration.
- P is for Pollard, corporal Lew,
he issues the ammo to this vast crew.
Quantities, Quires we have no Q's,
but in this firm we get much abuse.
- R is for Robins, captain so sound,
just ask a question he knows his ground.
Congratulations on your MBE,
but don't take the Maidstone out to sea.
- S we have one its Corporal Sharp,
who angles from Port bow to catch the carp.
- T is for Teale our carpenter buddy,
and finally friends one can't forget Toddy,
he checks on the rats, toilets and drains,
theres no doubt about it the job takes brains.
- U's None
- V's None
- W's theres two "Tug" Wilson and Webby,
our rear party crew.
No Exes, Whyz and Zees, all aboard
but we can't take to sea.

THE ALMA

The men of the Alma are one,
They all know what needs to be done,
But never mind royalty
The bulk of their loyalty,
Goes to the Platoons prefixed 'One'.

"

The young men of Staff Hall's 'One One',
Are handy with baton and gun,
They know what their at
With both Prod and Cat,
But of Aggro they've so far seen none.

"

The soldiers of Newell's 'One Two',
In Belfast know just what to do,
Whether lifting and searching
Or in OP a-perching,
They'll do it much better than you ! (So they say)

"

The tommies of young Meek's 'One Three',
Are approaching their duties with glee,
They're hard and they're tough
But impartial not rough,
And make the most of time that is free.

1 PLATOON NOTES

Matt's Marauders were full of glee,
Supping their ale on the Irish Sea,
With thoughts of Belfast dark and gloom,
Far from the minds of those in that room.
The morning sun and Sgt Rocks shout,
Soon cleared their minds as to what their about.
A quick look around and a silent stare,
And Flash Crawford moaned 'It's like Bradford, I declare',
Besieged with abuse and determined not
Ever again upset this gruesome lot.
A funny beginning to this little tale
Was first night here Evans guarded Crumlin Gaol.
Sweatmeat Clarkson thinks Unity's a treat,
It has a bakers shop so he's lots to eat.
Big John and Big BoB through the streets walk tall,
Guarding our rear that's Frear and Gomersall.
The Old Lodge/Unity Block tests one hundred percent,
But Rochester and Bowden do not relent,
Again and Again they venture out,
To find out from whence therecame that shout.
The height of the sangers proved quite troublesome,
Until old man George find a crate for Johnny Donaldson.
Tartan Mac Vokes is full of woe,
Rocks got him scrubbing out signs, 'Jocks must go'.

Checking cars on a VCP,
Nipping back in Unity for a quick cup o tea,
Over the road for a wash and shave, (Notice we are censored),
Back to Unity again to rant and rave.
Out on patrol in an armoured Pig,
Watching the bands do the Irish Jig.
Crumlin, Unity, Brown Squire, the lot,
Always on guard no time for a tot.
Silver teeth Gerik and MJ Ryan,
Can't find a pillow on which to lie-on,
Gimpy Thaites has nicked them all,
Dreadingly awaiting the repeated call,
ALL OUT, ALL OUT you sleepy heads,
Lets go put Paddy to his welcome beds.
Pl Sgts troubles are mounting more,
He's done it again - put wood on two till four.
There's Varley and Green and Sugden and Rhodes,
Soldiering on and bearing their loads.
Our sniper king must be getting a mention,
Or else he may withdraw his prevention
Of Paddy striking us from up above,
So here's to you Wuz Larnder - er with love.
A replacement joins our ranks so thin,
Sack-it Duckett we extend a welcome to him.
Well nearly one month over and not too bad so far,
Pl Commander a Television Star !!!!!
A near bomb blast sent a metal door by him,
Pl Sgt said he shouldn't have come with that Busby and Chin.
Our leave roster is about to begin,
Tex Woodward is first 'Good luck to him',
And good-night to you.

2 PLATOON NOTES

There's more to this searching business than meets the eye, it's all a question of feel or the tender touch (ask Lcpl Robinson). You haven't lived until you've searched a queer (an amazing experience, ask me). Then there's persuading drunks to get up against a wall (ask Cpl Bone). Of course there's always the brighter side of life, like convincing Butterworth that there's a motorised lawnmower full of armed IRA on the loose (and be sure to get the number).

Any queries, complaints, suggestions, suicide notes, etc, should be addressed to:-

Ptes Somma and Cordingley,
C/O The Cookhouse, (Working Hours),
or Rooftop Langer, (Home address).
Tele: 1428.

