

Extract from the Wire Mar 61

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Looking Back

Inspired by a Conversation
with an Ex-Junior Leader



We're terribly, terribly Denbury,
That's what we like about us,
We get on and do all our business—
With the minimum bother and fuss.



As the mist rolls back from the hillside,
'nd the horizon extends to the sea,
I gaze up in wonder at Haytor—
Majestically, Haytor glowers at me.



This is now home with a meaning,
One peculiarly all of its own,
It fashions its rules by its errors—
And no one is ever alone.



West winds sweep up from the valley,
Blasting fresh, into hearts, huts and mind,
The flag flutters hysterically in tatters—
“Sergeant Major? Another—in kind!”



We're the adopted of many great Regiments,
And they love us, or so we are told,
But the richness of love's manifestation—
Like the sands of the desert run cold.



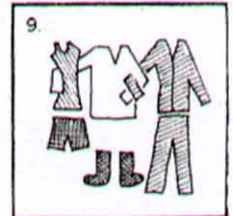
Through the gateway to Leadership,
And under the stars in the sky,
Denbury, the true heart of Devon—
By whose standards I'll live and I'll die.



That verse surprised me a little,
Coming out so sudden like that,
It's magic, no wonder, believe me—
Or my brain's gone the plural of bat.



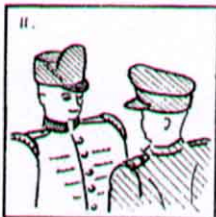
Junior Wing and dear Captain Beadon,
Ah, yes! I remember it well,
Two SDs, two boots, coarse undies—
BD trousers the Q couldn't sell.



Some blankets, two sheets and a pillow,
Pyjamas, vest red-white, shorts blue,
Two socks (pairs) and a cardigan pullover—
A few bits and that's that for you.



Now the secret of Denbury is whispered,
Hush, hush or we'll miss all the rest,
“In accordance with Army tradition—
You chaps will now all do your best!”



In pattern and styles of uniform,
Waterloo and Denbury hold hands,
The fashion now famed for its foresight—
Casts shadows in far distant lands.



In honour of yesterday's tradition,
And the spirit o' those Crimean chaps,
Who first pitched camp here in Denbury—
We wear coloured Bal'clava caps.



On, on, Junior Leaders, get moving,
“Ah, help me, the sound of that voice,
Please, God, that I pass the Junior—
And escape to the Troop of my choice.”



“Hey! White Swan! Kohima! I'm coming,
Bless us, life looks pretty grim,
White Spear! Iron! Jerboa!—
The Squadron now named after Slim.



Alexander has five other choices,
With Francisca, Quadran and then,
Anzio, Kukri and Bruno—
Complete troops in the Regiment to TEN.



Eyes front for six terms' hard labour,
The aim? Not yet clearly in view,
Some say Signal on, Royal Signals—
Well, well, and how do you do?



I'm a communications JL all purpose,
In peace time and war just the same,
On the battlefields of freedom or Whitehall
Oh boy! this is surely some game.



As a graduate from this here Den-bury,
I'll wear a symbol, or so people say,
Of a world with crossed flags upon it—
An honour without any pay!



Then onward I'll plunge, willing victim,
On location with Training Brigade,
To specialise in something specific—
Junior Leader in quest of a trade.



But why must there be this upheaval,
What's wrong with old Senior Wing?
If I take my trade test at Denbury—
I'd still hear the camp choir sing!



Where the trumpets 'll still sound reveille,
For the quiet of Regimental prayers,
Midst the plans for Ten Tors and
Nijmegen—
So much laughter and very few cares.



Paddy and the club rooms about us,
The theatre and jolly good fun,
The pigeon race, the canoe race,
remember—
That blistering day in the sun?



The lights in the camp shops winking?
The restaurant open till ten?
The farm hobby and old Sergeant Aven—
The fuss o'er the first laying hen?



The band so resplendent in scarlet?
Yates spluttering abuse left and right,
"Take a fine! Inward bound! Stop
breathing!
Oh! my No. 1 Hat—what a sight?"



Through the gates on Saturday evening,
Wearing the old "claret tie,"
UP TOORIES! We stand here united—
Fail Denbury? No, Sir, never, not I.



Let the west wind blow like the devil,
Bringing snow or the mist and the rain,
A part of our hearts lie in Denbury—
And someday we'll come back again.