

**A
POTTED HISTORY
OF
POST WW11 AMPHIBIOUS UNITS OF THE
BRITISH ARMY**

**EXTRACTED FROM
THE JOURNALS OF
THE
ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS
AND
ROYAL CORPS OF TRANSPORT
(THE WAGGONER)**

Please note the dates in bold type are the dates of publication in The Waggoner not the dates of the events.

The first DUKW Company to be formed after WW11 was 116 Amphibious Company at Cairnryan in 1951. The unit was Commanded by Major J A Abraham MC this consisted of Company HQ and 4 Platoons of 16 DUKWs each, the unit moved to Fremington in March 1952. In June 1954 it was reduced to three officers and 37 other ranks it was redesignated Amphibian Training Wing RASC in February 1960.

1952 January

LOWLAND DISTRICT

116 Company (Amph. GT.) are busy with their trainees. Their permanent staff football team, having had a series of easy matches, would like to meet stronger opposition which is difficult to find in this area.

January 1953

Congratulations to Cpl. R. Penny, 116 Company, on his engagement to Miss G. Allin, of Alwington, North Devon.

April 1953

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT

116 Company (Amph. G.T.) were called on to assist in relief work during the recent st Coast floods, and the skill and endurance of the drivers played an important part in the success of the rescue work.

August 1953

116 Company (Amph. G.T.) is soon to leave its present location for overseas. During the past eighteen months in England the Company has carried out many training and other commitments and can look back with pride on its achievements, which can bear witness to the Corps motto, "Nil Sine Lahore/" Sergt. Beswick is congratulated on the arrival of a daughter on 13th of July.

July 1953

Last month we stated 116 Company (Amph. G.T.) were still in the running for the inter-Unit Knock-out Cup, and now we are pleased to report they have won the cup by defeating the School of Amphibious Warfare by 3 goals to 2 after a terrific struggle in which two periods of extra time had to be played.

September 1953

116 Company, (Amph. G.T.). The Company is leaving the District for overseas and are wished "Bon Voyage."

May 1954

SOUTHERN COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

ACT of Gallantry: T/14471298 CpL F. W. Murrin, R.A.S.C; T/22306907 L./CpL R. G. Mitchell, R.A.S.C; T/22690240 Pte, J. R.Dyson, R,A.S.C.

On the morning of 11th December, 1953, an exercise was in progress from the Amphibious Warfare Centre, Fremington. Three vehicles, a L.V.T. and two Dukws, were taken into the sea. When fifty yards from the shore, three large waves struck the L.V.T. and the officer in charge reached the conclusion that the vehicle was foundering. He hailed a Dukw to come alongside and ordered the crew, which consisted of a corporal-driver, Dvr. Probert and himself, to swim the ten yards which separated them from the Dukw. The corporal and Dvr. Probert jumped in the sea and were followed by the officer, who found safety together with the corporal Dvr. Probert submerged. Cpl. Murrin, L./Cpl. Mitchell and Pte. Dyson, who were members of the crew of the Dukw, made repeated and strenuous efforts to save Probert, although hampered by their uniform, and gave up only when they were exhausted, but Probert was drowned. On the recommendation of the Chief Constable of Devon these three soldiers are to receive the parchment commendation of the Royal Humane Society. The G.O.C. in C, Southern Command, has directed that an entry be made in the documents of Cpl. Murrin, L./Cpl. Mitchell and Pte, Dyson.

July 1954

116 Company (Amph. G.T.) have been taking part in Exercise "Runaround," which has received publicity in the Press and the Gaumont British News. Our congratulations to L./CpL and Mrs. Green on the birth of their daughter, and we wish good luck to 2/Lieut. R. H. Bradfield who has joined us, and to Lieut. J. S. Maffey in civilian life.

September 1954

Most of 116 Company (Amphib. Tpt.), supported by L.C.T. 4086 from 23 Company, are taking part in Exercise "Winch" in Belgium.

November 1954

We learn that 116 Company, who were formerly with us, arrived in M.E.L.F. on 31st August and among their many activities have been the carrying of tentage and stores of all kinds to the stricken earthquake locations in Cyprus.

1955 February

As the weather is always a general topic of conversation and what a lot of it we have had recently the comments of 116 Company and 23 Company are particularly worthy of mention. 116 Company says; On Tuesday, 14th December, we were urgently requested to provide Dukws for the rescue of some pigs near Langport, which had been cut off by the rising flood waters. As a result fourteen prize porkers were duly ferried from their island home to a safe place of rest. The " operation Noah" was recorded by the B.B.C. Television camera and later shown on the Television newsreel. 116 Company is to be congratulated on winning the prize for the best decorated barrack room at Fremington Camp. We also wish the best of luck to those who leave us on posting, especially the N.C.Os. of 116 Company destined for Egypt and Korea,

1955 March

Postings to 116 Company 2/Lieuts. Walker and Lewis.

1956 July

After the parade the D.D.S.T. presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals to W.O.II (C.S.M.) T. Toole and S/Sgt. (C.Q.M.S.) H. C. Baker, both members of 116 Company, (bringing their holders to three).

1956 September

At 116 Company (Amphibious Transport) an interesting time was had when the director and camera team arrived on 4th July to take shots of the amphibians for inclusion in the forthcoming film on R.A.S.C. activities The shots will probably include a Dukw driver under instruction, practising entry and exit drill and also an L.V.T. loaded with a Land-Rover disembarking from L.C.T. 4086 wetshod swimming ashore and discharging the Land-Rover on dry sand.

The cricket team has done well, indeed, to win all four of its matches in. our local league. A hotly-contested round of the Hornblower Cup went by a narrow margin- to 22 Company, to whom we extend our best wishes in the later rounds. Our athletes performed excellently at the Fremington meeting on 23rd June, coming second in the meeting by some 13 points. Among the winners were Dvr, Sheriff 1/2 mile), 2/Lieut. Roberts (shot), Dvr. Baldwin (long jump) and a splendid win in the high jump by Dvr. Sheriff, who with no previous experience cleared 5 ft.4 in. In the sideshows we ran the Coconut Shy (Sgt.Cooper) and Bowling the Chicken (Sgt. Ash). A final contest for the chicken saw the elimination of, C.S.M.Toole by the O.C.'s nine-year-old son, Thorn.

1956 November

116 Company had a busy month. Starting with an amphibious exercise at Instow on 2nd September, the unit arranged demonstrations of L.V.Ts. on 6th, 13th and 20th September and of the Dukw on 13th September. Concurrently with this programme 116 Company ran a special two-week course for 264 (Scottish) Beach Brigade, R.A.S.C. (T.A.), who were unable to attend Annual Camp.

1956 December

116 Company maintain their volume of work with Amphibious Driving Courses and P.S.I, and Potential P.S.I Courses. The unit also provided D.U.K.Ws. and personnel for the D.G.A.M.S. Annual Exercise at Mytchett on 5th and 9th October, 1955.

1957 January

116 Company, R.A.S.C., gave a sigh of relief when the formation of 303 Company (which they were sponsoring) was completed. Their sighs were, however, rather premature. The release of Reservists brought back 303 Company to Fremington, and 116 Company had to undo all their former efforts.

1957 March

116 Company have regretfully said farewell, on parade, to Major M. Thompson, the late officer commanding. Major K. Binns has returned, after his sojourn with the Reservists, to command his old unit. The unit held its first variety show "Ham-Fibs" recently, and are happy to confirm a great success. The programme included sketches, a skiffle group quartet, Al Jolson routine and other nameless turns which went to make up two hours of excellent entertainment. The producer compere, Cpl. L. W. Sergeant, ably assisted by L/Cpl. K Boswell showed first-class talent.

1957 September

920 COMPANY R.A.S.C. (T.A.) (AMPHIBIOUS TRANSPORT)

Westward Ho! To most people this name is associated with Kingsley's novel and with little else. To the officers and men of 920 Company R.A.S.C. (T.A.) (Amphibious Transport), who have just returned from their annual camp in this area, the name has much more significance, On the beaches and in the sea and estuaries at Westward Ho! the' Company had their initiation into the handling of dukws. It was not long before they realized 1 there was far more in the job than just the glamour of belonging to an amphibious company. It entailed long sessions of maintenance and servicing of the vehicles and the pumping of great quantities of grease and oil into the various parts of the vehicles. By the third day, most of the unit were showing signs of the near tropical sun which blazed from morning till night on each of the fifteen days' training. The training was so devised by the Training Officer of the sponsor unit, Capt, R. Butler of 116 Company R.A.S.C. that, after a brief but concise introduction to the dukw, the majority of the time was spent in learning to handle the vehicle in the most varied situations. The accent was indeed on practical training. To this purpose, 920 Company was relieved of the many domestic duties which normally accompany the annual camp and which sap the numbers of men available for training. Sea, sunshine and an adequate amount of spare time, made the camp the best ever from everybody's point of view. The accommodation at Fremington was first class, the food was excellent and the majority of the men would have stayed on for another fifteen days if that had been possible, Now that the camp is over, the Company is preparing to receive its own dukws and soon the sight of those vehicles will be a familiar one around the town. It is understood, however, that they are not for charter for fishing parties or trips around the harbour, but they do promise some interesting and exciting training in an unusual role.

1957 December

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT

116 Company have now taken over Fremington Camp from the School of Amphibious Warfare and have been hard at work moving into more spacious accommodation. At the same time they have sponsored the formation of 303 Company also at Fremington. The W.Os. and Sergeants in taking over the mess gave a most successful farewell social evening to their contemporaries of the. School of Amphibious Warfare.

1958 May

Late last year Lieut. A. F. R. Evans rejoined 116 Company from Christmas Island, where he had been in charge of the Dukws. Shortly afterwards we heard with great pleasure that he had been appointed an M.B.E for his outstanding services; we offer him our warmest congratulations. Early in the New Year a special course was run for the officers and men who are next to go to Christmas Island for Dukw operations.

1958 May

Another flood rescue operation by Dukw has been carried out by 85 Company. Within 15 minutes of the call, the Dukw and crew, under the command of Lieut.

D. J. Blunt, was on its way to the assistance of a local farmer. Thirty five Welsh ewes and two rams were stranded in a field flooded by the snow-swollen river. Attempts to move them earlier" to higher ground had failed and with the water level still rising the help of 85 Company was sought. After two hours of wading in muddy water the animals were finally loaded on to the Dukw and delivered safely.

1958 November

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT

116 Company write: We said "hello" and "goodbye" to the Scottish Beach Brigade, T.A., who spent a rather wet, two-week camp, at Fremington and whom we left in the capable hands of the O.C. and a skeleton staff, whilst the bulk of the unit spent an equally wet fortnight on "block leave. It was a pleasure to meet our new D.D.S.T., Brigadier R. E. Goode, who displayed great interest in our job and delightful camp area,

The R.A.S.C. Long Transport (Officers) Operations and Control Course which consisted of twelve senior officers, has completed its brief visit to us and departed to continue its training with a visit to the Water Transport Training Company at Freshwater, I.o.W.

Two of our Dukws, together with crews, actively assisted the B.B.C. Television Outside Broadcast Programme on Wednesday, 21st August, when featuring "This is your Army." One Dukw carried a TV camera for the televising of the "amphibious assault landing" at Warbarrow Bay, the second Dukw acted as "safety boat" Our Dukw crews consisted of Cpl. McDougall, L./Cph Lockhart, Dvrs. Wooler and Wilkie. Our O.C., Major K. Binns, called on the B.B.C. Television Department at Bristol on Monday, 12th August, purely in an advisory capacity. The loading of the heavy diesel generators, TV cameras and control equipment called for expert knowledge and the greatest care. He was fortunate to meet many personalities of stage, screen, radio and television fame and the most outstanding was none other than Frankie Vaughan who we have heard felt the insecurity of becoming, once again, one of those "Dingle Boys" with the co-operative-spirit of Major K. Binns. Needless to say the O.C. had a very interesting time. A most enjoyable officers' training day was held on 30th August, when all R.A.S.C. officers in the District visited Fremington Camp. After learning about the R.A.S.C. in amphibious operations, being introduced to the Dukw and the L.V.T.III and watching demonstrations at Instow and Westward Ho! the party dispersed late in the evening after a very instructive and happy time. We welcome A.S.M, Saunders who joined us in July and takes the place of A.S.M. Allen who leaves in September for Gibraltar. We congratulate the latter on being awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

1959 September

116 Company have been very actively engaged with Reserve Army Training and both Reserve Army units and cadets' contingents appear to have been in and out of Fremington at an alarming rate, keeping the administrative element extremely well occupied, The instructional staff of the Company have had little respite from their duties recently. Even between courses they have been encouraging wide-eyed Army and R.A.F. cadets in the joys of amphibians. We understand, however, that the R.A.F. wish to send their cadets back to us for further experience during the winter months to dissuade them from their present inclination towards Army life with amphibious transport.

1960 January

116 Company have been at it again!

The inhabitants of Porlock must have thought that an invasion had started, when at first light on a fine October morning, six dukws of the Company, carrying the students of the Devon Outward Bound School, made a beach assault beneath the cliffs of North Somerset. But all was well, they (the inhabitants and the students) were friendly, In this country of ours there never seems to be a happy medium (as far as the weather is concerned). We're either in the throes of a drought when water is rationed or we're flooded out, and this has been the case recently as far as 116 Company soccer is concerned. Non-swimmers have had the greatest difficulty in keeping up with the game and so: more swimming training next year. Appropriately the leading goal-scorer is Pte, Flood is there a Pte. Drought in the Corps who would like a posting to 116 Company for "dryshod" games?

1960 May

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT

Headquarters. Many readers will no doubt have learnt already from press reports of the tragic accident to two L.VTs. of 116 Company (Amphibious Transport) which occurred at Westward Ho! resulting in the deaths of Cpls. Peacock, Quail and Young, all instructors in the Company. We extend on behalf of all ranks of the Corps serving in South-Western District, our deepest sympathy to the relatives of these N.C.Os, Cpl Quail was buried privately at his home in Swansea and, at the request of his relatives, the bearer-party was provided by N.C.Os. of 116 Company. Many of his friends attended the funeral. Cpls. Young and Peacock were buried at Northam, near Bideford, with full military honours. Although this accident cannot do other than cast a deep shadow over other activities of the past months, In the true spirit of the service "the show must go on" and therefore we report our other news as usual.

We have also, during the past month, said farewell to Lieut. MacQueen of 18 Company, (Amphibious Transport), who has returned to civilian life in Southern Rhodesia, C.Q.M.S. Smith, also of 18 Company, who has gone to the Depot Airborne Forces We welcome 2/Lieut. C. R. Smith and Sgts. Cooper and Scarr to 18 Company. 18 Company have again been off on the "spree" carrying out adventure training in the Cairngorms, with the accent this time on ski-ing, Two platoons have also been out on Dartmoor carrying out field training Sgts. Nicholas and Scarr have gone to Fort Eust's, Virginia, U.S.A*., for a six weeks' course on the Larc V. 139 Supply Platoon, having spent the winter at Fremington carrying out a variety of Regimental training duties, have now deployed into three sections, one at Wyke Regis, another at Plymouth and a third at Bodmin to handle rations for T,A. camps,

1960 November

Below is a verbatim contribution from 116 Company R.A.S.C. (Amphibious Transport). We have now reached the end of the T.A. Annual Camping Programme for Fremington Camp and the noticeable quietness now prevailing has left us wondering whether we are glad or sorry. All the units who spent their camp with us appeared to give their exercises an unusually amphibious bent which entailed the cooperation of our dukws, but the personnel of both the Company and the camping units greatly enjoyed the diversion from the normal routine. The G.O.C. South-Western District, Major-General H, Borradaile C.B., C.B.E., paid several visits to the T.A. units, arriving on each occasion by air at Chivenor Aerodrome from whence he came by helicopter to the camp sports field. We have been busy interesting various cadet contingents in amphibious transport during the last two months. On one occasion we found unexpected publicity when taking a contingent of R.A.F. cadets on the river, Noticing what appeared to be the R.A.F. photographer, our training officer, CapL Aubrey Evans, asked if we could have copies of the photographs he was taking. "You can see them all tomorrow night on the Regional TV news" was the reply. He turned out to be a cameraman for T.W.W. On another occasion when the dukw section was out they rescued two men whose canoe had overturned in a spot where the current is particularly dangerous. From all accounts, after their hour and a half in the water they were just giving up hope of rescue. In August we had innumerable visitors, all of whom we were very pleased to see and entertain. Brigadier G. Laing, O.B.E., the new Deputy Commander South-West District paid us two visits while he was getting to know the units in the District. The Inspector, Major-General A. F. J. Elmslie, C.B., C.B.E., visited the amphibious units on 27th and 28th August. No. 3 Long Transport Course spent a week with the Company and we were able to arrange a day's visit to Lundy Island which apart from affording them an interesting few hours on the island gave our instructors a change of coastline on which to work. On 17th September we were again pleased to see the I.R.A.S.C and also Colonel R. A. J. Eggar, who accompanied him, on an inspection of the Junior N.COs. Regimental School and some L.CTs. of 76 Squadron, R.A.S.C. Both were entertained to dinner at a Regimental guest night in Fremington House Mess. At the request of the Junior Leaders Company, R.A.S.C, who were spending their annual camp in Cornwall, we again arranged a visit to Lundy Island, this time for some of their enthusiasts of the Outward Bound Movement. Once more with the kind permission of the owner, Mr. A. Harman, we landed Major Ken Crockford and his lads on 12th September in dukws from an L.C.T. and left them there to their own resources until we collected them two days later. As the islanders were unable to assist them in any way, even by supplying water, due to the worst drought on the island for over thirty years, the Junior Leaders had to go fully self-contained. But were their six days supply purely an insurance against adverse weather preventing our returning for them as planned? There were times when we had the impression that they felt we had no intention of collecting them again! Our football team has now played several games in the Kingsley League but to our initial disappointment did not fare well, the main excuse, heard all round, that the first game came much too soon after Company block leave, was readily accepted—if only because there seemed no other reason. As the team is now on the up and up and showing its more true form there may have been something in it after all.

1961 May

18 Company. "A" Platoon have recently returned from, and "B" Platoon are presently participating in, a week's adventure training in the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland. The training consists of cross-country treks and hill climbing and is carried out by self-contained four-man patrols. Everyone so far has, agreed that it h a most enjoyable, though arduous, week. In all some seventy all ranks have been on this training and we feel almost ready to tackle the Eiger! We were pleased to have at Fremington during a week end in March on Exercise "Wild Duck," T.A. personnel from 43 (Wessex.) Infantry Divisional Column, One other commitment has been carried out the R.A.S.C, demonstration to the Cambridge University Officers Training Corps. 18 Company supplied one dukw for this demonstration under the command of Lieut. J. Hain. Field training is at present being carried out in Penhale by "A" Platoon. We hope they are enjoying themselves. It can be seen from the aforementioned that 18 Company have travelled around England quite a lot recently. We plan to "invade Wales for ten days next month in particular Castlemartin in South Wales, on Company Field Training. As reported in the March issue of THE WAGGONER the local "Derby" against Fremington was e a g e r ly awaited. It is with pleasure we announce that 18 Company emerged, after a very clean and fast game, winners by three goals to one. To soften the disappointment of the Fremington side a tombola evening was held, and as all those who attended will confirm. an enjoyable time was had by one and all. Our photographs show a scene from the film 'Rockets in the Dunes, 18 Company R.A.S.C. football XL 1960/61, who arc contenders for the championship of the North Devon League. With the team are O.C., Major N. I* B. Speller and team manager S./Sgt. Nicholas. Photograph by courtesy of "The North Devon Journal Herald. Open Day on Saturday, 27th May, 1961. We hope to welcome many relations of members of the unit on this day, together with local civilians, and we hope that at least some of them will like what they see enough to join us. Major H. J. McKenzie, R.E.M.E., who has spent some thirty six years in the R.A.S.C. and R.E.M.E.. has recently left us on posting to 10 Command Workshops R.E.M.E., his last appointment prior to retiring. We wish him well in his new appointment and in civilian life. 139 Supply Platoon. Since the last issue the floods have largely receded and it is again possible to play soccer in reasonable safety in fact we chalked up a win over Amphibious Training Wing by 1-0. a score that did not flatter the efforts of our team,

1963 November

43 (Wessex)

Division/District

18 Company Major N. 1. B. Speller, R.A.S.C, has relinquished command of the Unit and will shortly take up an appointment at H.Q. 2 Division. His successor is Major P, R. M. Lawson from B.A.O.R. and we wish them both good fortune in their new tasks. At this time of the year a lot of effort is devoted to recruiting and "Keeping The army In The Public Eye" The corps is represented at all the county shows and recently a very successful week was held at Woolacombe and Minehead. By courtesy of Mr. Billy Butlin certain activities took place in the Minehead Holiday Camp, D.U.K.W's, are a tremendous fascination to the public and although no records have been kept, it is true to say that tens of thousands of parents with small children have been carried in them. This is certainly long term recruiting and we hope that our efforts in 1962 have not been entirely wasted. The Company cricket team has rounded off a

successful season by progressing as far as the Division District finals where they met defeat at the hands of 6 Training Battalion.

Amphibian Training Wing.

