

NATIONAL SERVICE

NATIONAL SERVICE WAS INTRODUCED IN 1947 TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND RESOLVE MILITARY MANPOWER SHORTAGES IN THE WAKE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939-45).

WARTIME CONSCRIPTION WAS EXTENDED INTO AN OBLIGATORY PERIOD OF NATIONAL SERVICE FOR MEN OF MILITARY AGE. MORE THAN 2 MILLION WERE CALLED UP TO THE ARMED FORCES, OFTEN SERVING IN ONE OF BRITAIN'S MANY GARRISONS AROUND THE WORLD.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.NAM.AC.UK/EXPLORE/NATIONAL-SERVICE-EXPERIENCE

SOME OF MY MEMORIES OF TWO YEARS NATIONAL SERVICE IN THE ROYAL ARMY PAY CORPS. (WELL IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO)

OR

HOW I DID MY BIT FOR THE SAFETY OF THE COUNTRY.

WELL THERE I WAS WORKING AWAY IN THE MIDLAND BANK PONTYCLUN.



A YOUNG MAN OF THE AGE OF 20 SINGLE BUT WITH A GIRLFRIEND WHO IS NOW MY WIFE. WE MET JUST DOWN THE ROAD IN MISKIN. I LIVED IN CARDIFF SO WORK WAS A BUS RIDE AWAY. QUITE LONG HOURS AND A BORING JOB BUT QUITE GOOD WAGES AND LUCKY TO BE IN WORK.

ONE DAY IN ABOUT 1959 I PICKED UP A NEWSPAPER AND READ THAT NATIONAL SERVICE WAS FINISHED. SO I THOUGHT THAT'S GOOD. NOT FOR ME THEN. HOW WRONG I WAS BECAUSE IN EARLY 1960 I RECEIVED A LETTER ASKING ME TO REPORT FOR A MEDICAL AT THE OLD ELECTRICITY BUILDINGS ON KINGSWAY WITH A VIEW TO SERVING MY 2 YEARS NATIONAL SERVICE. A BIT OF A BLOW.



I ATTENDED MY MEDICAL WITH LOTS OF OTHER YOUNG MEN ON 15 MARCH 1960. WE ALL STRIPPED TO OUR UNDERPANTS AND MOVED FROM DOCTOR TO DOCTOR WHO EXAMINED DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR BODIES AND THEN I WAS TOLD I WAS FIT TO SERVE. AN INTERVIEW THEN WITH A SENIOR ARMY OFFICER. WELL NOT QUITE AN INTERVIEW BUT A TELLING OF WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. I WAS TOLD TO SIT IN A CHAIR OPPOSITE HIM BUT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WAS I TO MOVE THE CHAIR. HE INFORMED ME THAT I WOULD BE CALLED UP VERY SOON AND I WAS TO SERVE IN THE ROYAL ARMY PAY CORPS. THANK YOU AND GOODBYE. A FEW DAYS LATER I RECEIVED A LETTER TO SAY I WAS GRADE 1 FIT WHICH WAS QUITE A SURPRISE TO ME BECAUSE

DID NOT FEEL THAT FIT.

NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS

GRADE CARD

Registration No. PRM 13885.

Mr. TOMMY SENDER

whose address on his registration card is
49 Conway Road
Cardiff **CARDIFF**

was medically examined on 19/5/60.

Medical grade

on 22 MAR 1960 and placed in
GRADE* I diff

Chairman of Board V Dault

Medical Board Stamp CARDIFF

Man's Signature

The roman numeral denoting the man's
grade (with number also spelt out) will be
entered by the Chairman himself, e.g., Grade I
(one), Grade II (two) (a) (Vision).

N.S.55 [P.T.O.]

IN MAY 1960 I RECEIVED THE DREADED ENLISTMENT NOTICE I WAS
REQUIRED TO PRESENT MYSELF ON THE 19 MAY 1960 TO THE ROYAL
ARMY PAY CORPS TRAINING CENTRE WALLER BARRACKS DEVIZES
WILTSHIRE BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9AM AND 4PM. NEAREST STATION
DEVIZES. THE LETTER INCLUDED A TRAVEL WARRANT FOR THE JOURNEY
AND A POSTAL ORDER FOR 4 SHILLINGS REPRESENTING AN ADVANCE OF
SERVICE PAY.
SO NATIONAL SERVICE. HERE I COME.

NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS, 1948 to 1955

ENLISTMENT NOTICE

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE REGIONAL OFFICE

MILITARY RECRUITING SECTION (R.O 9B)

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE,

WESTGATE STREET,

CARDIFF.

3 MAY 1960

(Date)

MR.

*Llewellyn Seager,
49 Conway Road,
Canton
Cardiff, Glam.*

Registration No. *PRM 13885*

DEAR SIR,

In accordance with the National Service Acts, 1948 to 1955, you are called up for service in the Regular Army and are required to present yourself on.....

19 MAY 1960

(date), between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to:—

THURSDAY

ROYAL ARMY PAY CORPS,
TRAINING CENTRE,
WALLER BARRACKS
DEVIZES, WILTS.

DEVIZES.

(nearest railway station)

*A Travelling Warrant for your journey is enclosed. Before starting your journey you should change the warrant for a ticket at the booking office named on the warrant. If possible, this should be done a day or two before you are due to travel. If your warrant is made out to travel from London you may obtain a railway ticket at, and travel from, the most convenient station to your address.

