

JUNIOR

MERCURY



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RING OUT THE BELLS FOR CHRISTMAS

As Christmas approaches every year, most of us look forward to a season of gaiety and goodwill, in the hope that we may be able to enjoy it in the company of those whom we love—released from the cares and anxieties of the working year.



It is a curious thing that this most beautiful of feasts invokes the best of all our memories, and brings into the relief the days when, as children, we received from our mothers, in particular, kindnesses and understanding of a sort that few of us are likely to have experienced since, and yet all of us took so naturally for granted. Many will be the stories told about the family fireside (whether of coal, pine, or eucalyptus): of last Christmas and the Christmas before, and of Christmases twenty and more years ago.



Most of us will remember the first toy soldiers, or even the first Christmas stocking. Others will recall the almost miraculous appearance of the first scooter or bicycle, and realize, only now, that it was the same Christmas when mother could not afford to treat herself to a pair of shoes (or was it a pair of warm gloves?), and it seemed quite proper that she should do without!



How many are the lovely days and the lovely occasions we could call to mind from the past, and is there one of them that can be dissociated from the absolute, and quite unbelievably unselfish, devotion and love of one's mother?



Surely there is a debt here somewhere that has not been paid; and it will always appear in 'red,' for there will never be enough years left in a lifetime to pay the bill, having realized and acknowledged its existence. Yet does she ask much? For her son's health, perhaps, his success, his happiness, and peace in his time.

And every son, by an act of resolution, with a little courage and determination, has it within himself to strive after these things, to reassure her at Christmas time and to make her proud of him.



So, enriched with all the memories that we might recall today, for which there is insufficient room on a single sheet of paper, let us pay tribute to MOTHERS EVERYWHERE—without them we would not know the meaning of love. An especially wonderful Christmas to them all, with God's most precious blessing.



From the Officers, Junior Leaders, Military and Civilian Staff we offer our most sincere wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family; to the Army; to our Colonel-in-Chief and Corps; to the Command and District Headquarters under whom we serve; to all Junior Leaders Regiments; to our friends old and new in many parts of the world, to those in Newton Abbot and all over South Devon, in all the towns and villages from where Junior Leaders come, and all who have been so kind to us and who have helped and encouraged us.



To all to whom we should send Christmas cards and greetings and may have forgotten to do so; to all those from whom we will receive greetings from all over the world, not having ourselves remembered them from Denbury, and finally to Denbury itself, deserted and silent but for the faint echo of a thousand voices: "Up 'Toories,' and look after yourself until we come Home from Home again."



Leonardo da Vinci's painting, "Virgin of the Rocks."
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London)

EDITORIAL

It is always a pleasure to write the Editorial for a Christmas number. Firstly, in the spirit of the season, it gives us an opportunity to wish our regular readers, our casual readers, even the "lookers-over-shoulders," and our advertisers a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Secondly, it is a pleasure to offer you all once again a supplemented 'Junior Mercury,' with two extra pages, more pictures, and more reading.

The biggest item of the month has, of course, been the Choir's appearance at the Royal Albert Hall taking part in the Festival of Remembrance Service. They sang songs of all nations with outstanding success, as was shown by the applause on the night as well as by the numerous letters (back page of the Supplement) which we have received on the subject.

Then comes our sporting pages, filled with accounts of the way in which we so nearly won the Football Cup. Never mind our loss in the final, let it spur the Rugby team to even greater efforts to retain the Army Rugby Cup next term.

J/Sgt. Grant's journey to Germany, including his stay in a Paris prison, makes exciting reading, and in this connection we would like to thank Capt. Fordham for drawing us such an excellent map to illustrate this journey.

Our usual thanks go to Capt. Bowyer for his "X" cartoon, and for his Festival of Remembrance heading, where he has so excellently reproduced the shields which he produced for the occasion in the Royal Albert Hall. It is, too, with great pleasure that we welcome Capt. Bowyer in the new field of photographer, the pictures of the Choir having been taken by him direct from the television coverage of the Royal Albert Hall service. We welcome, too, our new artist, Pte. Plumb, who drew the cartoon on page 10—there are more to come from him! Our thanks, too, to Sgt. Martin, not only for his excellent photographs in this issue, but for his fine photographs during the past year.

The 'Junior Mercury' staff unite in wishing all a very Happy Christmas Holiday.