The manpower axe has swung again and this time on the Amphibian Training Wing. These will be our last notes as on 1st October we shall have disbanded. To mark this occasion a farewell parade was held recently at Fremington, We are happy to say that the majority of its members have now almost all been posted to 18 Company The Wing was formed in 1951 as 116 Company at Stranraer, moved to Fremington in 1952 and was redesignated "Amphibian Training Wing" in 1960, During its life the Wing has trained many Amphibian Drivers, not only for the Army, but for the Royal Marines and other Services, It has even trained one of the monks from the Caldy Islands! We have seen many changes of personnel over the years, but as others come and go, S./Sgt. Baguley seems to go on for ever! Not satisfied with having served eight years with the Wing, he is going to stay at Fremington with 18 Company

Amphibious Detachment Christmas Island

1957 January

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS

OUR NEWEST STATION—CHRISTMAS ISLAND

READERS of THE WAGGONER may be interested to hear that a posting is now possible to a mid Pacific coral atoll Christmas Island The island has most of the expected desert island attractions, blue skies, green lagoons, constant sunshine, beautiful sunsets and coconut trees. A small "basha" type village is occupied by members of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands who work on the island under contract and add local colour, for on occasions a grass skirt is seen. In order to discourage too many applicants for posting to this island paradise, it should be added that the only married quarters belong to the Gilbert Islanders, so far there is no leave or L.O.A, and the working week often has seven days in it. According to the press, tests of thermo-nuclear weapons are due to take place in this vicinity in the New Year, but be that as it may, a R.A.S.C Special Services Unit is in support of the three Services forming the island garrison. Amongst the Corps commitments on the island, part of the ship to shore movement is provided by ten amphibious vehicles, which in spite of the fact that they are far from new vehicles, have logged over 3,000 running hours and are still capable of many more, We regret to state that one DUKW sank complete with a load of supplies 200 yards off shore; Sgt. Crampton braved the sharks to fix wire ropes under the vehicle so that the Royal Navy could recover it. Seven cases of marmalade still rest on the sea bed. A small supply depot, within thirty yards of the beach and is assisted in its function by sixty tons of rather erratic cold storage, which is only kept in operation by considerable effort on the part of the R.E. and R.E.M.E. A field bakery detachment in charge of Cpl. Smith provides a very popular loaf, especially for those who remember the fourteen days issue of biscuits in lieu. M.S.S. Silk resides in a coconut plantation in charge of POL, stacked along a mile of a narrow peninsular between the Pacific and a lagoon. A petroleum installation, in the final stages of construction, completes the Corps commitment on this particular island and together these depots occupy a large area of the Port of London, which is situated fourteen miles from the main encampment. Lieut, A. F. R. Evans is about to open up a branch office and provide normal services on an even more remote island,

and it is probable that the Corps flag will be flown on further islands before the operation is completed. In addition to the normal Army sports, swimming, sailing and fishing provide popular recreations, when work permits. Dvr. Clarke holds the record catch so far with a 127 lb shark. There is also an open air cinema which provides evening entertainment for those well enough endowed for sitting in comfort on wooden plank seats. Our main sporting success has been in an "American tournament" when, despite the fact that we were the smallest contingent of five, we were runners up to the Royal Marine and Royal Navy combined team and celebrated accordingly. One achievement of note is that L/Cpl. Rigg has made the highest score for the Port of London Cricket Team by making forty three runs in eighteen minutes. Reinforcements have been located in Honolulu and we hope that on their arrival we shall be able to deal more thoroughly with the local teams.

1957 March

DUKWS "DOWN UNDER"

At Christmas Island two Dukws unloaded eight five tons of stores from a ship in one day and set up what is believed to be very nearly a Corps record. At one period Dukws were the only craft able to get ashore in the surf. One Dukw did in fact sink and another capsized, R.N. signals have been passed stating "We think your Dukws are wonderful. [EDITOR: We hope that this operation may provide material for an interesting article.]

1958 January

CHRISTMAS ISLAND 1956-1957

"Bang Goes Our H-Bomb" is no longer headline news, but it may be of interest -to hear of some of the experiences of the R.A.S.C. Special Services Unit taking part in the Christmas Island megaton trials. In choosing a location for these trials, there must have been few alternatives other than the Pacific, and Christmas Island was certainly well chosen as the main base for Operation "Grapple." Situated in mid-Pacific two degrees north of the Equator, Christmas Island is believed to be the largest coral atoll in the world. In outline it is shaped like a battered boot thirty five miles east and west and twenty four miles at its greatest width, It is 3,600 miles from the nearest mainland of California and more than 4,000 miles from Australia; the nearest civilization is at Honolulu, 1,200 miles to the north. Discovered by Captain Cook on Christmas Eve, 1777, it was appropriately named but since then it has never had an indigenous population, The main Army commitment on the island was to build and maintain a base, involving the rehabilitation and extension of the U.S. Second World War airstrip. A task group consisting of a Field Engineer Regiment, R.E., and supporting Services converged on Christmas Island by sea and air during June, 1956, The original members of the R.A.S.C. unit were flown across North America to Fiji, via Honolulu and Canton. The ten-day break in the journey at Fiji, among a friendly population, was enjoyed by all as the last outpost of civilization to be seen for over a year. The next stage of the journey was completed in H.M.T. Devonshire, which arrived off the island on 24th June, 1956. The R.A.S.C. were among the first ashore in. the local copra boats. After the "fleshpots of Fiji" the local conditions proved somewhat of a contrast, The first nights rest in the open on the beaches, in close company with curious lizards and land-crabs, provided a dubious welcome. The food provisioned was of excellent quality, but it was unfortunate that the equipment to cook and distribute it was noticeable by its absence. After these initial inconveniences the unit quickly settled down to its job of supporting the Field Engineer Regiment and

elements of the two other Services. As soon as the wartime vintage dukws were off-loaded, their drivers started an unloading programme which was eventually to aggregate over 7,000 running hours for the ten original vehicles. These drivers soon found that coming alongside a ship at anchor in a swell and landing through surf were rather different from their training conditions at Fremington but they soon mastered sufficient nautical experience to gain the approval of the Senior Service. It is not possible in this review to summarize the work carried out by the dukw drivers during their many landings over difficult coral beaches on four different islands. Some of these landings have been made under conditions in which no other craft, including L.C.Ms., could be used. Casualties must be accepted in such circumstances and two dukws were unfortunately sunk of which one proved recoverable. Among the highlights of the many amphibious activities have been the unloading of eighty-five tons of cargo in one day by a pair of dukws and numerous rescue operations. Two ladies of the W.V.S. were rescued from a local island after a boating accident but no mention is made of what was waved to attract the driver's attention. An L.C.M. which broke away from its moorings was recovered and towed for two miles; salvage money is still awaited by the optimists. On top of the normal duties these drivers have been employed as bakers storekeepers, clerks and conservancy agents and have further demonstrated their versatility as operators of distillation plants, cranes and bulldozers. One dukw has in fact been used as an air/sea rescue launch but fortunately for the pilot it was not called upon to produce maximum revs. The amphibious vehicle has become part of standard equipment of nearly all H.M. ships visiting islands in the "Grapple" area and although a helicopter was tried instead on one occasion, the small payload necessitated a return visit with the appropriate amphibian. One ship's captain signalled that the parting of a dukws steering cable as it was negotiating a narrow gap in the reef took five years off his life. In order to reduce further wear and tear on naval nerves an escort launch as far as the reef was arranged on the next occasion; unfortunately this time the escort craft broke down and was saved from destruction by the military vehicle under escort! It is difficult to visualize how this operation could have taken place as at present constituted without the ubiquitous dukws and the fact that the running hours are reported weekly to the Task Force Commander confirms the value placed on the work of these vehicles. The "Grapple" handbook on the first nine months of the operation states that "all in all the work of the dukw detachment has been throughout of inestimable value to the operation as a whole, The activities of the supply personnel have not been devoid of interest in their task of supplying Christmas and three other island detachments spread out over 200,000 square miles in mid-Pacific, Dry rations are normally despatched to these detachments by sea at monthly intervals and the more perishable items are delivered by aircraft weekly or bi-weekly the day following receipt at Christmas from Honolulu. The task of victualling R.N. ships and shore establishments has taken place on occasions and is only complicated by the amount of paper work involved. The issuing of five types of "in flight" ration to the R.A.F. must be an experience "enjoyed" by few other units; these rations are characterized by their choice variety, necessity for partial abatement of the basic scale and the short notice at which they are demanded. in order to safeguard the crew of aircraft from the remotest possibility of developing stomach-ache during a highly inconvenient stage of the operation special care is taken with all issues. All fresh fruit and vegetables are hand sorted on the evening of arrival and issued to cookhouses the same night. The absence of supply ships on occasions can be a source of embarrassment when the refrigerated storage ashore is limited and a stench of putrescent potatoes at times has born silent but odiferous testimony to the

fact that the supply ship has been absent for several weeks. The supply element on this operation has been chiefly remarkable for its embryonic origin so that a period of prolonged labour and growth was necessary before it reached maturity in the form of a normal supply organization. To quote again from the "Grapple*" handbook: "By November, 1956. the supply depot was holding fifteen weeks supply of dry rations and up to six weeks of fresh items. Over 230,000 rations were held and 177 varieties of food were accounted for and issued by one clerk and one storekeeper/" We are particularly proud of the efforts of the bakers who were unfortunately unable to observe the fourth Commandment for the first nine months due to increasing commitments. They have maintained the production of a popular loaf under many difficulties including the use of weak flour below the standard normally used by Army bakeries. The popularity of the end product has resulted in demands for R.A.S.C. bread from many of the smaller ships when returning to port and this extra load has been cheerfully met by the bakers in the interest of inter-Service co-operation, Batches of bread with improved keeping qualities are supplied by air to the remoter islands. The six petroleum experts have been kept well occupied in handling seven million gallons of POL products in both bulk and packed form. The novelty of unloading ocean tankers by barge has now become a routine procedure and up to two tankers a month are turned round with equanimity, although it must be admitted that a one-time seven per cent ocean loss did cause some concern. These men took over a hastily completed bulk installation on one evening and commenced filling it the following morning to the accompaniment of reciprocating pipes and copious fumes; fortunately these "teething troubles were eventually overcome, The discovery that the "contractors" did not propose to provide tank calibration tables at a late stage occasioned some burning of midnight oil. Calibration is a pleasant subject to lecture on but one always hopes never to have to practise it to the standard required for peacetime accounting, especially when there is "deadwood" involved. This installation has the disadvantage of only being capable of issuing or receiving at one time, so that a night shift is frequently necessary during the operational phase. In view of the rather low man-power ceiling a form of "self-service" has been introduced in both depots without producing any noticeable consumer resistance but it is not intended to apply this principle to the Supply Depot. Here again issues of POL have been made to island detachments by sea and air. Fuels have also been supplied to R.N. and merchant ships with few difficulties other than the acquisition of signatures from ships disappearing over the horizon. The major portion of the unit is, of course, based on Christmas Island, but the Corps is well represented on the unattractive "forward area" island where a small detachment provides administrative, supply and amphibious transport services. The dukws in this area, in addition to their normal duties, are used as water barges, pinnaces and liberty boats when their drivers are not employed in running a canteen or distillation plant. As can be seen their existence on this island is no sinecure and it will be easy to guess which is the last vehicle to leave and the first to return when the island becomes temporarily "unhealthy/" These, then, are some of the activities of the R.A.S.C soldier on Operation "Grapple" and in outline this is an indication of the contribution he has made, as a small but essential link, in the chain of events culminating in the successful explosion of Britain's first Megaton yield nuclear bomb. It is fitting, therefore, that almost half of these men should have been witnesses of the awe-inspiring and fabulous sight of a hydrogen bomb explosion, to which conclusion their labours had been directed for so many months.

AMPHIBIOUS DETACHMENT
CHRISTMAS ISLAND 1956/57
by **Lt. A.R.R. EVANS, M.B.E., R.A.S.C.**

INTRODUCTION

AT 10.30 A.M. CENTRAL PACIFIC TIME, on the 25th June, 1956, H.M. Trooper Devonshire dropped anchor off Christmas Island. Our first view of the island was obscured by a tropical rainstorm—the British Army had arrived. It passed over as quickly as it had come and in the distance, the deep blue of the Pacific merged into the paler shade of a lagoon, banked by gleaming white coral, with an occasional sinister brown coral reef to break the placid scene. On the horizon, the palm trees of copra plantations stood in orderly rows a mute welcome beneath the bright sun. These copra plantations, we discovered later, were originated through the beneficence of the British Government in order to employ the two hundred Gilbertese, who lived on the island. There were four hundred of us on the Devonshire, representing many different branches of all three services and we were the advance party of the joint force. Our task, in general, was to prepare the way for the great influx of R.A.F. and A.W.R.E. later in the year, by erecting camps with the basic mod. con. and constructing an airfield. The main function of the amphibious detachment of ten DUKWs was to support troops on shore by maintaining a ship to shore cargo service with a secondary role of shore-to-ship transportation.

The year I personally spent in the Pacific divides itself fairly evenly into two parts:

June—November, 1956

Christmas Island

December, 1956—July, 1957

Maiden Island

The two parts presented very different problems in the operation of amphibians which I will try to bring out as I proceed further.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Christmas Island, one of what are known collectively as the Northern Line Islands, is the largest coral atoll in the Pacific, although its dimensions are only about 35 miles East and West by 24 miles at its greatest width. The shape of the Island roughly resembles a large lobster claw, the jaws of which, opening to the North West, contain a spacious and almost semi circular lagoon. Surrounding the island is a fringing reef, several hundred yards in width. The day temperatures varied between 70° to 100°F, but the Easterly Trade Winds exerted a cooling influence, so that, despite the high humidity, the heat was not oppressive after the rigours of acclimatisation were over. The first four DUKWs arrived from Singapore on L.S.T. Reginald Kerr on 26th June, and the following ten days proved to be very hectic and rather unpleasant, due to the effect of the heat and the lack of certainty as to the availability of the next meal. The Reginald Kerr was filled to capacity with tentage, composite rations, beer, packed P.O.L., camp structures, Elsans, beds, blankets and other stores vital to human existence. This was a critical period for the DUKWs, as they were then the only means of transportation from ship to shore. After many alarms and crises, sufficient was landed to enable all living ashore to have a roof, a bed and food. It was necessarily slow work for only four vehicles, a two mile journey to the ship and a limited carrying capacity, a limitation due to bulk and not so much to weight. We were very relieved to see the S.S. Benwyvis arrive on 2nd July, for she carried L.CM's and N.L. Pontoons as well as the remaining six DUKWs. Her arrival marked the real beginning of the Port—a crane appeared on the wharf, vehicles began to come

ashore, jetties were set up. At the end of three weeks, the Sappers had left us to go up country to start work on the main camp and the airfields. The Port and the Port Camp were in business. The credit for the frantic activity of these three weeks must go to the Deputy Task Force Commander, Commodore P. W. Gretton, D.S.O., O.B.E., D.S.C., R.N., who seemed to be everywhere, who urged us on by his example or who coerced us by the effective use of the spoken word !

Through July, August, September, the cargo ships appeared—Bennevis, Benrinnes, Beachill, Pinehill more troops arrived on Charlton Star and Cheshire, and the Royal Navy arrived on H.M.S. Messina. A steady flow of craft maintained the rate of cargo to shore, until the rush became routine. The necessity for using DUKWs for cargo became less urgent, so that we were able to concentrate on more R. A.S.C. matters supplies and P.O.L. The supplies at this stage were brought in from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Fort Beauharnois to the supply depot on shore from whence they disappeared either to the main or port camps. Fresh salad items were also flown in weekly from Honolulu. The R.A.S.C. ran its own bakery night work only, the bakers were the few without a suntan; and later the butchery flourished as the numbers increased. By December there was also a bulk tank farm for AVGAS and AVTUR as well as the packed depot. The R.A.S.C. was well established. The amphibian problems at Christmas Island were all caused by the distance involved between ship and shore. A round trip was very nearly five miles to the more distant berths and back. This long haul in low gear and hot climate caused excessive overheating of the engines which required constant observation. By dint of continual radiator flushing, "modified air-intakes", governing-down of engines and advancing of ignition, we managed to keep some sort of check. By constant strict supervision of servicing and perpetual painting and scraping, we deferred the inevitable submission to corrosion as long as possible. The original DUKWs became beyond economic repair eventually due not so much to mechanical faults as to unseaworthy hulls. To ensure economical employment of DUKWs at Christmas Island involved the use of six or eight on a circuit. In this way, time was not wasted at the hold of the ship and unloading parties ashore were kept fully employed. An average of thirty-five to forty DUKW loads a day was achieved in this manner. By December life was reasonable. The NAAFI sold beer, the A.K.C. showed films, we had infrequent but most welcome visits from the U.S.A.F. Band of the Pacific. But anyone who thought that sameness and routine would take charge was in for a surprise. Attention now focusses on Maiden Island.

MALDEN ISLAND

Four hundred miles South of Christmas Island a desolate flat coral mass emerges from the Pacific to form the twenty-five square miles of Maiden Island. Bare, but for half a dozen palm trees and some old guano workings and a few derelict buildings, the houses of the native miners and European overseers, the Island is uninhabited save for a few pigs, the descendants of those left there in 1927, when the only previous occupants of modern times departed for more hospitable shores. As with Christmas Island the island is fringed by a coral reef, but there is no friendly lagoon. The only gap in the reef was blown by the guano workers of the last century, who also had a wooden jetty constructed. The records of the mining company show that they shipped 14,000 tons of phosphates a year ! Our efforts stood up well in comparison. During the seven months, we were there, the DUKWs (normal strength three) lifted 1,500 tons of stores and about the same tonnage of fresh water. Maiden was the Forward Area for GRAPPLE. It served as the general base for the target area. From December to March, a small army detachment of two officers and seventy other ranks (primarily R.E. with R.A.S.C., A.C.C. and R.E.M.E. in support) had the task of

erecting a camp with basic facilities, constructing an airfield and putting up the installations required by A.W.R.E. The R.A.S.C. amphibians had to bring all the stores and equipment ashore, except for the movement of vehicles and plant which was done by L.C.M's during favourable beach conditions. Our task was therefore basically the same as at Christmas. Here, however, it was even more important that the DUKWs maintained 100% availability as we had to carry anything from two-ton steel plates to delicate electronic racks. If the problem at Christmas had been distance, here, for the first time, we encountered the vagaries of an enigmatic ocean, causing difficulties on the beach and at sea.

The difficulties were caused by:

- (a) The gap.
- (b) The variations in swell
- (c) The variations in surf.
- (d) The changeable texture and gradient of the beach.

To deal with them in order:

- (a) The gap as I mentioned earlier was blown by the guano miners. Because the coral had been blown up, there was a sheer drop at the water's edge from 0-2 fathoms. This drop often caused the DUKWs to "belly".
- (b) Since the gap was situated on the South Western tip of the island it was governed by two swells; one from the North and one from the South. It was impossible to know when the swell would change and on many occasions a DUKW left shore into the Northerly swell and returned in the Southerly.
- (c) The direction of the surf depended obviously on the swell, but the height would change quite inexplicably heights of 6 in. to 25 ft. were encountered. Because of the drop, the surf consisted of one fierce wave with a vicious undertow, which swept across the beach.
- (d) The texture of the beach varied from soft sand to fine coral shingle, so fine that DUKW tyres even at minimum pressure were unable to grip. The gradient varied from shallow to very steep depending on the surf conditions. The problems then were the drop, the swell, the surf and the beach. The swell and the surf were quickly mastered by the drivers, but the drop and the beach always caused trouble. If there was little surf, the DUKWs would "belly", if there was high surf, the beach would become too soft for the DUKWs to get up it. The danger moment arose when the DUKW stuck and it was a race against time to free it before the surf carried it away. To this end, we used a bulldozer with a winch. The winch cable, with a clip hook attached, was unwound to the water's edge, where two men stood as close as they dared. In the event of a DUKW being unable to get itself out, the hook was attached to one of the lower towing shackles and the bulldozer did the rest. It sounds a simple procedure. Although no one was hurt in the process, we had many narrow escapes. I would point out at this stage that we had to operate in poor conditions because of the restriction in time-and one could never be sure of the advent of good conditions. By the end of February, the stores were ashore, the airfield was built and the island was ready for the "boffins". The middle of March saw many changes. The "boffins" arrived; we had a permanent support ship in H.M.S. Narvik[^] an L.S.T. which was also the scientific control ship; fresh rations were now flown to us to augment the compo. Everywhere there were signs that something was about to happen. During this time, the tasks of the DUKWs were the transportation of fresh water and a bus service.

Up to the arrival of Narvik, we had our own distillation plant on shore (The Emmett Machine), but whether by design or luck, it finally died on us the day before Narvik

arrived; to solve the problem a four hundred gallon tank was put in a DUKW, which would bring ashore normally 10 tons of water per day. The bus service was to enable the "boffins" to have speedy access from Narvik to shore and vice versa. During the device tests themselves, we had yet other tasks. Many people have written descriptions of the dropping of the device, I would like to say something of what happened immediately before and after each drop, in Maiden, which was only a few miles from where the explosion took place. On the day previous, all the tents were struck, the structures (cookhouses, water tank, showers, latrines, etc.) taken down and everything buried in shelters. The personnel were then taken off to waiting ships Warrior and Messina. The DUKWs however returned to meet the last aircraft coming in, carrying V.I.P's, other observers or Press representatives. We took them away to H.M.S. Alert and ourselves swam into Narvik, leaving the rearguard to do their last minute arrangements before being picked up by helicopter. It was strange driving across the deserted island, now much as we had found it; a few buildings; terns and boobies flying above; some shelters, silver in the evening sun; the last Dakota receding into the distance and only Narvik and Alert on the sea. The day after the explosion, we returned to the island. One had a feeling of surprise. The boobies and terns still flew overhead, a few fires burned but little seemed to have changed, even the pigs still lived. We brought the men ashore again. By evening, the camp was re-erected and we waited for the next time. Our last phase at Maiden consisted of backloading all the equipment and the fourth and last striking of the camp. What a relief to know we were not to put it up again ! The weather was kind and our task was completed well ahead of schedule. Just as a DUKW was the first to intrude upon the peacefulness of Maiden, so was one the last to leave, having completed another chapter in the history of R.A.S.C. Amphibians. As a result of experiences on Christmas and Maiden Islands, I cannot stress the following points too much:

- (a) The necessity for complete and thorough servicing.
- (b) The observance of all possible safety precautions.
- (c) A high standard of driving ability.
- (d) The ability of the driver to think for himself and be able to take charge of his vehicle in any circumstances. To elaborate on these points further:
 - (e) Daily servicing must be carried out under N.C.O. or Officer supervision. Painting and scraping must be assiduously performed. In conditions such as those on Christmas Island, AB. 406 inspections to be carried out every fortnight and a period check every week. We found the average life of a DUKW was about eight months.
 - (H) Never be rash or foolhardy; the only DUKW we lost was on detachment without an escort or any beach assistance. Suitable safety precautions are absolutely essential.
 - {Hi) The driver must be of such a standard, that, for example, he does not waste valuable moments fluffing a gear change at sea. He must be able to detect defects and carry out minor repairs at sea. He must also have the ability to change himself into a sailor once on the sea.
- (iv) The driver must learn that he is responsible for his vehicle and the security of his cargo or if he is carrying passengers, that they know he is in charge. He must be able to assess a situation immediately for example, at Maiden it was no use approaching the beach from the same angle as one left it, if the direction of the swell had changed. The last two points regarding the drivers come with and can only be learnt through experience, the first two require constant vigilance. I am sure that all those who were in the detachment at Christmas benefitted from the experience in amphibious operations and we certainly will never forget the spectacle of the explosion itself.