A Postal Order for 4s., representing an advance of service pay, is also enclosed.

Immediately on receipt of this notice, you should inform your employer of the date upon which you are required to report for service.

Yours faithfully,

YOU SHOULD READ
CAREFULLY THE NOTES
OVERLEAF

I. BARRY

for Regional Controller.

[P.T.O.]

*Delete if not applicable

12A S13385 *175419 W1.73102 D1112 4/57 75M T&Co. G760. (S4).

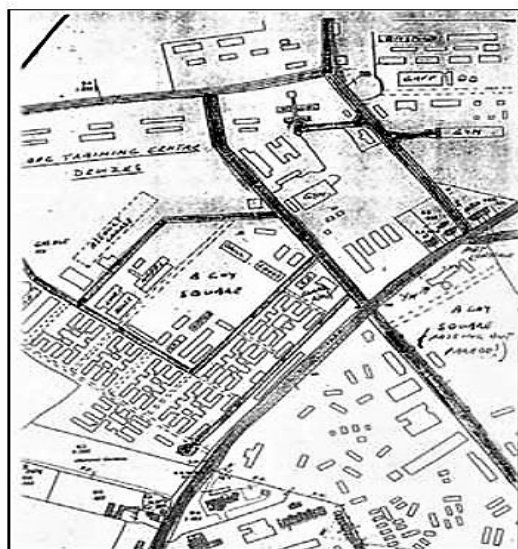
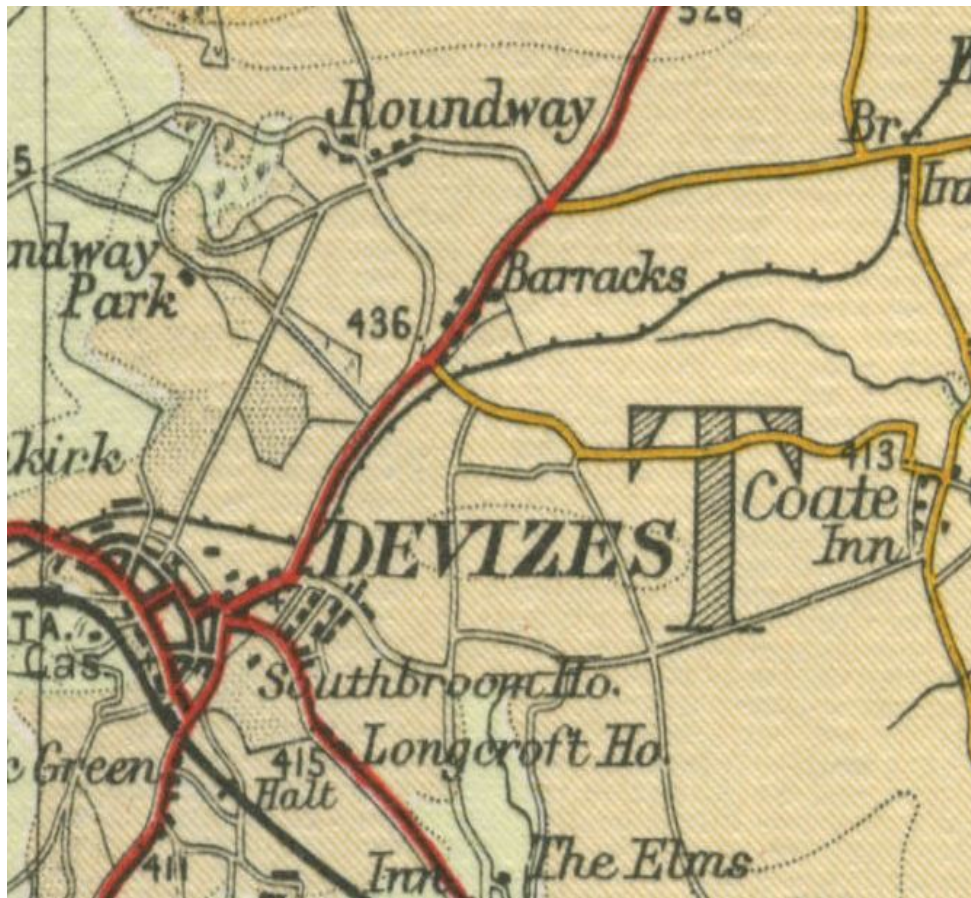
SO ON 19TH MAY AFTER SAYING GOODBYE TO MY FAMILY AND GIRLFRIEND
I CAUGHT THE NO 6 TROLLEYBUS FROM LLANDAFF FIELDS TO THE
GENERAL STATION THERE I CAUGHT THE TRAIN TO BRISTOL TEMPLE
MEAD STATION AND THENCE TO DEVIZES RAILWAY STATION WHERE I
ALIGHTED. (THINKING HOW DO I NOW GET TO THE TRAINING CENTRE).



I NEED NOT HAVE WORRIED. THE PAY CORPS HAD SENT A NICE LORRY TO COLLECT ME AND OTHERS FROM THE TRAIN. I WAS GREETED BY A SMART CORPORAL WHO WAS VERY COURTEOUS AND EVEN HELPED ME INTO THE BACK OF THE LORRY.



WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE TRAINING CENTRE I AM AFRAID THE NICENESS STOPPED. I HAD MY FIRST TASTE OF DO AS YOUR TOLD WITHOUT QUESTION. WHATEVER IT IS.
THIS WAS THE FIRST STAGE OF TAKING ALL DECISION MAKING AWAY FROM YOU AND THEN FOLLOW ORDERS WHATEVER THEY MAY BE.
SO STARTED MY 10 WEEKS BASIC TRAINING AT DEVIZES.



RAPC TC Map



RAPC TRAINING CENTRE GUARDHOUSE (ABOVE)

ACCOMMODATION

I LIVED IN A BARRACK ROOM WITH ABOUT 20 OTHER RECRUITS. SINGLE BEDS WITH LOCKERS. A ROOM AT THE END ACCOMMODATED THE CORPORAL IN CHARGE WHO WHEN HE WANTED SOMETHING DONE SHOUTED OUT A NAME AND HE WAS GIVEN A TASK TO DO.

THERE WERE SEVERAL BARRACK ROOMS AROUND A CENTRAL AREA WHICH INCLUDED WASHBASINS, BATHS AND TOILETS. AND A DRYING ROOM.

THE WHOLE COMPLEX WAS CALLED A SPIDER FOR OBVIOUS REASONS. MY BARRACK ROOM WAS AN OVERFLOW WITH LESS RECRUITS. IT DID MAKE A DIFFERENCE BECAUSE WE WERE NOT INSPECTED TO THE HIGH DEGREE OF OTHER BARRACK ROOMS.

THE PERSON WHO WAS OPPOSITE ME WAS A GUY WHO WET THE BED EVERY NIGHT AND COULD NOT COPE WITH THIS NEW LIFE. HE ONLY LASTED A FEW DAYS AND WAS SEEN NO MORE. I HOPE HE WAS ALRIGHT.

WE GOT UP AT 6.30AM READY FOR INSPECTION AT 7.00AM. THIS CONSISTED OF STRIPPING THE BED AND FORMING THE BLANKETS AND SHEETS INTO A SQUARE AT THE TOP OF THE BED. THIS WAS CALLED BARRACKING YOUR BED. YOUR LOCKER WAS ALSO INSPECTED AND OF COURSE YOUR UNIFORM AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

THE FIRST TIME WE DID THIS EVERYONE'S BEDDING WAS THROWN OUT OF THE WINDOW BECAUSE IT WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. I LEARNT LATER THAT THIS WAS DONE EVEN IF YOUR BEDDING WAS PERFECT.

A WEEK AFTER ARRIVING WE WERE GIVEN A POSTCARD TO SEND HOME WITH THE STRICT INSTRUCTIONS ONLY TO WRITE HAPPY NEWS OF HOW WE WERE GETTING ON. SO I WROTE SETTLING IN VERY WELL AND HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME.



WE ALL HAD DIFFERENT TASKS TO PERFORM ON TOP OF THE DUTIES EXPLAINED. MINE WAS TO KEEP THE OUTSIDE AREA CLEAN AND TIDY. ALRIGHT IN THE GOOD WEATHER NOT SO GOOD WHEN IT RAINED.



UNIFORM

WE WERE ISSUED WITH OUR UNIFORM SOON AFTER THE FIRST DAY. THIS WAS DONE IN A LONG LINE AND YOU HAD TO CARRY EVERYTHING. BERET GREAT COAT. JACKET TROUSERS SHIRTS JUNGLE GREEN UNDERPANTS SOCKS FATIGUES BELT SCABBARD FOR BAYONET GRENADE HOLDERS. GATERS AND RAIN WEAR.

HARD LUCK IF YOU DID NOT KNOW THE SIZES AND A TELLING OFF IF YOU DROPPED ANYTHING (I DID)

THE UNIFORM WAS TAKEN BACK TO YOUR BARRACKS WHERE YOU TRIED EVERYTHING ON AND STARTED CLEANING AND POLISHING YOUR BOOTS. (AN EVERY DAY OCCURRENCE)

GETTING INTO TROUBLE

MINOR MISDEMEANOURS WERE NOT SALUTING AN OFFICER EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE TOLD NOT TO UNTIL YOU WERE TRAINED TO DO IT PROPERLY.

BEING TOLD YOU DID NOT NEED A HAIRCUT BY SOLDIERS AT THE BARBERS. THEN BEING SHOUTED AT BY THE SERGEANT WHO SAID IS YOUR HAIR HURTING YOU. IT SHOULD BECAUSE I AM STANDING ON IT.

NOT CLEANING RIFLES PROPERLY WITH A PULL THROUGH. THE COMMENTS WERE HAVE YOU CLEANED THIS RIFLE THIS MORNING. I CAN SEE SPIDERS CRAWLING UP IT.

AND THE FAVOURITE COMING LAST IN ANYTHING USUALLY MEANT

FATIGUES TO BE DONE IN THE EVENING.
MAJOR MISDEMEANOURS LIKE DISOBEYING AN ORDER OR RUNNING AWAY
WERE MET WITH FAR MORE HEAVY PUNISHMENT.



MILITARY TRAINING

THIS TOOK UP MOST OF YOUR TIME DURING THE FIRST 5 WEEKS OF YOUR
TRAINING. MARCHING AND THE VARIOUS MOVEMENTS WERE TAUGHT.
SOME QUITE DIFFICULT AND INTRICATE. WITHOUT RIFLES AT FIRST THEN
WITH.