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2. The views expressed herein are not necessarily official War Office or Army policy.
3. All communications should be addressed to The Editor, "Junior Mercury," Denbury Camp, Nr. Newton Abbot, Devon.

STAFF SCRAPBOOK

They're football crazy, they're football mad, or so it would seem in Senior Wing nowadays. Everyone is running a syndicate these days, but only the cooks, or so it appears, have the secret. They say that lightning never strikes in the same place twice; well, we don't know really know, but there appears to have been quite a few heavy flashes in the cookhouse's direction recently.

It's obvious, though, that if anybody should have the RECIPE to pools success it should be the COOKS.

The sparks were really flying on Bonfire Night in the camp. The traditional Guy Fawkes Night opened in Olympic fashion with "Jock Smith," clad in white from head to toe, claiming everyone's attention as he ran to the stack, torch in hand. A flick of the wrist and the flames reached for the sky—and so did a dozen rockets marking the start of a firework display. And that was not all—when the first fire lost its glory the civilians gained theirs.

Their first big dance, which had been arranged to follow the fireworks, was the big success we all knew it would be.

The early days of the month were crowded days. Hard on the heels of the bonfire celebrations came Remembrance Sunday, when the staff took part in the annual parade. With the rest of the Regiment, they remembered. After the service they helped make a colourful picture of the march-past.

About that time, too, we said our last 'cheerios' to three more of the staff who had completed their time. Roy Horton, George Brooks, and Johnny Goodchild left the service for a new life—that is, all but George. We understand that he liked the life at Denbury so much that he is staying on and joining the ever-increasing number of civilians who work for the Regiment.

The end of November brought us more goodbyes. Adrian Piggford and Dick Allen (off on a course to finish off his service) left Denbury.

Farewells also to Capt. Gregory, off to Aden's warmer climate, and to Sgt. "Jim" Fuller, up to the frozen wastes of Edinburgh. Capt. Gregory, as Officer Commanding Anzio Troop, was a brilliant performer on the hockey field, and as a good type will be missed. Sgt. Fuller hasn't been with us so long, but in his short stay has done a great deal to dispel the illusion of a dour, unsmiling Scotsman.

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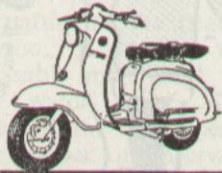
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OBERAMMERGAU AND BACK

By J/SGT. GRANT

Editor's Note.—The thanks of the Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Signals, go to Major-General R. J. Moberly, C.B., O.B.E., Director of Communications and Electronics (Ex - S.O. - in - C.) for his presentation of a magnificently-carved wooden pigeon as the trophy for the Inter-Troop Pigeon Race. The pigeon was carved by an expert wood carver from celebrated Oberammergau, in the German Alps, and it was from there that J/Sgt. Grant collected it.

"I started out from Newton Abbot at four o'clock on Tuesday, 17th November, 1960. I had hoped to catch the night train to Ostend, but I arrived too late. A railway carriage on Victoria Station was my bed for the night. The next morning I caught the boat train to Dover and, after a calm crossing, arrived in Calais at about three o'clock. My route to Paris took me through Boulogne, Arras, and St. Quentin. People who gave me lifts thought I was a parachutist, and I let them think along those lines throughout the entire journey.

"I arrived in Paris at one o'clock on Wednesday morning. While I was looking for a hotel a police van drove up. A man who was walking along about 15 yards behind me ran up an alley, which turned out to be a cul-de-sac. The gendarmes trapped the man in this alley; he surrendered with his hands above his head. The police then took both of us to the police station. They thought that the prisoner might have been tempted to relieve me of my wallet; he was an Algerian. The Commissioner of Police advised me to spend the night at the station, as there would be no hotels open at that time of night. The cell stank of its previous inhabi-

tants, and in neighbouring cells were criminals and prostitutes.

"The next morning, after viewing Paris, I set out for St. Die, arriving at 1900 hours. The towns in the area of Nancy and Epinal were the cleanest I saw in France. Having spent the night at the house of a young lady in St. Die, I proceeded through the Vosges Mountains to Strasbourg.

