

9 o'clock heard "fall-in" sounded and everybody smartly on parade. Colonel Rickman was a stickler for discipline and transgressors at this time were "for it".

"Specialists" marched off to their own jobs, (unless the orders were battalion work). The "band" became "Stretcher Bearers". The "Sanitary Squad" enjoyed their buckets and spades for awhile, then severely roused any careless "orderly" who had been unfortunate enough to drop a potato peeling or a match stick around the door of his hut.

The "Water Cart" team was always a bag of mystery and what they did, nobody really knew. Some said they did not know themselves, but the boys from Chorley under Corporal Harrison were wise and as wily as a cage of monkeys, so they won on points or shall we say taps, and were better left alone with their tanks of water and little tins of Chloride of lime.

Their brew of the latest rumours of stories - "Straight from the water-cart" earned them their keep, if nothing else did, although if the truth were known most of the rumours originated in the "cook-house", "the horses mouth" and other places where men perforce did congregate.

The "Lewis Gunner" and "Signallers" were rather "highbrow" or in more modern language somewhat of the "Old School tie" type. Their calling in life put them in the class of brain-workers and dignity was the acquisition. They usually retired to some quiet corner and were oblivious to all but their job of work.

In contrast were the burly "Bombers" - real swash-buckling lads built for the job. They were housed in two separate huts and whether this was for their own welfare or for the peace of mind of the rest of the battalion is not known.

They were tough and nursed their bombs and gun-cotton as a mother her first-born.

Tears of affection (or was it sweat) streamed down their faces as they flung their little charges from them and even the mother earth groaned and quaked with intense feeling as the little petted things changed into tiny wisps of smoke and flitted merrily away like fairies dancing in the woodlands.

The "cooks" and quartermasters did not parade. They were busy, but the "police" under "Old Nick" were usually there, somewhere near our general factotums, the "Pioneers" and hidden away in strange nooks and crannies were the "Batmen", "Messwaiters" "Orderlies" "Grooms" "Postmen" "Tailors" "Cobblers" "Orderly Room Staff" and sometimes "Prisoners" and "Detention" men. Hidden round the back of the huts were the "transport" busily engaged in cleaning harness and limbers or knocking some poor old moke into shape.

When one considers the size and variety of the great family, the trouble of training, feeding, clothing and cleansing, of discipline and medical attention, it is no small wonder that our Colonel got "cross" sometimes.

Dinner was usually a big meal, then training in the afternoon with tea about 5 and the evening off unless there were night manoeuvres or a guard duty. At Hurdcott there was not much to do with one's spare time and the Canteens and Y.M.C.A. were the most popular rendez-vous if one did not feel like a long walk into the village.