HELLK'S MEN

First: Well Woody's in charge,
They're small and fat and large,
with jolly fatty Trear
Bringing up the rear.
There's small plonky Riggy,
Friends Tab and Blackey,
And lastly young Conny.

'Home posting at last',
Called Paddy, you see,
With Lilly and Coozy,
Gladys and Bert,
Rev with 'Have a fag' Dec.
They're all there to see,
Not forgetting S.P.

Thirdly there's Fereday,
Not the one atomic one,
With TIC Snowy,
Dack, Rev and Bugs,
Also Geoff and Dougy.
Some say this lot are rugs,
But they're Simpson's Marauders.

Here we are in Belfast,
With Ian Paisley and his cast,
There's Brian Faulkner with nowt to say,
And at the front the IRA.

We're all alone in old Brown Square,
Which isn't such a bad affair,
B and C in Girdwood Park,
Their location is no lark.

On the 12th we're on the street,
With Paisley and his mob to meet,
There'll be trouble that's for sure,
But rubber bullets'll provide the cure.

When the knocker sticks come charging,
Be sure you won't be there,
For when the Alma's a-marching,
They'll know it was us there.

Song for the next few weeks: We're Going Well -
We're throwing shell.

CROSSWORD No 1

1		2	3	4	5		6	7	8
	9						10		
11	12					13	14		
15						16			
17					18			19	
				20					
21		22	23			24	25		26
		27				28			
29	30					31			
32				33					
34						35			

CLUES

ACROSS

1. Sea-shore (5)
5. Waistcoats (5)
9. Tend the fire (5)
10. Haul (3)
11. Girls name (5)
13. Army's River (5)
15. Cooper (5)
16. Noise (3)
17. Rests (4)
18. Annual financial statement (3)
20. Arrived first (3)
21. Combining of firms (6)
24. Worry (4)
27. Away (3)
28. Cut (5)
29. Push aside (5)
31. Backs horses (5)
32. Consume (3)
33. Goes out (5)
34. Bullocks (5)
35. Between 12 and 20 (5)

DOWN

1. Sheaths (5)
2. Thing of value (5)
3. Celestial bodies(5)
4. Mans name (4)
5. WWI Battle in France (6)
6. Bee's weapon (5)
7. Weight (3)
8. Charming (5)
12. Join together (5)
14. Concealed (3)
18. Orderly Room (3)
19. Choose (5)
20. More moist (6)
21. Thinks (5)
22. Way (5)
23. Weapon (3)
24. Musical Instrument (5)
25. Wash lightly (5)
26. Tries out (5)
28. Roasting Rod (4)
30. Headwear (3)

COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

We have been working hard (hehehahaha) - We have actually. We have all discovered things about each other that we never knew before, it's living in such close proximity that does it. We now know that Major Cumberlege gets incredibly hungry at 2 AM and has been known to dispose of half a loaf and six hard boiled eggs in the space of half an hour.

Captain Redwood-Davies worries dreadfully about the size of his beret and has spent most of his time trying to shrink it. The C.M. has been trying to devise a new way of searching girls who come into the camp on Disco nights. At the moment he has a machine which, when passed over a ladies handbag, will emit a high pitched whine on coming close to anything metallic. It has picked up 92 sets of corsets and 132 sets of suspenders already.

Sgt Pye, our AT Sgt, has been going quite mad trying to fix four Armoured Cars (Ligs) with one clutch, 5 Landrovers with 3 engines, two 4 tonners with one starter motor etc, etc, etc.

The C.M.S. is in charge of the delightful Miss Beatty. (Do not worry Mrs Stewart, she is the kind little old lady from the Christian Aid Society). When Miss Beatty arrives it takes one strong man a whole afternoon to entertain her and who better than the Colour Sgt - who does nothing else anyway!

Our Intelligence Sgt, Sgt Robson, spends most of his time discussing intelligence in the Sgts Mess with Cpl Budden (??) who he seems to have developed an affection for.

The next time these notes are to be written will be four weeks hence and by that time the twelfth of July celebrations will be over, so there should be plenty more to write about.

Eyesore of the month goes to the sacking partition inbetween the Ladies and Gents at Disco nights.

Thought for the month: What has an IQ of 144? Answer: A gross of Irishmen!!

4 PLATOON NOTES

Hi there readers! Talk about a take over! We got off the boat and did our first patrol in the Lodge with our suitcases in our hands.

Sgt Hodgkinson and Cpl Cole had been here a week already and pushed us through the first few days, warning us all the time that it would be all go, and it was. And we haven't had a lot of sleep either.

