

BRITAIN'S ACE SUBMARINE COMMANDER

Lieutenant-Commander M. D. Wanklyn V.C., D.S.O.

Special to the Times of Malta: Official Release.

Lieutenant-Commander Malcolm David Wanklyn V.C., D.S.O., a submarine commander of outstanding ability is Captain of His Majesty's Submarine "Upholder". When interviewed by your representative, he modestly confirmed that his successful attack on a heavily escorted convoy off Sicily several months ago, which resulted in the sinking of an important Troopship, had won him the Victoria Cross and that since this feat his ship has accounted for

ONE MERCHANTMAN; ONE DESTROYER; ONE U-BOAT; TWO TROOPSHIPS; ONE TANKER; THREE SUPPLY VESSELS.

The "Upholder's" record as shown by the above is a very fine one. On almost every occasion when ships are attacked they are being escorted by destroyers, torpedo boats and aircraft; whether a submarine attack is successful or not, it is impossible for her to escape the wrathful counter attack of the enemy who nearly always reply by dropping depth charges, against which avoiding action must be immediately undertaken.

"UPHOLDER'S" ADVENTURES:

Previous to the attack on the enemy convoy off Sicily, "Upholder" had operated with success, sinking several enemy ships, for which Lieut.-Commr. Wanklyn had been awarded the D.S.O.

Like many other submarines the "Upholder" has had thrilling adventures which can only be narrated after the war is over. Sometimes, he said, the enemy plastered the sea with depth charges and "we undoubtedly had some nasty moments when over sixty exploded in 15 minutes." Once an enemy destroyer was so close to the "Upholder" that all the crew could plainly hear the enemy ship's propellers moving overhead and depth charges started raining down. Asked how the crew behaved under this "underwater bombing blitz", his reply was "with their usual exemplary calm and attention to action stations".

KEEPING THE "TALLY":

With few exceptions Lieutenant Commander Wanklyn had worked with the same crew in "Upholder" and their steadiness was admirable. One of the ship's company in every submarine keeps the log to record the narrative of events during an attack on the enemy, he also notes the number of depth charges dropped and "Upholder" keeps her tally with zest.

Some quiet rivalry exists amongst the submarines of the Flotilla in assessing who has caused the enemy to expend the most charges.

THE FIRST TO LEAVE

U-BOAT KAPITAN

The "Daily Mail" of December 6 last contains the following report: The U-boat which was sunk by the Canadian corvettes CHAMBLY and MOOSEJAW was the U 501—the Admiralty has announced—and when attacked the U-boat commander Korvetten Kapitän Hugo Forster, abandoned his crew and jumped on the "Moosejaw's" deck.

The U 501 was the first of a new series of 740-tonners. Last August she started her first and last operational cruise.

After remaining under water for days at a time to elude British warships and aircraft she found a 2,000-ton Norwegian ship unarmed and unescorted. She sank this—with more than 40 shells—her only contribution to Hitler's alleged blockade.

SET UPON

On September 11 she tried to attack a British convoy and was set upon by the two corvettes. "Chambly" made a depth-charge attack which put out all lights on the U-boat.

U 501 surfaced. "Moosejaw" opened fire, tried to ram, but achieved only a glancing blow. Yet at that moment Forster, who was on the conning-tower, jumped on board.

The "Moosejaw" again opened fire. The German crew took to the water.

Thirty-seven of them are now prisoners. Ten were drowned.

Forster's jump for his life, announced the Admiralty, has "caused discussion" among the hundreds of U-boat prisoners now in our hands.

Significant point: Forster, apart from a U-boat course, had never been in a submarine before this voyage; neither had his second-in-command. Two other officers had had no navy experience at all. Only six of the very young crew of 47 had ever made a war cruise in a U-boat.

IMPETURBABILITY:

Asked what quality was most needed in submarine warfare for success Britain's submarine Ace replied: "That's a nasty one, so I will use a long word: 'Imperturbability'."

Lieutenant Commander Wanklyn said he had first served in submarines as a Sub-Lieutenant, which was as soon as possible after leaving the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. Submarines, he said, gave an opportunity for early command and consequent responsibility. The congestion of life in these ships when at sea made human and personal interest in one's ship's company and material interest in one's ship particularly absorbing.