In conclusion I would like to quote from the Task Force Handbook that "All in all, the work of the DUKW Detachment has been of inestimable value to the operation as a whole".

1958 May

Several personnel changes have taken place since our last contribution. Major John Aldred has left 22 Company for 3 S.R.D., and Capt. Bob Butler has left 116 Company on retirement. To these officers we offer our appreciation for their hard work and wish them good luck in their new spheres. We welcome as their replacements, respectively, Capt. I. J. Rutherford and Capt. I. A. R. McLeod. Late last year Lieut. A. F. R. Evans rejoined 116 Company from Christmas Island, where he had been in charge of the Dukws. Shortly afterwards we heard with great pleasure that he had been appointed an M.B.E. for his outstanding services; we offer him our warmest congratulations. Early in the New Year a special course was run for the officers and men who are next to go to Christmas Island for Dukw operations.

1959 January

BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL

The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal (Military Division) for Gallantry, in recognition of gallant conduct in the area of Christmas Island to: T/23256614 L./Cpl. (Acting) Peter Corrigan, Royal Army Service Corps. For determination,- courage and skill when ordered to take his D.U.K.W. to the rescue of the crew of a disabled landing craft in danger from heavy breakers off a dangerous reef. Even when his vehicle was pooped and in danger of sinking, he remained at the controls.

1959 March

The history of 18 Company, R.A.S.C., dates back to 1878 when it came into existence at Aldershot as No. 18 Commissariat Depot. It remained at Aldershot until 1902 but little is recorded of its activities during this period except that in 1889 the unit was redesignated a Supply Depot Company and in 1892 was split in two to form 38 Company. From October 1899 the unit embarked for service in South Africa. It is of interest to note that in November 1901 Dvr. Andrews was promoted to the rank of corporal for gallant conduct in the field whilst attached to "J" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery in South Africa. In January 1901 men were provided to line the route for the return of Lord Roberts from South Africa and also later in the year details were similarly provided for Queen Victoria's funeral. For a period in 1902 the unit together with 38 Company was used as a Demobilization Centre for troops returning from the South African War. The Company moved from Aldershot to Woolwich in 1902 and at the same time its role was changed to that of transport. In 1906 18 Company moved to London (Kensington) where it remained until the outbreak of the First World War. In 1914, 18 Company went to France with the British Expeditionary Force as a Horse Transport Company in 4 Divisional Train, The unit is recorded as having remained in France until 1916 although there is no mention of its activities during this period. Indeed, records make no reference to the Company again until 1922 when it is shown as being at Chatham in a static transport role. Chatham continued as its home until 1939 when it was reorganized as a Motor Ambulance Company and proceeded to France with the British Expeditionary Force. Having been evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940 the unit sailed for the Middle East in 1941 where it remained in an M.T. role until 1946 when it was placed in suspended animation. In

1947 18 Company was re-formed in Germany as a Divisional Transport Company but was once again placed in suspended animation in May, 1948. For the third time in its history the company changed its role and was re-formed in 1950 as a Water Transport Company having amalgamated with 632 Company at Sheerness. For the next seven years 18 Company continued in this role; its activities were spread over much of the East Coast area from Newhaven to Tynemouth and flotillas were to be found at Dover, Woolwich and Grimsby. Two notable happenings during this period were in September, 1951, when a flotilla of ten fifty-foot G.S.Ls. made a very successful training cruise to Copenhagen and in February, 1953, when the Company operated an extensive ferry service between Chatham and Sheerness carrying foodstuffs, medical supplies and personnel during the East Coast floods. With the rundown of the R.A.S.C. Fleet 18 Company had to be disbanded in September, 1957. The final chapter in the history of the unit to date has only just begun. On 1st June, 1958, 18 Company was once again re-formed, this time to be an Amphibious Transport Company. As 18 Company, R.A.S.C. (Amphibious Transport) the unit is now in the process of training at Fremington in North Devon in order to take its place in the Long Term Army. In its new role 18 Company has an important part to play and continues as it has done since 1878 to contribute to the many and varied activities of the Corps.

Company Commanders—18 Company, R.A.S.C.

1878-81	DACG	(Capt O M. Graham
1881	DACG	(Capt.) C. H. Santi
1882	ACG	(Major) E J. G. Cooke
1883-86	DACG	(Capt). W H. Cole
1887-89	DACG	(Capt.) F. S. C. Hare
1890		(Major) J. W. B. Parkin and Major F. F. Johnson
1891		Major C\ G. Knocker
1892-93		Capt. A. E. Caldwell
1894		Capt W G. B. Bovce
1895		Capt. A- K. Gillespie
1396-97		Major C, Bawnsley
1893		Major A. N. Roberts
IS99-1901		Capt- E. E D. Thornton
1902		Major C. W Grev
1903		Capt. P, C. J. Scott
1904-5		Capt. J. R. S, Shinkivin
1906-9		Capt. C. H. C. Nunn
1910-12		Capt. W. E. T. Christie
1913		Capt. R, P. Crawley, M.V.O.
1914		Capt F. W. Wright
1915-42		Not Known
16.1.43		Capt. R. C. Wheeler
1.11.43		Capt. R. R* Norris
29.12.43		Major G. Combe
23.3.44		Major G. L, Harkness
1.11.44		Major R. D. Burn
10.9.45		Major C. A. Larke
12.3.46		Major R. R. Kabalkin
5.1.50		Major D. E. Cuff
19.9.52		Major N. H. Vincent

11.12.53 Major O S. Kent
19.11.55 Major J. H. S. Field until disbandment, September,
1957
1958 Major F. J. Heathcote

1959 May

18 COMPANY

SIR.

I was very pleased to read the article "Unit History, 18 Company, R.A.S.C.," and it brought home many happy old memories, One has a certain proud feeling towards 18 Company, A.S.C., more so when it was the Company during the Boer War which I joined as a recruit. It is for this reason I mention the following facts: It was early in 1900 when I joined 18 Company. Our C.Os. were Lieut. G. N.T.D. Gourley (who also commanded Aldershot Supply Depot) and Capt. C. H. Bingham. This covers part 1900 and part 1902. 18 Company was definitely a (Supply) Company for recruits, etc., and with no H.T, details. I cannot recollect that Capt. Thornton served with 18 Company at Aldershot in 1901 or a Major Grey being in command in 1902 at Aldershot.

Yours faithfully,
G. W. BUNCH,
Major (Retired).

SIR,

I have just received THE WAGGONER and notice that there is a long hiatus in the list of Company Commanders of 18 Company. I can fill in a bit of the gap. In 1924 I was posted to 18 Company, then at Chatham, My O.C. was Capt. H. N. B. Walker. He left for Hong Kong in the autumn and for six months I took the chair. Finally, Capt. H. A. Tapp relieved me, and I, after a few months, departed to India. So you can add:

192-to 1924: Capt. H. N. B. Walker.

1924 to 1925 : Lieut, B. J. Haworth.

1925 to 1927(?): Capt. H. A. Tapp,

Yours faithfully,
B. J. HAWORTH.
Colonel.

1959 March

R.A.S.C. Services Unit. This unit is specially designed to function on Christmas Island. At the moment it consists of three sections: bakers, dukw drivers and petroleum fitters The bakers have one of the most arduous tasks. They work under trying conditions in front of their hot ovens. Nevertheless they are amongst the most cheerful people here and their zeal wins continual commendation by all. During periods of maximum activity they have had to work for fourteen hours a day. This has not excused them from assisting with "self help," concreting and building schemes with other members of the unit The petroleum fitters are responsible for the efficient functioning of two fuel tank farms. These installations were built a couple of years ago, when it was expected that they would be needed for a short and limited period only. Since then the installations have been altered and added to, as the situation required. The result has been a fitter's nightmare with pipes running in all directions.

Each extreme of heat daily brings a new crop of leaks. It is necessary to give the pumps and engines twice the amount of maintenance that they would need elsewhere or they will not work at all. A petroleum fitter surely gains more experience here in three months than he would get anywhere else in a year. The dukw drivers have perhaps one of the more interesting tasks. They make regular journeys with their dukws aboard an L.S.T., H.M.S, Narvik to the islands of Maiden and Fanning. It is these trips and periods away from Christmas Island that are the great attraction. At Christmas Island the dukws travel out to the food ship, in the anchorage, to collect loads of frozen and perishable feed. These loads can be quickly conveyed from the ship to the main camp or the refrigerators, without further handling. At Fanning and Maiden the dukws maintain the garrison over the beaches. Landing craft are only used when vehicles or heavy plant are needed. Fanning is an island with a regular, heavy rainfall and in many ways it is rather like Malaya, although it is completely flat. Maiden is quite the opposite. It has hardly any rain and is therefore a true desert island. It was on the Maiden beach that a dukw driver won a B.E.M. in February 1958. The only way ashore is through a narrow gap in the reef, through which the surf continually pounds, except on the very calmest of days. Every dukw that goes through this gap has to face a hazard. Although the dukws do sterling service and all are amazed at their versatile capabilities, they are old wartime vehicles and the repair and maintenance task is staggering. Free time on Christmas Island can be spent in a number of ways. The more energetic play soccer, cricket, volley-ball, swimming and fishing. It is possible to join photography, cycling, natural history, Rover Scout and water sports.

1960 November

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Ex Op Grapplers" would be astonished at the changes if they returned to Christmas Island. Permanent buildings have mushroomed throughout the inhabited parts of the island, H.M.S. Resolution, main camp and the airfield. There are only very few tents remaining and almost everyone lives in permanent accommodation; tropical type buildings, light, airy and pleasant. Tarmac roads have replaced the dusty coral tracks. R.A.F, do the catering and very well too. Football and cricket pitches have been laid with cement-like lagoon mud and a fine diving board has been erected at the Sandspit swimming lagoon, thanks to the Nuffield Trust. Earlier this year part of the dukw detachment was hoisted aboard the L.ST. H.M.S. Narvik and taken to Maiden, a tiny coral atoll almost surrounded by a reef. There the dukws once again proved essential to the success of the operation and their amphibious capabilities and specially lengthened A frames were fully exploited. The Pacific surf at Maiden has to be seen to be believed, but in spite of the bad weather the dukws were able to work fully loaded. The beach is so steep that a bulldozer is usually needed to winch the dukws clear of the pounding breakers and backwash. A subsequent operation with dukws to Fanning Island, the Cable and Wireless Station, proved interesting and exciting, although less hazardous than Maiden. Sgt. Lawrence and his dukw crews were replaced in early March by a new detachment commanded by Sgt.

Hollingsworth. Sgt. Craven handed over the bakery to Sgt. Macmaster at the same time. His Royal Highness the Duke of, Edinburgh spent two days on Christmas Island in April. During his tour His Royal Highness visited the dukw detachment, the R.A.S.C. Bakery and our petroleum fitters at the Port Installation. We were privileged to detail two dukws for delivering bread to the Royal Yacht Britannia, moored

in the anchorage beyond the reef. One Saturday in April all able-bodied men on the island took part in Operation "Coconut"; a competition devised by the Task Force Commander to help the Gilbertese with their lagging copra output. All turned-to with gusto and many thousands of nuts were gathered in a morning. No. 94 Company left the island in May, at the end of their tour, leaving 146 Independent Transport Platoon to carry on the good work. Our dukws go out daily to the anchorage. Alongside Fort Beauharnois they are loaded with supplies and stores. They return over the beach and discharge their cargo at the R.A.F. Supply Depot or fourteen miles up country at the Main Camp. In the role of amphibious cranes they work with the Sappers and civilian divers in building a new slipway for the Navy. Most week ends the dukws take a picnic party across the lagoon to the bird sanctuary of Cook Island, where Captain Cook, R.N., first landed in 1777 from his ship H.M.S. Resolution. The bakers, under Sgt. Macmaster, R.A.S.C., are doing a fine job in producing bread each day for everyone on the island. We now have a permanent bakery, built on the old tented site; but the mobile ovens first brought into use in 1957 are, still going strong. Most men in the unit have been on leave to Honolulu, Hawaii. Surf-riding, famous Waikiki beach, hula-hula the snag is that Honolulu is extremely expensive, but definitely worth a short visit. The journey by air between U.K. and Christmas Island is worthy of note. The route varies depending on plane and weather, Keflavik. Iceland, Goose Bay. Canada, New York. Chicago, San Francisco are usually among the interesting places visited. Some men travel the other way round via North Borneo and the Far East. Some even manage to fly right round the world in the course of a year. Glorious sunshine, temperatures up in the eighties, sandy beaches, swimming in the lagoon what a life ! However, the sameness of our environment palls after a while and we look forward to civilization after a "Grapple" tour. After a life of only six months, we have now been told that we are to disband by the end of November, 1959. We must be the smallest unit with the shortest tour in the Corps! Since last writing we have been visited, at different times, by the Engineer-in-Chief, Major-Generat Sugden, and the Air Officer Commander-in-Chief of Transport Command, who have been paying flying visits to the island. We have managed to show a sufficient profit on our club that everyone has an engraved tankard in their kit to remind them of the stay on this coral island. Needless to say, all tankards were christened in the traditional manner before they were packed. The arrival of the plane to take us home is now eagerly awaited, the only dampener being that we leave this tropic sun for a cold and dreary England. However, the thought of Christmas with the folks at home is a very cheering thought. Our vehicles are now looking smart with their new coat of paint and they are taking a well-earned rest after taking us a total distance equal to seven times round the world in six short months. Considering the type of roads, and also the type of loads carried, this is nothing short of a miracle. All that remains now is to clean up for the last time and this posting becomes yet another pleasant memory to be looked at and enlarged upon in later years.

1959 March

SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICT

18 Company are in the news once again with their venture to Scotland. Our Special Correspondent reports: "It was not without a little trepidation that on 13th January this year, 18 Company's recently formed B Platoon boarded L.C.T. 4061 of the R.A.S.C. fleet prior to sailing to Scotland for a ten day exercise. But despite patches of somewhat undulating sea lanes, we survived the northward journey surprisingly well,

arriving at our final destination some three days later. "Once in Scotland we were soon paddling joyfully about the lochs as any self-respecting 'dukwing should, the floating ice making little difference to our endeavours. "Our little expedition was closely watched by Major F. J. Heathcote, the Company Commander, who had previous knowledge of the area and was able to give conducted tours of both lochs and coast. "In fact, there was never a dull moment, for we gained considerable experience both afloat and ashore, by day and by night, as well as rescuing drifting buoys and operating a liberty dukw for an occasional evening ashore. "It was therefore with a twinge of regret that we set off by L.C.T. back to our native shores, with some very pleasant memories. Also during January we welcomed to Fremington the Junior N.COs.' School, commanded by Major W. J. E. Weller, who have now moved there permanently. It is to be hoped that the stunned expression on the faces of the members of 116 Company and 18 Company will fade when they become accustomed to the sound and sight of the junior N.C.Os. on parade with C.S.M. E. Hunter and the school's drill sergeants. Departures Major (QrMr) R. Kearsley, Capt. I. J. Rutherford. Arrivals. Capt. A. J. F. Cobb, Sgt. F. Henly, Sgt. D. Allen.

1962 January

By JOHN PORTER and BARRIE DAVIES

AT HOME ON LAND AND SEA

At Fremington the tiny Devonshire village that straddles the Bideford-Barnstaple main road it is a common sight to see a convoy of dukws squeezing their way through the narrow lanes. For Fremington is the home of 18 Company (Amphibian). Fremington has long been a centre of military activity, for the camp was formally occupied by American troops until 1958 when 18 Company moved in. The camp is built in the grounds of Fremington House, an old country mansion that is now the Officers' Mess. Being based in the heart of such a small village as Fremington, the personnel of the company and the local people have of necessity to be in close contact: no effort has been spared in getting to know the villagers, and many friendly contacts have been established, 18 Company is often called upon to give demonstrations to civilian 'organizations. Even while we were visiting the unit members of Devonshire police were being entertained. But Devon has more reason to thank the company than for mere make believe demonstrations. During the great floods that caused so much damage in the West Country a couple of months ago, the men of 18 Company played a big part in rescue operations. A dozen dukws made a fifty mile dash through the night to Exeter where they spearheaded the rescue operations after five feet deep floods had swept through the streets of the Cathedral city. A farm at Winkleigh was the scene of another dukw rescue act when two vehicles were sent there to rescue 160 sheep trapped by floods. It took us very little time at Fremington to find that the work at the camp is interesting and varied. And one thing we discovered was that the men like being based at Fremington. Instance of this came from C.Q.M.S. George Southgate. He has spent twenty one years in the Corps and had previously served at the camp. With two years to retirement he was given a choice of where he would like to serve. He and his wife chose Fremington. The Q, who will return to his home town, Manchester, when he retires, told us he had done everything in the Corps except air despatch. We were given the opportunity to drive a dukw on the training beaches and wondered at the way in which the men drive these large and cumbersome vehicles so confidently through the narrow streets of Barnstaple on their way to the training area. But Dvr, John Greenaway, eighteen years

old and an ex Junior Leader handled them expertly and, like the other drivers, was quite confident of taking them through the narrowest gaps. John's number two on his dukw was Dvr, Robert Read, also an ex-Boy. They have both been with the company for six months and took part in rescue operations at Exeter. Dvr. Frank Robinson is also an ex-Boy. We spoke to Lieut. R. Stephens, a former policeman, who was in charge of the dukws that went to the aid of flooded Exeter. Lieut. S t e p h e n s thought it was funny to be working side by side with the Chief Constable of Exeter and smiled as he told how he and his men rescued a hundred girls stranded for nine hours in a flooded factory. He comes from a military family. His father is a retired lieutenant Colonel. Born in India, Mr, Stephens saw England for the first time in 1950. A former lance corporal in the Tank Corps, he transferred to the R.A.S.C. on being commissioned. CS.M. Arthur Owen, has served twenty years with the Army and joined the company when it was formed. Father of two girls and a boy aged eighteen, he lives in a hiring at Westward Ho! C.S.M. Owen was particularly pleased that the company was receiving a number of ex Boys; in fact, at the time we were there, they had twenty eight in the company. Cpl. Derek Walley (27). who spent three years with Water Transport as a marine engineer, is a dukw driver, but when we saw him he was walking around with his leg in plaster. He broke it playing football for the company team in September. Cpl. Walley has also played football for Barnstaple Town and plays cricket for the town too. A crack tennis player, he is going in for the Army tennis title this year. Pte, Jim Thomas (22). though a lorry driver in civilian life, is the C.S.M/s clerk. A burly 13 stone rugby enthusiast, he plays for Barnstaple as the company hasn't enough players to raise a side. But Jim hopes to organize a team for the Corps seven aside competition This year. He is just getting back to form after being out of the game for half a season with a broken thigh. Sgt Cliff Cooper (31), who has seen twelve years in the Middle East is N.C.O. in charge of the M.T. Section. Sgt. Cooper, married with two children, is an amphibian trained instructor Cpl. Ronald Short, the documentation clerk, is a twenty four year old engineer from Peterborough. Also in the documentation office is Pte. Dan Chandler (22). a carpenter. Assistant chief clerk, CpL Taffie Pugh (26). a Regular soldier with eight years service, has been at Fremington for two years. The despatch clerk, twenty one year old Pte. Brian Champion, is married and lives in Middlesex. Cpl. Tom Mead was with the company from 1952-54 and came back to dukw driving nineteen months ago. A former Welsh Guardsman, he joined the Corps in 1948. Another ex guardsman, this time the Scots Guards. is L./Cpl. John Lambie (24), a dukw driver who joined the Corps in 1958. L/Cpl. Bill Boyd (28), a keen rugby player from Wigan, is ex-Royal Horse Artillery. He has been with the company for eighteen months. Dvr. Ernie Gallagher (23), is a re enlistment and comes from Motherwell. Officer Commanding 18 Company is Major N. I. B. Speller and we extend our thanks to him for giving us the run of the camp during our stay and helping us in every possible way, At Fremington we saw plenty of signs of the floods that had recently devastated the countryside and our visit coincided with gale force winds, ominous skies and heavy downpours. While we mere landlubbers found our frequent soakings most uncomfortable, the men of 18 Company took them in their stride probably because this was the kind of weather they enjoy just the weather for dukws.

1961 March

DUKWs IN ACTION AGAIN

IN the January issue of THE WAGGONER we spotlighted 18 Company in our "This is Your Unit" feature. Since that time, the dukws have been busy again on flood relief, and altogether have covered about 3,500 miles on this work. 2/Lieut. C. Smith took six dukws, manned by young Regular and National Service men, into Tiverton after a fast police escorted ride of thirty five miles. After rescuing many people who were stranded, the dukws, with a police guide on each, split up and toured the town delivering milk and hot meals. Another dukw was used to rescue old people from houses in danger of collapsing. Altogether 1960 was a busy year for 18 Company and many people in Devon have reason to be grateful that Frcmington is the home of the Corps Amphibious Company.