For the most part people are friendly and we are working hard on those who aren't. The most dangerous part of our tour so far has been avoiding the drunken drivers when we are manning road blocks. We nearly lost Pte Leskiewicz the other day when some idiot in his car nearly knocked him back to Warsaw.

We have searched cars, investigated brown paper parcels which were thought to be bombs, lined the streets for a few marches, patrolled the streets and generally made our presence felt.

Now we are preparing for the hateful July when Irishmen go mad, wave flags, and make a nuisance of themselves.

We welcome to the platoon Sgt Wilkinson. Also in our ranks we have Pte Malcolm Banks and Bob Barcham who have just recently arrived. They have settled down well and we consider them one of the family.

Finally, to the wives of Sgt Hodgkinson, Cpls Craven & Cole, Ptes Jackson, Foster, Thompson 65 and Waller, we say, 'Don't worry, we'll soon be back in your arms again'.

5 PLATOON NOTES

Tuesday the 15th of June saw 5 Pl debcating at the docks to be met by our platoon commander wearing a flak jacket (bullet proof vest) and carrying a bent truncheon. However this warlike appearance deceived us all because very little has happened for the past 3 weeks in the New Lodge Area.

We investigated a bomb blast at Gallahers Tobacco Factory the other day but little damage was done apart from a few broken windows. Sgt Cookson is seriously thinking of coming back to Belfast as a glazier. He will have to bring some glass with him though because judging by all the broken windows in the Lodge area, there can't be a lot of glass left around.

Lcpl Wilson investigated a loaf of bread thinking it was a bomb. He was asked by the owner of the loaf if he would like a slice.

Platoon personalities of the month include:

2Lt (Rip Van Winkle) Sherlock (who seems to be challenging Sgt Pyc for the record number of hours sleep).

Little Fat Sgt Cookson (who spends most of his time chasing 2Lt Sherlock off his bed).

Pte (Schultz) Burgess, who is dieting.

To the wives of Sgt Cookson, Cpl Laherty and Cpl Thomas - keep smiling, we'll be back soon - people are already talking about the arrival of the relieving unit recce party.

6 PLATOON NOTES

After 6 weeks of hard but enjoyable training which led to numerous injuries, 6 Pl finally arrived in Ireland. It was not long before the platoon got into the swing of things although some things were completely unexpected.

Sleep is the most valuable thing around and our Georgie can't get enough but we think he might pull through.

The Disco is always looked upon as a hair raising attraction, and talking of hair, the CSII 'Black Jack' is still on the rampage.

Our platoon mascot, Andy Phillips has finally been out of camp, much to the disapproval of the Pl Sgt. Morale in the platoon is very high, now that the platoon can have as much beer as they want providing that it does not exceed two pints every fourth day. They seem to be quite happy though. We are still trying to push Lcpl Dyke up for promotion and the CSM is keeping his eyes open - good luck to both of them.

Finally the platoon NCOs thank those concerned for their most interesting night out in Belfast and we say farewell to Lcpl Smith 15 on his posting to the IRA as chief weapon instructor.

The 'Big Six' by Cpl Whittaker

It started off as a joke,
and brave old 'Six' became afloat,
On the ferry they did come,
Every man with his gun,
Landed in old Belfast town
Straight to an OP looking around,
Saw a man running away
A man they knew from the IRA,
They chased him hard to bring him in,
And they caught him on the old Crumlin,
Everyone did know at last
That 6 platoon was in Belfast,
So they say loud and clear
Let it be known to everyone here,
6 platoon is big and brave,
And Northern Ireland they did save.

God save the King !

ULSTER '71

Here we are in Belfast
Lying on our backs
Sleeping, eating, working,
Thinking 'prods and cats.'

Lines and lines of marchers
Going through the Lodge,
waving, screaming, shouting
Playing 'Rubber Bullet' dodge.

From the Falls to Ballymurphy
The Lodge Ardoyne too
Our lot is not a happy one
Our numbers far too few.

The peace keepers they call us
Twixt Paisley and the Pope
People sing our praises
People live in hope.

Look at the little children
Playing in the rubble.
Our own exactly like them
Causing mainly trouble.

Our enemy lies hidden
In shadows far too black
Guns and bombs their weapons
Their target is our back.

Oh! to be in England
To enjoy a beer or two
Life is never boring
Laughs are never few.

Anon

MEDICAL CENTRE

I SAY, I SAY, I SAY,

A stock comic device in the old music hall was a crossed dialogue. Two pairs of actors had a separate conversation at opposite ends of the stage, the fun came from mingling the lines. We discovered last week that the Medical Centres tea break is a natural home of crossed dialogue. Last weeks eve's dropping produced the following:-

"I've just got back from the surgical equipment exhibition. Have you seen the new range of operating stools?"