FINE TEAMWORK:

The enthusiasm of the men of "Upholder" for their job and their determination are reflected in the personality of their Commander. One can easily picture the magnificent team work of the ship's crew.

YOUNG BEARDED SCOT MARRIED IN MALTA

Lieutenant-Commander Wanklyn is a man of resolute character, quiet speech, and has penetrating brown eyes. He is over six feet in height and like most submariners in war-time, sports a beard. He is 30 years of age. He married his wife, Elspeth Kinloch, in Malta and has a two-year-old son, Ian, now staying at Ellangowan, Meigle, Perthshire. He is a Scot by birth, but is best known in Cheltenham. He obtained his first command in January 1940.

HAPPY ISLAND MEMORIES:

Lieutenant-Commander Wanklyn has been in Malta on several occasions, his first visit being in 1933, and he has happy memories of the Island, its people and has great admiration for the Maltese farmers. His favourite past-time is fishing, and his favourite games are hockey and tennis.

RECEIVING THE NEWS:

Asked how he had received the news of his V.C. award, he said: "At 6 a.m. I was woken up; when I had heard a knock at my cabin door I had quite expected that it would be an order to go to sea immediately. Naturally I was exhilarated by the news. A wonderful surprise".

COOK'S IMPORTANCE:

Lieutenant-Commander Wanklyn said that "Upholder" was fortunate in her cook; catering and cooking are important items in a submarine's routine at sea. The confined space and necessity for each member of the crew to perform active duties, prevent the carrying of a trained Cook, but an Able Seaman, specially selected for his culinary talents, answers to the rest of the ship's company for their welfare in this respect. Pointing out that short spells of intense excitement only occasionally relieved long periods of monotony the cook's ability and ingenuity particularly when the weather was rough were a matter of special interest. Submarine crews received a balanced and ample diet especially suited to their arduous duty; he stressed the men's appreciation of the fresh fruit and vegetables which they obtained.

Your representative thanked Commander Wanklyn for facing the Press, like he faced depth charges, with composure. "Imperturbability", and wished him and all his gallant comrades a Happy Christmas and a Victorious New Year.

Present Day Life in Malta

MODERN SCOPE AND PAST ASSOCIATIONS

BY REYNARD AND SAGITTARIUS

THE R.A.M.C. is one of the younger Units in the British Army, having been formed in 1898, but the need for caring for the sick and wounded is as old as the gentle art of war-waging itself. Before the 19th Century, the medical side of soldiering had not been developed to any extent, and the armies of other days were often decimated by epidemic diseases such as plague and typhus fever, and a badly wounded man was more often than not put out of his misery without further ado.

In ancient times, all the medical arrangements were in the hands of one or two Surgeons who usually accompanied the army when it took the field. These men, who were mostly the personal attendants of noblemen, were assisted only by their apprentices and by the women who followed their menfolk in the wake of battle.

Such conditions prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and right up to the time of the Commonwealth, when a standing army was first raised and maintained by Cromwell. The Surgeon then became an integral part of the regiment, and under him was a small regimental hospital with its untrained male staff. Even in the 18th

Nevertheless, the Army in South Africa had been sorely depleted by typhoid fever and dysentery, and research in preventative medicine, as well as curative, was begun in earnest.

In 1903 a larger school of military medicine was opened in London in the form of the R.A.M.C. College and in the same year the Corps Journal was first produced. During the ten years of peace which followed, no time was lost in putting training on an organized basis; new methods were evolved and perfected, and by August 1914 the Army possessed a small but efficient Medical Service some 9,000 strong. Volumes have been written about the part played throughout the next four years.

It can best be summed up by fact that over 9 million casualties were dealt with, and no less than seven V.C.'s won. Two names there are which stand out with unrivalled distinction—Captain Noel G. Chevassé V.C. and Lieutenant A. Martin Leake V.C. These two R.A.M.C. officers won the only two bars to the Victoria Cross that have ever been awarded.

PAST ASSOCIATIONS WITH MALTA

In the Age of Chivalry, Malta was famous as the stronghold of The Knights Hospitallers. In this Machine Age, modern "hospitallers" in Malta still maintain the great tradition of succouring and healing—though hypodermic needle has superseded lance, and the scalpet the Crusader's sword.