1961 May

DUKWs GO TO DUCK ISLAND

18 Company Men Visit Arctic Circle

When Exercise "Cooltime" was being planned by 41 Commando, Royal Marines, during 1960, it was decided that 18 Company (Amphibious) should provide seven dukws and four Champs for the exercise. And our destination was to be Andoy meaning duck! the most northerly island of the Lofoten group some 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle in Norway. The dukws to go were selected from the platoon which won the M.T. efficiency competition. The fortunate platoon was B Platoon and were detailed to provide one officer, two senior ranks and twenty seven corporals and below which included a R.E.M.E. detachment, The crews were selected without difficulty as all platoon personnel were keen to go. After a thorough inspection by Company Workshops, the seven dukws left for Bickleigh in early September to report to 41 Marine Commando. On arrival at Bickleigh each dukw was designated to a roop. Yellow crosses and troop letters were painted on the windscreens of the dukws and canvas squares bearing a similar marking were attached to each dukw canopy. The vehicles were loaded with equipment varying from motor cycles and wireless sets to R.A.S.C. supplies. The aim of the exercise was that 41 Commando with a t t a c h e d units, (yellow forces), would carry out an amphibious landing with the mission of capturing the airfield on Andoy Island, Various craft were to be used for this assault. Besides our dukws, there were Geminis, Norwegian L.C.V.Ps., two launches from H.M.S. Tyne and two b o a t s from H.M.N.S. De Ruyter. The main body of 41 Commando were to embark on H.M.S. Tyne at Rosyth along with our four Champs while the dukws were to move by road to Poole where they would embark on the Naval L.C.T., H.M.S. Rampart, We set out from Poole, and on arrival at the J.S.A.W. Centre were informed that H.M.S. Rampart could not accept us that evening so we stayed overnight at the centre and after refuelling we sailed from Hanworthy to Poole quay and carried out a wet shod loading on to Rampart. The dukws, though heavily laden, caused no trouble during this operation. Once on Rampart they then had to be carefully guided into positions beside one another, When three dukws were positioned in line abreast there were only inches separating them and this was found to be an advantage during the Journey as there was less tendency for them to roll independently of the L.C.T. once fenders had been placed firmly between them. Once on board, we found that owing to lack of accommodation, a Dumber of the crews and marines who were with each dukw would hare to sleep on the vehicles themselves This proved a problem due to the fact that the dukws were fully loaded with stores and equipment. However, by utilizing all possible space,

including rear hatches, sufficient room was made to provide space for all. Large sections of canopy were placed over the tank deck in an endeavour to make it watertight { which, unfortunately for the men, was not altogether successful) and finally wiring was run up to provide some light for the tank deck. These conditions were not welcomed by the men on learning that the journey to Harstad, which was our destination, was estimated to take at least ten days. H.M.S. Rampart had been modified to embark cranes and A.F.Vs. and as a result, had a heightened forecastle and bridge. This, along with its shallow draught, appeared ominous to the non sailors of the party.

1961 September

18 Company Show FOR the first time in its history, Fremington Camp the home of 18 Company R.A.S.C. (Amphibian) was open to the public on 27th May. The open day was held as a contribution to the Commonwealth Technical Training Week. And there were two Mayors among the 1,500 visitors the Mayor of Barnstaple and the Mayor of Bideford. They both took trips down the River Taw in dukws of 8'Company. The dukw trips on the River Taw were so popular that there were two long queues throughout the afternoon; showery weather did not dampen their enthusiasm to go for a ride on the water. Nearly all of the camp buildings were open for inspection by the visitors. There was a recovery and first-aid demonstration and an alarm race between H.Q, "A" and "B" Platoons and Workshops, while among the more sedate items was a cricket match between the R.A.S.C, and South Molton. To end the Open Day, music was provided by the Band of the Junior Leaders Battalion R.A.S.C. from Taunton.

1961 November

SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT

Headquarters. Since our last edition we have bade farewell to our second-in-command and District Supply Officer, Major J. H. B. Molyneux, who has gone on promotion to command 3 Petroleum Reserve Depot. We welcome as his replacement, Major T. K. Batty for a short stay pending posting to attend the post graduate nuclear science and technology course at R.M.C.S., Shrivenham, in January. 1961. Capt. N. E. Bligh has arrived to take over 139 Supply Platoon from Capt. C. M. Roots, to B.A.O.R., and Capt. (QrMr) W. J. Sutter to replace Capt. G. Jones in command of the Administrative Unit, Fremington Camp, on posting of the latter to 71 Company. We also welcome to 18 Company, 2/Lieut. I. Borland of R.E.M.E., C.Q.M.S. Southgate and Sgt. Norris. 18 Company regard the demonstration of maintenance over the beaches to the cadets of R.M.A. Sandhurst as the high-light of their summer activities. The L.V.T. 3 (amphibious tank) from the Amphibious Training Wing aroused great interest, and carried the platoon commander's Champ and control post party ashore from Hawley Lake. The Rat a Canadian articulated amphibian, was also demonstrated. The Company looks back with somewhat mixed feelings to the "Porlock Dawn Landing Exercise"; the convoy was late down Porlock Hill and into the sea, this resulted in three dukws getting stranded on the rocks. A most unfortunate occurrence, but we all learn by our mistakes, especially stranded crews who have to wait for the evening tide! "B" Platoon, commanded by Lieut. A. A. R. Stephens, has left on a four-week N.A.T.O, Exercise in Norway with 41 Royal Marine Commando. No doubt in the next edition the platoon's tasks and experiences will be mentioned. S./Sgt. Scarr is at present in hospital at Hindhead. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him back on the L.A.R.C. in the very near future, The L.A.R.C, and R.A.T. trials still occupy much time and a large proportion of the resources of 18 Company.

Sgt. Nicholas, 18 Company football manager and coach, is at present a harassed man. His two football teams that have already been so successful this season have been sadly depleted owing to the departure of "B" Platoon to Norway and men and dukws from A Platoon on a recruiting demonstration team, which is now touring the Devonshire countryside. Perhaps we shall see the coach himself in football boots in the near future! It is of interest that an 18 Company (Amphibious) tie is to be produced, and our potential artists are busy preparing designs. Sections of 139 Supply Platoon are now returning to Fremington after a busy summer season deployed feeding camping units.

1962 January

D.S.T TRIES OUT NEW AMPHIBIAN

The Director of Supplies and Transport, War Office, Major-General JP. G. Turpin, O.B.E. recently visited Fremington in North Devon. While there he saw the new American wheeled amphibian the L.A.R.C. 5 (Lighter Amphibian Resupply Cargo), The L.A.R.C. 5 has been with 18 Company (Amphibious) for the past year while it has been undergoing its British Army Trials. The crew of two were S/Sgt. Nicholas and Cpl. Cockell, both of 18 Company. During his visit the D.S.T, handled the L.A.R.C, 5 in the Taw Estuary and later through the surf line at Saunton Sands. The L.A.R.C. has a water speed of approximately 9.5 miles per hour, it has a good cross country performance owing to its four large-sized low pressure tyres, and a road speed of 30 miles per hour. Maintenance on the L.A.R.C. can be completed in half the time that is required for the D.U.K.W. and its manoeuvrability in the water is far superior.

1962 January

18 Company Never let it be thought that the Corps representatives at Fremington h i b e r n a t e after the summer is over! The past few weeks have been a period of intense activity, Our visitors have included the D.ST., who saw and drove the L.A.R.C. 5, Brigadier V. E. Dowdy, O.B.E., D.ST. Australia, and Lieut Colonel R. C. Gabrietr BEM and his staff from the Port Task Force Wing at Marchwood. In addition we have carried out amphibious exercises with various regiments. By far the greatest activities, however, have taken place away from North Devon and at one time the Company was split over four countries. The Officer Commanding, Majot N. Speller, was in S.W. France attending the United States Army Exercise "Nodex 29." Taking part were the amphibious companies of both the American and French Armies. Major Speller met his opposite numbers in 460 D.U.K.W. Company, U.S. Army, and 311th D.U.K.W., French Army. All units, including 18 Company, still use the now familiar D.U.K.W., first built in 1943 and still going strong! In North Norway, D.U.K.Ws. from the Company joined in a Norwegian tri-service exercise called "Peter Pan/* The DU.K.Ws. went to Norway in HMS. Rampart, and the senior N.C.O. in charge was Sgt. J. Hollingsworth. Another part of the Company, under Sgt. G. Bond, is operating tracked amphibians in Malta, where they are undergoing driver training and assisting 41 Commando, Royal Marines in Exercise White Bait This party went to the Mediterranean by air from Gatwick Airport and returned at the end of October. To complete the list of absentees from North Devon, the Operations Captain, Capt. J. Macro, is on temporary duty in Nairobi, Kenya, In the same country also is the Company Chief Clerk, Cpl. V. Pugh, who is looking forward to returning to Fremington and his wedding. Cpl. Pugh. whose home is at Mardis, Glamorgan is marrying into a London family who have settled at Northam, North Devon. In many

respects October was another interesting, yet busy, month for the men of 18 Company, R.A.S.C. Members of the Company were also interested to see a five-minute coverage of their activities on Westward T.V., and a column in the Times of Malta all in one week. Back home again we welcome 2/Lieut, J, Drew, R.E.M.E., to the Workshops, and Sgts. Mitchell and McKinley. S./Sgt. Cooper has returned from his C.Q.M.S. Course and taken over his duties, and S./Sgt, Morris is now away on his CS.M's. Course. At football the Company is again fielding two elevens this winter, and they have both "gone up" into more senior leagues. Badminton, basketball and table tennis are our winter evening activities. A Rugby Football XV has been formed and is playing local fixtures. The Wives' Club are now well ahead with their winter programme and recent subjects have included an illustrated talk on Lundy Island which partly made up for the fact that wives could not go on the recent training, exercise there! Mrs. D. F. Easten was a welcome guest at the October meeting. The Club are very pleased with their recent purchase from Welfare Funds of equipment, including an oak tea trolley and a tea service.

Amphibian Training Wing. The Wing is now nearing the end of the current training year and, apart from the usual Regular Army courses, we have for the first time this year undertaken the training of A.E.R. personnel from the newly formed A.E.R. Amphibian Company. A party from the Wing has just returned from a very pleasant three weeks in Malta. The party, led by Capt. M. Swale and Sgt. Kubinski, went out to man the stockpile of L.V.Ts, held on the island. The first week was taken up with mall exercises with 40 Commando, Royal Marines and the rest of the time was spent giving continuation training to a party of I8 Company who accompanied us.

1962 July

18 Company: We hope it is not too far into the cricket season to report our hat-trick in Soccer successes. This year the Company 1st XI has won the 43 (Wessex) Division/District Minor Units Cup; then the Sierra Leone Southern Command Cup beating 1 A.A.S.O.; and finally in April at Buller Ground they beat 20 Company to win the R.A.S.C. (U.K.) Football Cup. Our photograph shows the team and the cup, with O.C. Major N. I. B. Speller and team manager S./Sgt. Nicholas B. E. M., and Sgt. Brzozowski. In the local civilian leagues in North Devon our 1st XI has ended third this year, having gone up last year, and again on "promotion" the 2nd XI are third. In a R.A.S.C. Shooting Match at Bulford our Pistol Team led by Capt. P. Hopkins was victorious. In, other events we were second throughout. Our skiing expedition and adventure training to the Cairngorms in Scotland was a great success. There was no shortage of snow and on the return initiative test Cpls. Nicoll and Colman made it in 24 hours. Our photograph is just to prove there really was some snow. Our ctivities include the first appearance of a Company Newspaper, and a visit from 4,war correspondents making a film about the D.U.K.W, for the Rank Organisation in the "Look at Life" Series. Other highlights have been Operation "Truncheon II" when some four dozen Police Officers of the North Devon Constabulary discarded their blue uniform for the day and joined us in training on the D.U.K.Ws. Summer training has now started in earnest. We have welcomed L.C.T. 4079 with us early in May and we are now looking forward to having the R.A.S.C.V/ Mull with us for a sustained period of cargo-handling work before we join 3 Port Task Force on Exercise "Pablo Two." Our visitors have included Capt. A. T. Hail R.A.A.S.C., Brigadier J. R. Reynolds, O.B.E., E.R.D. D.D.S.T. Southern Command and Lieut.-Colonel J. Heptinstall on taking over as C.R.A.S.C. 43 (Wessex) Division/District. We say farewell to Lieut.-Colonel D. F. Easten, M.C., and wish him all the best in the Far

East. Nearer home it has also been farewell to some of the longest-serving members, C.S.M. Owen on retirement after 22 years in the Corps and S./Sgt. Morris on promotion to W.O.II and joining the T.A. permanent staff. By the time these notes appear we shall have held a second annual "At Home and Open Day" and for once the public will have the freedom of Fremington Camp and free D.U.K.W. trips on the estuary. We hope the weather is kind.

1962 September

NEW FILM FEATURES 18 COMPANY'S DUKWs

18 Company (Amphibious) are playing a leading part in a film being made by J. Arthur Rank for the "Look at Life" series. The DUKWs of the Company which were built for a short life on the invasion beaches are still going strong today. Although this is now the only DUKW unit-left in the British Army, they are still front line vehicles. As part of the Strategic Reserve they must be ready to go anywhere at short notice. Halfway between a 6-ton lorry and a six knot boat, the DUKW can do the work of both and from its Army use, is now used in coastal work, cargo carrying and in many forms of marine and civil engineering. In this new "Look at Life issue, one of the most spectacular sequences is of German DUKWs doing rescue work in flooded Hamburg early this year. In Britain, too, almost every winter, the Army DUKW unit in North Devon is called out for flood relief, This is the story of a vehicle designed to assist wartime invasion, that has proved itself a valuable and manoeuvrable piece of peace time equipment.

1962 September

The past few weeks have been busy ones as usual for 18 Company and our latest excursion in to film land has resulted in the film Amphibian being produced and released. We welcomed Brigadier J R Reynolds O.B.E E.R.D D.D.S.T Southern command recently to present the B.E.M. to S/sgt Nicholas. Farewell to Lieut. C. Smith on his return to civilian life and in his place we welcome Lieut, W. W. Barnard to command "A" Platoon. We have recently changed our flash and now sport on our clothing and vehicles The Sword and Dolphin of the port task Group by the time these notes appear we will have assumed the amphibian driver training duties from the Amphibian Training Wing.

The occasion of the 18 Company second at home was the opportunity for Lieut.-Colonel F C. Green-Price, now living at Knowle, Braunton, formerly O.C. of the unit in 1927, to meet the present O.C., Major N. I. B. Speller—who was born in the same year. He was one of some 4,000 visitors who visited Fremington Camp, North Devon, on a brilliant afternoon in June. Once again it was Open Day for parents, friends and visitors to see how the R.A.S.C live and work. Colonel Green-Price was able to speak of the great changes to the Company since he commanded it at Chatham. Then it was a station transport company with some twenty trucks up to one ton capacity including bread wagons now it is amphibians. Another retired member of the Corps with amphibious connections and present at the Open Day was Major J. Woodward, now of Tintagel, who commanded 162 (Indian) Amphibious Company in Burma during the war. In glorious sunshine hundreds of people ranging from small children to elderly folk were taken for trips in the dukws. They climbed aboard at the camp, tied on lifejackets, and then went on the amphibians by road for Yelland, where they entered the River Taw. After these unusual excursions to 'the beach, when they returned to the camp these guests of the Army enjoyed a full programme of

events and attractions, In addition to free teas for all, produced by Sgt. Ferrett, A.C.C, and his staff, there was .22 shooting, a cricket match, film shows, and vehicle and model displays. The R.A.S.C, vessel "Mull" was also dressed overall and moored alongside Bideford Quay. The band of the R.A.S.C. Junior Leaders Battalion closed the afternoon although the dukw trips went on nearly two hours after the scheduled close-down time.

1963 May

43 (Wessex) Division/District

18 Company. Those who have envied us during the summer for our wonderful location would probably have changed their mind if they had paid a visit during January and February. Even the O.C. saw the iceberg off lundy Island! The estuary has added to its normal hazards by being littered with icefloes some as much as ten feet across and eighteen inches thick. A real navigation hazard to a thin skinned D,U.K.W. One of the more interesting pursuits has been the testing of a comparatively new tracked vehicle which appears to rely on one rubber bag and a rubber screen to make it float. Its past efforts were rather like a timid maiden testing the water with her toes. In gently pause out quickly. For those interested it did float but chose its own direction to travel. Despite the cold, training has continued. Now almost everybody can drive a D.U.K.W. Even the cooks are looking apprehensively at the lists for future courses. Talk amongst the officers has been of wizard prangs, good shows and beat ups. R.A.F, Chivenor Officers Mess froze solid recently and twenty four of them moved into Fremington House whilst the plumbers got to work. We shall be sorry to see them go. All except the barman who can now get some sleep.

1963 August

18 Company. The whole Company moved into the Southern Command Battle Camp at Okehampton for ten days adventure training at the end of March. Dartmoor was its usual bleak self and at times the mist reduced visibility to about fifty yards; but in spite of everything, no one got lost. The selector of the overnight bivouacking area obviously had a warped sense of humour. The site was on top of what seemed to be the highest tor on the moor with a river running round its base. Anyone who had succeeded in remaining dry until then was very lucky if he remained so. Everyone, however, felt that the final insult was, after having gone to bed in the rain, to wake up and find that there had been a fall of snow during the night and that the moor was covered in two inches of snow. In twenty-four hours the weather had gone from rain to sun to mist to rain and then to snow; five changes in that time was somewhat untoward. During April, we received an urgent request from the B.B.C. asking if we could lend them a D.U.K.W. for a film sequence. Information was received that this was for their programme 'Moonstrike' and that filming was to be in the Studland Bay area. Permission was granted and a section of four D.U.K.W.'s was sent off to R.V, with the B.B.C. at Poole. On their arrival they were told that the programme was not "Moonstrike" but that it was 'It's a Square World.' The plot was that the local mayor of a seaside resort could not stand tourists and had organized the local inhabitants into a militia to withstand the holiday invasion. The holiday-makers invaded the town over the beaches (in our D.U.K.W.) and proceeded to overcome the local resistance!!! At this stage, the D.U.K.W. disappeared from the scenes and what happened after then is not known. Michael 'Bentine, the star, had lunch with the" crew of the D.U.K.W. and has asked them all to attend a party he is giving to celebrate the end of

the present series. At the end of April, we carried out an experiment for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. This was to see if a D.U.K.W was capable of efficiently towing a twelve-foot drag trawl with runners along the sea bed. A D.U.K.W. of I8 Company experimenting With towing a 12 foot Drag Trawl fitted with runners on behalf of Ihe Ministry of Agriculture. Food and Fisheries. These experiments were carried out 'under the supervision of the Ministry along the Westward Ho beaches and the mouth of the estuary. The Ministry representative said that they were highly successful, but we had a certain amount of reservation about this as only four dabs were caught during the whole morning. As it has been successful, the Company will be going to Red Wharf Bay in Anglesey next month to assist the Ministry in carrying out a survey of small plaice. They have bred these in salt water tanks and are releasing them off Red Wharf Bay.

1963 October

18 Company: Thanks to help given by many Corps units OUT Open Day on 6th July was voted a great success. Approximately 1,500 civilians were given a ride on D.U.K.W.s on the River Taw without incident. Of course it poured with rain and a D.U.K.W. full of umbrellas is a strange sight and worth an extra knot down wind! Excitement all round during Exercise 'Tartan Splice*' at Browdown. First there was the Hovercraft which churned round and round amidst a cloud of dust within the perimeter of the camp for the whole of one day. Somebody even cadged a ride. He is still trying to work out how with one engine to make it go forward and two to lift it up it managed to go backwards on occasions. So it seems was Vickers Chief Test Pilot who was at the wheel. Then there was the officer who commented .that he had operated D.U.K.W.s during the war further out to sea than we were doing: he departed rapidly when told that they were over the horizon in that direction and would he like to renew his acquaintance with amphibians, R.E.M.E. comment on the exercise: "It's surprising haw much work we have to do to get the unit out to location but how little on the return journey." During the block leave period, seven of the unit are making an attempt to get a \Land-Rover to the top of Ben Nevis, It seems it has been done before but not by the Army. We wish them luck. Who said the Scots weren't an optimistic crowd. One of the hazards of being in 18 Company is small boys who bring in to us things like old rusty thermos flasks. They seldom get a direct answer to their "Please sir is it a bomb?" If there is anybody around by the time they get the last word out, it isn't.

1964 February

THE team of 18 Company, led by Capt M. E. Jordan, added another success to unit history when they finished overall fifth out of 37 starters in the B.A.M.A. Rally, which covered some 2,000 miles and took in all the Home Commands, except Northern Ireland. The course was difficult and 21 of the teams gave up before completion and it was a tired but happy team which returned to Fremington to be later presented by Lieut General G. G. Gordon-Lennox with the cup donated by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and also the Trophy for the Best R.A.S.C. Team in the Rally.

The photo shows from left to right: 'Dvr. McAlwane, L/CpH King, Dvr, Fowler, Capt, M. E. Jordan, L/Cpl. Townsend, Dvr. Ough and L/Cpl. Webb. Sgt. Mitchell and Cpl. Gostelow, not shown on the photo, were also members of the team.

1964 February

18 Company. The D.S.T., War Office paid a visit to the Company on 14th November. After inspecting the quarter guard, commanded by Sgt. Norris. he went on to inspect our amphibians and camp, In the afternoon he went on to Instow to inspect " B " Platoon and examine the new I.A.R.C. V, proposed replacement for the veteran D.U.K.W. S/Sgi. Nicholas demonstrated its capabilities on the water. Travelling twice as fast as the D.U.K.W and carrying twice as much cargo, it should prove a worthy successor. At the beginning of October twenty three soldiers of the Company visited the Isle of Skye for a fortnight's training. Camping at Glenbrittle on the western fringe of the Cuillin Hills, the object was to introduce the party, all volunteers, to the joys and problems of operating in mountainous terrain. Limited difficulties of map reading where contours converge to form a solid brown blob and the compass needle does not point North due to iron bearing rock, were soon overcome. Operating in groups of four or five, the sections carried out patrols over most of the Cuillins which were accessible to parties not equipped with ropes. Bruach na Frithe 3143 feet was climbed but, as the party reached the summit, mist descended obscuring the panoramic views of the Cuillin Ridge and the Outer Hebrides. It was not perhaps coincidence that a number of patrols ended at the Stigachan Inn, the only Inn within twenty five miles of Glenbrittle, always a welcome sight after a hard day on the hills.

1964 August

RASC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL EFFICIENCY AWARD

THE results of the seventh competition have now been assessed and are as follows :

First: 18 Company (Amph,)

Second : 19 Company (Tk. Tptr)

Third : 26 Company (ATT.)

It is hoped to present the trophy at the 1964 R.A.S.C. Rally at the Albert Hall.