"It's always a difficult business picking new orderlies."

"I'm sure it's important to find one that gets on well with the men."

"Especially the new fashioned ones with the swivel seats."

"The first requirement of all Medic's is that they should be physically fit."

"I always test mine by sitting on them for a few minutes and then by bouncing up and down."

"Did you notice those new alloy dishes?"

"It's even more important that he gets on well with the senior ranks."

"You mean the ones with the stainless steel bottoms? I believe they're very hard wearing."

My last one was a social disaster. He couldn't take his beer at the all ranks dance.

"For our work we really need one that can hold 15 pints without leaking."

"Have you ever thought of taking an orderly on the NHS?"

"They're alright until the Soldiers get their hands on them. Then they end up in a frightful mess."

"And of course one must take an interest in the welfare of ones Medic's."

"It doesn't bother me. They just need an occasional wash. I get my young Cpl to put mine in the sink and give'em a good scrub at the end of the day."

"I like the look of those new Sigmoidoscopes."

"Yes, Roger always takes his out to dinner with him at the Savoy. It helps to build up his private practice."

"Big Plum always said that rigger players made the best Medic's."

"They're first class. But it's important to sterilize them first. Otherwise you have complaints from the men."

NEWS FROM THE SWINGING CORUNNA - DUNMORE PARK

COY SIGNAL DETACHMENT

With Cpl 'Bren' Bowler of 54 Thorneyhill Park, Catterick Camp on the guitar and three "Marx Brothers" Pte "Steve Blagbrough of 44 Willow Ave, Catterick Camp, Pte 'Windy' Gale of 4 Hipswell Rd, Catterick Camp and Pte 'Mike' Stukalo of 13 Portsmouth Ave, Peel Park, Bradford.

Radio Appointment Titles. A work to WOII COLL "I know NEPTUNE, RUCKSACK, KESTREL and FELIX are new, but it's no excuse for not telling Stukalo that the OC is SUNRAY not Guv'nor.

Heard on the Net

"Hullo 3 this is 31 "There are only very little people in Upper Meadow St" (Still I suppose we are in Ireland after all).

"Hello 31 this is 3 radio check over"

"31 yes over"

"3 Why over"

"31 wait - wait out" (and he was never heard again).

THE ROAD BLOCK

7 PL STYLE

Operation " _____ " was on. Road blocks at 'X', 'Y' & 'Z' immediately. 7 Platoon roared off in their "Pigs" (1 ton armoured vehicles - NB. pig is an apt name). The platoon arrived, the drill was known - men with lights, men with caltrops, searchers, sentries all were detailed and rehearsed. A certain Thomson, a zealous youth, was the 'stopper' of oncoming cars. The doors were barely open when Thomson set into the traffic. Hand raised, baton at the ready but still the first car came on. Thomson ran towards the vehicle the car drove on! CRUNCH - our first casualty, badly hurt, send for the ambulance! No wait - Thomson's alright at least he's smiling, its the car thats in trouble! At least he got his car!

THE STOLEN CAR

AN 8 PL EPIC

It fell to C/S 32 the dubious honour of finding the first stolen car in our area, this of course was due to the powers of observation and alertness of the said C/S. No names mentioned but a certain other sub-unit had passed the car three times during the same evening.

It was about 2330 hours when the message came over the air from the section on the ground saying that the car, an Hillman Elf was spotted outside a pub in Tigers Bay. Immediately (as per SOPs) the platoon slipped smoothly into gear like a well oiled machine. The Platoon informed Coy, Coy informed Bn (we are not quite sure who Bn informed). The area was cordoned off, snipers moved to vantage points in order to make full use of night scopes in case of "aggro". Everyone of course consulted 'yellow cards' just to refresh their memories. The trap was set now all they had to do was wait.

About thirty minutes later two well dressed young ladies stepped out and moved slowly towards the car, immediately the net closed in. Then ugh-ah-umph!! No not aikido, no arrests just an embarrassed apology - the car had been found and returned to its rightful owners two weeks previously. So the young ladies were allowed to continue on their way.

Of course then the Platoon informed Coy, Coy informed Bn (and we are still not sure who Bn informed).

TEA

ANOTHER 8 PL EPIC

The patrol was to be of the commando type, moving during the early hours, with darkness the chief ally. The orders on briefing were short and simple, move with stealth and caution, observe but do not be observed, the order of the day being silence, caution and alertness.

