

**1959 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE**  
**1st GREEN JACKETS, 43rd & 52nd.**

**DEMONSTRATION BATTALION AT THE SCHOOL OF INFANTRY**  
**BY MAJOR J. M. A. TILLET**

'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players ... Each man in his time plays many parts . . .'

AT the conclusion of our first 'term' here at Warminster many riflemen have already played many parts and it is quite obvious that they have many more to play in future. Already in the short space of three months Rifleman 'Smith' has found himself crawling, doubling, jumping, shooting, attacking, defending; sometimes as a Warminster Rifleman and sometimes as a Fantasian. He has been asked to perform his daily military duties, and sometimes even to pretend to die, under the critical eyes of our ever present audience. ('Do it again, never seen a chap die like that.') He has been every sort of 'human target' including representing a dissident 'mob' in internal security exercises. He has done all this by day and by night and in almost every sort of weather. He has had long periods of waiting for his 'act' during which time he has been very cold and wet.

It is satisfactory to record that Rifleman 'Smith', by using the qualities of adaptability, versatility, bequeathed to him by generations of Riflemen, has acquitted himself well. It seems to be generally accepted among our critics here that the first three months have passed off well.

In the remainder of this article I will try to convey some idea of what being the Demonstration Battalion means and the backcloth before which Rifleman 'Smith' performs.

At the present time the School of Infantry is divided into three main Wings. The Small Arms/Signal Wing is at Hythe in Kent and the Support Weapons Wing and Tactical Wing are respectively at Netheravon and Warminster in Wiltshire.

The Demonstration Battalion is committed to providing troops at these three places as follows:

Hythe	Approximately one section.
Netheravon	One section of medium machine guns. One section of 3 inch mortars. Two detachments of anti-tank guns.
Warminster	Battalion less the above.

In addition we find a large platoon of about fifty for demonstrations at Mons Officer Cadet Training Unit at Aldershot. The activities of this detachment will form the subject of a separate article at a later date and I will not mention them further here.

I will not say very much at this stage about the detachments at Netheravon and Hythe. As both these Wings of the School are concerned with teaching specific weapons, the duties of their demonstration detachments are directly concerned with the technical and tactical handling of specific individual weapons. This involves demonstrations in actual weapon handling and taking part in a variety of students' mutual training periods and exercises. A considerable amount of time is taken up with preparation and rehearsal for specific periods and the remaining working hours are fitted with the great variety of trials, experiments and fatigues which are the constant chore of a weapon school.

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Naturally a very high standard of efficiency is demanded, and achieved, in these establishments and our detachments resident there benefit from this. These undoubted benefits compensate for the disadvantages of having small parties detached from the Regiment, living in the rather impersonal conditions which exist in any combined establishment. Personnel of these detachments are changed over at intervals, either through necessity or to provide a change of environment. A more detailed account of their activities will be given later in our tour of duty.

Our major commitment concerns training carried out at the Tactical Wing at Warminster and this I will deal with in rather more detail.

Located at Warminster is the headquarters of all Wings of the School and also the Tactical Wing. Resident also at Warminster are a tank squadron (at present 'A' Squadron, The Queen's Own Hussars) and an A.P.C. troop. In addition our own Letter A Company is living in the School at Warminster while the remainder of the Regiment is stationed at Knook Camp, Heytesbury, about five miles away.

Headquarters of the School of Infantry acts as our senior headquarters in a number of training and administrative matters. In particular we come directly under the command of the Commandant of the School (at present Brigadier Tony Read, D.S.O., C.B.E.). We deal with School Headquarters staff on all matters affecting trials and commitments which arise in addition to normal duties connected with the courses run at the Tactical Wing. Miscellaneous tasks which have come our way so far during our short stay here have ranged from trials with new types of waterbottles to the making of a War Office film on internal security operations (most appropriate in view of our recent return from Cyprus).