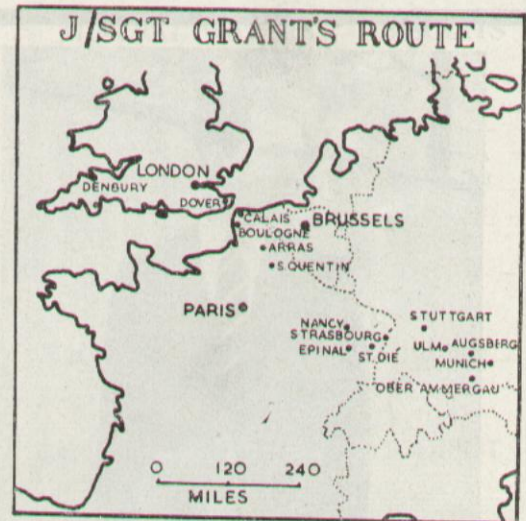
"Crossing the German border, I passed through Stuttgart and Ulm, and along the autobahn to Oberammergau. Arriving there at 1130 hours, I collected the pigeon which was the object of my journey. After having lunch with the wood carver, I climbed a mountain and took some photographs of the scenery.

"I then went to the U.S. Army base at Oberammergau, where I obtained a lift to an army base at Munich. On the Saturday morning most of the helicopters left on a search mission as a 'copter had crashed three days before. I managed to get a lift in a jet-engined helicopter which was en route for Verdun, and I was dropped off at Stuttgart.

"I spent the weekend at Stuttgart, and 'Americanized' with the Americans stationed there. There was a training flight leaving for London, via Brussels, with which I got a lift on Monday morning.

"When we were flying over the Channel I was sitting on a 'Mae West,' with a parachute on my back (which I hadn't the remotest idea how to use). We touched down at Gatwick Airport with a flat tyre—that was really a terrifying experience!

"After seeing Major-General Moberly at the War Office, I returned to Denbury Camp with the pigeon. I had been away only one week, but had sufficient experiences to last me for a lifetime."



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"X"-TRA DRILL

It all started when, at the end of a morning's education, Sergeant-Major Philp called for two volunteers to sweep out the classroom. Now Mr. Philp is a kindly man, and when J/Sig. "X" didn't come forward straight away, he realized that it was his natural shyness, and therefore he selected "X" and his mate for the task. Then he made his mistake. Not having a broom handy, he sent "X" to get one. Undoubtedly "X" intended to come back with a broom, but one thing led to another, a quick yarn with a couple of blokes in the barrack room, a fag-end to smoke, even a quick "kip" on his bed. The long and short of it was that WO II Philp saw sign of neither "X" nor a broom until the following day. The conversation then was simple and straightforward:

"'X,' why didn't you come back with that broom yesterday?"

"Me, sir?"

"Yes, you, J/Sig. 'X.'"

"Broom, sir?"

"Yes, a broom to tidy up the classroom."

"Classroom, sir?"

"Look, I'm not going to argue with you; take an extra drill."

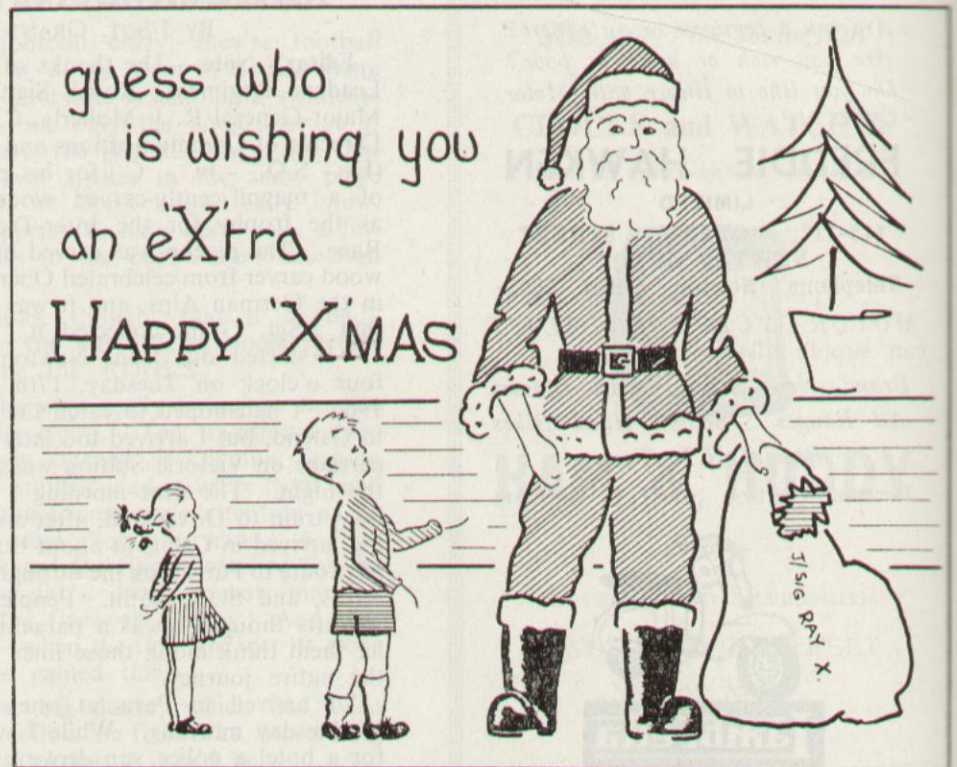
"Extra drill, sir?"