Modern associations begin as early as 1896, when a contingent of the A.H.C., 44 strong, was stationed in the stronghold of Malta, and from that time the Army Medical Service have never left the Island. During the last war, as many will remember, the whole place was turned into a gigantic Hospital, or collection of Hospitals, and among the large staff were Australian doctors and sisters. Today I know of at least one surgeon and three sisters from "down under" who are maintaining the old association.

THEN AND NOW

The task of the R.A.M.C. in Malta during the last war was to nurse large numbers of sick and wounded soldiers back to health; so much so that the Island earned the name of "Nurse of the Mediterranean". Now, they have the equally important, though less dramatic role of keeping the standard of health of a vast garrison up to a level unprecedented in previous wars.

THE FIGHT AGAINST DISEASE

The Field Hygiene Section

A remorseless war is continuously being waged against the animals and insects which carry the germs of disease.

In this, all medical units are engaged, but especially the Field Hygiene Section who are experts, not



only at giving advice on all matters of hygiene, but also at producing elaborate and ingenious traps for the unwary fly, out of any odd scraps of wood and tin.

They also hunt the rat, louse, flea, bug, itch mite and cockroach, not to mention many kinds of dangerous bacteria as well.

THE ARMY'S G.P.

The Field Ambulances

The place of the family doctor is taken by the Medical Officer of the Field Ambulances under whose care are the hundreds of small posts and detachments scattered throughout the Island. His task is often hard and wearisome, but appreciative soldiers with small Sick Parades are his reward.

Of the two Field Ambulances, the 161st (East Anglian) is the only Territorial Medical unit on the Island, and they are proud of the traditions behind them. They have drawn their numbers almost exclusively from Suffolk for more than 30 years, and are one of the oldest units in the T.A. At the beginning of the Great War they were known as the 1st (E.A.) Field Ambulance, later becoming the 88th and finally being brigaded as the 161st.

In 1915 a second line was formed, and the first

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Century, the regimental surgeon was still a fearsome figure armed with little else than an ugly saw for amputating battered limbs, and a bucket of pitch with which the deeper sabre cuts were staunchened.

It was not until the Crimean Campaign, when Florence Nightingale was inspiring the world by her fortitude and devotion in the face of many difficulties, that it was decided to form a special branch of the Army to undertake, and to specialize in, medical work. This branch was first known as the Medical Staff Corps (though subsequently, from 1857 to 1884, as the Army Hospital Corps), and had its headquarters at Chatham.

The Unit had the distinction of having an establishment of one officer and 900 men. It is recorded that he managed to teach them to salute. In 1860 a new seat of learning was established by the opening of an Army Medical School for Officers.

As an augury for the non-combatancy of the Medical Services which was to come, it is interesting to note that in 1861 the A.H.C. was exempted from 'Musketry and Gunnery'. At this time many regiments still retained their own Surgeons, but by 1873 almost all medical officers had been absorbed into the Army Hospital Corps, and were no longer part of the regiment.

Notable exceptions still exist to this day, and the R.M.A. and the K.O.M.R. share with the Household Cavalry the distinction of having their own Surgeons, who wear the uniform of the regiment.

During the thirty years that followed the Crimea, the M.S.C. and the A.H.C. were well tried both in South Africa and in the Sudan, where they did valuable work and established a lasting reputation among their fighting comrades. The forerunner of the Territorial R.A.M.C., the Volunteer M.S.C., was raised in 1886, and it was towards the close of the Old Queen's reign in 1895, that the title of 'The Royal Army Medical Corps' was granted by Royal Warrant. From this time also dates the familiar facings of 'dull cherry', the Badge of the staff of Aesculapius and the motto 'In arduis fidelis'.

The newly formed Corps was almost at once plunged into a major war—the South African Campaign of 1899-1902—when the real foundations of the present Corps were laid. 23,000 casualties, a figure which today seems relatively small, passed through their hands during those three years, and six Victoria crosses alone were won.

XMAS & NEW YEAR GREETINGS

The Chief & Petty Officers Social Club, Old College Street, Sliema, are not sending Seasonal Greeting Cards this year, but take this opportunity of wishing ALL OFFICERS, C. & P.O.'s and SERGEANTS of H.M. FORCES and our MANY FRIENDS a MERRY XMAS and a HAPPY and PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.