At 0130 hours all were ready. Rehearsals were completed, faces blackened all loose and shiny objects of kit taped or removed. It was important that the patrol should get from Dunmore to the selected ambush position undetected. Full use was made of the shadows, soldiers flitted from tree to tree, from corner to corner like ghosts. All well lit roads and open ground avoided and pitch black alleyways used. Two long hard hours later the patrol were in position down an inky black 'ginnel', the atmosphere was electric and the thought in everyones mind was that at last we might make our first IRA capture. Then a door opened!!!! - wait - wait the suspect spoke - "It must be cold out there love, won't you all come in and have some TEA".

THE CO'S RUN

In the middle of the night
when the town's up-tight
and the air is cold outside,
The Chief Clerk gets dressed
in his Paddy-bashing vest
and goes out for a ride.

He finds it fun
to ride shotgun
on the CO's nightly prowl,
With his head held high
and his rifle to the sky
and his face set in a scowl.

Staff's at his best
when he dreams that he's out West
fighting a fearsome foe;
O'er a glass of ale
he will spin a warlike tale
of tommying long ago.

So for those of you
who like telling stories too
here's one thats quite grotesque -
Of how the Paddies ran
when they saw this mighty man
step out from behind his desk.

So in the middle of the night
when the town's up-tight
and the air is cold outside,
When you get dressed
in your Paddy-bashing best
to go out for a ride -

Dont start to weep
because you've lost some sleep
or the fact that it's not fun, -
Just think of the Chief Clerk
when he goes out in the dark
on the CO's nightly run!

FOR THOSE WITH A GUILTY CONCIENCE : If you have left your wife with an uncut lawn - does that make her a grass widow.

(Thank you Mrs Huxtable)

SOMME COMPANY : PAULETTE AVENUE

YE ODE TO PAULETTE AVE

By

Sparkes

At the dead of night all is still,
It's then the rats eat their fill;
Large and small, fat and thin,
In threes and fours they march straight in;
Batons, Shields and baited traps,
Nothing it seems, will deter those chaps.

Chunkies, Cooks, Signallers yet,
The hairy foe they have met;
Screams and squeaks rend the night,
It's a loosing battle that they fight.

From Buckingham's Palace to turn the tide,
Marches out Somme's fighting pride,
Moustache quivering, club in hand,
He advances on the rodent band.

There he squats in pouring rain,
Baton ready, rats to brain;
The object is to give a clout,
To any rat that may come out,
O wet Commander what chagrin,
No rats came out but two ran in.

It's morning now the night has fled,
Somme advances to count the dead;
In full light the havoc abounds,
But alas, no corpses on the ground;
So once more on the daily sit rep,
Goes the report "No score yet".

Here's one thought for today,
Are they trained by the IRA?

BATTALION REST AREA

A tale that once was very rife,
Told how Somme's lot was free of strife;
No bottles, bombs or knives in vest,
Just the place to have a rest;

How they scoffed, how they laughed,
But now poor clods they all look daft;
Shooting, looting, petrol and fire,
All are used to raise our ire;
We however play it cool,
And let the others play the fool.

Written by

Enda Oboh

ELEGY IN A CHURCH(SCHOOL)YARD

(With apologies to Gray)

Sitting peaceful, all serene.
Signals buzzing, dozy dream.
Peeler snores in corner snug.
Sweetened tea in steamy mug.
What a sweet idyllic scene,
Just the thing for poets theme.

BANG, BANG BANG BANG BANG and BANG.
Is it shots from IRA gang?
All stand to. Oh what a fuss,
Run and grab and duck and cuss;
Who the? What the? Why the? Where?
That's no porcupine, but old Gunn's hair;
Peeler's presence not all clear,
Bottoms only do appear.

Urgent call from Wonson's lair,
"Lots of shooting fills the air"
Bryson, Beechfield, Seaforde all,
Seem to team with gangsters tall;
OC's below "All turn out",
We will put these ___'s to route.

Moving slowly in the dark,
Down the street to make our mark;
Come from north and come from south,
That should close the steel traps mouth;
All seems simple and going well,
"Hello 49" - Now what the Hell?
Riot starting outside the Church,
Yobbo's shouting our names besmirch.

Anti-tanks and drums alert,
Just to see St Mat's not hurt,
Dickens leads his stalwart men,
Helmets on, to the lion's den.
Smashing bottles flying free,
Brick and bombs are thrown with glee;
"Hello 49" (I don't believe it)
Another shooting, all must grieve it;
Go and look at shattered glass,
Bullets flying. Oh my --goodness!