STRIPPING AND CLEANING RIFLES CLEANING UNIFORM AND CLEANING
BOOTS. THIS WAS INTERSPERSED WITH CLASSROOM LECTURES ON ALL
ASPECTS OF ARMY LIFE AND VARIOUS FILMS SOME I THINK CAME FROM
THE FIRST WORLD WAR. AND A FILM ON VENEREAL DISEASE.

LATER WE HAD SHOOTING PRACTICE AT THE NEARBY RIFLE RANGE.

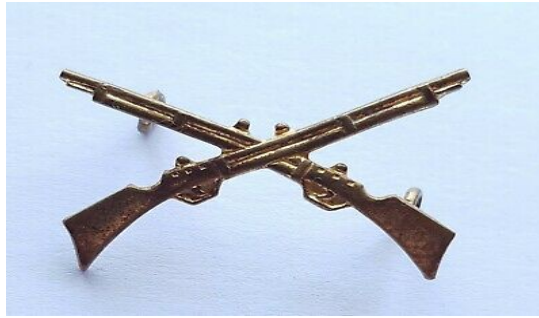
THIS WAS BOTH SCARY AND FUNNY.

AS WE WERE WALKING TO THE RANGE ONE SOLDIER WAS WALKING BACK
WITH A FACE FULL OF BLOOD. HE DID NOT
HOLD HIS RIFLE TIGHT ENOUGH AND IT KICKED BACK AND HIT HIM IN THE
FACE.

SO WE ALL HELD OUR RIFLE QUITE TIGHT WHEN WE FIRED. ONE SOLDIER
TURNED AROUND WITH HIS RIFLE POINTING TOWARDS EVERYONE ELSE.

(HE HAD LIVE AMMUNITION) LETS SAY HE DID NOT DO IT AGAIN.

I WAS AWARDED A CROSS RIFLE BADGE FOR MY SHOOTING. I AM NOT
SURE HOW BECAUSE I MISSED THE TARGET SEVERAL TIMES.



WE ALL TOOK A TURN IN THE BUTTS. WHERE THE TARGET IS. WE WERE DOWN BELOW HOLDING THE TARGET ABOVE. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I REALISED THAT A BULLET TRAVELS FASTER THAN SOUND. THE ZAP OF THE BULLET HITTING THE TARGET WAS HEARD BEFORE THE SOUND OF THE RIFLE GOING OFF.

WHILE WE WERE IN THE BUTTS UNSUPERVISED WE USED TO PLAY A GAME. WE WOULD HOLD THE TARGET UP SO THE RIFLEMAN COULD GET A SIGHTING THEN WE WOULD TAKE IT DOWN AND HOLD IT UP AGAIN A FEW YARDS TO THE RIGHT. CAUSED QUITE A CONFUSION.



THIS ALL WENT ON FOR ABOUT 4 WEEKS WHEN IT WAS HINTED THAT IF WE WERE GOOD ENOUGH WE COULD HAVE A WEEKEND PASS TO GO HOME. SO THERE WAS A LOT OF SMARTENING UP. I WAS GOOD AT IRONING SO IT WAS MY JOB TO IRON ALL THE UNIFORMS FOR THE PLATOON.

FIRST LEAVE

ON THE FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK WE WERE GIVEN OUR WEEKEND PASS. WHICH INCLUDED A TRAVEL WARRANT AND AN INSTRUCTION THAT WE SHOULD REMAIN IN UNIFORM ALL OF THE TIME AND WE SHOULD MARCH EVERYWHERE.

IT WAS NICE TO SEE MY FAMILY AGAIN AND ESPECIALLY MY GIRL FRIEND. PART OF THE WEEKEND WAS SPENT AT PORT EYNON IN A CARAVAN AND I RETURNED TO CAMP ON SUNDAY EVENING. TO BE HONEST I DID NOT WANT TO GO BACK BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT DID NOT BARE THINKING ABOUT. SO MY GIRLFRIEND ANITA SAW ME OFF ON CARDIFF GENERAL STATION. AVOIDING THE MILITARY POLICE WHO WERE INTENT ON SHOWING UP SOLDIERS IN FRONT OF THEIR GIRL FRIENDS.

FINAL FIVE WEEKS TRAINING

MUCH OF THE SAME REALLY. MORE MARCHING AND EVEN MORE INTRICATE MOVEMENTS. KEEPING YOURSELF AND OTHERS SMART AND KEEPING THE BARRACKS SPOTLESSLY CLEAN.

A FINAL INSPECTION WHICH WAS NOT TO BAD FOR ME BECAUSE I WAS IN THIS OVERFLOW BARRACK ROOM AND NOT THE MAIN INSPECTION ROOM.

FOOD REMAINED PRETTY AWFUL WITH USUALLY CRAWLING THINGS IN THE VEG. LOTS OF SPAM AND POM WHICH WAS SOME KIND OF ARTIFICIAL POTATO. I MADE A COMPLAINT ONCE BUT IT DID NOT HELP. IN FACT I THOUGHT IT MADE IT WORSE WITH THE COOKS DOING SOMETHING UNMENTIONABLE WITH THE FOOD.

WE DID HAVE A RESPITE WITH NAFFI (THE NAVY, ARMY AND AIR FORCE INSTITUTES) THIS PROVIDED SOLDIERS WITH ALL SORTS OF DRINKS AND FOOD AND OTHER GOODS AND WE USUALLY VISITED AT LEAST ONCE A DAY.