1964 August

18 Company. This summer at Fremington is one of feverish activity, Not only is the Company hard at it on the sea, training and taking part in exercises, but also shooting, assault coursing, map marching on Dartmoor, sailing, running in athletic matches, tug of warring, playing cricket, parading with local Mayors, putting on shows for television and (for the selected few), judging beauty competitions. As the only Army unit in the area the Company takes a full share In all the local activities. Half a Platoon left for the Far East under Lieut. W, W. Barnard in April. We think of them "roughing it" on some sunny beach, off Pulau Brani or Johore, as we sit in the friendly rain and mist of Braunton Burrows. Time is taking its toll and many of the old practised D.U.K.W. hands are leaving for other fields. Inevitably their replacements are new to the sea. But, no doubt, air despatches find it an exhilarating change to be on the water after dropping things out of aeroplanes. Capt. Jordan, the Second in Command of the Company, returns shortly after spending six months of a U.K. tour of duty in Cyprus. Major P. R. M. Lawson has left for the Far East and has been replaced by Major D. E. T. Charles-Jones who has just returned from the U.S.A. Another move of particular note is L/Cpl. Vietch's wife, who surprisingly easily, got an indulgence flight to Kenya and is now wondering how to get back.

1964 August

Headquarters, R.A.S.C—The most important events during April and May were the arrival and welcoming ceremony for the R.A.S.C. Vessels Antwerp and Arakan, and the arrival of a platoon of D.U.K.Ws of 18 Company. A crash programme of modification and overhaul of the L.C.Ts and D.U.K.W's is now almost complete. Most officers have already experienced a sea trip in a D.U.K.W. to one of the nearby islands as part of weekly training. There were no casualties apart from a few mild cases of sunburn and sea sickness. Families of L.C.T crews and personnel of 18 Company have now been called forward and should all be reunited by the end of June. Arrivals have been Lieut. W. W. Barnard, Sgts. Mitchell and Mathews and W.O. E. A Ward, R.E.M.E., as part of the 18 Company detachment,

1964 October

18 Comany—It has been a summer of feverish activity on exercises of various sorts from escape and evasion on Dartmoor to rough weather work of Carlyon Bay in Cornwall. The problem of a Company like this is to turn good truck drivers into seamen and yet also remain good truck drivers. Our soldiers must be truck drivers on the road and seamen on the water and not vice versa. It is hoped that they change from one to the other at the waters edge. The end of the summer season was celebrated by Fremington Week, when all the units in 43 (Wessex) Division/District visited us and training was combined. The week was one of continual competition of all kinds to the music of bagpipes (Guest Artist S/Sgt Kenderdine). Most people were thoroughly exhausted and ready for block leave by the time the week was over. If anything can be judged by the number of beer tankards won, this areas liquor consumption received quite a boost, One other new scheme starting here is sailing for everyone as part of normal training. It is all part of the process mentioned above to generally improve sea sense. It is becoming a familiar sight off Instow Beach to see an 18 Company dinghy upside down in the water. The local yacht club may laugh now, but we will be winning all their races next year. We hear from our platoon in the Far East that they have done very well in all the local sporting activities. There hosts 25 Company appear to be very long suffering with all the extra work we must have given them. Although there is still a long time to go some members of the detachment are already planning a trip home across country. Last but not least L/Cpl. Kirk has just distinguished himself by trying to run 32 miles to Ilfracombe and back in 3 1/2 hours for a pound. It is alleged that he ran 25 miles in three hours and then decided that it was not worth the effort.

1964 December

THIS IS YOUR UNIT SPOTLIGHTS 18 COMPANY (AMPH)

POP' Griffiths is the oldest soldier of this Unit. On the 6th June, 1944, he landed with his D.U.K.W, on Sword Beach in Normandy. A few months earlier, his Company had changed from its normal truck driving duties to handle this new, strange creature, the D.U.K.W. Now, twenty years later, he is the only one left here in the Amphibious Unit who crossed the water that day. We are stationed at Fremington in North Devon. The reason we are here, rather than anywhere else, is that in this area we have a choice of almost every type of beach and condition of sea that you would find in the whole of England. The beaches are so extensive that we have enough room to operate

without tangling with the holiday-makers or shipping. We have the beaches of Westward Ho! Saunton Sands and the estuary formed by the Taw and Torridge rivers. Last, but not least, there are also the sand dunes and grassy hillocks of Braunton Burrows. The estuary runs into the seas of Barnstable or Bideford Bay, depending on the town to which you owe your allegiance! In the last twenty years, there have been many comings and goings, until now we have but one Company of D.U.K.W's left and even of this, half a platoon is away in the Far East Although the D.U.K.W's are twenty years old, we are nevertheless still obliged to use them as our chief vehicles / vessels, because nothing better or sufficiently inexpensive has yet been produced to replace them. The name 'D.U.K.W.' stands for 'Detroit Universal Kaiser Works', which is very convenient! In the Company we also have L.V.Ts (Landing Vehicles Tracked). They, too, were used in Normandy, but in an assault role because they travel very low in the water and are, to a certain degree, armoured. L.V.T's are, as their name signifies, driven on tracks, both on the land and in the water. Those left with us now are very much museum pieces and intrepid are the crews who take them to sea. Those joining the Unit have, more often than not, never seen the sea except at Blackpool. It is our job to turn all of them from the good truck drivers that they must be before coming here, into expert seamen as well. However good a truck driver a man may be, unless he can also master the sea, he is a menace to everyone the moment his D.U.K.W. takes the water, in and around shipping, using the correct channels and buoys, and to work with a landing craft and merchant vessel. Anyone can handle a D.U.K.W. on the water when it is calm or when everything is going according to plan. It is when the weather deteriorates or the unexpected occurs that you sort out the men from the boys. The aim of this training is to turn each man into someone who is alert, competent and awake, to deal efficiently and at once with any eventuality that may occur on the sea. As has been said above, a man who has no sea sense or is not alert is a liability in this Unit. When a soldier joins the Company, he is usually attached to 'A' Platoon for a few months to get the feeling of the Unit, and to work around D.U.K.W's for a while before he starts his amphibious course. In this time, he also does a sailing course to learn about the water and develop a sea sense. All the new words such as thwarts, midships, rudders, halyards, sheet bends, port and starboard fall into place before he starts learning about amphibians in detail. The ideal new arrival is, of course, one who has been connected with the sea before. He next goes through a B.III Amph Course. This normally takes about four weeks, depending on the weather and his general aptitude. In this course he learns how to drive the D.U.K.W. on the road, across country, in sand dunes, wet and dry beaches, rivers, estuaries, the open sea, surf, and, finally, in rough water. He also learns how to handle a D.U.K.W, These days it is considered naive to talk about adventure, but nevertheless, we daily go adventuring on the sea. We regularly practice doing the more difficult things likely to occur on the sea. Perhaps the most spectacular, certainly the most terrifying at first, is heading out through surf. Each man learns to steer through waves which roll over him and his D.U.K.W. The D.U.K.W. heads across the beach towards the grey rollers. The propeller is engaged and we move out of our depth. As each wave approaches we have to throttle down so that the D.U.K.W. will not head straight into it at speed. As soon as the bows are clear, the engine is again given full throttle. While the foam, waves and spray fly in all directions, the driver has to keep his attention firmly fixed on the direction of the bows. If they are not heading straight into those waves, the D.U.K.W. may broach to and turn over. D.U.K.W's have been known to do this, It is for this reason that we hope our engines will not pack up. Depending on the

weather, perhaps three, four or more waves break over the top of the D.U.K.W. before we reach less turbulent waters. We wonder time and again, "are we ever going to surface? There are tales of Christmas Island to which this Unit sent D.U.K.W. crews, when D.U.K.W's did not surface, the crews and passengers had to trust to their life jackets to float them to safety. A L/Cpl. Corrigan won a B.E.M. in an incident such as this in 1958. The other day we visited Lundy Island, where we had travelled in the L.C.T. Arezzo. All D.U.K.W. crews and passengers went ashore on Lundy's little beach. This was quite simple until a storm blew up in the space of an hour with winds force 8, gusting to 9, The problem Returning from. Lundy Island through a gale. now was to get the D.U.K.Ws back on board the Landing Craft. It is possible for D.U.K.W's to climb up the ramp of a Landing Craft and in through the bow doors whilst at sea. This is quite easy when the waves are small, but when the wind is blowing hard it is a very different matter. Three D.U.K.W's got in through the bow doors without mishap or a great deal of difficulty. But, as the weather worsened, those who were following continually failed to make it. The Captain again and again hazarded his ship by heading under the lee of the land, Eventually through wind and spray, a fourth D.U.K.W. clambered on board, to the cheers of all spectators. Encouraged by this, the fifth D.U.K.W. quickly followed but, alas, old age overcame the sixth. There she wallowed in the waves without any drive to her front wheels. Without front wheel drive she could not pull herself up the ramp out of the sea. This, however, is something that we practise. Incredibly quickly lines were rigged, pulleys fixed and winches set going, Although the D.U.K.W. was going up and down with the waves six or seven feet in front of the L.C.T, ramp, she was heaved out of the water without mishap. Although we were soaked to the skin, we avoided a wet night on gale swept Lundy Island. This was because we had learnt to cope with the unexpected and handle our craft, come what may. Our messiest, but also essential, training is recovery through mud. One or two D.U.K.W's are purposely driven on to a mud bank and then we take it in turns to get them off. A D.U.K.W. has an excellent winch and cable. In the mud two D.U.K.W's with blocks, tackle, anchors, luck and a lot of swearing can heave themselves more or less anywhere. We have with us in the Unit an Amphibious Company R.E.M.E. Workshops which is the only one of its kind. Without this very dedicated group of men, we would have a bad time. If they make mistakes, we sink. During our more active periods in the year, it is rare that the Workshops is quiet at midnight. Only in this way, can we be assured of D.U.K.W's at sea next day. As in most Units, our workshops are very proud of their prowess at sport. Another part of the Unit which can never go unmentioned is our cooks, under Sgt. Ferrett. Food can be found in his cookhouse, steaming and hot, at any time of the day or night, whatever the weather. However wet and grim an exercise or operation may be, we always know that Sgt. Ferrett and his men will be there with a cheery smile and hot steaming stew. The day is obviously getting close when we will have to say farewell to our D.U.K.W's. There are many rumours of a replacement but nothing more. Although we will be sorry to see a change, we look forward to the day when the Company takes a hovercraft convoy down Barnstaple High Street! Our athletics, cricket, soccer, rugby, sailing, shooting, boxing and motorcycle teams are very active. Those who do not belong to one team or another still have to go over our assault course in the trees behind Fremington House twice every week. No one can complain of an inactive life. One or two of the Unit characters deserve a mention like the Company Sergeant Major, CS.M. Dearing. He is new to Amphibians and we enjoy watching him experiment with a strange art beside other learners. Two grand old men

of the sea are S/Sgts, Baguley and Nicholas. They are the ones who make sure that the rest of us know our stuff. It is said that S/Sgt. Baguley does the Football Pools each week so that he can buy a D.U.K.W. of his own. The champion D,U.K.W. crew this summer was Drivers Law and Parker, even though they were the ones who rescued the O.C at Carlyon Bay. The Irishman of the Company, who seems to be in everything for better or worse, is Driver Smith. It would be possible to go on for a long time but it would really be better if you joined us and saw for yourself. The Company Duck, as opposed to D.U.K.W., is feathered and white. He or she, lives on the static water tank, having been found adrift by 2/Lieut. Franklin, now Duck Officer. Although we have only touched the surface of what goes on here, we believe that we have given some idea about the unique task that we have and the pride of this Unit. If you get fed up with your parachuting, air despatching, water transport or truck driving, there is always a different way of life for you here. When the sea is involved, nothing is dull, routine or uneventful. To close, let us give our toast "To the edge of the beach".

1965 February

Det 18 Company.—(H.M.S. Bulwark) On the 17th October, four D.U.K.W's and crews commanded by Sgt. Mitchell embarked on H.M.S. Bulwark, the Commando Carrier, to take part in Exercise "Dark Night". The D.U.K.W's had to be lifted onto the flight deck loaded from the sea, so our Det. Workshop tested each D.U.K.W. in turn to the satisfaction of all concerned, and we knew we would not be dropped approximately 50 feet into the 'hoggin'. The Captain of H.M.S. Bulwark was conveyed from the shore to his ship in a D.U.K.W. and during the trip he mentioned that he last rode in a D.U.K.W, during the D-Day landings. He was astounded when the reply was "U could have been this one", The detachment continues to do well in the field of sport, and we congratulate L/Cpl. Walkington on his selection for the Army Singapore XV, We say goodbye and congratulations to our Platoon Commander, Lieut. W. W. Barnard on his posting as O.C. 58 Supply Platoon Labuan, and welcome the new Platoon Commander, 2/LieuL A. J. Franklin on his arrival from 18 Company.

1965 June

18 Company — The unexpected arrival of ten days summer weather at the end of March and beginning of April almost caught us unawares, as we have become completely acclimatized to winter gales, blizzards and non-amphibian type weather. Perhaps this particular bright spell is a good portent for the remainder of the year. Despite the weather two basic amphibious courses have been run since the new year and a wealth of tanned faces prove that not all the Company spend the winter huddled over antiquated and foul smelling coke stoves. The O.Cs tan incidentally, was not procured locally, but is a result of a two week trip to the Far East, to visit our Far East Detachment. Two small amphibious exercises were run in the Pembroke area. D.U.K.W's and the Larc V were embarked on the L.C.T, Aachen which then sailed from Instow to Pembroke where a Company of the Welsh Guards were embarked. The Infantry were put ashore at Tenby and Pendine to carry out an assault and then re-embarked. The success of this particular type of training can be judged from the query of one Guardsman who wanted to transfer to the R.A.S.C, as a change to digging trenches in stony Welsh hillsides ! To everybody's disappointment, the Larc V is not going to replace the D.U.K.W. It is b e l i e v e d that D.U.K.W's will now continue in service until the advent of the hovercraft. Certainly all Company personnel are

looking forward to hovercraft trials which are due to take place in the Fremington area in September. As a final note, former Company members may be interested to Hear that the Company mascot, a duck feathered, has been wooed and won, and duckling recruits are expected in the near future.

1965 June

18 Company Detachment have been busy with routine work at China Rock bombing range and on exercise with the Commandos. Major D. E. T. Charles-Jones, O.C. of 18 Company, paid a flying visit to the detachment during February and early March. We said farewell to L/Cpl. Barnes and Cfn. Chapman on return to U.K. and welcomed Cpl. Griffiths, L/Cpl. Raine and Dvr, Peters all of 18 Company Detachment.

1965 June

D.U.K. W.

THE writer of the article on 18 Company in the December 1964 issue of THE WAGGONER made the statement that the letters D.U.K.W. stand for "Detroit Universal Kaiser Works". Many people have put forward similar theories including some " knowledgeable" Times correspondents in the early 1950's. Dual Utility Kargo Wheeled and Deutsche Unterzee Kraft Wagen are but two examples from this period. The late Commander John Mulock who was perhaps the greatest U.K. expert on amphibious matters and a mine of obscure information always maintained that the letters were not abbreviations, but the makers designation similar to the Bedford designations O.Y., Q.L., R.L., etc. I believe the following quotations from a U.S. Army Transportation School, Fort Eustis, Virginia, publication should finally put the record straight. "D.U.K.W. is the code name General Motors used when it developed the amphibious truck. In 1942 work was begun on the amphibious truck by a group of civilians known as Office of Scientific Research and Development (O.S.R.D;) , To save time in development and simplify field maintenance, it was decided that a 'ground up' design should not be undertaken. Rather, a modification or conversion of a vehicle then in production would best meet the urgent workline requirements, The 2 ton G.M.C. 6 x 6 , C.C.K.W. 353 was selected as the basis for development. The basic design was roughed out and developmental engineering was begun at the G,M.C. Truck and Coach Division, Pontiac, Michigan. The first model of the amphibious truck was completed that same year and given the official designation of D.U.K.W. by the manufacturer."

S. M. Walker, Major

1965 August

18 Amphibious Squadron.—To get everybody warmed up after the Easter leave, we went to Dartmoor for Exercise "Hardpad" an "Escape and Evasion*" exercise in which the whole Squadron took part. In June Dvr. Griffiths left the Army after twenty two years' service. This marks a milestone in the D.U.K.W. Unit's history. He was the only remaining soldier in the Unit who drove his D,U,K,W. ashore in Normandy on D-Day. Although he has been in other Units for short periods of time he has been with D.U.K.W's most of the time. He is to become a Traffic Warden in Barnstaple. Perhaps we shall still be able to get a few parking rights for old times sake !

1965 October

18 Amphibious Squadron.—A certain wife was heard to remark to her husband the other day, "I am sorry not to be ready, but you upset the routine when you come home !. This perhaps is a good illustration of how active the Unit has been these last couple of months. In June the Squadron left for Holland on Exercise "Pablo V". The Dutch people in the Flushing area welcomed us with open arms and almost every soldier was adopted by a Dutch family. The highlight of the visit on the social side was the friendship struck up between ourselves and the Dutch Army and Navy. On the second day of the exercise we sadly had a fatal accident, which is reported below. We returned to Fremington some two and a half weeks after leaving. The journey from Folkestone was done in one hop for flood mobility practice. The next event was a farewell parade for Dvr. Griffiths, known affectionately by all as "Pop". He was the last soldier remaining with the Unit who took part in the "D" Day landings in 1944. He was given a chromium plated D.U.K.W. bilge plug and dinky toy D.U.K.W. mounted as an ash tray by the Company and a cup from the Corporals' Club. He will long be missed in the Unit, in which everything difficult or out of the ordinary was fixed by "Pop" Griffiths, The •Carlyon Bay Camp, this year with the M.V. Cranbourne, IS always a good one because not only is it possible to work the ship in all kinds of weather, but also the New Cornish Riviera Club provides plenty of off duty relaxation of every kind ! It was on the beach at Carlyon Bay that we held our rebadging parade. With the high cliffs, beach, waves and the cries of the sea gulls, it was a very fitting and even moving ceremony for this, the last of the Army Amphibious units. The parade was shared by a detachment of 51 Port Squadron (Stevedores) who were training with us at the time. On television that evening Western Diary gave both Units a good coverage for the rebadging parade, in spite or. the fact that they promoted our O.C to Major-General in their dialogue. During the last week of July we held the second Fremington Week, This year our visitors were 65 Squadron from Bicester. We have formed a surf life saving club. The aim is to cover our own sea-going activities and also to help the police patrol beaches during the height of the holiday season. Five members of the Unit have already won their bronze surf life saving medallions. It is intended to make this number 24 by the end of the season. Last but not least, the Squadron mascot "Phibby" has four little ducklings, hatched in June, They are now nearly as big as their mother because everyone helps dig worms for them. One we are sending to the Far East detachment; the remainder are being posted, one to each troop and one to Workshops. It is with sadness that the loss of L/Cpl. Holmes is reported. He went down with his D.U.K.W. at Sloehaven, Holland on 18th June. He had been with the Squadron for four years. - He was a very popular and most efficient member of the Unit. It is with the greatest appreciation that ; we thank those who have sent messages of condolence and contributions ^ to his widow.

1965 December

18 Amphibious Squadron. — The Devon weather has failed to live up to its sunny reputation and our training, sports and social activities have been somewhat curtailed by the rain. Perhaps those soldiers who undertook the unit adventure training in Wales during September suffered the most About 600 men carried out the pursuits of canoeing, climbing, mountain walking and caving in the Talybont area of South Wales, but in spite of hardships of the Welsh weather, most enjoyed themselves,

L/Cpl. Wilson distinguished himself by going down with his canoe in the Brecon Tunnel, and subsequently being bitten by a water rat. However, this was not the only novelty of the training. L/Cpl. Parker by necessity invented a new climbing hold, by securing himself to a rock face by his chin, when all other holds failed. During the first weekend of September, North Devon played host to the hardy men of England who assembled for the National Surf Life Saving Championships. The Squadron provided four D.U.K.W's to assist in these Championships, and they proved their usefulness by rescuing four competitors in difficulties with stomach cramp. During the events Sgt. Ferrett, A.C.C, our Cook Sergeant, managed all the catering for competitors and officials. Needless to say this had no bearing on the remarks of the preceding sentence. Our own Surf Club has now been formed under the captaincy of L/Cpl. Rice, and will shortly be presented with a reel and official recognition by the national body. We believe ours to be the first military Club so formed.

1965 December

SINGAPORE

32 Regiment Headquarters.—Life is now somewhat quieter after the momentous events of 15th July. Much time and effort has been spent in assisting the civilian community centres to which we are affiliated. These affiliations are organized throughout the theatre and are intended to foster good relations between units and the civilian population. Mention must be made of our D.U.K.W. detachment from 18 Amphibious Squadron, who recently took part in an amphibious force exercise "Windy Weather". Ferrying guns and land-rovers ashore from R.N. carriers, the drivers performed with great skill on a moonless night. Two D.U.K.W's were used to land a patrol ten miles behind enemy lines. After a long sea approach with no navigational aids the commandos graciously accepted an error of one hundred yards. In the sporting world, a combined 18/25 Squadron team did well to become the Area Tug of War champions. Unfortunately the R.A.F proved too strong in the inter services and semi final. By the time these notes are printed we will be a rather smaller Unit than hitherto, having handed over to 33 Maritime Regiment the command of 10 Port Squadron, 37 Maritime and 75 L.C.T. Squadrons and the detachment of 18 Amphibious Squadron. We wish the new Regiment every good fortune. In addition to all the old friends moving across to 33 Regiment, we say farewell to Major C. A. Priestley, Capt. A. Beer, Capt. D. I. Jeremy, Lieut. A. G. Smith and Lieut D. G. Rosser-Owen. We also regret to announce the death of Dvr. Yahaya Bin Omar after a long illness. Our sympathies have been extended to his family. Finally, we welcome to the Regiment Capt. D. M. Bond, our new Adjutant, Lieut. Karom Singh and 2/Lieuts. Boorman and Bakx.

1966 February

SINGAPORE

The Detachment of 18 Amphibious Squadron is now under command of 10 Port Squadron at Tanjong Berlayer. Two D.U.KW's and their crews commanded by Lieut. Franklin were hastily despatched by air to assist with the flood relief operations in the Trengganu - Kelantan area of North Malaya. It is believed that this may be the, first occasion that D.U.K.W's have ever been lifted by air.

