

HRH The Princess Royal visits the Junior Leaders Regiment – 12th June 1959



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Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, C.I., G.C.V.G., G.B.E., T.D., R.R.C, D.C.L., I.L.O., Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Corps of Signals, visited the Junior Leaders' Regiment at Denbury on June 12.

Denbury Camp is located in the green, undulating hills of South Devon; washed on one side by the waters of the English Channel and bounded to the North by rambling Dartmoor.

In pre-Christian times, rumour says Roman Legions marched close by, and rugged Saxons tilled the rolling soil until the coming of the Normans, Later, it was from this area that England's mighty explorers and adventurers set sail for new worlds.

It seems fitting, therefore, that it is in surroundings such as these, steeped in tradition and bold legend, that the future warriors of a nuclear-age are being trained to take their place in the Corps.

It was to a Regiment, proud as the land to which it belongs, that Princess Mary came on a warm June day.

She flew to Exeter with her Lady-in-Waiting, Lady Paynter, where she was met by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, The Right Honourable Lord Roborough, J.P., Major-General M. S. Wheatley, C.B., C.B.E., Representative Colonel Commandant, Brigadier F. W. P. Bradford, M.B.E., Her A.D.C. for the day was Captain M. A. T. Hartnett of the Junior Leaders' Regiment, Colonel R. M. Bacon, Chief Constable of Devon, travelled in the leading car.

Third Meeting

The Princess in her uniform as Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Corps of Signals was greeted by the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel L. H. M. Gregory, M.B.E., who then presented Major S. F. Dunkley, the second-in-command, and the Adjutant, Captain P. S. Davis.

For Colonel Gregory this was the third occasion he has met the Princess Royal. He was first presented to her in 1949 at Edinburgh as the composer of the "Signals Reel," a Scottish country dance which has become part of the Corps tradition. Seven years later he again appeared before her at St. James' Palace, London, to receive her Royal Banner as the original Commanding Officer of the famous Gurkha Signal Regiment of Her Majesty's Brigade of Gurkhas.

The Princess immediately walked to the parade ground and took the Royal Salute before inspecting the 369 boys on parade under Junior Regimental-Sergeant-Major B. J. Cole. Carrying the Standard was Junior Sergeant H. Henderson, and the guard was made up of Junior Signalmen, Coope and Pickens. They had been especially trained for this duty by Sergeant R. Peake, and were in "blues" specially shipped from the Four Divisional Signal Regiment.

The Corps of Drums was also in "blues" under Junior Drum-Major J. Fisher.

Following her inspection, the Princess returned to the saluting dais to watch an impressive march past. She then addressed the Regiment.

The Princess said that throughout the world today, in all walks of life, there existed an urgent need for sober, honest, and imaginative leadership.

A Great Mission

"Seldom has a greater mission been entrusted to my Corps than the maintenance of a ceaseless watch over communications so vital to our Commonwealth and International obligations. The task is one of high trust and a challenge to the skill and integrity of all ranks in my Corps," she said.

"Should the horror of war burst upon us again these activities will be extended on to the battlefield and we must bear ourselves there, with courage and fortitude, as we have done in the past."

"The eyes of every Regiment of my Corps are upon you," she told the boys on parade, "they are keen to receive you as full and equal members, and potential junior leaders, of the Corps to which we all are proud to belong. You may be assured of their help, their encouragement, and their support. You must not fail to live up to the standards they have set for you."

The Princess Royal continued by congratulating the boxing team for their recent fine performances, and she said she was delighted to see the variety which the training programme offers. She believed that visits, such as the one to Norway, and the participation in the International Marches in Nijmegen planned for this July, were of good value; and she wished the newly-formed Regimental Choir every success when it makes its first appearance in London next year.

She announced that academic, military and trade training would be knitted together more closely because it is felt this will give greater continuity and closer command in Troops and further opportunities for leadership training.

"The interests of your Social and Games Clubs are to be widened and affiliated to schools and Youth Clubs in the towns and villages that surround you," the Princess Royal said. She was convinced the boys would be a credit to the Corps wherever they went.

In conclusion, she said: "I have asked your Commanding Officer to grant you a holiday on the 27th of June to mark the occasion of this my first visit to my Junior Leaders' Regiment. I am pleased to learn from him that you will be holding a Carnival on that day open to the public of Newton Abbot." She then congratulated the boys on their excellent turn-out and bearing.

After the Parade, the Princess Royal and Her Lady-in-Waiting were escorted to lunch in the Officers' Mess. One of the first people to greet her here was the 13-year-old daughter of the Second-in-Command, Karen Dunkley. She presented the Princess with a bouquet of red and cream roses.

The officers of the Regiment and their wives were presented to the Princess Royal. During lunch part of the string section of the Corps Band, under Lance-Corporal Simpson, played selections from "My Fair Lady" and the music of Ivor Novello.

Lunch had been prepared under the expert guidance of award winning Captain Arymar, and Warrant Officers Lawton and Munt, of the Army Catering Corps. It consisted of fresh Salmon, braised ham with new potatoes and peas, followed by strawberries and Devonshire cream.

Next came a tour of the camp. Along the way she watched with interest a demonstration of "Outward Bounding" which Second Lieutenant A. Sproul had organised. She spoke to members of the Recruit Troop and saw the hobbies centre, NAAFI, and M.R.S., where there were three sick boys.