THERE WERE SOME LIGHTER MOMENTS AFTER SOME WEEKS OF GETTING TO KNOW EVERYONE AND LOTS OF SUPPORT AND BONDING INCLUDING THOSE IN CHARGE LIFE SEEMED TO GET A LITTLE EASIER.

ONE FUNNY MOMENT WHEN ONE OF MY FELLOW SOLDIERS WAS AWAY AT ONE TIME. THE WHOLE PLATOON TOOK HIS BED AND BEDDING AND HIS LOCKER AND BEDSIDE CUPBOARD AND PLACED IT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PARADE GROUND. HE WAS NOT BEST PLEASED BUT TOOK IT IN GREAT SPIRIT.

WE ATTENDED A MILITARY TATTOO AT ONE TIME. QUITE EXCITING BUT STILL A LITTLE DANGEROUS BECAUSE ONE OF THE DISPLAYS WENT WRONG AND A FIREBOMB WENT INTO THE CROWD AND ONE PERSON WAS QUITE BADLY HURT.

ANOTHER TREAT FOR US WAS TO TAKE PART IN AN ASSAULT COURSE. WE DID NOT HAVE ONE IN THE TRAINING CENTRE SO HAD TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. I WAS PRETTY HOPELESS IN CLIMBING THE WALLS BUT WE ALL MANAGED TO GET AROUND.

ANOTHER TIME WE HAD SOME NIGHT EXERCISES. QUITE A FARCE REALLY BECAUSE NO ONE KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING. ONE SOLDIER FELL IN TO A WASPS NEST AND GOT STUNG QUITE BADLY. IN THE END IT WAS CALLED OFF. A BIT LIKE DADS ARMY.

NEAR THE END OF TRAINING WE WERE ALLOWED A DAY OUT IN BOURNEMOUTH. WE HAD A SHORT SESSION ON THE PARADE GROUND WHERE THE COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR GAVE US SOME ADVICE AT WHAT WE MIGHT DO IN BOURNEMOUTH (NOT FOR ANY ONE'S EARS NOW) THEN A COACH TRIP ON ONE OF THE "ONE OF CARDS" COACH COMPANY FROM DEVIZES. A WHOLE DAY IN BOURNEMOUTH SPENT WALKING AROUND AND A PACKED LUNCH IN THE PARK. NOT DOING ANYTHING ADVISED EARLIER.

PASSING OUT PARADE

THE END OF TRAINING WAS IN SIGHT. THE PASSING OUT PARADE WAS BEING ARRANGED. THIS WAS A PARADE WITH A MILITARY BAND ON THE MAIN PARADE GROUND IN BEST UNIFORM WITH RIFLES AND BAYONETS. FAMILY AND FRIENDS WERE INVITED WITH TEA AND REFRESHMENTS AFTER WARDS.

MY MOTHER AND FATHER. MY GIRLFRIEND ANITA AND HER MOTHER AND FATHER ATTENDED.

WE PARADED EARLY TO GET READY. I WAS RIGHT MARKER AND WE ALL THREW OUR RIFLES ON THE GROUND SO THAT THIS WOULD STOP US DROPPING IT ON PARADE. I HAD NEVER DROPPED MY RIFLE DURING ALL THE TRAINING ALTHOUGH SEVERAL OTHERS HAD,. EVEN MORE THAN ONCE.

THE PARADE COMMENCED THE BAND PLAYED "IMPERIAL ECHOES" AND WE MARCHED PROUDLY ON TO THE PARADE GROUND.

WE DID A COUPLE OF MILITARY MOVEMENTS AND THEN WE FIXED BAYONETS. THIS INVOLVED HOLDING THE RIFLE BETWEEN YOUR KNEES WHEN YOU TOOK OUT THE BAYONET.

HORROR OF HORRORS THE RIFLE SLIPPED OUT AND FELL ON THE FLOOR. I WAS MORTIFIED.

WE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IF THIS HAPPENED WE SHOULD CARRY ON THE ROUTINE AS IF WE WERE HOLDING THE RIFLE AND AT AN OPPORTUNE

MOMENT WE SHOULD PICK IT UP AGAIN. THAT MOMENT DID NOT PRESENT ITSELF. ALL OF A SUDDEN I HEARD THE PARADE SERGEANT MAJOR SHOUT "PICK IT UP". AND SERGEANT BIRKETT BEHIND ME ALSO SHOUT "THAT MEANS YOU SEAGER". SO I PICKED IT UP.

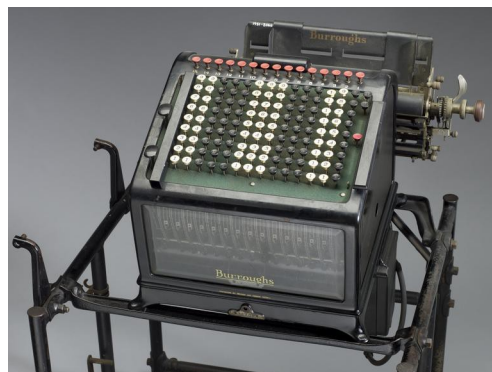
THE FUNNY PART WAS I WAS QUITE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN BECAUSE OF THIS. NO ONE SAID A WORD AFTERWARDS. NO REPRIMAND. HARDLY ANYONE NOTICED AND I OVERHEARD THEM SAYING IT WAS AN EXCELLENT PARADE.