1966 April

18 Amphibious Squadron. — Our last notes mentioned preparations for the Christmas festivities, and it would appear that a good time was had by all ranks and families. Father Christmas (A.Q.M.S. Outram) descended by helicopter. His role is somewhat different now as the unit is in the middle of the C.L.V. Unfortunately his sledge is V.O.R. One of our normal Christmas activities is the presentation of a cake to the Mayor of Barnstaple, who distributes it to local charities. This year Sgt Ferrett baked a cake in the shape of a book of carols, and it was shared between the old folks in the area. Just prior to block leave the unit was engaged in flood rescue operations. On the 18th December a call was received for assistance in the Tiverton area. Cpl. Read took a half section of D.U.K.W's crewed by L/Cpl. Tunstill, Harrison, Ellis and Hudson and was soon engaged in a difficult rescue of a farmer marooned on a barn. After a five hour operation, during which the D.U.K.W's negotiated flooded streams and inundated fields, the rescue was completed. In assisting the civil authorities during times of flood we prove as useful as our detached Troop in Singapore, who have been doing the same thing but on a larger scale. Sgt. Mitchell claims the honour of being in charge of the first D.U.K.W. afloat in 1966. When five were attached to the new L.S.A. H.M.S. Fearless, to take part in trials. The words "sippers" and "gulpers" were bandied around the N.A.A.F.L shortly after their return. Off again to this interesting ship shortly our Army sailors will perhaps return with further naval terms. On the sporting side, the Soccer team is currently top of the local Junior I league, though out of cup competitions, Major (QrMr) R. A. Scholes, RA.O.C. is doing very well being at the top of the 43 (WX) Division/District Small Bore League.

1966 June

18 Amphibious Squadron — Our training cycle is dictated by the weather and sea conditions. For this reason the first three months of each year are spent ashore running upgrading courses, regimental training and all the other activities not directly concerned with amphibians. The aim has been for every soldier to be upgraded in his M.T.U education and M.Q.C. courses. Many have been on as many as three courses this winter, and the results have been very good. Work on the sea started again two weeks ago. It is surprising how many people have forgotten their semaphore and knots. Some pretty odd things also happened to the D.U.K.W's in those first journeys through the surf after the winter ashore. The L.C.T. Audemer visited us for two weeks but regrettably bent a propeller or something on departure and had to go to Mil ford Haven for repairs. Those who know Fremington will recall how the soldiers always put their best foot forward with very little coercion on such occasions as the C.I.V. and the Annual Inspection. It looks as though the good results achieved again recently will ensure that we are left alone for another year We have had a further detachment working aboard the assault ship H.M.S. Fearless, which during February held trials in Barnstaple Bay. Fremington House Mess has been filled with officers of all services who have appeared from all over the place to take part in these trials. Instow beach has been the scene of great activity because the waves off Saunton were too great. This has caused a certain alarm to the good people of Instow who remember the days when the Americans made their beach quite untenable. Fremington , sports field has more or less become a permanent helicopter landing pad. Our next visitors were 12 Dartmoor prisoners who stayed here for ten days. Their task was to clear wartime debris which still remains on the Braunton Burrows training areas. The national and local newspapers made a great fuss about this and many was the tale which spread around the area. In spite of the newspapers,

the prisoners, all "trusties", worked and behaved very well. They were most impressed with life in the Army today, in particular with the standard of food ! Their 14s. a week pocket money did not go far in the N.A.A.F.L This is probably why they appeared to be so fit, and helped them to beat a scratch Unit soccer team 8-1, in a friendly match. It was suggested that they should take part in cross country running, but the prison authorities ruled this out,! Cross country running has been particularly to the fore because L/CpL Kirk and Dvr. Hopkins did very well in the R.C.T. Cross Country Championships at Taunton. These two soldiers always shine at these meetings although they do practically no training at all. The soccer team, in spite of our newly achieved high standard, has dropped to third in the N. Devon League, but there is still a chance of winning if the present form continues. The .22 shooting team finished third in the 43 (Wessex) Small Bore Competition, We were running neck and neck with two major units who beat us at the last moment. Shooting has always been a great interest here under Major (QrMr) R. A. Scholes," but he left the Unit a few days ago. Talking about Major Scholes, it will be of interest to his friends to learn that he has emigrated to Australia with his family. He left the Army looking forward to new adventures ahead. It seems that half the Unit expects him to find employment for them in Australia in due course After block leave the Squadron . goes up to Dartmoor for the yearly Escape and Evasion exercise. This exercise is a shake out after the months in winter quarters. This year we will be joined by some members of 20 Squadron. There is one thing about it, of course, that should we get lost, our 12 friends on the Moor will surely put us up for the odd night or two !

1966 June

Singapore

The detachment of 18 Amphibious Squadron, commanded by Lieut. Tony Franklin, comes under 10 Port Squadron's command. Their crews are broadening their experience as seamen by sharing in our many activities and in return are teaching many ex-Sappers to be drivers.

1966 August

Singapore

We welcome 18 Amphibious Squadron and its Workshop, R.E.M.E. who came under command of the Maritime Group on 16th June. We look forward to working much more closely with this unit in the future.

1966 October

18 Amphibious Squadron. — On 16th June the Squadron bade farewell to 27 Regiment and came under command of Headquarters Maritime Group. Although farewells are tinged with sadness, the Unit, on account of its role, is pleased to become part of the Maritime Group. Brigadier P. H. Henson, O.B.E., Commander Maritime Group paid his first visit to us on 23rd June. We were able to introduce him to Fremington Camp and some of our neighbours. In spite of the distance from the rest of the Group, we are assured that our full quota of visitors will come. Already Major N.I B. Speller, M.B.E, Major K. G. Tait, and Capt. E. L. Beard, M.B.E., the Fleet Superintendent have been to see us. The 16th June also marked the change of command of the Unit, Major D. E. T. Charles-Jones, commanded and inspected a ceremonial parade. After the inspection, he handed the Unit over to Major J. D. Payne, who marched the Squadron past the outgoing Officer Commanding. The occasion was well covered by the local press and television with the result that a

number of calls were soon received welcoming the new O.C. back to his native country. Who says that A.G. Branch has no heart ? Major Charles - Jones was dined out of the Officers' Mess on 17th June. The event was indeed memorable. We sincerely wish Major and Mrs. Charles-Jones and their family a happy and enjoyable tour in Singapore. June and July are the months in which amphibian training is at its height. In June, we completed our individual training with a B.II upgrading course, then gave a helping hand to 161 Amphibian Squadron (A.E.R.) our old friends. From 1st July to 8th July the Unit exercised on Staddon Heights, near Plymouth. The location was delightful perched on top of a high cliff with panoramic views over the whole of Plymouth Sound and the Hoe. The weather was kind and we had great difficulty in persuading the Wives Club and the party from Junior Leaders Regiment that things were not always like this. This exercise helped the new O.C. and the rest of the Squadron to get to know each other. Exercises were carried out over Slapton Sands in South Devon and flotilla drills in Plymouth Sound. Our gallant but ageing D.U.K.W's were visibly moved when a spectator on the Hoe asked whether they were new floating tanks. It was hard to have to say "no". We then exercised with a chartered , coaster in Carlyon Bay in south" Cornwall. This is an old haunt of the Squadron and provides ideal conditions for amphibian operations almost regardless of the weather. Of course, the fishing and the "attractions" of the holiday resort also help. Every member of the Freight Handling Troop from 17 Port Regiment under 2/Lieut. G. Townsend, has volunteered for the exercise next year! The coaster turned out to be our friend from 1965, the M.V. Cranbourne. The enthusiastic reunions left no doubt about our asking again for Skipper "Bob Curtis and his vessel next year. Having adjourned for the weekend, work with M.V. Cranbourne was resumed in Appledore Pool, near Fremington, as a demonstration for 281 No. 1 Advanced Transport Course which spent two days with us. We hope the officers involved enjoyed their visit as much as we did. We are happy to say that the D.U.K.W's remained in fine fettle throughout the exercise. Fishing and sailing have been our main sports and the Unit takes equipment for both wherever it goes. The trouble is that the fishermen, under Capt. D. B. Porter the operations officer are lobbying for a return to Carlyon Bay or Slapton Sands whilst the sailing fraternity (also under Capt. Porter !) want Plymouth Sound. Lieut, P. W. Snell, "B" Troop Commander, is busy in Barnstaple with the local amateur dramatic society. However, apart from other pursuits he has also managed to win his Army judo colours, a fine effort, on which we congratulate him. We congratulate too, L/Cpl. Davey, L/Cpl. Wilson and L/Cpl, Ingham all of whom were recently married. We wish each of them a happy and bright future. There must be something in the air of North Devon, for Major (Retd.) F. Watson, the Officers' Mess Secretary, was also married recently. We wish him and Mrs. Watson every good fortune,

1966 October Singapore

10 Port Squadron.—At the end of June 10 Port Squadron Lighterage Troops and the detachment 18 Amphibious Squadron were deployed on Exercise "Long Hop" with the Marine Commandos. The exercise involved working with H.M.S. Albion and the L.S.L. Sir Lancelot whilst engaged in beach landings with D.U.K.W's and Mexeflote ferries. The exercise was unfortunately marred by Dvr. Neal of detachment 18 Amphibious Squadron being extensively burned when his D.U.K.W. caught fire on board the Sir Lancelot. Only the quick action of Cpl. Wickenden and L/Cpl. Winfield, who pushed the burning D.U.K.W. out through the ship's stern door, prevented

serious damage being done to the ship. Dvr. Neal was flown direct by helicopter from the ship and was in hospital within 45 minutes of the accident. He is now in the R.A.F. Hospital, Halton, in U.K., and we wish him a speedy recovery. After a three day internal security exercise our "Army Sailors" and freight handlers were commended on their security guard work of the military port area whilst continuing with normal work, During Corps Week we reached the final of the Singapore Area Tug-of-War Championships, and after a tough struggle lost to 30 Battalion R.A.O.C, old champions of the sport. Two days later we won the C.T.O's Football Cup, playing against our sister Unit 37 Maritime Squadron: The Commanding Officer was neutral, having a winner guaranteed ! There is little doubt that the nearly 100% Squadron support helped our team to win.

1966 December

QUEEN'S COMMENDATIONS SOLDIERS BRAVERY AT SEA

THE Queen has ordered the awards of Commendation for Brave Conduct to : **Cpl, Royston John Wickenden and L/Cpl Norman Winfield**, both of the Royal Corps of Transport. In June this year, while off the Malaysian coast, an amphibious vehicle burst into flames on the tank deck of a landing ship. CpL Winfield was thrown from the vehicle by the explosion, but with complete disregard for himself reboarded it and released the handbrake. CpL Wickenden, using another amphibian, then pushed the burning vehicle off the ramp into the sea and stayed with it, and with other men fought the fire until it was under control. By their cool appreciation and swift action, both men prevented a serious fire on board the landing ship. Both N.C.O's have now returned home for duty with 18 Sqn.

1966 December

18 Amphibious Squadron. — All ranks join in congratulating CpL R. J. Wickenden and L/Cpl N. Winfield on their awards of the Queen's Commendation reported on page 334 and are proud of their bravery, coolness and initiative. The process of the integration of 18 Squadron at Fremington into the Maritime Group has continued and we have now changed our flag and our Unit tac sign to the Maritime Group Ensign. However, we are keeping our Port Task Force Tac Signs bright and clean for use on the appropriate occasions. In early September we bade farewell to S/Sgt Nicholas and 15 other members of the Unit who left us as a relief draft for the Far Eastern Detachment. We hope they all had pleasant and safe journeys. We are now eagerly awaiting the return to Fremington of those members of the Squadron who have spent the last two and a half years in those sunny climes. We were pleased to welcome members of 22 Air Despatch Squadron to the camp for Fremington Week, This is a week of concentrated, competitive military activities. The final event was an Officers and Sergeants versus Corporals cricket match. This was a most enjoyable (and entertaining) event. The result was never in doubt until the Corporals had lost nine wickets and the Officer Commanding, Major J. D. Payn, was put on to bowl. Nevertheless the Officers and Sergeants won by a comfortable margin. The visit of the O.I.C R.C.T. and A.C.C Record Office (Colonel R. K M, Parry, M.B.E.) was very much appreciated. We trust that he enjoyed his day with us and that he will accept our assurances that the wetting he received on the water was not planned. L.C.T. Aachen (Capt. D. Hammett) visited us for two weeks with the aim of helping our two Amphibious Courses to practice their skills with the vessel. However we were able to

arrange additional activities involving the L.C.T. On Sunday, 25th September the Officers held a Sherry Party aboard the L.C.T. and we were pleased to welcome the Mayoress of Bideford as our guest. On the three following days the L.C.T. and the amphibians of 18 Squadron were involved in exercises with the 2nd Coldstream Guards. We believe that they were impressed. On 27th September, the Unit was honoured with the visit of two Brigadiers. The Commander Maritime Group, Brigadier P. H. Henson, O.B.E., and the D.D.E.M.E. Southern Command, Brigadier L. C Libby, came to inspect the new Workshops location and to discuss the various availability and repair problems. The Unit is very conscious of the efforts which are being made on its behalf. Luncheon during the Brigadier's visit was arranged on board L.C.T. Aachen, which was reached by amphibian. We were joined on the beach by the Commanding Officer of R.A.F. Chivenor, Group Capt. H. L. Calder-Jones, O.B.E., We do not know if the D.U.K.W. ride to the ship upset the Group Capt. but he delighted us all by being winched from the ship into his helicopter on leaving. The remainder of the party went ashore in the L.A.R.C. belonging to A.X.E. (Amphibious Experimental Establishment of the Royal Navy). The Governor of Her Majesty's Prison at Princetown has also been to see us, but we hasten to assure our readers that this was not in connection with any of our soldiers but to arrange the details of the return visit of a working party of 12 prisoners to assist in the clearance of the Military Training Areas. The prisoners and their prison officers are now with us and we hope that they are going to enjoy their stay. We are pleased to welcome back to the Unit Sgt. Coulson, he is great strength to our soccer team which has lost several of its star players on posting recently. Early results in the North Devon Senior Soccer League have been very varied. However, the team now seems to have settled down and to be playing well. We have to congratulate Headquarters 3 Division & Signal Regiment who beat us five goals to three in the preliminary round in the Army Cup competition. Our congratulations also to Dvr. Butler who married Miss Doreen Colling at Durham on 3rd September, to Dvr. Robb whose wife gave birth to a baby daughter on 12th September, and L/CpL Stafford, whose wife also gave birth to a baby daughter on 27th September.

1966 December

Singapore

10 Port Squadron—We wish Major W. Moorhouse, M.B.E., and Mrs. Moorhouse every good luck in their new posting to 69 Air Despatch Squadron at R.A.F. Seletar. After a year's unaccompanied tour in Brunei Major F. W. Arnold, our new O.C., has arrived with his wife. We wish them both an enjoyable stay in the Squadron. In the field of sport we seem to do our part. During the recent Corps swimming gala at the Britannia Club, Singapore, we virtually represented the Maritime Regiment, and came second. We are well represented in free fall parachuting. A very keen nucleus of skydivers who pay their own expenses disappears up country most weekends. Full honours go to the Amphibious Troop. At the recent 1966 Singapore and Malaysian Skydiving Championships, Cpl. Wickenden came first and Cpl. Card second. The former did the best jump of the Championships with 4ft. 9in. We beat the R.A.F. in the team jump, by coming first! Cpl. Raine must be congratulated on coming fourth out of 17, in the novices event. Cpl. Wickenden and Cpls Card form part of the Far East Free Fall Parachute demonstration team and their claim to fame is falling into the Turf Club, Penang, almost on their feet.

1967 February

18 Amphibian Squadron.—All who have been stationed in North Devon or have visited us in camp or in the field will know the very high standard set and maintained by Sgt. Ferrett our Cook Sergeant for the last six years, now retired after 22 years in the Army. It was a sad day when we made our official farewells to him but we are consoled with the knowledge that he has taken up the appointment of catering manager at the "Goose and Gander" at South Molton. Many a promise was made to visit Sgt Ferrett in his new surroundings and to sample, once again, his special delights especially his curries. We wish him every good fortune in his new life. It has been said that once the summer months are past the Unit has a closed season. It appears that the summer, is lasting a very long time this year On October 19th we were especially pleased to welcome Brigadier J. H. Penrose, O.B.E., M.G, B.G.S., Southern Command. The responsibility for co-ordinating all the Army's amphibious training now belongs to Brigadier Penrose. We were able to show him our training areas and our various capabilities and we now look forward to an increasing use by the Regular Army of Fremington Camp. The tradition of R.C.T. Officer Courses visiting North Devon is now well established. During the last two months we have been visited by the Intermediate Specialist Maritime Course, by No. 88 Junior Officers' Course, and by No. 22 Short Service Officers' Course. Amongst our other visitors have been the Potential Officers' Course from 12 Training Regiment who spent a day with the Intermediate Specialist Maritime Course during the unloading of the M.V. Ronan which had been chartered for them. Some of the Junior Tradesmen from Rhyl spent a day with us as did the Army contingent of the West Buckland School C.CF. (which is affiliated to this unit). The Squadron team won the Maritime Group R.CT. Skilled Driving Competition and went forward to the Inter - Regimental Competition at Devizes. The Unit now has the Lifemaster type life-jacket in replacement of the old and well-known kapok life-jacket. Everyone is now familiar with the new equipment, which will be the subject of a "wet" drill practice next year. However the efficiency of the Lifemaster life - jacket had been "demonstrated" by Dvr. Jones (Squadron Headquarters clerk) during a squadron exercise earlier in the year. We can all now share his confidence, When the Warrant Officers and Sergeants visited the Officers Mess recently for a most enjoyable games night, the members of the Sergeants' Mess were given the task of marching away the wooden spoon. The S.S.M. (S.S.M. Dearing) has recently run a series of Civil Defence refresher courses. During the 'Rescue from Heights instruction an unnamed person said I thought I was here to sail a D.U.K.W. and here I am, 40 feet up, like a flaming tightrope walker, Capt. D. B. Porter who has attended, a driver testing course said that the course presented him with only one difficulty, that of the commentary drive in Salisbury on market day. As he put it "I just couldn't speak quickly enough. Despite the difficulties of the Camp Fire Piquet in lighting the bonfire on November 5th we are still much more concerned with their ability to extinguish fires. One important event in preparation for Christmas took place on October 28th when the Christmas pudding was stirred with the usual ceremony. A.Q.M.S. Adams, R.E.M.E. performed as the oldest soldier in the Unit, whilst the youngest was Dvr. Godden. There was some confusion when the unit soccer team beat the CV.D. Ashchurch in the first round of the 43 (Wessex) Division/District Minor Units Competition. The final score was 9 goals to 6, and the local press had to be assured that this was a soccer score and not a rugby one.

1967 April

D.U.K.W

AN official of General Motors of Detroit has provided the following information : :
"The letters D.U.K.W. have no particular significance" as such and it is pure coincidence that they sound like "Duck" which is so appropriate for an amphibian. Every General Motors product is recorded with certain letters appropriate to the type of vehicle and the letters D.U.K.W stand for the following :

D—Series letter corresponding to the year of production (1942):

U—Unconventional. In this case because the vehicle is an amphibian.

K—Vehicle with front wheel drive.

W—Vehicle with four wheel drive at the rear.

Variations have been suggested :

1. "Detroit Universal Kaiser Works"—as manufacturers. •!;

2. D—Type chassis. ^

UK—United Kingdom—was it a U.K, idea ?

W—Water. VI

3. D—Detroit.

U—Universal transmission,

K—six wheels.

W—Water.

Brave attempts, no doubt, but not quite right!

1967 August

18 Amphibian Squadron. — The various measures taken during the winter months appear to be paying off and D.U.K.W. availability has shown a marked improvement. This is due in large measure to the unstinting effort of the Squadron Workshops personnel. We should like to acknowledge their contribution and thank them for their loyalty and helpfulness, The O.C Workshops, Capt. A. E. Collinson, R.E.M.E., is a former member of 17 Port Regiment, R.C.T., and fully understands the unit problems. The constant flow of visitors to Fremington makes quite sure that we are never bored. It is especially good to note the increase in Corps visitors. Individually, we have been pleased to have Rev. A. D. Bartlett, the Padre from Maritime Group at Portsmouth, to visit us. We must mention one other visitor to North Devon in April, We refer to L.C.T. Abbeville (4041), under command of Capt. T. I. Frost. It is always pleasing to have the various L.C.T's with us and this visit by 4041 was marked by the volume of training we were able to complete. The revival of the Lundy Island exercise was a notable feature of this. visit to Lundy is a memorable experience and many a stamp collection is now enhanced by the various island issues valued in "puffins" which were, at one time, the island's unit currency. The Squadron signallers took part in Exercise "One Hole" for three days in May. This involved setting up a wireless net to assist the Secretary of the English Golfing Union to control the English Amateur Golf Championship Competition at the Saunton Sands Golf Club. It speaks highly for the signallers ability that not once in the whole period was a score incorrectly reported. It was a valuable exercise in K.A.P.E., as well as wireless procedure. On 2nd June, a detachment of D.U.K.W's assisted Slandaridge School C.C.F. (near Romsey, Hants.) on its Inspection Day. A demonstration was laid on by the cadets for the Inspecting Officer, Earl Mountbatten of Burma. It was a great privilege to be able to show Earl Mountbatten, a former Chief of Combined Operations that the World War II

D.U.K.W's can still give good account of themselves. We congratulate Lieut. David Peoperell, "B" Troop Commander, on his marriage to Miss Alexandra Margaret Cody on 3rd June. We wish them every happiness.

