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The Wire visits the Junior Leaders Regiment



Panorama of Denbury Camp

Since its earliest days the Corps has always trained its own Boys, and the ex-Boy has made an outstanding contribution to the efficiency and morale of the Corps through the years. This spirit and outlook goes from strength to strength as is evident from the following description of our fine Junior Leaders Regiment.

* * *

Introduction

The Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Signals, is stationed at Denbury Camp, in the heart of South Devon, three miles from Newton Abbot and seven miles from Torquay. The camp is within a few miles of the estuaries of the Dart and the Teign, and the Tors of Dartmoor can be seen from the parade ground on a clear day. There are two large playing fields and a full-scale assault course within the camp perimeter and a small heated indoor swimming pool is to be built in the next few months.

Over the past few years the size and quality of the boys joining the Regiment have steadily improved and as a consequence the establishment holding of boys has been raised from 480 to 630. At the time of writing there are 570 Junior Leaders at Denbury and it appears that the new ceiling will be reached later this year.

Aim

The aim of the Regiment is to take boys at 15 to 16 years of age and to give them a full-time course of educational, trade and military training which will equip them, in later years, to fill senior N.C.O. and Warrant Officer appointments in Royal Signals. Junior Leaders normally graduate to Colour Service at the end of the term in which they reach the age of 17½, but

the Commanding Officer has the discretion to authorise an extra term at Denbury for those who need more time to complete their Army Certificate of Education examinations, or who wish to sit for G.C.E. 'O' level subjects. Authority has also recently been given to the Commanding Officer for those boys who have reached the rank of Junior Warrant Officer while at Denbury and have passed a BIII trade test, to be promoted to Lance-Corporal on graduating to Colour Service.

Life at Denbury

The training programme at Denbury is split into three approximately equal parts as follows:—

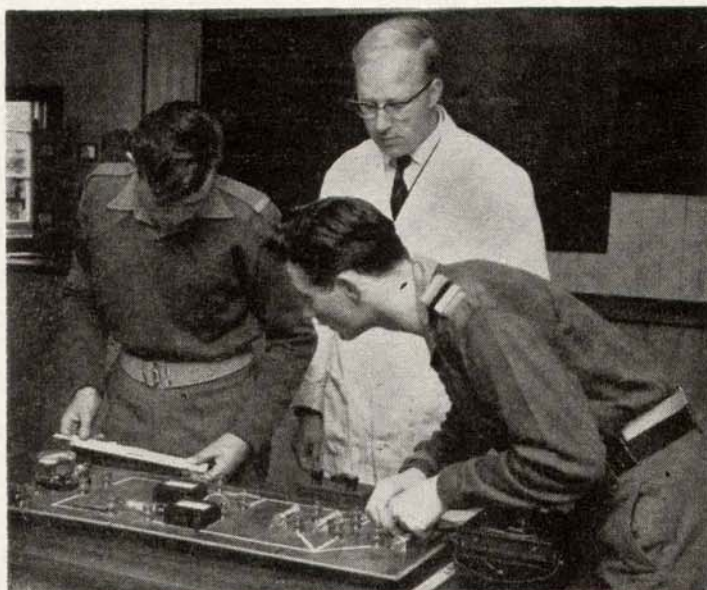
Academic Studies
Trade Training
Leadership, General Military Training and Sport.

The proportion of time devoted to these in the programme varies throughout the boy's stay in the Regiment. In the first term the boy is held in Junior Squadron—the Recruit Squadron—and here he is taught basic drill and given part-time education. In his second term the programme provides full-time education, leadership training and sport. Thereafter, trade training is gradually introduced and in his last term the emphasis is exclusively on trade training.