WE ALL MET UP AFTERWARDS AND I SAID GOODBYE TO ALL THE FAMILY AND A SPECIAL GOODBYE TO ANITA.

THE NEXT STAGE.

SOON AFTER PASSING OUT EVERYBODY HAD THERE POSTINGS. I WAS POSTED TO A CAMP ATTACHED TO THE TRAINING SECTION CALLED RPO REME WHICH SUITED ME DOWN TO THE GROUND. AFTER A SHORT LEAVE I REPORTED TO MY NEW BASE ABOUT A WEEK LATER.

THE FIRST TWO WEEKS WAS A TRAINING SESSION ON HOW TO USE THE BURROUGHS MACHINE FOR RECORDING THE PAY FOR SOLDIERS OF REME.



ALSO A SETTLING IN PERIOD AT THE NEW BARRACKS. THIS OBVIOUSLY WAS A SLIGHTLY MORE RELAXED PERIOD OF ARMY LIFE. WE WORKED FROM 9.00AM TO 5.00PM EACH DAY IN A CIVILIAN TYPE OFFICE WITH CIVILIANS DOING THE SAME JOB (MUCH HIGHER WAGES) MOST WEEKENDS WE HAD OFF. ONE OUT OF FOUR WERE USUALLY SOME MILITARY TRAINING WHICH WAS HELD ON A SATURDAY MORNING AND FINISHED BY ABOUT 12.00 MIDDAY. A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS HAD LEFT BEFORE THIS TIME UNNOTICED AND ON THEIR WAY HOME.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE HAD A PICKET DUTY WHICH WAS SIMILAR TO
GUARD DUTY BUT WITHOUT RIFLES.

THIS WAS TO SECURE THE CAMP AND TO MAKE SURE THERE WERE NO
FIRES ETC. MOST OF THE TIME WAS SPENT SLEEPING SO GOD HELP US IF
ANYONE HAD TRIED TO BREAK IN.

RECREATION

SPORT WAS WELL CATERED FOR AT RPO REME I WAS PART OF A
THRIVING RUGBY UNION TEAM THAT WON ALL ITS MATCHES AGAINST
OTHER UNIT TEAMS. TRAVELLING TO RAF CAMPS AND AS FAR AS
TAUNTON. I WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO BE IN THE FIRST TEAM BUT WAS
ON THE BENCH FOR SEVERAL MATCHES AND OFTEN ACTED AS
LINESMAN.

I WAS IN THE UNIT TENNIS TEAM. PLAYING IN SEVERAL MATCHES. THE
UNIT ALSO HAD A FOOTBALL TEAM AND ONE OF THE OTHER SOLDIERS
PLAYED FOR DEVIZES FOOTBALL CLUB AND WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL.
THE UNIT HAD A GAMES HALL WHERE SNOOKER COULD BE PLAYED ALSO
TABLE TENNIS AND OTHER INDOOR GAMES.

DANCES WERE HELD FROM TIME TO TIME AND THE MAIN CAMP HAD A
CINEMA.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE WOULD WALK INTO DEVIZES AND MADE USE OF
THE MANY PUBS AND ALSO USED THE LOCAL SWIMMING POOL OR A WALK
OVER TO SEE DEVIZES CASTLE. THE PALACE CINEMA WAS ALSO A VERY
POPULAR VENUE.

I REMEMBER WATCHING THE LOCAL CARNIVAL WHEN I HAPPENED TO
BUMP INTO SERGEANT BIRKETT WHEN WE HAD A LITTLE CHAT ABOUT
THE TRAINING WE WENT THROUGH.

ON AUGUST THE 10TH 1960 I CELEBRATED MY 21ST BIRTHDAY (AN
IMPORTANT ONE IN THOSE DAYS) I RECEIVED LOADS OF CARDS AND A
FEW PRESENTS. THERE WERE DISPLAYED ON MY DESK FOR A LITTLE
WHILE BUT I WAS SOON TOLD TO TAKE THEM DOWN AS NOT
APPROPRIATE IN THE ARMY. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY FAMILY AND
GIRLFRIEND HAD A LITTLE GET TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE.





DAYS OUT

OUR FAVOURITE DAYS OUT WERE MAINLY TO BOURNEMOUTH. ONE TIME WE STARTED OUT EARLY IN THE MORNING. SPENT THE DAY ON THE BEACH THEN WENT TO BOSCOMBE FOR A DANCE. THIS FINISHED QUITE LATE AND BY THE TIME WE GOT ON THE ROAD TO DEVIZES THERE WAS NO TRAFFIC SO WE SPENT THE NIGHT IN A BUS SHELTER. PITCH DARK AND I AM SURE THERE WAS AT LEAST SOMEONE ELSE IN THERE TOO. I COULD HEAR TRAINS MOST OF THE NIGHT AND IN THE MORNING I FOUND WE WERE SLEEPING IN FRONT OF A CEMETERY. A BIT SPOOKY. WE THEN CAUGHT A BUS BACK TO DEVIZES AND SLEPT MOST OF THE WAY.