Just behind us house blows up,
Turn around and make new FUP;
"Excuse me Madame, must come through,
Bombers running gives a clue;
Through the house and out the back,
Into alley all pitch black;
Onward Somme your's not to fear,
Although not many left next year.

Once again too late of course,
Must have rushed off on a horse.
Search around and don't get caught,
Another bomb with danger freight?
Yes, we thought so, there it goes,
(Soon must change our underclothes).

Now however quiet reigns,
All of Somme are aches and pains;
Look at watch, It can't be right!
The scene has lasted through the night,
Dawn comes quickly, sun comes quick,
Chance now for a little kip?
No such luck, it's such a bore,
This pace lasts for two days more.

Written By

Enda Iboh

10 PLATOON NOTES

10 Platoon, (alias the Mortar Platoon)(alias the Seaford Street Enders), have now settled into a steady life of Mobile patrolling in East Belfast and sleeping and eating aboard HMS Maidstone. The only time that anyone seems to be wide awake these days is when "Hectors House" is on the Telly and even the Mobile manages to find its way back to the ship to watch Hector.

Everyone in the platoon wishes to say all the best to Tony Marr and Margaret on their wedding. Congratulations go to Lcpl Nobby Clark and Janice on the birth of their son Colin.

Line edit at 1000:00

One or two light hearted incidents have happened in the short time we have been here to make our lives a little more pleasant, the first one being the time that C/S 41 called in at Paulette Avenue and a certain patrol commander visited the LOO and found that to do what was necessary was impossible with a rifle sling looped around the right wrist. He overcame this by propping his rifle against the wall to his front and succeeded in giving his rifle the best cleaning it had ever had when the flushing system suddenly came to life.

The next one involved our makeshift Platoon Sgt and his trusty foot patrol one night in the back alleys to the East of Bryson Street. A certain Radio Op following along in the footsteps of the Drum Major had the misfortune to allow his 4ft antenna to come into contact with a metal sign overhead with the loudest crack you could wish for. Result - No patrol to be seen anywhere and hearty scrubbing of under garments the morning after.

It is the intention of this sub unit to issue one nickname per month in our Platoon notes to different members of Somme Company and we are hoping for a lasting effect to help us remember these occasions when the tour is ended. The first lucky person just happens to be our unfortunate Company Commander who we think well deserves to be baptised:-

"Major SPIRO AGRO"

12 PLATOON NOTES - ST MATHEWS CHURCH

THE DUKES RE-VISIT ST MATHEWS

Line edit at 1000:00

Exactly 50 years to the day the "Dukes" will be stationed again in St Mathews. The first time they came was on the night of Sunday 23 July 1921 when the convent which is annexed to St Mathews was burnt to the ground in Anti-Catholic riots. In 1921 the "Dukes" only stayed for four days and here we are again 50 years later for 4 months - tours appear to increase with time. Although our main purpose is to prevent the church from being burnt down we still keep an eye on the convent. One of the nuns remembers the Dukes of 1921 and hopes to find some photographs of our previous visit.

This time 12 Platoon have set up home in the Church Hall - complete with stage, projection room, lighting effects and even a ticket office and as a result of the platoon not taking part in public duties in the big city we have christened our home "Buckingham's Palace" after our moustache-oed Company Commander.

We are left very much on our own except at "Hoolie - time" when the rest of the Company descends on our peace and quiet and sleeps on the tables, pushing our hospitality to the limit completely clearing us out of cigarettes and ale.

Joe 90 - Lcpl Taylor our cook has been doing a grand job impervious to the insults such as 'Who called the cook a clot' and 'Who called clot a cook'. He has called his empire the "Savoy Grill" - he says he once cooked, sorry prepared meals in that establishment but others say he only fed the cats. (Feline ones).

We soon booked our first arrest (the first in the Bn we are told) - some poor chap who was drunk as a lord broke our tranquility by telling tales of how he was going to blow up the Chapel.

During the little time here in between our arduous duties we have unearthed a number of poets, the following are their contributions:-

TO THE REST OF THE COMPANY FROM THE ANTI TK PLATOON

They seek him here they seek him there
Those poor old Mortars seek everywhere,
They never seem to get a rest
Until they reach our homely nest.

We feel so safe, we feel so sound
Stationed here on Holy ground,
Mortars, Chunkies, and all the rest,
Are jealous of our homely nest.

On guards and duties we are the best,
Mortars and Chunkies can do the rest.

EDITORS NOTE: Sorry only room for one more.

ULSTER by Pte WHITE & P1

The Irish are a funny lot
There hard to understand,
I've seen a bit in my time
But now't like Ireland.
Through the day their friendly
They give you tea and buns,
Through the night their not so nice
It's nails and petrol bombs.