1967 September

18 Amphibian Squadron. — It appears that we have been masquerading under a false title since the Squadron, and its predecessors, entered the amphibious business. Apparently the unit title should reflect our equipment and not our role. 18 Squadron should be "Amphibian" not "Amphibious". This is now agreed but will not be officially published for some months to come. Whilst some doubt exists about our legal entitlement to do so, we have already corrected our title. The new G.O.C South-West District, Major-General T. H. Acton, paid his first visit to Fremington on 5th June, which provided the opportunity for the D.U.K.W's to be paraded on Saunton Sands and for the staging of a drive past and a demonstration of water work. On 10th June, the Squadron held a Queen's Birthday Parade. A "feu-de-joie" was followed by the traditional three cheers for Her Majesty and a march past. We were privileged to have as our Inspecting Officer, the newly-elected Major of Bideford, Councillor Harold Blackmore. Squadron exercises this year started with a return visit to Fort Watchtower near Plymouth. Again our two weeks there were enhanced by glorious weather, which made the view over the Sound magnificent by day and night. R.C.T. Vessel Mull joined us for the exercise, as did a contingent of the Cheshire Regiment, for a few days. The R.C.T. Staff Band was able to come to North Devon at the end of June so a Regimental Weekend was planned round their visit. A regimental dinner was held attended by the newly appointed Mayors of Barnstaple and Bideford and by Brigadier P. H. Henson. On the Friday evening, the Staff Band, after Beating Retreat in Barnstaple's Rock Park, provided their "beat group" for a Junior Ranks' Dance and a dance band for the Sergeants' Mess. On the Saturday the Squadron held "Open day" and was greatly invaded. Although the other attractions were well patronised the D.U.K.W, rides proved most popular. Quite unintentionally, the cook house made a profit on teas. The weekend was concluded with a church parade. The service was conducted by the Rev. P. Pearson, O.C.F., Vicar of Fremington and the sermon was preached by the Venerable A. F. Ward, Archdeacon of Barnstaple. On 1st July the Squadron moved by L.C.T. to south Wales for Exercise "Happy Valley". Capt. W. E. Thomas found us a training area suitable for our needs at Pendine with the Proof and Experimental Establishment. This was an alternative to our more usual haunts in south Cornwall. Readers may know that the world land speed record was broken, prewar, five times at Pendine. There is no truth in the story that we held D.U.K.W, races on the sands ! We returned the 230 miles to Fremington overnight. There were no D.U.K.W. failures on the journey. At least we proved that our 25 year old vehicles can still keep up with the modern breed. On our return part of the unit was involved with 3 Parachute Regiment. Each night for a week, amphibians met platoons of the "Paras" on Saunton Sands to evacuate them through the surf and by sea back to base (Fremington). The parachutists had earlier been dropped on Exmoor and made forced marches by night for two days to rescue a "kidnapped scientist" from the R.A.F. Chivenor. The exercise was splendid practical experience of night operations for us. We were pleased to be able to repay, in part, our debts to R.A.F. Chivenor. For those who do not know, the R.A.F. Station faces our camp across the River Taw. The R.A.F. provides us with assistance in many ways—not least by providing what we think is the finest local helicopter service available to any minor unit commander in the Corps.

On 15th June, the A.O.C-in-C Fighter Command, Air Vice Marshal R. N. Bateson, carried out his Annual Inspection of R.A.F. Chivenor. A section of D.U.K.W's, under the command of Sgt. Mitchell, took part in the day's events. Straight from his inspection of Hunter jets, the A.O.C boarded a D.U.K.W. and took the controls. He proceeded to drive down the new slipway (to the river) and declared this to be opened. Once on the river, the A.O.C was kept "interested" for some long time before returning to the airfield. We trust that the R.A.F. inspection went well and that we occupied enough of the Inspection Team's time

1968 January

We congratulate Dvr Blanche of 18 Squadron for being selected again to play football for the Army. Last year he played with the team against Southern Counties University and Cambridge University.

18 Amphibian Squadron. — It is with regret that we have to report the very sudden death of Major (Retd.) D. C. Bastow on 25th October, 1967. Major Bastow had commanded the (civilian) Administrative Unit, Fremington, since 1st March, 1963. Before that he had served in the North Devon area for many years including a tour as Officer Commanding the unit R.E.M.E. Workshops. He was, indeed, part of the scene at Fremington and was known to many in the Corps he will be greatly missed. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Bastow and her two daughters. The reorganization of the static chain of command has had its effect locally. Administrative responsibility for 18 Squadron now rests with Headquarters South West District at Taunton. The Headquarters of Devon and Cornwall Sub District effectively closed on 21st November. The Sub District Commander, Brigadier J. H. S. Majury, paid his farewell visit to the unit on 5th October. He inspected the unit (ceremonial) Quarter Guard commanded by Sgt. Coulson; and then inspected a Squadron parade under the command of Capt. I. G. M. Bamber. The Regimental Band of The Cheshires was on parade and made an impressive addition to the occasion. The hovercraft from 200 Squadron arrived at R.A.F. Chivenor at just the right moment for Brigadier Majury to greet it. This conveniently filled the gap between the parade and the Ladies Dinner Night at which Brigadier and Mrs. Majury were our guests. Following on a departure, it is appropriate to mention some arrivals. Firstly we are pleased to welcome, as our Corps neighbours in the county of Devon, 60 Squadron. We have already made good and useful contacts and hope to see a good deal more of them. 60 Squadron has arrived at Plasterdown Camp as part of 24 Brigade. As this Brigade is to assume special responsibility for amphibious training we expect 18 Squadron to become heavily involved with it. Already the Brigade Major and G.III have made a fact-finding visit and booked all our free dates for 1968. We welcome Capt. D. L. Jeremy, whose arrival from 47 A.D. Squadron on 13th November was unexpectedly early. He comes as the new Administrative Officer and Second-in-Command. We also welcome Brigadier (Retd.) T. P. Keene as the new Officer Commanding, Administrative Unit, Fremington. He comes to us from Battle Camp at Okehampton. As a local Councillor (until recently Chairman of Northam U.D.C.) Brigadier Keene will be a most welcome addition to Fremington. H.M.A.V. Agheila (Capt. R> T. Frost) visited North Devon early in October. This visit was in connection with the Annual Officers' Amphibian Course. It also corresponded with the prolonged, severe gales that struck the whole country. In spite of lack of sailing weather, we understand that the L.C.T. crew enjoyed their stay. Other visitors in the recent past have included the Boat Section-of 22 S.A.S. Regiment. It is with profound

regret that we report the death by drowning of L/Cpl. Anderson, S.A.S.

1968 March

18 Amphibian Squadron.—On the occasion of the Annual Administrative Inspection, the Regimental Band of the Royal Welch Fusiliers was in attendance, resplendent in their scarlet. The parade was inspected by Brigadier W. M. E. White, C.T.O. Southern Command. A gay evening was spent playing skittles, Lieut.-Colonel C. Adwick (S.O. I Transport Southern Command) astounded all by his shattering display of skill. The following day the Inspecting Officer donned boots, rubber, knee, to take the salute at a drive-past of the Squadron on Saunton Sands. The Officers' Mess was pleased to be able to act as hosts for a second year running to the S.S.A.F.A. Ball on 29th December, 1967. It is with gratification that all festivities passed without any contact with the breathalyser ! On return from leave the unit barely had time to unpack its kit before very heavy rain precipitated severe flooding in the valley of the River Taw. The commitment of the Squadron snowballed rapidly throughout the morning until 14 D.U.K.Ws were committed. Initially the call was to aid a stranded school bus, but this extended to sheep rescue in the flooded valley. While engaged in this work one D.U.K.W. was swept down onto a railway bridge, holed and sunk. The crew and passenger, including B Troop Commander (2/Lieut. I. Anderson) leapt for the bridge and made safety by the skin of their teeth. The D.U.K.W. disappeared in the torrent to be discovered 24 hours later one mile downstream, having negotiated two bridges (silent service please note). After a recovery operation lasting two days and involving much ingenuity, the D.U.K.W. was brought back "B.E.R.". The same evening, 9th January, the Second - in - Command, Capt. D. Jeremy became one of the first to be marooned on the west bank of the River Torridge following the partial collapse of the 600 year old Bideford Bridge. First light on 10th January revealed the full extent of the disaster to this vital link in local communications and D.U.K.W's were immediately called upon to provide a ferry service between Bideford Town and East-the-Water. Operations started at Bideford Bridge but were transferred to Instow Appledore due to the extent of the soft mud banks of the river at most states of the tide. On 10th January, D.U.K.W's carried 3,700 persons across the river and being the sole means of crossing, the ferry service continued until Sunday, 14th January, when it was suspended except to meet service needs. In all the Squadron carried 10,747 passengers in the five days. The D.U.K.W. ferry service enabled us to give Sgt. R. W. Cockle of "A" Troop an additional resettlement course. On the basis of his leaving the Army in two months time to become an inspector on the Hong Kong- Yaumati ferry, he was made N.C.O i/c the operation. We are sure that the experience will stand him in good stead. D.U.K.W's also aided the various survey parties who wished to view the damage at close (sometimes too close) quarters. Since it will be some time before normal communications can be restored, a limited commitment is likely for some time. Throughout this period, the Squadron has received much publicity at a time when the future of the D.U.K.W. is again under review. Perhaps we can claim to be the first unit to get an observation from the Command Secretary as a result of the B.B.C, T.V. newsreel twelve hours after seeing our operations on the national news. We welcome 2/Lieut D. McGregor on posting in to command the U.K. element of "A" Troop. Visitors to Fremington included The Rt Hon. Jeremy Thorpe, M.P. Major-General R. M. Johnstone, D.D.M.S. Southern Command; Colonel T, G. Steele, Director of N.A.A.F.L; and Brigadier P. H. Henson accompanied by Lieut-Colonel J. D. Lofts.

1968 May

18 Amphibian Squadron. — This period has been one of intense activity in camp with individual training being necessarily concentrated in the relatively short period before Easter block leave and the ensuing start of the Amphibian training season. Following a recent visit to Records, it was disclosed that a new manning figure for the unit, a prelude to an establishment revision raised the status of all drivers (amphibian) to L/CpL Thus the O.C. found himself with an orderly room of 29 all for promotion. A problem with which this leaves us is that of the vanishing race of good old-fashioned drivers. The Squadron football team has won its first trophy of the season, the South West District Minor Units Cup. This was won on the 13th of the month from 29 Commando Light Regiment R.A. in a tense final on a neutral ground at Tavistock. They now go forward to the Southern Command final at Tidworth on March 20th, On March 1st the Squadron came under command of 17 Port Regiment at Marchwood. The CO., Lieut. Colonel Lofts visited the Squadron on 14th and 15th March when he was entertained to a Regimental Dinner Night, followed on 15th by formal parades and inspections. We were pleased to have H.M.A.V. Agkeila "in port" at this time, having arrived for a fortnight's stay. Other visitors during the period were Major Cameron, B.W., G.2, designate at M.O.I, Lieut.-Colonel J. S. M. Walker, CR.QT. London District and Major Hudman, US Army, with 29 students from the School of Transport. Sgt. Coulson is to be congratulated on his promotion to S/Sgt

1968 September

18 Amphibian Squadron. — A detachment of three D.U.K.W's led by S/Sgt. Coulson and L/Cpl. Walkington, travelled by L.C.T. to Skye to assist T. & A.V.R. civil assistance project. Amid difficult conditions, they earned glowing praise from the Sappers, Dvr. Mills has learnt that being Duty Clerk can entail a rail journey to Skye, "carrying" a crated D.U.K.W. gearbox in a cleft stick. At this time the remainder of the Squadron was at camp at Staddon Heights, Plymouth. Part of the time was spent on an exercise run by 53 Port Training Squadron for the benefit of the Intermediate Specialist Maritime Course who were charged with the problem of loading a coaster in Plymouth Sound. Later a further exodus took place, this time to the Proof and Experimental Establishment at Pendine. A pleasant crossing in H.M.A.V. Aachen terminated in force 8 gale and driving rain. From shore information came that the camp site was under water. An offer of covered accommodation as an alternative to tents was gratefully accepted. The subsequent arrival of the D.U.K.W's was carefully coordinated with the Press and proved a distinct local tourist attraction. Before taking her leave, H.M.A.V. Aachen provided the basis of a night ship to shore exercise. Weather varied but enabled us to drive in placid waters to Tenby and Caldey Island. Here we renewed acquaintance with Father Joseph, our amphibious monk, whose yellow D.U.K.W. greatly excited the curiosity of Squadron Workshops. A series of "sporting" events against the local establishment left many with bruises and sore heads, not all sustained on the field. This period has also seen many visitors to Fremington. Yager Coy H.A.C., carried out a weekend exercise. T. & A.V.R. visitations from Central Volunteer H.Q Squadron H.Q's 264 and 265 Squadron and the R.C.T. Vessel Trevoise gave this an unusual slant on our own activities, We were also pleased to see a party from the R.A.S.C. and R.C.T. Association (Exeter) from Bristol O.T.C and from the L.P.D. Troop of H.M.S. Fearless,

1968 September

EXETER & DISTRICT BRANCH RASC/RCT ASSOCIATION

(Hon, Secretary: Mr. T. E. Rickard, 32 Colleton Way, Exmouth, Devon. Meetings : first Monday of the month in the Information Room, Wyvern Barracks, Exeter.)

SATURDAY, 25th May was a real red letter day for the Branch. We received an invitation from the Officer Commanding 18 Amphibian Squadron to spend a day as guests of both the Officers and Sergeants' Messes. A number of members, complete with wives and friends, left Exeter by coach and on the way had a good view of the annual Steam Tractor Rally which was held at Umberleigh, Devon.

On arrival at Fremington the party was welcomed by Major J. C. R. Hyde, and almost at once embarked in the famous D.U.K.W's. They were driven across the River Taw and then some of the most rugged, rough and uneven land in the West Country, which was thoroughly enjoyed. On returning to Fremington the party was taken to the Officers' Mess for drinks and lunch. Fremington House, in which the Mess is located, has some particularly fine carved oak in the hall. In the afternoon Barnstaple and Bideford were visited and the ladies did a good deal of window shopping. On returning to Fremington the party was escorted to the Sergeants Mess where a sumptuous high tea was served. Then a convivial evening was spent in the Mess ending with a marvellous supper, Without doubt it will be a day which will long be remembered by all members who made the journey to Fremington. Again we thank the officers and members of the respective messes for the welcome and hospitality given so generously to our Branch.

1968 November

10 Port Squadron.—At present we have men in Penang, Brunei, Hong Kong, Terendak and aboard HMS Intrepid, We are wondering who else is on a jaunt somewhere without the authorities knowing It is in July that the giant turtles come ashore at nearby Dungun to lay their eggs. During our exercise in that part of W. Malaysia we saw many tracks and a few eggs but no turtles in spite of many foot sore miles walked. We are now to send about 30 men on exercise in N.E. Australia. Our original swagman, Capt. F. S. Poole, R.A.E., with whom we have close dealings on the staff side, knows the exercise area and says that it abounds with mangrove swamps, dingoes, mosquitoes, scorpions and crocodiles. The ground is impregnated with arsenic and all water is hence highly suspect Our next notes will relate how it all went (if there is anyone alive to tell the tale). Although we were knocked out of the CT.O's Football Cup by 3 Squadron, we won the six-a-side, the Cup being collected by Cpl. Law. We later gained our second cup on 29th July when we won the 100 stone tug of war at the District Athletics. Our D.U.K.W. detachment became non operational on 31st July and soon all eight of these craft will be disposed of. First built in 1942, they must, in their time have sailed the shallows of all seven seas. We regret their departure and would like to thank Lieut. D. Pepperell, S/Sgt. Nicholas and all ranks for their loyal support and cheerful co-operation. Most of the D.U.K.W. detachment is being trained as driving instructors at Nee Soon. Among those who have recently left us for U.K. is Sgt. Connery. He played rugby football for 45 years, finally hanging up his boots at the end of last season, aged 53. We shall very much miss him here, and hope that he and his family have a happy tour in March wood.

1969 January

Exercise for Ducks and D.U.K.W's. UPROOTED from Fremington 18 Squadron took part in ^ Exercise "Swap" in Northern Ireland. To ensure the smooth running of the skills of the unit it was essential that the Squadron mascot be present whenever the D.U.K.W's were operating. Dvr. W. McGrath is shown placating DONALD DUCK when the latter had commented unfavourably on some aspects of "the brutal and licentious" who had been conveyed from H.M.S. Fearless to shore !

1970 January

18 Amphibian Squadron. — The Squadron flew out from England to Cyprus in the middle of one of the hottest summers for a long time a good foretaste of the 100° plus temperatures we have had to contend with during the first part of our tour with the U.N. Force. We took over the duties of H.Q, UNFICYP Transport Squadron on 15th July from 7 Squadron. We provide all forms of transport for the Force, from staff and poo! cars for the Headquarters to fuel bowsers, ambulances and sullage vehicles popularly known as " U g g y" wagons for the outlying contingents. Now, three months and some 400,000 miles later, we can look back on a summer of heavy motoring under hot and trying conditions in some of the most erratic traffic in the world. Successes in tennis, volleyball, basketball and, latterly, rugby, have given rise to dark comments from other contingents that we must have a Troop permanently detailed off for sport. Our ace cricketer, Sgt. Hoyland, was chosen to play with the NEARELF XI when the Chairman's XI visited the island. Without resorting to hackneyed jokes about web feet and D.U.K.W's to water, it is true to say that we are still very much water minded. After a successful swimming gala at the nearby U.N. pool shortly after our arrival, a number of the Squadron have had their first trial at water skiing. There is also keen and growing interest in subaqua diving, which we hope to continue when we return to North Devon. Two notable events took place in the first three months of our tour. In September half the Turkish Army contingent left the island from Famagusta under U.N. direction. They were replaced by a new detachment which moved to their camp in our vehicles. Control of Transport was carried out by us at the Famagusta docks and all our vehicles were employed in the change over, which took 15 hours. On 9th October we were presented with our U.N. Medals by General Martola, The Force Commander, at a parade at H.Q. UNFICYP. Thanks must go to the Band of the 1st Btn. The Worcester Regiment who helped | to make the occasion such a success. Celebrations that evening included cocktail parties at the Officers' and Sergeants' Mess and an excellent dance at the Squadron's Club, the "Wheel-Em-Inn".

We have been pleased to see Major R. J. Boyles and Capt. H. C. Hylden, serving with UNFICYP, and many representatives of 18 Amphibian Squadron, both on parade and on the rugger field. Another new arrival in Cyprus is Sgt. H. Brozowski, who is Mess Caterer in the Garrison Sergeants' Mess, Episkopi. He and our CO. served together in 18 Squadron.

1970 March

18 Amphibian Squadron (Main) we are at the end of our tour with UNFICYP. In retrospect they have proved six very valuable months. Apart from providing a welcome change from the rigours of soldiering in England, it has given us the chance to brush up on the operation of various type of road transport. Providing all the transport needs of a large international Headquarters has been an interesting and

rewarding task, which has taxed the adaptability of an Amphibian Squadron. We would like to record the excellent way that the small detachment from 19 Tank Transporter Squadron has enthusiastically joined with the Squadron in all its activities. The onset of colder weather reduced water sport activities, although the Scuba Club is still averaging two dives a week. Rugby is proving popular and we have reached the final of the Island football league. Squadron personnel have represented the H.Q. with some success in the Inter-Contingent Badminton League and Lieut. Steel and L/Cpl. Eells have completed a number of jumps with the Dhekelia Free Fall Parachute Club, Now that the snow has arrived we are hoping to get some winter sports at Troodos before we return to U.K,

1970 March

18 Amphibian Squadron (Rear).— Our Christmas festivities owed much to the work of the catering staff, and on this occasion we bid farewell to S/Sgt. Kermode who has gone at short notice to the School of Infantry, and we congratulate him on his well earned promotion. In addition to his normal duties he was responsible for whipping up enthusiasm for basketball our team is more than holding its own in the Devon league and is making good progress in the Minor Units Cup. In table tennis too, a Squadron team has made an impressive appearance on the local scene. The team captain, Dvr. Cullumbine, has yet to be beaten. Our congratulations to Cpl. Hutchings, on his promotion to Sergeant, to Dvr. Munday, upon his recent marriage, and to Cpl. Stables and L/Cpl. Redpath on the birth of a daughter and son respectively.

1970 May

18 Squadron.—There is much satisfaction over the upgrading of the Driver Specialist Amphibian Trade to an A trade from 1st April and the sudden interest in upgrading has been noted by the Pay Office, Visitors to London may have seen a DUKW parked outside Charing Cross station. Two crews took it in turns to drive around central London as part of the R.C.T. Display at Golden Cross House. The Squadron was pleased to welcome on 20th February, Lieut. Mehay, French Army, J'Ecole d'Application du Train at Tourse, for an exchange visit. He remained with the Squadron until 3rd March, a period which included the Annual Inspection by Brigadier D. O. Morgan, Commander 2 Transport Group, on 24th February. For the inspection, one Troop Group was deployed on Braunton Burrows Training area where they were visited in location. The inspecting officer made a rapid tour of the unit by helicopter, taking in a Regimental Quarter Guard at Fremington and Workshops at Instow in addition. Two days later we were pleased to see the C.T.O. Army Strategic Command on an informal visit to Fremington. We offer our congratulations to Cpl. Stedman, Dvr. Hart and Dvr. Rawlings on their recent marriages, and also to 2/Lieut. and Mrs. Anderson and L/Cpl, and Mrs. Hudson on the birth of a son and daughter respectively. We also say goodbye and good luck to S/Sgt. Bond on his discharge from the service. The Squadron now has a heraldic shield depicting a white DUKW with Fleet Insignia on a blue backing. Made in enamel and mounted on teak, these may be obtained from P.R.I., 18 Amphibian Squadron for 32s. 6d. plus Is. 6d. for post and packing.

1970 July

18 Amphibian Squadron. — Rarely these days do we have the chance of operating as a Squadron in the Assault Role, landing troops from shipping over open beaches as we will be doing in Exercise "Soleil" later on this month. With this in mind

much of our continuation training through March and April has been on the water and in surf, including some night work in the estuary that must have puzzled the masters of visiting merchantmen as the groups of small "boats" visible by their navigation lights suddenly sprouted headlights and set off up the main road ! Notable visitors to the Squadron over the past few weeks have been Major-General J. K. I, Douglas-Withers, C.B.E., M.C., G.O.C. South West District who included the unit in his visit to North Devon, and Brigadier P. J. H. Leng, M.B.E. M.C., commanding 24 Bde. visiting the area in connection with Exercise "Soleil". We were very pleased to have 20 Squadron to stay with us for a two week annual camp. We also had great pleasure in acting as hosts to the North London A.C.F., who impressed us all by their keenness, Old D.U.K.W's never die . . . this time one has gone to the Royal Armoured Corps Centre, Bovington. Apart from success in the South West District Minor Units basketball, sport has been uneventful. Our Safe and Skilled driving team once again came out on top in our annual struggle with 20 Squadron, by winning the Southern Command Cup and the Regular Units Cup at the U.K. finals at the School of Transport M.T. Wing. In a more light hearted sphere our "pirate" D.U.K.W. in the Plymouth Mayflower celebrations carnival attracted a lot of attention as well as some friendly abuse from members of the Senior Service on the message "Sail Army" displayed prominently on its sides ! The Squadron S.C.U.B.A. Club is now a going concern with a number of members already on their way towards B.S.A.C qualifications.