FOOD

THE FOOD AT THIS CAMP WAS SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN THE TRAINING CAMP BUT STILL PRETTY AWFUL. SO WE ATE OUT QUITE A BIT. IT WAS SO BAD THAT ONE OF MY FELLOW SOLDIERS (WHO WILL REMAIN NAMELESS) CONTACTED THE NEWSPAPERS TO COMPLAIN. WE WERE HEADLINE NEWS FOR A FEW DAYS AND THE CATERING DID IMPROVE FOR A WHILE BUT NOT LONG. THE CAMP COMMANDER WAS NONE TOO PLEASED AND TRIED TO FIND OUT WHO DID IT.

HOME VISITS

BECAUSE NATIONAL SERVICE WAS QUITE A LONG TIME ANITA AND I HAD AN AGREEMENT THAT WE COULD FORM OTHER RELATIONSHIPS IF WE WANTED TOO DURING THIS TIME BUT WE BOTH STAYED FAITHFUL TO EACH OTHER WHICH WAS NICE. SO HOME VISITS WERE REALLY SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TOO.

I MANAGED TO GET HOME QUITE OFTEN. A LADY WHO WORKED IN THE OFFICE WOULD GIVE US A LIFT INTO BRISTOL AND I WOULD GET THE TRAIN TO CARDIFF FROM BRISTOL TEMPLE MEADS STATION.


SOMETIMES I HAD TO HITCH HIKE. NO MOTORWAYS OR SEVERN BRIDGE THEN SO I HAD TO GET LIFTS TO SWINDON CIRENCESTER GLOUCESTER NEWPORT AND THEN CARDIFF. IT TOOK QUITE SOMETIME BUT PEOPLE IN THOSE DAYS WERE QUITE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU LIFTS IF YOU WERE IN UNIFORM.

GETTING BACK WAS QUITE A DIFFERENT MATTER. IT WAS TRAIN TO TEMPLE MEADS STATION BRISTOL. THEN A SPECIAL BUS TO DEVIZES CAMP.

THE TRAIN WAS EASY BUT CATCHING THE BUS WAS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT. IT DID NOT WAIT LONG AT THE STATION AND SOMETIMES IT WAS FULL. I MANAGED TO CATCH IT MOST TIMES BUT ONE TIME AS I WAS RUNNING DOWN THE STATION PLATFORM I TRIPPED OVER MY SUITCASE. BROKE THE CASE AND CUT MY HEAD ON THE PLATFORM. I MANAGED TO CATCH THE BUS BUT I HAD BLOOD POURING OUT OF A GASH IN MY HEAD. NO ONE SEEMED TO CARE THOUGH.

ANOTHER TIME I MISSED THE BUS. I WAS WITH TWO OTHERS. WE MANAGED TO HITCH A LIFT TO BATH BUT AT 12.00 MIDNIGHT WE COULD NOT GET ANY MORE LIFTS SO WE SLEPT IN BATH BUS STATION IN A LOCKED WAITING ROOM. IN THE MORNING WE MANAGED TO GET TO DEVIZES AND IMMEDIATELY WORKED ALL DAY.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE



GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF
EDUCATION

This is to certify that in the Summer Examination for the General Certificate of
Education held in 1961

THE FOURTH GRADE

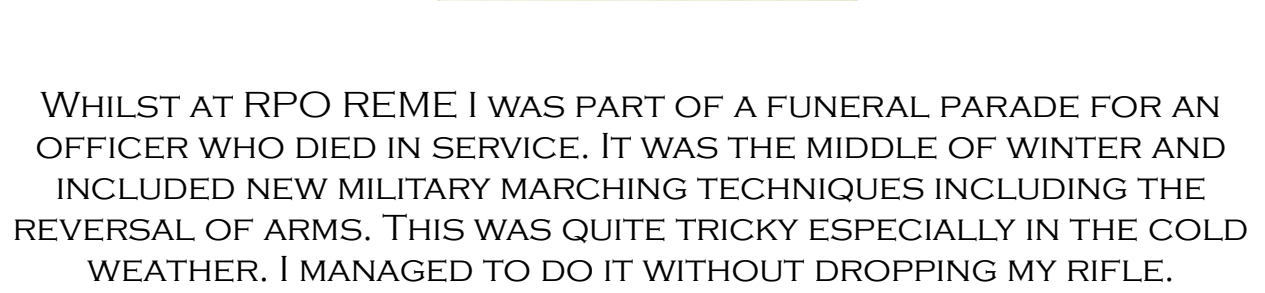
passed at the level indicated in the subject(s) shown below:

	PRINCIPAL OF ACCOUNTS	ORDINARY
5254	15	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS PASSED 1

H. Butterfield
Vice-Chancellor

The Ministry of Education accepts the examination as reaching the approved standard.
Signed on behalf of the Ministry of Education

T. R. Weaver
Under-Secretary



1800



I ALSO LEARNT A VERY HARD LESSON ABOUT NOT VOLUNTEERING IN THE ARMY. I WAS APPROACHED BY MY SERGEANT TO SEE IF I WAS INTERESTED IN PAINTING. THINKING HE MEANT PICTURES AND ART. I SAID I WAS. I WAS HANDED A POT OF RED PAINT AND A POT OF WHITE PAINT AND TOLD TO PAINT ALL THE FIRE EQUIPMENT ON THE CAMP RED. ALL THE ORNAMENTAL STONES WHITE. IT WAS AGAIN WINTER AND PRETTY COLD. I DID VOLUNTEER ONCE TO ACT AS A WAITER AT THE SERGEANT'S MESS DINNER. WITHOUT ANY TRAINING I WAS QUITE GOOD AT IT.