"Oh, get lost! If brains were made of elastic, you couldn't make a canary a set of braces."

"X" departed, mumbling to himself the words "victimization" and "gross injustice."

However, the following Saturday found "X" explaining to his Junior Lady that he wouldn't be able to meet her until late, as he had been especially selected for a Drill

Demonstration. There were only five of them in the squad. "X" and his mate (he had a season ticket) and three younger boys. The J/Sgt. taking the squad had never liked "X"—perhaps he unjustly suspected "X" of soaking his bunk with water on a certain memorable occasion when he had come across "X" with a fire-hose in his hand, the nozzle resting against the keyhole of his room.



Despite this, "X" felt it to be rather unfair when he was made to spend half an hour marking time at the double with his knees up, whilst the remainder went for a quiet walk up and down the drill shed. As soon as he had finished in the drill shed, "X" changed into denims, and dashed off to the Regimental Farm to give Mr. Philp a hand cleaning up the pig-sty. Farming is his hobby!



Off-duty smartness

Gieves have been making uniforms from Wellington's day onwards. But here's proof that we know a thing or two about clothes for off-duty wear. The illustration shows a single breasted blazer in serge or hopsack with cavalry twill trousers

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DARTMOOR'S WATER

Cranmere 86 inches, Princetown 89 inches, Devil's Tor 73 inches, and Sinard's Cross 78 inches. These are some annual rainfall figures for selected points on Dartmoor, and they compare with an annual rainfall of only 28 inches at, for example, Exeter. It is clear that the moor has a heavy rainfall, brought by the prevailing south-west winds, and this, combined with the impervious granite bed-rock, explains how such swift and powerful rivers as the Dart, Teign, Tavy, Walkham, Erme, Taw, and Okement are born on Dartmoor. The Moor is, in fact, the principal watershed of the south-west, and its rivers provide not only an angler's paradise, but also the water supply for many peripheral towns.

Anyone who has walked over the Moor during a rainy spell will vouch for the waterlogged nature of the peaty soils, and can speak, too, of swollen streams and almost impassable marshland. This great reservoir of water makes Dartmoor a valuable asset of the S.W. peninsula, and the growing number of waterworks on the margins of the high moor bear mute witness to the gratitude of thousands of Devonian urban dwellers for their supply of water. A heavy fall of rain is followed immediately by a rise in stream levels, and by a great volume of water pouring off the moors towards the sea. Clearly much of the rain would be lost were it not captured and retained in the great blanket-bogs of the North Moor. Few areas currently represent zones of active peat formation: on the contrary, there is much evidence of a steady regression, which can conceivably threaten the supply of water from the moor. For this reason one might expect a certain amount of caution to be exercised in dealing with peaty areas, but any such caution is largely absent, and quite recently peat was cut commercially on the north side of the bog at Cranmere.

However, excessive fear of the future conditions of the blanket-bog seems unreasonable, and meanwhile, Plymouth, Torquay, Paignton, and other towns depend for their domestic water supply on the beneficence of Dartmoor. Sir Francis Drake in the sixteenth century had a lead constructed to carry water to Plymouth, and as towns have grown, so his example has been followed more energetically and more ambitiously. Today, Burrator, Vennaford, Fernworthy, and Hennock are the great reservoirs on Dartmoor, and many a walker has used them as landmarks to guide him!