We do guards, we do patrols
We try to keep things quiet.
But every time all seems well
They start a bloody riot.

Answers to Crossword No 1

ACROSS:- 1. Coast. 5. Vests. 9. Stoke. 10. Tow. 11. Susan. 13. Rhine. 15. 'Emery.
16. Din. 17. Sits. 18. Budget. 20. Won. 21. Merger. 24. Fret. 27. Out.
28. Slice. 29. Shunt. 31. Punts. 32. Eat. 33. Exits. 34. Steer. 35. Teens.

DOWN :- 1. Cases. 2. Asset. 3. Stars. 4. Tony. 5. Verdun. 6. Sting. 7. Ton. 8. Sweet.
12. Unite. 14. Hid. 18. BOR. 19. Elect. 20. Wetter. 21. Muses. 22. Route.
23. Gun. 24. Flute. 25. Rinse. 26. Tests. 28. Spit. 30. Hat.

Tailpiece: And as the God of Thunder came riding through the clouds on his Silvery White Horse, he cried. "I'm THOR, I'm THOR". His mare turned round and with a frown said, "Yeth you forgot your Thaddle Thilly".

FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to thank all those who have submitted articles for this, the first edition of the Duke's Diary. Don't be downhearted if your article has not been included. It will probably be in next months issue.

The number of Poets in the Battalion is quite staggering!
The aim must be to improve on each edition. With this aim in view, I would like more cartoons, general articles and good quality photographs.

May I have your next diary notes by Thursday 12 August.

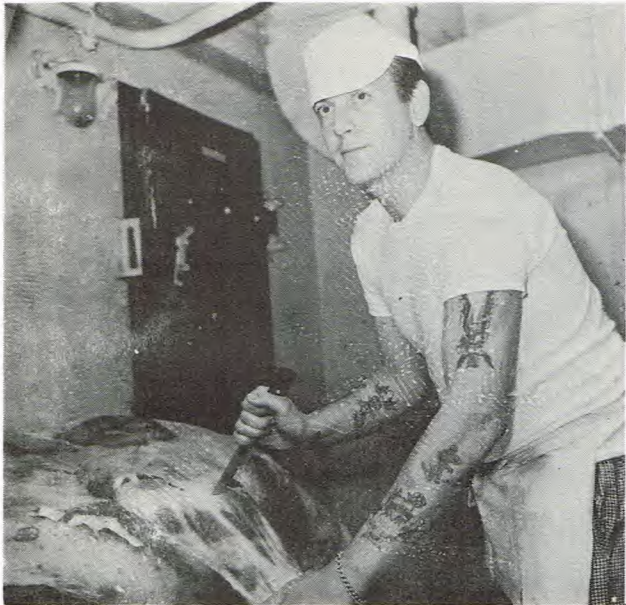
Editor.



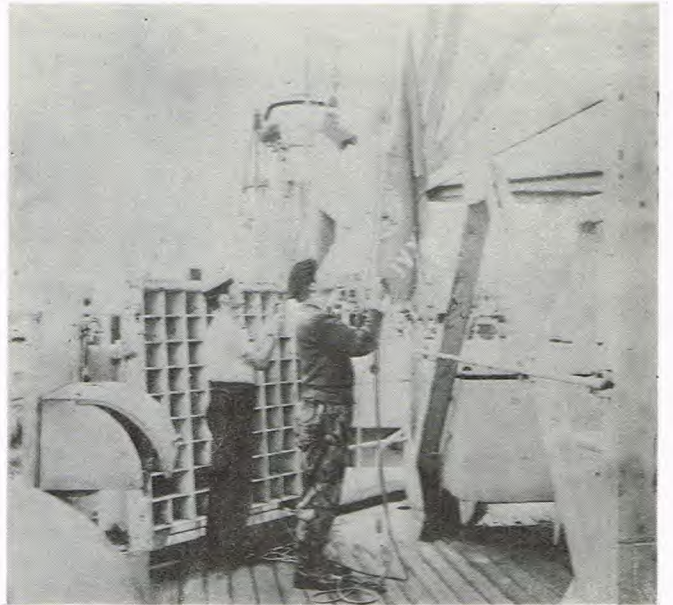
Pte. Marr, Drum Major Lever, Pte. Wright and Cpl. Frear on duty in the Mortar Platoon Ops. room.



Ptes. Walker, Birks, Winstanley Evans (Anti-tank Platoon) and Nelson the dog on duty outside St. Matthew's Church, Ballymacarrett.



