

Pontoon was very popular in the huts but usually the stakes were small. The handsome remuneration of 7/- per week, less insurance, less barrack damages, less home allowance, if any, did not allow for much plunging, but the odd coppers were useful and they went round and round and usually ended in the canteen where they did not go round any more, although this faculty usually possessed the late owner when he got outside.

After "lights out" at 10 o'clock, "night life" blossomed forth.

To see four or five fellows leaning over a table playing pontoon, with a candle for lighting and the men, table, cards and candle all enveloped in a blanket, to keep the light from being seen from outside, was an education. Usually they were all smoking and might have been in a world of their own had it not been for the h ads that kept popping out of the blanket for a breather.

This was, of course, good training for the blanket gas masks that they were to wear later, but it was very annoying to the tired Tommies, lying on their bags of straw just nearby, who were trying to get some sleep, especially when at some exciting moment the form toppled over and dumped the whole struggling mass over them.

Even this did not stop the play which often carried on until the small wee hours, only disturbed by the smothered curses of a disgusted and weary sleeper.

Although it was late in the year and there was lots of rain, there were also some glorious days with a touch of frost and a keen air which tempted one to have a good hard tramp.

Salisbury was always an interesting trip and put one in touch with civilization for a brief spell. The old town with its imposing cathedral teemed with chaki clad figures, all with a mission, shopping, amusements, fresh beer or a girl friend, with some visiting the photographers and those with funds indulging in a good feed.

It is astounding how feeds are important chapters in a soldier's life and this particular story started with the "borrowing" of a dog.

A member of No.13 platoon who had "romany" inclinations had spotted a whippet in a cottage whilst the Coy. was on the march one day and decided the evening before an "off" day to obtain a loan of the animal for a rabiting expedition. This was done successfully in the dark, without the owner knowing, and between the hours of 9 and 11, the boys in the hut were kept well amused with his antics in training the agile hunter.

The following day the romany and a pal and the dog went forth over the moors taking with them entrenching tools and valises. Bunnies were dug out and thrown ten yards in front of the dog and if he caught them they were duly bagged. There were so many holes that the dog caught about one in ten. He was not fast enough for the hares but some good chases were enjoyed. Twice during the day the hunters became the hunted as the game-keepers did not appear to approve of this kind of sport.

Late afternoon saw the happy trio returning with a big load of rabbits all nice and plump and they were not long before they were cleaned, skinned and ready to go into the buckets of water heating on the stoves. Cook-house supplied a bit of beef and some seasoning and by 8 o'clock the buckets gave out an odour that was delicious to the hungry souls who were eagerly waiting.