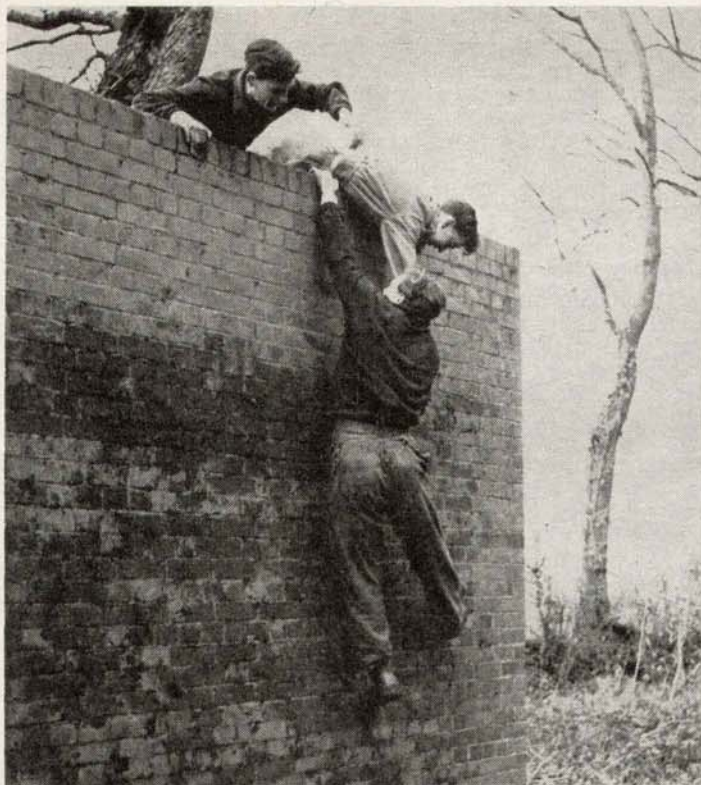
A great deal of responsibility is placed on the Junior Leader N.C.O.s and Warrant Officers. Each Troop of 40 boys has its own Junior Sergeant and each Squadron has a Junior Squadron



Sergeant Smith giving instruction in Comcen working



Junior-Corporal Woodford and Junior Staff Sergeant Major Nunns conduct a Physics experiment under the watchful eye of Mr. H. R. A. Price, A.I.Mech.E. Both students are G.C.E. candidates



The Assault Course always presents a challenge and particularly the High Wall where team work is essential

Sergeant Major. Discipline out of normal working hours is maintained by the Junior N.C.O.s and Junior Warrant Officers and much of the Troop and Squadron administration and supervision is undertaken by these senior boys, under the guidance of the Troop Officers and Sergeants. This ensures that a large proportion of Junior Leaders are given experience and training in N.C.O.s duties during their service with the Regiment.

Denbury is proud of its designation as a Regiment of Royal Signals and from the beginning boys are encouraged to feel themselves as soldiers, and as members of the Corps. The boys are designated "Junior Signalmen" and our sub-units are Squadrons and Troops. Each troop of 40 boys is affiliated to a regular regiment of the Corps and a very active liaison takes place between the Junior Leader Troops and the affiliated Regiments. Each Troop takes its name from its affiliated Regiment as follows:—

Alexander Squadron

TROOP	AFFILIATED REGIMENT
Quadrant	4th Regiment
Kukri	17th (Gurkha) Regiment
Romulus	13th Regiment
Beaufighter	19th Regiment

Slim Squadron

Kohima	2nd Regiment
White Spear	7th Regiment
White Swan	30th Regiment
Lion	9th Regiment

Montgomery Squadron

Francisca	28th Regiment
Iron	3rd Regiment
Ferboa	1st Regiment
Javelin	22nd Regiment

Junior Squadron

16th Regiment

Over the past year many Junior Leaders have had an opportunity to visit their affiliated Regiments. Two boys from Iron Troop flew out to the Middle East for a month last summer with 3rd Regiment, and White Swan Troop spent a very enjoyable 48 hours at Blandford with 30th Regiment. The affiliations have also been fostered by the generous gifts of pipe

banners, trumpet banners, sports trophies, sports equipment and regimental ties from the Regiment, and there can be no doubt that this friendly and enthusiastic support has helped to build up, in the Junior Leaders, an awareness of the Corps and a deep loyalty to it. This is furthered by our good fortune in having Royal Signals Officers, Warrant Officers and Senior N.C.O.s to carry out all regimental and administrative duties in the Camp and to instruct the boys in drill and weapon training.