HISTORY OF THE SIGNALS

6.—The First World War, 1916-17

In the Spring of 1916 it became apparent that the present depth of buried cables (three feet) was not sufficient to withstand a direct hit by a German 5.9 inch howitzer. Therefore the "deep bury" (six feet) was advocated, and brought into use on as many divisional fronts as possible, although time did not permit complete conversion, and at Ypres even the sewers were used for this purpose. Other preparations took the form of concealment of trenches from aerial observation, additional protection for HQ and signal offices, overhead construction in back areas, and mobile pigeon-lofts.

The main changes in organization, described in our last chapter, were completed just in time for the tremendous battles of 1917. Since 1914, research and development in wireless techniques had been progressing, and in July 1917 these contingents were absorbed into their respective signal companies. By the end of 1916 three types of wireless set were in use—the B.F. Trench Set, the Wireless Set, and the Loop Set—all of which had spark transmitters. To these were added, in 1917, the first continuous wave sets, which were at first difficult to handle but were, by degrees, simplified.

Earth induction telegraphy apparatus (comprising a transmitter with a hand-driven alternator, which produced a high-pitched buzz, and a listening set as receiver) was used on a smaller scale during the Somme operations, but with better equipment and better handling, earth induction signalling was on many occasions invaluable in 1917.

Yet, in spite of these developments and modifications, it was the exception rather than the rule for battalion signals to go into action in 1917 with anything beyond their line and visual equipment and a few pigeons. These were reasonably effective during quiet phases, but during periods of heavy bombardment, when communications were most needed, all messages, as in the past, often had to be carried by runner. "It is a sad reflection that after three years of war, infantry communications in times of stress were virtually no more effective than at the beginning of trench warfare. All attempts to improve them had been nullified by the increasing intensity of the shell-fire, and there was in fact no complete solution in default of the portable and reliable wireless sets of the future."

(N.B.—All quotations are from "The Royal Corps of Signals," by Maj.-Gen. R. F. H. Nalder, C.B., O.B.E.)

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READERS' CORNER

LIFE OUTSIDE DENBURY

DEAR SIR,—I hope you will excuse this short letter. I hope in December to be revisiting Denbury, and will take this opportunity to call into your offices to renew my subscription to 'Junior Mercury,' a newspaper much talked about here.

I have just come off a combined NATO forces scheme, which will be of interest to many of your readers. We were sent 200 kilometres from Divisional HQ to the Danish border, where we were working with Danish soldiers. Being a Signal Centre Operator, I found myself supplying communications to three of BAOR's divisions. The object of the exercise was to practice all NATO forces together, so that in the event of any emergency all forces would have some knowledge of each other's communications and "set-up." The commander of the exercise was General Fisher (SHAPE).

We were very fortunate in having glorious weather for the entire ten days during which the exercise lasted. It was a great experience to be working with soldiers of a different country, and I am looking forward to taking part in the next NATO exercise, scheduled for the beginning of next year. The whole exercise went off with a "bang," and afterwards all ranks were congratulated by the Supreme Commander on a fine showing and understanding between troops of different nations.

This should be of especial interest to many of the boys whose "parent" regiments are in Germany. I am looking forward to paying a visit down to Denbury in the near future.—Yours, etc.,

F. LITTLEFAIR.

Oscar Troop, 1 Sqdn, 1 Signal Regiment.

REGARDS TO WHITE SWAN

DEAR SIR.—I want to thank you on behalf of myself and my two comrades of White Swan on our regular supply of 'Junior Mercury.' We might not be in England for your next issue, so we want to know if we will still receive our supply. We would be pleased if you would give our regards to Staff Nicholls and the boys of White Swan Troop. I am deeply pleased with my posting because I will be with my old Troop Officer (Capt. Hancock). Best of luck to all the boys at Denbury.—Yours, etc.,

Harry, Charlie and Terry.
(Kitchenman), (Rayner), and (Filer).
(ex White Swan).

LEARNING TO FLY

DEAR SIR.—I was very surprised to be given a copy of 'Junior Mercury' out here. I have read the edition and would like to obtain this very fine magazine each month as, being an ex-Junior Leader, I am very keen to follow the events at Denbury, so I am enclosing with this letter a postal order for 6/- for the next twelve months.