Later, on one of the sports' fields, where big marquees had been specially erected, the Princess attended a tea-party with the wives and men of the Regiment. As the time of her departure neared, she moved informally chatting with Junior Leaders and Sergeants.

At a few minutes past five in the evening, she left the camp to return to Exeter Airport where she met Her Majesty the Queen Mother, who had just completed a tour of the South-West. The Royal Party returned to London.

It was quite obvious throughout the Princess Royal's all-too-brief stay at Denbury, that she had captured the affection of all those around her. The boys felt rewarded after the long hours they had spent rehearsing—in particular the Corps of Drums.

Besides being memorable to the Regiment the Royal visit will be remembered by the hundreds of civilians who lined the route from Denbury to Exeter cheering as the Princess Royal passed by. For many of the local school children who watched the ceremony on the parade ground in the morning, it was the first time they had seen a member of the Royal family.

Undoubtedly the Princess Royal has left a mark on the hearts of all who were present, and greatly enhanced the ever-growing reputation of Her Junior Leaders' Regiment in Devon.

Many thanks go to Barry Cole for the following photos





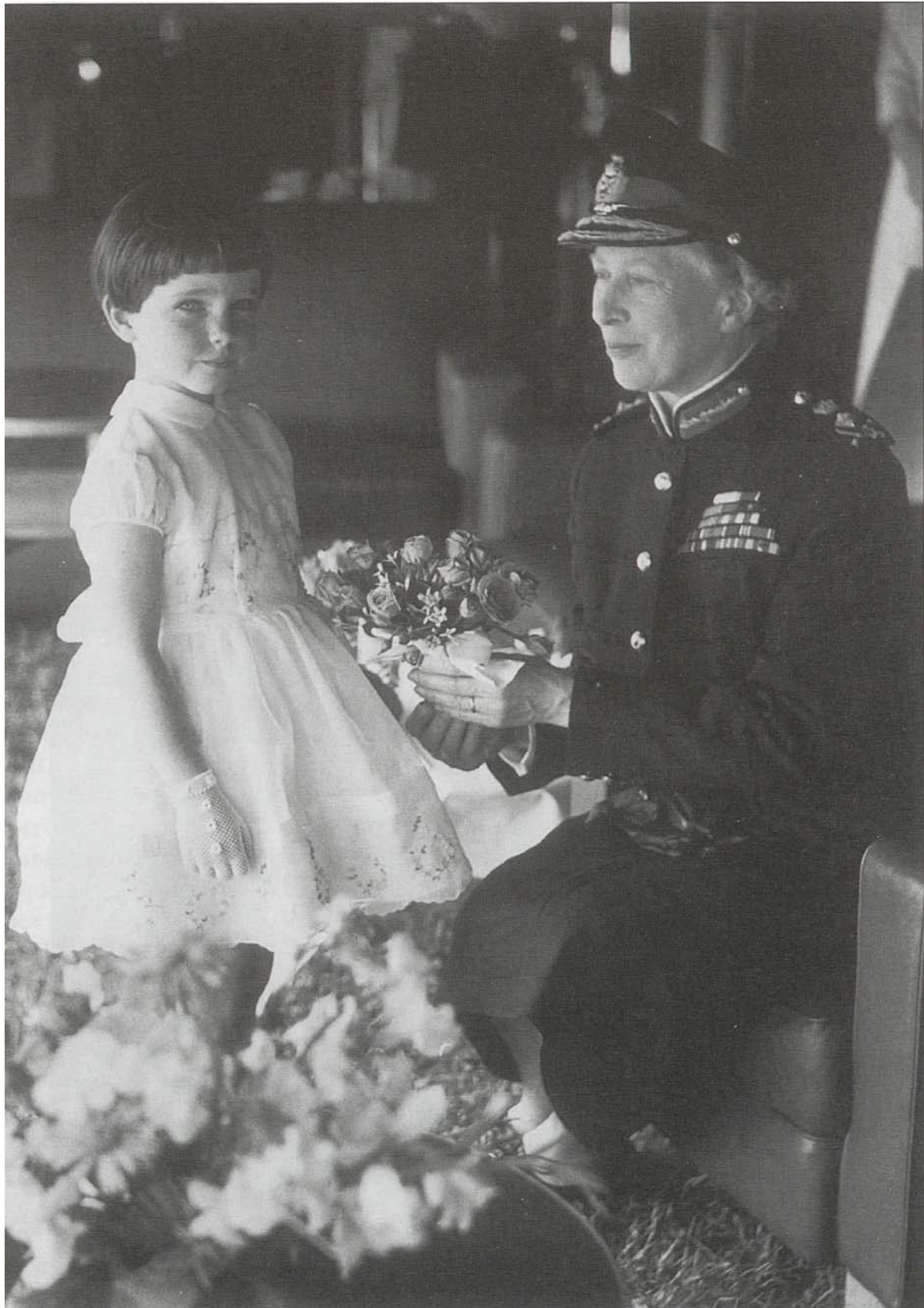
Meeting RSM FJ Pavey and JRSM BJ Cole











Alexandra Pavey daughter of RSM FJ Pavey presents a bouquet to HRH The Princess Royal