A Graduation Parade is held at Denbury at the end of each term. Distinguished visitors who have honoured the Regiment over the past 18 months by acting as Reviewing Officers include Mr. James Ramsden, Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Slim, General Sir Richard Hull, General Sir William Scott, General Whistler and General Swainson. The Graduation Parades are made the occasion of an Open Day for parents, and accommodation and meals are provided for parents in the Camp. Last year a total of nearly one thousand parents and relations were accommodated and fed during the three Open Days.

Trade Training

The aim of trade training at Denbury is to bring every Junior Leader up to Class III standard in one of two basic Royal Signals operating trades, either as a Comcen Operator or a Radio Operator. Training has had to be limited to these two trades in order to keep down the quantity of equipment required and the number of instructors.

All boys are interviewed by the Senior Personnel Selection Officer towards the end of their training and are allocated to a permanent trade for their Colour Service. Those who have reached BIII standard as Comcen or Radio Operator may be posted direct to regular units to exercise their trade, or they may be sent on to the Training Brigade Royal Signals for continuation training in an "A" Trade.

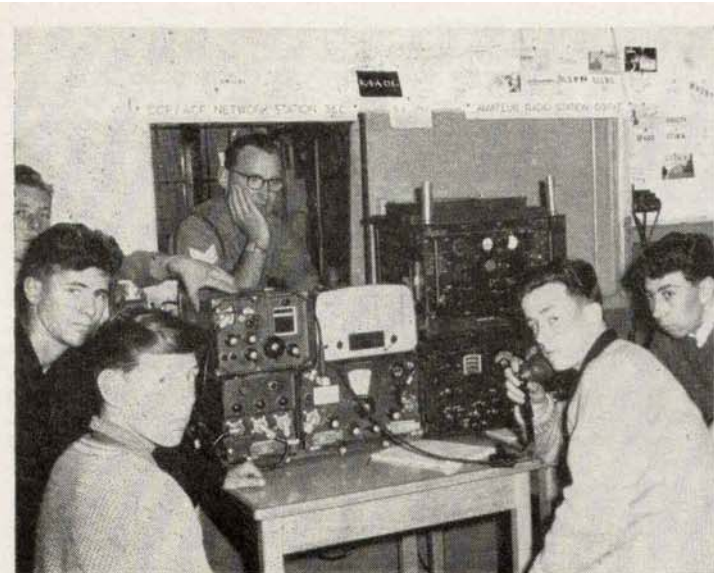
A considerable proportion of boys who have qualified well on either of the basic operating trades will be allocated for continuation training as Telegraph Operators. Those boys who fail to obtain an operator's rating at Denbury and who are considered unlikely to achieve this after further training at Catterick, are allocated to a trade which does not require manipulative skill and carry out training for this with the Training Brigade.

Junior Leaders who have made above-average progress in their academic studies and have obtained a pass in mathematics in their Army Certificate of Education Class I are considered for Technician training, and basic technical instruction is given to such boys during their last term. In 1963 about 20 boys benefited from this arrangement and were allocated for technician training in Catterick.

Owing to differences in the ages of boys joining the Regiment it is not possible to train every boy up to Class III trade standard while he is at Denbury. The training of boys who join the



Captain Tony Watson training the forwards for the Senior Final of the Army Hockey Cup to be played against the Infantry Junior Leaders on 9th March



Sergeant Akehurst gives instruction in the Amateur Radio Hobby

Regiment when over the age of 16 years of age corresponds to that for the younger boys but it ends a term or so earlier. However, the trade training syllabi at Denbury are co-ordinated with those of the Training Brigade Royal Signals and this enables boys to complete their training at Catterick with the minimum of upset.

In the past few months, the Regiment has received 12 Land Rovers and six driver-instructors. It is now possible to include a considerable proportion of outdoor exercises in the Radio Operator training and arrangements are now in hand for all Junior Leaders to be taught to drive while at Denbury.

The trade training programme at Denbury is still relatively new and we are only just reaching the stage where boys leaving have completed the new trade training syllabus. However, it appears that any boy who serves the full seven terms in the Regiment and works conscientiously at his trade will have little difficulty in obtaining a BIII rating. It also appears that as the Trade Training Wing gets into its stride, many boys will leave not only with a BIII rating, but with skills which will put them very well on the way to their BII.