TOWARDS THE END OF MY STAY IN DEVIZES I WAS AWARDED A LANCE CORPORAL BADGE WHICH WAS ONLY AN ACTING ROLE BUT MEANT I HAD SEVERAL SUPERVISORY DUTIES.

CANTERBURY

IN ABOUT MAY 1961 I WAS TRANSFERRED TO CANTERBURY. I WAS POSTED TO RPO EASTERN COMMAND AND LIVED IN CHAUCER BARRACKS.

BECAUSE I WAS NOW A LANCE CORPORAL. I SHARED A ROOM WITH ONE OTHER LANCE CORPORAL. MUCH BETTER THAN A BARRACK ROOM.



WE HAD A SMALL CANTEEN AND THE FOOD WAS A VAST IMPROVEMENT ON EARLIER DAYS.

THE OFFICE WAS A SHORT WALK AWAY IN MILITARY ROAD AND WAS SIMILAR TO THE ONE IN DEVIZES. CIVILIANS WORKING ALONGSIDE SOLDIERS. BECAUSE OF THE LANCE CORPORAL BADGE I HAD A BIT OF A SUPERVISORY ROLE.

BECAUSE CANTERBURY WAS SOME DISTANCE FROM CARDIFF AND ALL ROADS SEEMED TO LEAD TO LONDON HOME VISIT WERE NOT SO

FREQUENT SO TIMES WERE SPENT AROUND CANTERBURY AND AT MARGATE, RAMSGATE HERNE BAY AND A FEW TRIPS TO LONDON. VISITING THE LONDON WELSH CENTRE IN GRAY S INN ROAD AND TWO FOOTBALL GROUNDS AT Highbury and White Hart Lane. ONE OF MY MATES HAD A MG SPORTS CAR AND LIVED IN LONDON SO WE HAD A FEW LIFTS.



MILITARY TRAINING

VERY LITTLE MILITARY TRAINING TOOK PLACE AT CANTERBURY. A SMALL NUMBER OF PARADES. WE STILL WORE UNIFORM BUT LITTLE MARCHING. TOWARDS THE END OF MY STAY WE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER MILITARY FUNERAL SO TRAINING FOR THIS WAS STEPPED UP. BUT THE FUNERAL WAS CANCELLED SO WE WERE ALL STEPPED DOWN.

HOME VISITS

VISITS TO CARDIFF WERE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. IT ENTAILED A FRIDAY NIGHT TRAIN TO VICTORIA LONDON. TRANSFER TO PADDINGTON AND THEN A TRAIN TO SOUTH WALES GETTING HOME QUITE LATE FRIDAY EVENING.

GOING BACK WAS EVEN WORSE. SUNDAY EVENING A TRAIN AT 10.30PM FROM CARDIFF GENERAL TO PADDINGTON GETTING IN

ABOUT 2.30AM MONDAY MORNING. THEN A WALK FROM PADDINGTON TO VICTORIA OR CANNON STREET STATION (NO TUBES) CATCH THE 6.30AM TRAIN TO CANTERBURY. GETTING IN ABOUT ABOUT 8.00AM AND A WALK TO THE CAMPSITE. WE THEN STARTED WORK AT 9.00AM UNTIL 5.00PM AND THEN STRAIGHT TO BED.

ONE WEEKEND I HITCH-HIKED TO PLYMOUTH TO SPEND THE TIME WITH MY UNCLE AND AUNT. IT TOOK MOST OF A FRIDAY BECAUSE ALL ROADS WERE TAKING ME BACK TO LONDON.

END OF NATIONAL SERVICE

IN MARCH 1962 WE HAD A LITTLE SCARE. THE MILITARY HAD MISCALCULATED THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL THEY WOULD NEED TO CARRY ON. SOME SOLDIERS WOULD HAVE TO SERVE ANOTHER 6 MONTHS TO MEET THIS NEED.

FORTUNATELY I WAS NOT ONE OF THEM.

SO IN MAY 1962 I HANDED IN MY UNIFORM (WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT) AND ON 17 MAY 1962 I SAID GOODBYE TO ALL MY MATES AND TOOK THE TRAIN HOME.

AFTER NATIONAL SERVICE

ABOUT A WEEK LATER I REPORTED TO THE MIDLAND BANK LTD TRAINING CENTRE IN BRISTOL FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS BANKING TRAINING. NATIONAL SERVICE HAD MADE ME A BIT RESTLESS AND WHEN I HEARD THAT I WAS BEING POSTED TO MOUNTAIN ASH I DECIDED TO LEAVE AND START A NEW CAREER WITH CARDIFF CITY COUNCIL IN THEIR FINANCE DEPARTMENT. THE REST IS HISTORY.

WHERE HAS IT ALL GONE

EVERY PLACE I STAYED ON NATIONAL SERVICE HAS NOW GONE

RAPC TRAINING CENTRE AND RPO REME NOW AN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



ALTHOUGH THERE IS A PLAQUE TO SAY WHERE IT WAS



THE RIFLE RANGE NOW BACK TO FARMLAND



CHAUCER BARRACKS CANTERBURY
HOUSING ESTATE AND CAR PARK



RPO WESTERN COMMAND

ONLY JUST DEMOLISHED



THE END