L/Cpl. White, Admin. Company, carving it up on "Maidstone."



Pte. Furness hoists the Regimental flag for the first time on "H.M.S. Maidstone."



The Recce Platoon keeping watch behind St. Anne's Cathedral during the Golden Jubilee Service.



The C.O. at Carlisle Circus keeps watch as the Lodges march to a service to commemorate the Battle of the Somme.



Pte. Best, "A" Company, on guard at Brown Square.



Tidying up the defence around Brown Square.



Ptes. George Barber, Mike Small, Chris Guiney, Mick Stannard, L/Cpl. Carl Barker, Ptes. Dave Waring and Norman London of Burma Company having a drink in "The Blow Up" Bar, Girdwood Park.



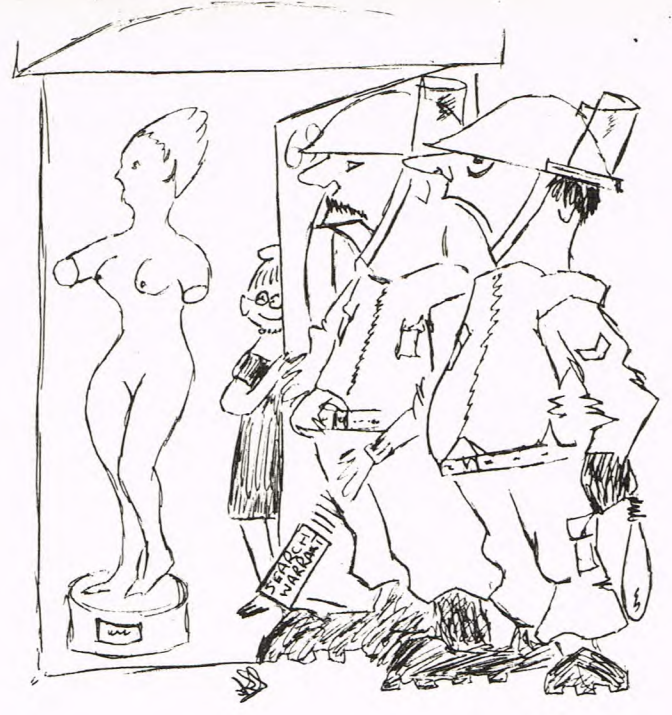
Ptes. Rodney Elgar, Brian Foster, Paul Wood, Stanley Holt and John Thompson of Burma Company, moving out from Girdwood Park on a patrol.



8 Platoon settling down in Dunmore Park.



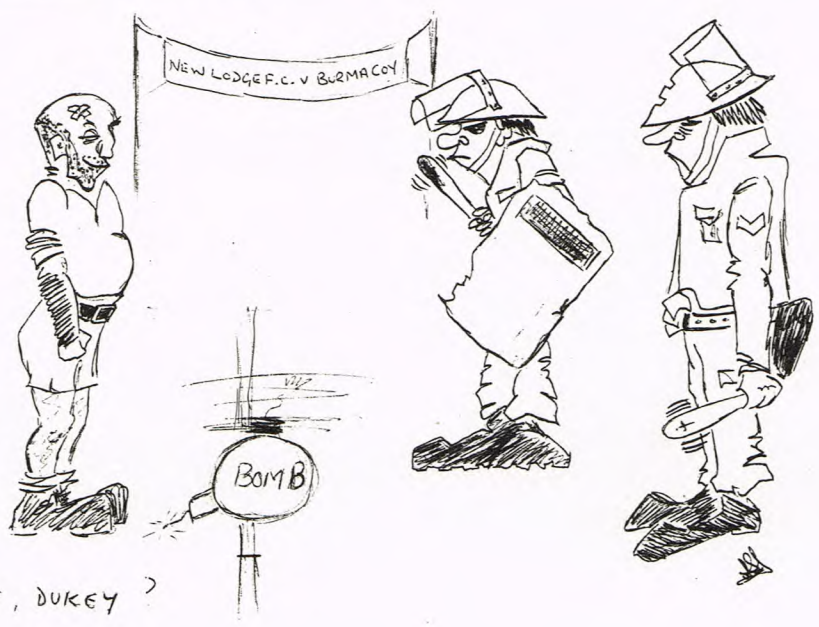
Ptes. Jock White and Michael Slater, Corunna Company, leaving Dunmore Camp on patrol.



ARREST ME. I DOUBLE DARE YOU.



SHELAGH SAYS, CAN SHE PASS, AS SHE'S LATE FOR THE DISCO.



SHALL I KICK OFF, DUKEY?