While being out here I have met many ex-Boys, and also Capt. Robinson, who was my old Troop Commander while I was at Denbury. I am attached to the RAF at Akrotiri, which is the most important station in the Middle East.

Since I have been here I have been learning to fly, which I find very interesting. We have plenty of spare time here to go swimming and sailing, and even some water-ski-ing.

My trade is a Radio Relay Operator, and my section is responsible for all the radio-telephone circuits on Cyprus, which is essential to the Royal Air Force, for the defence of the island.

I will close now, but I would like to give all my very best wishes to Junior Leaders who are about to enter the Regular Army; also that I am looking forward to reading the 'Junior Mercury.'—Yours, etc.,

Sig. L. D. BROOKER.

23473275, 280 Signals Unit, RAF, Akrotiri, BFPO 53.

The following quotations were received from Mrs. M. Bound.

Talk about the weather—better to be a bore than a gossip.

Two quotes from Jock Billings (could he have been a Junior Leader?): "Laff every time you pheel tickled and laff every once in a while anyhow." "It ain't no disgrace for a man to fall, but to lay there and grunt is."

Kindness is something we receive and have to pass along in order to keep it.

Life's problem is not how to make money first; it is how to make it last.

The world is a camera—keep smiling, please!

'Tis easy enough to be grouchy
When things aren't going your way;
But the prize old growl is the man who
will howl

When everything's going O.K.!

Good resolutions, like the screaming child, should be carried out.

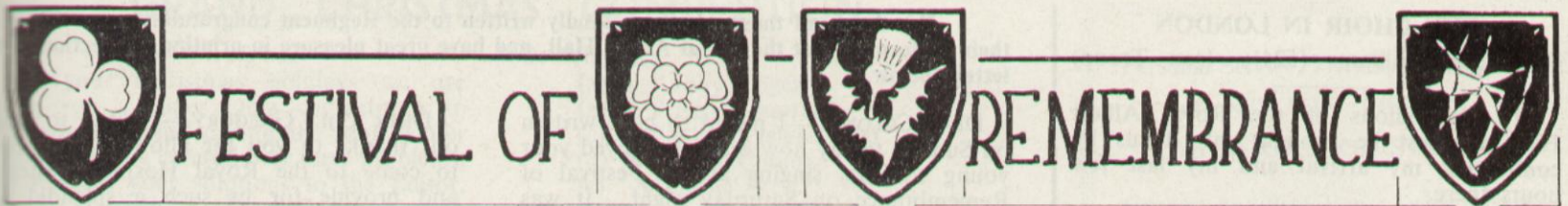
You won't hurt a smile by cracking one.
A long face shortens your list of friends.

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FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

INSIDE THE ALBERT HALL

The Regimental Choir were distinctly nervous when they first appeared in the Royal Albert Hall for rehearsal. The first rehearsal was poor, but by the fourth (and a "pep-talk" from Ralph Reader), the choir were used to the microphones, but still nervous. During both the afternoon and evening performances the auditorium was packed to capacity, but in the evening the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, and other members of the Royal Family were present.

First came the Muster, led by the Union Jack, with a parade of all the regional British Legion flags, followed by contingents from every branch of the three services.

The Romford Boys Brigade Band opened the show, followed by the Navy's contribution. The Navy Flag-Mounting Ceremony and the Royal Marines Band (Portsmouth Division), which included an excellent cornet solo.

The Regimental Choir opened the Army display with "Begone Dull Care" and "Gaudeamus Igitur." Then, as they broke into "The Star of the County Down," a member of the Corps of Drums, dressed in scarlet, appeared bearing a three-foot high shield with Ireland's national emblem. The Welsh shield was borne down to "Land Of My Fathers," the Scottish to "Westering Home," and finally the English Rose to "Land of Hope and Glory," which rose to a grand climax when the organ and orchestra joined in. After their performance the choir received a tremendous ovation.

The Scots Guards gave a display of Highland dancing and piping. Royal Air Force Boy Entrants gave a display of elementary Judo throws, and the Royal Air Force gymnastic display team gave an exciting and exhilarating display.

For the community singing and the Service of Remembrance, the Naval colour party and the RAF boys and our own Junior Leaders returned to the arena. During the two minutes silence there was not a sound to be heard save for the falling of poppies from the roof. For those watching and for those taking part, it was an impressionable moment never to be forgotten.