Military Training

Every Junior Leader is taken through the syllabus for the Military Proficiency Test Class III during his time with the Regiment and most boys pass the test before graduating to Colour Service.

Adventure Training

The Regiment is ideally situated for adventure training and as might be expected, has set the lead in Army Junior Units in this type of training. For many years Dartmoor has been the setting for strenuous "Outward Bound" type exercises. Every Junior Leader spends at least one day per fortnight on such training and whenever possible exercises are extended to include one or two nights under canvas. Full use is made of the local river estuaries for canoeing and sailing, and every boy is taught elementary rock-climbing. The Regiment has a close liaison with the Outward Bound School at Holne Chase, near Ashburton, and thanks to the kindness of the Warden we are able to send parties of Junior Leaders from Denbury to negotiate their high ropes "Confidence Course." The emphasis in all outdoor training is on individual initiative and leadership and all activities are carried out in small parties with senior boys in charge.

The highlight of the term's Adventure Training is the Commonwealth Trophy Competition, when the entire Regiment, less Junior Squadron, takes part in a map-reading and endurance test on Dartmoor. The competition is organised on a Troop basis, with each Troop split into six or seven patrols. Each patrol is required to cover a set course of up to 20 miles and penalties are awarded for bad map-reading and loss of time. The Troop with the best aggregate patrol results is awarded the Commonwealth Trophy for the term.

Ten Tors Expedition

For the past five years the Regiment has organised a Youth Expedition on Dartmoor over the Whitsun weekend. From small beginnings, the Expedition has grown into a major occasion and it is now one of the biggest youth events in the national calendar. This year 2,000 young people will be taking part and teams will be coming from all over the United Kingdom and, for the first time, a number of Commonwealth teams will be participating.

Regimental Activities

The Regiment provides a wide spread of hobbies and activities which the boys are encouraged to take part in during their off-duty hours. These include the usual indoor hobbies, such as canoe-building, Camera Club, Radio Club, plus a number of activities which are traditional at Denbury. The Corps of Drums appears on parade in scarlet tunics, nearly 100 strong, and is ably backed by a pipe band of 20. The Regimental Choir, which performed a few years ago at the British Legion Festival in London, gives regular performances throughout the winter at local hospitals and Old Folks' Clubs. The Highland Dancing Team strives to maintain and improve the high standard of its public performances and last year Junior Leaders, competing as individuals, won more than 70 medals and awards in the West of England Championships and the Scottish and Highland Dancing Board's examinations.

Junior Mercury

The Regimental Magazine *Junior Mercury* has a circulation of nearly 5,000 and is published monthly. It is the only regular monthly magazine published by a Junior Unit of the Army and it performs a valuable function in placing before its readers our life at Denbury. It is distributed to all Army Information Offices and plays a valuable part in publicising the Regiment and ensuring a steady flow of high-grade recruits. Although printing costs amount to £60 per edition, these are met by magazine sales and advertisement revenue, and very little expense falls on Regimental funds.

The Future

Over the past three or four years the Regiment has doubled in size and it is now one of the biggest Junior Leader Regiments in the Army. This increase has been achieved as a consequence of good recruiting and a very low wastage rate. In 1963 our wastage rate was less than half of the average figure for all Junior Leader Regiments and a quarter of that for some Junior Regiments. Over the same period, the quality of boys joining the Regiment has steadily improved. The annual number of successes achieved in the Army First and Second Class Examinations has trebled.

In the next few years a new camp is to be built for the Regiment and no doubt this will cater for a further increase in the Junior Leader strength. It is hoped that the new camp will be built at Denbury, and that we shall be able to continue to make full use of Dartmoor and the rivers and sea-coast of South Devon in our training. However, whatever our future and wherever we settle, the traditions which started back in "F" Company in 1924, and have remained with us through the years in Catterick, Beverley and Denbury, will go on, and we will continue to feed into Royal Signals a steady stream of self-reliant, smart and robust young men who will, as in the past, provide a large proportion of the long service N.C.O.s and Warrant Officers of the Corps.