Our daily 'bread and butter' is provided by Tactical Wing. This Wing runs two main tactical courses; one for company commanders and the other for platoon commanders. The courses, which overlap in time, each run for approximately eight weeks and there are normally four such courses a year. Both levels of course lay particular stress on the co-operation of all arms and this factor adds considerably to the interest of our demonstrations and training. In addition to these four long courses each year there are additional commitments entailing an annual demonstration in June, courses for Territorial Army officers in September, pre-Staff College course, etc. These can be better covered in the next issue of the CHRONICLE when we shall have had the experience of a full year here.

For those concerned in Tactical Wing Courses the 'Term' commences about a week before the students assemble, with preparations and rehearsals for the opening demonstrations. From then until the end of the course nine weeks later, the demonstration rifle companies, Letter 'A' (three platoons) and Letter 'B' (two platoons) are kept fairly consistently employed on demonstrations and exercises and the numerous preparations and rehearsals which precede both. Support Company also take part in a number of actual support weapon demonstrations or in exercises, in addition to acting as riflemen and enemy on numerous other occasions. Headquarters Company's specialist platoons are naturally involved in almost all activities but in addition almost the whole of the company, clerks, storemen, cooks, etc. are required to turn out as riflemen on major exercises which involve the whole Regiment.

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In outline the programme for Tactical Wing courses is in the following general sequence. First, a short period of 'familiarisation' with details of establishments, organisation and equipment of the infantry and other 'teeth' arms; armoured corps, artillery, signals and engineers. This is followed by consideration of tactical problems in the main phases of war; defence, attack, advance and withdrawal in a conventional setting. This involves indoor and outdoor discussions, demonstrations and exercises at different levels for the platoon and company commander; the last phase of the programme is devoted to consideration of nuclear warfare. This primarily concerns the company commanders' course rather than the platoon commanders but again involves demonstrations and exercises.

Without going into detail I have listed below some of the major roles which we play as demonstration troops in the above programme. In the 'familiarisation' phase of the first two weeks we demonstrate:

- All types of weapons and equipment.
- Fire power of infantry weapons by day and night.
- Basic drills used in co-operation with tanks and armoured personnel carriers.
- Basic fieldcraft and battlecraft drills by day and night.
- Types of field defences.
- Laying of mines and breaching obstacles.
- Patrol activities.

In addition at this time we supply small parties and individuals to assist in minor tactical exercises as enemy, targets, fire representation, communicators and general fatigue men.

In the second and main part of the course we demonstrate such things as:

- Attack drills by company groups.
- Village fighting technique.
- Advance action with tanks and A.P.C.s.
- Internal security operations.

And we take part in a number of exercises including a battalion night attack and advance to contact. In the major exercises many riflemen find themselves with officer students as section, platoon and company commanders to the mutual astonishment of all. In addition we find enemy parties from a section to a company group strength.

In the final nuclear stage of the present course our activities are limited to a major operation involving defence and counter attack and two exercises which involve the whole Regiment. At the same time we send a platoon away to Dartmoor to act as enemy to the platoon commanders' course during their final test exercises.

I think from the above few paragraphs it will be obvious that we are kept busy during the course period. To this may be added the many additional items which invariably come the way of the demonstration battalion, i.e. trials, visits by ministers and foreign potentates, etc. not to mention the normal domestic chores such as guards, audit boards, administrative inspections. Owing to the fact that at present our total strength is very low, everyone is very heavily committed and there is very little spare time for the normal cycle of training or even for sports and recreation. We hope however that this situation will cease in the coming year.

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I have tried in the preceding paragraphs to outline something of our activities here at Warminster. I have tried to avoid too much detail as our experience so far is only based on one 'term'. One of the advantages of being stationed here is that there is always something new happening and we are kept on our toes and up to date. There is a constant accumulation of items both social and military to write about. I hope that a more interesting account of our activities over a longer period of time here can be included in the next issue of the CHRONICLE. With this in mind I hope I have provided a background against which these events can be recorded and have given some idea of the scope of our present task as Demonstration Battalion.



The Regiment demonstrating at the School of Infantry  
'Infantry carried into battle on tanks'