DISCIPLINE & LEADERSHIP

"for natu minimus from natu maximus" (This article is written by an old and trusted friend who wishes to remain anonymous)

Forty-two years ago the writer learnt from those incomparable teachers, the Warrant-Officers of the Brigade of Guards, that Discipline comes from Pride, and Leadership from Humility. The Choir of the Regiment who were at the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall on November 12th, and the Band, who Beat Retreat at the Royal Hospital on November 13th, had three things in common:

Exemplary turn-out and appearance.
Considerable skill.
Discipline of a very high standard.

The Choir

Split-second timing marked their entrance, it was a scramble; but a disciplined scramble. One boy was noted, the last to arrive in his place. His mouth opened, he hit the first note of music exactly at the moment his heels came together.

The descent of the poppies on the heads of many was not rehearsed, alighting on hair, nose, ears, they must have tickled abominably. But, as 5,000 people noted, not one boy moved.

The relief of tension when, without command but as if they had rehearsed for weeks, it was "Caps on, about turn," and then the cheer that cut right through the cheering of the 5,000 and hit the Royal box so that it was almost felt.

The Band

A routine of 40 minutes, with few commands, much intricate manoeuvre, many changes of instrument, of tune, of time, needs much working-up. Undoubtedly the band has perfected the routine over many weeks of practice, including many public performances. On November 13th the ground was, to say the least of it, awkward. The audience was very distinguished and critical. Possibly it was the band's first performance in public in full dress.

The writer watched for lack of concentration. He failed to find any. True, one drummer very nearly made a mistake. He winced; in the audience his Commanding Officer winced. Probably only three people were aware of it.

At the age of those in the band one does not concentrate for 40 minutes or more without conscious effort.

Pride

Enough has been written to make it clear that our Junior Leaders are rightly so proud of themselves and their Regiment that discipline is well-nigh perfect.

What of Leadership? After 42 years one judges faces. Seen in twos and threes amid the milling crowds outside the Albert Hall, there was leadership in those determined young faces. They have the Discipline that comes from Pride, the experience of years that will provide in most, if not in all, the Humility that makes the good Leader."

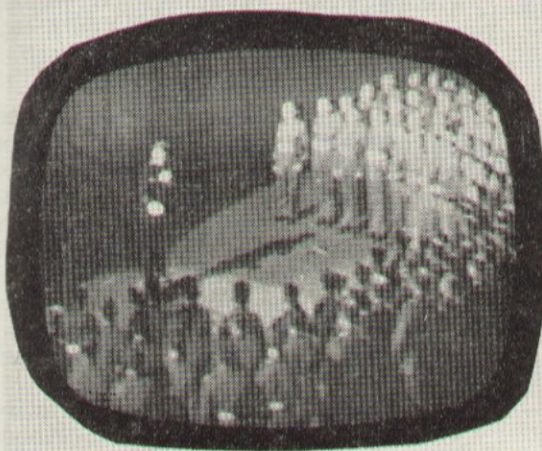
BAND AT CHELSEA

After the disappointment of not appearing at the Royal Albert Hall, the Corps of Drums took up their scarlet and their instruments and adjourned to Chelsea Hospital to Beat Retreat for the Chelsea Pensioners. The performance was the finest the band have put up for many a year. At the conclusion, the Parade Commander congratulated Drum-Major Ramsey, saying: "It's the finest bit of marching and drill that I have seen for quite a while." To be praised by these veterans of so many years army service is praise indeed.

Only the week before the Mace had had a new "Jimmy" attached to it. The Drum-Major's pride and pleasure at this was short-lived, as, having obtained permission to march off, like the old fables the Mercury flew . . . and landed at his feet. Horrible thoughts passed through his mind at the prospect of Staff Yates's reaction, but all was well!

The Corps of Drums, despite the disappointment of not appearing at the Festival of Remembrance Service, had the gratification of entertaining the oldest and grandest soldiers in the army.

Congratulations to J/Sig. Hall on his appointment to the coveted post of Drum-Major of the Corps of Drums, replacing J/L/Cpl. Ramsey, who has been Drum-Major for a year, and who is now graduating to Man's Service.



THE ENSEMBLE



CONCENTRATION



THE POPPIES FALL by Capt. Bowyer