1970 September

18 Squadron.—Although only part of the Squadron was involved in Exercise " Soleil with 29 Bde, it proved to be a valuable exercise to all concerned. The Amphibian control system was practised to the full, and the DUKW drivers were able to carry out ship to shore passenger and cargo movement with ' live cargo for a change. Overall exercise safety was one of the Squadron responsibilities, and this resulted in some hair raising manoeuvres in the surf in support of the vehicles landing from the L.C.M. 9s of the Royal Marines. Fine weather helped to make the whole operation a success, although a patch of sea fog on the morning of the first landing caused some navigational problems for section commanders. The L.S.L. was anchored two and a half miles off shore and visibility at times was down to a few hundred yards! On 11th July we said goodbye to Major J. C. R. Hyde, who after two years with the Squadron, has moved on to a staff appointment at H.Q. 3 Division. In his place we welcome Major R. L. Martin. On 16th July the Squadron was visited by the G.O.C. Southern Command, General Sir Michael Carver, who met members from all units at Instow Fremington and flew over the Braunton Burrows training area. Another visitor was Capt. C. Forache from the French Transportation Corps. It is heartening to hear that the French Army also still employs DUKWs with their amphibious forces, although, unlike us, they have a number of interesting new amphibians on the stocks as possible replacements. Our first Squadron " broad brush " watersports weekend at Bovisand proved to be a resounding success, with members trying their hands at sailing, canoeing, water skiing, skin diving and fishing in Plymouth Sound. We must congratulate L/Cpl. Ivey of the Squadron Workshops, our canoe instructor, who has been picked for the Army canoe team. Once again Sgt, Hoyland has been picked to play cricket for the Army and the Corps, and we have a number of people playing for the local North Devon team. Our football season came to an official close with our winning the local six-a-side competition, but actually terminated with a match

between the Wives Club and the Junior Ranks Club, which because of the indifferent referee, was won by the former.

1970 November

17 Port Regiment "FOLLOWING the success of the A first Tracked Vehicle Driving Course at the R.A.C. Centre, Bovington, where all of the Regiment's six representatives passed and are now the proud possessors of Group H licences, we sent a further six on the second course who also passed, including the rather rotund L/Cpl. Worth who required heavy recovery from the Chieftain simulator. The Regiment continued to receive a very large number of visitors from many branches of the Army. Amongst them were the G.O.C. in C. Army Strategic Command. The Transport Officer-in-Chief (Army), the Director of Movements, The Chief of Staff Army Strategic Command, the Captain of H.M.S. Fearless, the G.O.C. South East District and the Commandant of R.S.M.E. Chatham. Brigadier H. B. Booth-Mason, M.B.E., visited 18 Squadron recently to say goodbye prior to his departure from the Army and presented the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to S/Sgt. Green, and L/Cpl. Burgess and also to Sgt. Burnett, R.E.M.E. Other notable visitors during a busy summer season have been 63 Squadron, 210 Squadron (V), and Cadet contingents from the R.A.F. the Army Cadet Force and Abingdon School.

There have been many small but interesting tasks for the D.U.K.W's and their crews, such as acting as a mobile film platform for the Royal Marines film team, ferrying Dutch naval personnel ashore from their vessels off Sandown, Isle of Wight and, together with HM.A.V. Aachen (L4062), transporting a team of Royal Navy climbers to Lundy Island for an August Bank Holiday expedition. During this task we assisted Fording Trials Branch, R.E.M.E. in the delivery of the first Land-Rover to the island. The vehicle was wrapped in a tarpaulin, floated off the L.C.T. and towed ashore by a DUKW. Once again two names dominate our summer sport season. Sgt. Hoyland has played cricket for the Army seven times this season, and finished second in the Army bowling averages. L/Cpl. Ivey from the Squadron Workshops R.E.M.E. has had a very successful summer in the Army Surf Canoe Championships, coming first in three out of five events. He is also currently running first amongst the Army competitors in the National Slalom Competition. Squadron football teams are now playing in three local leagues, and L/Cpls. Mitchell and McManus will be playing for the -Wyverns this winter.

1971 January

18 Amphibian Squadron.-Ex Poles is now behind us, and Capt. Dadswell, Lieut. Steele and A Troop have returned from six weeks "north of the border" where they were operating DUKW's in the Tay estuary. The exercise was notable for the large number of Polish personnel taking part and the small amount of petrol actually moved. During the Southampton Boat Show we had two DUKW's carrying the public around with a third on static display. Based on LCT's from 20 LCT Regiment, B Troop recently took part in Exercise Chuff (phonetic spelling). After weathering a couple of days "marrying up" in St. Helier, Jersey. the DUKW's hit Carlyon beach at dawn on 24 October as the first wave of the landing force. A notable event was the opening of the Squadron Junior Ranks Club. Thanks to the work of Cpl. Walton and his hard working band of carpenters and decorators, the club was able to hold its highly successful opening evening on 9 October. Major Zafar Iqbal, from the Pakistan Army

Service Corps, visited us in October to study all aspects of amphibian operating. Other visitors over the last few months have been a detachment from the Worcester Foresters, and a party of cadets from Kelly College, who spent a blustery but pleasant day out on the beach with DUKW's from B Troop. Capt. R. L. Coombes has retired after 25 years' service. We wish him and his family all the best and success in his new job at Bideford.

1971 March

18 Amphibian Squadron.—We had a visit from the Transport Officer in Chief on 19 November, the highlight of which was a damp and stormy trip across the estuary in a DUKW to visit B Troop on exercise. As a change from the nautical scene the Squadron spent a week on Dartmoor to complete the annual range and P.E. tests. It was pleasant to return to the slightly warmer sea breezes in Fremington. The Christmas activities included the DUKW borne delivery by Santa Kubinski of a 201b Christmas cake to a local hospital. We have now had our first batch of eight recruits direct from 12 Training Regiment and welcome some of the Corps youngest soldiers to serve with the Corps oldest vehicles,

1971 July

18 Amphibian Squadron. — Ex members of the Squadron will be pleased to hear that a replacement for the DUKW is again under consideration, with LARC V raising its head once more. The G.O.C. South West District spent a day with us in March and we were able to take him through some gentle surf. We also demonstrated that it is not all that simple to enter an L.C.T. in a heavy swell, by missing the ramp first time and hitting the side of the vessel! It is with deep regret that B Troop has to announce the final passing away of DUKW YPoo. She was BLR in April and is being returned to Ordnance. She was full of character and will be sadly missed. Full of hope, but with our best shots in Northern Ireland, we entered the Regimental Skill at Arms meeting at Browdown. We surprised our selves by coming second, one point behind the winner, and winning the falling Plate.

1971 September

18 Amphibian Squadron. — The Squadron's activities during the past months have been as varied as ever. A and B Troops each spent a week on Exmoor tracking, stalking, playing and basking in the sun. The two weeks saw not a drop or rain but oceans of perspiration. On the ceremonial side, the O.C. Major R. L. Martin, attended the Mayor Making at Barnstaple, the 2 i/c, Capt. R. T. Thomas, did the same at Bideford (the new Mayor being an ex-R.A.S.C. warrant officer who served in Egypt during World War II Mr. A. P. Hughes) and 2/Lieut. J. A. Dawson led a contingent of the Squadron through the streets of Barnstaple on the 27th anniversary of D Day. A DUKW was "converted" into a carnival gaiety and took its place in the procession at Plymouth on 22 May with 2/Lieut. E. R. Prewer in command. Sgt. N. G. Thomas excelled himself by winning the pistol shooting competition within 17 Port Regiment's shoot, at which the Squadron gained second place, being pipped by 17 Port Regiment's Workshop by one point. During the Corps shoot the Squadron supplied one member for the Corps XXX Dvr. C. W. Easter, a personal achievement indeed. Cpl. R. Mitchell came second, out of 58 drivers, in the Class B event at the 1971 National Lorry Driver of the Year Competition at Torbay on 23 May. In the South West District competition at Bulford on 27 and 28 May 2/Lieut. J. A. Dawson won the 100 yards free style event, whilst the Squadron gained second place in the

Minor Units competition. The annual cocktail party on 4th of June saw an impressive gathering at Fremington House Mess, including Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, M.P. and many local civic dignitaries. The display of Regimental silver on loan from Buifier Officers Mess and the R.E.M.E. H.Q. Mess was greatly admired by all our guests,

1972 May

18 Amphibious Squadron.—The day now dawns when this Squadron, re-roled as a general Transport unit, must move from Fremington in North Devon, where it has been stationed for the past 14 years. The history of the Squadron goes back to formation of the first 18 H.T. Company in 1878. It took part in the Boer War and was part of 4th Divisional Train during World War I. After post-war disbandment it reformed in 1922 as a M.T. Company and in 1939 was mobilised in a Motor Ambulance role. After evacuation from Dunkirk the unit reformed and in March 1941 went to Palestine, joining 4th Australia Corps until November when it moved to the Western Desert to join 13 Corps, part of 8th Army. It served throughout the desert campaign, including the retreat to Alamein and the final advance to Tunis. After World War II, and two disbandments later, it re-formed, amalgamated with 632 Water Transport Company and commenced its nautical role. In 1957 it was equipped with D.U.K.W.s and became 18 Company R.A.S.C (Amphibious). A detachment took part in the atom and hydrogen bomb tests on Christmas Island in the Pacific, a half troop went to Singapore during the Indonesian threat to Malaysia in 1964. In 1965 the unit became 18 Amphibian Squadron R.C.T and, as part of the Army Strategic Command Reserve, it has maintained a constant state of readiness. Recent events included a two day exercise in December, when 4 D.U.K.W.s, under 2/Lieut. Ashby, manoeuvred very carefully in and out of rocky coves and bays on the Cornish coast. On 11 January the men of 18 Squadron lined the route out of camp, as 12 D.U.K.W.s. under command of 2/Lieut. Dawson left Fremington for Marchwood on permanent attachment to 17 Port Regiment. With them went S/Sgt. W. Boyd, one of the mainstays of the unit, who has spent the majority of his 13 years in the army at Fremington. On 2 February the Squadron was visited by the Deputy Transport Officer in Chief, who was shown all the various activities being undertaken by the Squadron at present. Later the Brigadier presented L.S. & G.C. Medals to S/Sgt. Ruff R.E.M.E., and Cpl. Border. He went on to address the men, and allay any doubts or fears they may have had over their change of location. On the sporting side, the Squadron Basketball team again excelled itself. Aply organised and captained by Cpl. Hopson, they are at the top of the North Devon Basketball league and are proceeding very favourably in the South West District Championships.

1972 May

17 Port Regiment R.H.Q.—We must plead guilty to "Empire building" with the addition of Amphibian Troop to our ever increasing status. We welcome 2/Lieut. J. A. Dawson and S/Sgt. Boyd, together with 25 men and 12 DUKWs. All that remains amphibiously of the

1972 July

Northern Ireland

18/26 Squadron. — Thiepval Barracks has heard some unusual expressions of late. During the working day such phrases as "port" and "starboard" and "full astern" have

rung out. The cause being the amalgamation with 18 Amphibian Squadron to create 18/26 Squadron. Some revolutionaries see this as a step towards the creation of a new Cavalry Squadron and suggest embossing "18/26" on their epaulettes. (Shades of The Military Train and our two VC's Ed.) The amalgamation is proving to be a success and the occasion was marked by a most successful Squadron "smoker" which went with a swing. The war stories continue to become more and more vivid. A Troop's casevac ambulances more often than not are to be seen limping home bruised and battered after a day "in the thick of it". The Meat Delivery Service crew from B Troop is still holding its own in the NAAFI for the best stories. Judging by the size of the stones thrown in the last incident, we have decided that Cpl Hopson and L/Cpl Rowlands should make good fishermen.

1972 September Northern Ireland

18/26 Squadron. — The 18/26th continues in top gear sneaking all over the Province using its many disguises to good advantage and covering in a relatively small land area a vast mileage. In the inter sports league .HQ troop maintains its narrow lead. ASM Thomson and his "spanner men" must be praised for their more than able assistance to HQ in achieving this success. What with FFR, The Queen's Official Birthday Party, and visits from countless celebrities, there's been plenty to keep A Troop busy. Dvr "Geordy" Cockburn continues to hold for A Troop the much coveted "Best Squadron Driver" award. "Busy B" Troop continue to zoom about the Province in their glossy Bedfords delivering everyone's goodies. L/Cpl "Taffy" Brake, after being seen in earnest conversation with the Rev Ian Paisley, was heard to mutter that judging from the Reverend's comments about the weather, sunshine will soon become a civil rights problem.

1972 November Northern Ireland

18/26 Squadron. — The Squadron got through the marching season relatively safely, including the period in late July when Exercise Motorman and its intensive build up took place. The entire Squadron was either on detail or immediate standby for the whole period, and drivers were snatching sleep whenever they could. There were camp beds and makeshift "pits" in every dark corner of the MT bays and the Cab Hotel was also popular. It was during this time that Dvr Wilf Brown's wife earned the sympathy of B Troop his snoring also resulted in his banishment from B Troop Bays. Cpl Dennis Car showed how astute he is by operating the A Troop fish and chip van in the MT lines ; it proved an invaluable asset between details. D Tp at Baltykelly also took its fair share of the workload and in addition set up, administered, and tasked, a makeshift troop of 30 Bedfords scraped together from 8 Bde units to form a Brigaded Transport Troop. WOI Campey and Sgt Stewart thoroughly enjoyed their unexpected abundance of transport. Despite the increased operational activity social endeavours have continued with enthusiasm. A successful Corps Ball was organised for which we had the CRCT Lieut Colonel Evans and his wife as guests. Dvr "Taff" Jenkins earned himself a reputation as a charity dance organiser when completely on his own initiative, he raised £83 for a local handicapped children's home. The OC and L/Cpl Henderson played well to get themselves into the quarter and semi-finals respectively of their events in the Northern Ireland Lawn Tennis Championships, The Squadron football team is training hard under the whips of

S/Sgt Greeves and Cpl Higgs. Old faces include Dvrs McGuckian, Richardson, Connerton and Cope, but our hopes also rest on the new entry. Results so far include an 11-2 win over 24 Bde Sig Sqn and a 2-1 win over Lisburn Garrison.

1973 January

Northern Ireland

18/26 Squadron. — Some of the Squadron has seen the bright blue waters of the Mediterranean on Exercise Hot Sand in Cyprus. With two more sun seeking excursions still to take place, Lisburn chemists are running out of their stocks of sun tan oil. Dvr Jones, A Troop was our most recent casualty, when he was dragged from his minibus near the Musgrave Park Hospital by four men in hooded uniforms and kicked about the head before his attackers were frightened off by an approaching vehicle. He suffered a dislocated jaw and bruising but was allowed to leave hospital after a night's rest. Our CASEVAC details have again been the target for interference. On the sports scene. HQ Troop still leads the field after its resounding victories over A and B Troops in the recent six-a-side football competition and also at tennis. The basketball team has been in top form and under Cpl Higgs able leadership it has soundly beaten 39 Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (twice), Depot RIR, and and 233 Sigs Sqn. The football team has had some ups and downs. We hope for improved results now that Dvr McGuckian is back in goal.

1973 March

Northern Ireland

18/26 Squadron. — L/Cpl "Tubs" Machin with his 30 seater Bedford coach heavily disguised as an "Ulster 77 bus" (all those who've been here will recognise this famous name !) hit the national news headlines when his trusty steed came under attack from an IRA rocket squad (we suspect almost by accident) in Lurgan. Luckily they forgot to "pull the pin out", so with a loud bang and lots of tinkling glass, the rocket passed relatively harmlessly through his vehicle midships before exploding against a nearby 4 ton Bedford and injuring seven infantrymen. Breathe again L/Cpl Machin. Only days later Dvr "Spots" Brittain anonymously hit the "Daily Mirror" front page as the "injured soldier" being attended at the roadside by a nurse on her way to see her own wounded son after having just flown in from England. Once again we were all reminded of the importance of wearing safety belts when Brittain came out of this head on collision with only bruised ribs. A Troop stole the scene again. It had Sgt Aldridge driving the PM during his recent visit to NI. However, enough of this glory boy stuff and on with some nitty gritty facts ! In 1972 the Squadron did 3,500,000 miles of which A Troop claims 600,000, and B Troop 400,000 !

1973 May

17 Port Regiment

Amphibian Troop.—We have now completed our first year at Marchwood. During that time we took part in Exercise Symphonie 72 with the Federal German Navy, had a detachment in France, the Channel Isles, and sailed across to the Isle of Wight. A basic amphibian course was run at Fremington and as a result L/Cpl Swan is now amphibian trained and has left his office forever. The DUKW still amazes the unenlightened and last year we covered over 20,000 miles with our small contingent, S/Sgt Boyd spent his 39th birthday in hospital having a cartilage operation but is now back in training.

1973 November

17 Port Regiment

HQ Squadron.—Despite a constant drain on the availability of DUKW trained personnel S/Sgt Boyd has kept the DUKWs in his Amphibian Troop afloat towing dracoons for the Royal Engineers, transshipping stores in conjunction with LARCs of the Federal German Navy during Exercise Symphony, and has also produced them at a large number of public displays. One weekend the Troop appeared at Mumbles in South Wales which was holding its 500 year celebrations. On this occasion it was honoured when the present Lord Nelson of Trafalgar stood on the "poop deck" of one of the DUKWs.

1974 July

A PRIL 19, 1974: a memorable day in the history of our Corps, for it was the final parade of the DUKW. The last remaining section of this veteran of Messina, South East Asia and Normandy was finally disbanded at a parade at 17 Port Regiment, Marchwood. For this nostalgic occasion we were extremely honoured to have Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, KG, take the salute; and how appropriate, for it was he, as Chief of Combined Operations in 1942, who made the decision to obtain the DUKW for our forces. The day started with the Admiral arriving at the Town Quay, Southampton, to be met by Major D P Hutton-Dunton, who escorted him to a workboat commanded by Sgt Matheson. It is believed that this is the first time that an Admiral of the Fleet has flown his flag on an RCT vessel. On arrival at Marchwood he was met by the Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel S B Ball, who invited him to inspect the quarterguard, commanded by Cpl Coupland. The Admiral was then introduced to the TO in C (A) and Commander 2 Transport Group, who, together with Colonel Ball, escorted -him to the parade. The Admiral spent a good deal of time inspecting the parade and, at the end, gathered all around him for a short address. He spoke for several minutes on his involvement with the DU.KW and his decision to purchase Marchwood in 1943 for the construction of the Mulberry harbour. He finished by saying how sad it was to see the end of this proud vehicle. The DUKWs under the command of S/Sgt Boyd then drove past the Admiral prior to entering the water to take part in a sail past of all vessels of 17 Port Regiment. For this the Admiral embarked on a mexeflote, which proceeded to the middle of Southampton Water where the salute was taken. Afterwards, to mark the occasion, the TO in C (A) presented a silver Armada Dish to Earl Mountbatten at a luncheon in the Officers' Mess.

1978 September

The centenary of 18 Maritime Squadron was celebrated in St George Barracks, Gosport, on 9 May when Brig J D Lofts, MBE, ADC, presented an illuminated scroll recording the event to Maj L R H Coney, the squadron's officer commanding at that time. During its centenary the squadron has been equipped with horses, mechanical road transport, boats, and DUKWs, and back again to boats,

1979 September

DUKW Takes to Water at Fremington IT was nostalgia time for both regular and volunteer members of 233 Squadron of Volunteers during annual camp at Fremington in May. On a visit to the Fording Trials Branch at Instow, SGT Derek Fisk and SGT Jumbo Collins brushed away the tears of regret for the past years when

They once again commanded a DUKW on real water. SGT Collins was- a member of 920 (Amph) Company RASC (TA) and 920 Squadron RCT(V) from 1958 to 1967, and SGT Fisk served with 18 Company RASC from 1961 to 1965.

1984 June

Duck?

THOSE who served in the Second World War in amphibious operations will have no difficulty in remembering the DUKW which operated on the beaches of Europe and in the Far East. With the 40th anniversary of the D-Day landings being commemorated this year, many soldiers who landed in Normandy will recall the sight of this ubiquitous amphibian operating from ship to shore. A question often asked is what the letters DUKW represent:

D - the year of introduction,

A 1939 - D 1942.

U - The basic type of vehicle, e.g.,

C conventional

F cab over engine

U Utility

K - represents front-wheel drive

W - 6 wheel dual driving axles.

These letters were pencilled on a tablecloth when members of the committee which set up the model identification procedure were lunching in the GMC's private dining-room in the latter part of 1942. DUKW was the model and Duck it was. On 12 April 1974, DUKWs paraded for the last time in a Regular Army unit in 17 Port Regiment at Marchwood where Earl Mountbatten took the salute.

DUKW Doggerel 1942-45

Who will remember the Dukw?

Intrepid amphibian breed,

Many a hundred strong,

Whom the country has ceased to nerd.

Will they buy you up for a song,

For profit and greed,

To sail on the Broads, with white wake,

As prim as any peacetime drake.

Or break you up to make

Dukw-boards?

There is no telling,

Apart from the survival of your spelling.

Once were the seas that you knew, an inferno,

Dark with the dive-bombers over your head,

Waiting at Arromanches, the Rhine and Salerno,

To carry the ammo, the rations, the dead.

To ferry the Chindwin and swim trawaddy,

You were a name on the edge of a map,

Out of your cargoes was woven the story,

Of those who went down to disorder the Jap.

Lie as you may alongside the Skylark,

.Laden with day-trippers; shall not your keel

Strike you mad memories, out of the dark

Waters beneath you, like flint striking steel?

Bird of no common dukw, '
Ft edged by a stroke of lukw,
From barge out of trukw,
Fought with a mongrel's plukw,
Now that the hour has strukw,
Who will remember the DUKW?

DUKW Doggerel was written by Edward Smyth, who was officer commanding 44 Field Surgical Unit RAMC who crossed the Rhine in a DUKW on 26 March 1945 at Rees, where a DUKW ferry was operating, known as Lambeth Bridge. The detail concerning the letters is from material provided by GMC Truck and Coach Division, General Motors Corporation, Pontiac, Michigan. - Editor.

The End

