my cousin Emily says, the Ulsterman is loyal to the Crown and the half-crown, but he certainly gives you value for money.

Saturday, 30th August, and the last day of our cruise. Up at 0600 hrs. at high water so as to catch the tide out of the little harbour, having taken my leave of Bob Dick the night before. Jonath, the ever reliable, hopped off the steamer and hopped on Marcus for the sail back to Loch Ryan, which we started at 1000 hrs. The wind was strong from the south-west and visibility very poor as we could only see about a mile ahead. Once again we had to trust to our navigation and the compass and both proved reliable, for after six hours of sailing, mostly in fog, we once again tied up to our own moorings at Cairnryan.

This is the end of my tale. It was the greatest fun and by taking reasonable precautions we ran no undue risks, and we were blessed by having no rain, nice breezes and calm seas throughout our cruise.

---

DOWN AMONG THE Z MEN

BY

Colonel M. H. P. SAYERS, O.B.E.

Preparations for the reception and training of field transfusion units in Wiltshire were begun in January, some five months before the first reservists were due to arrive. A huddled camp was made ready for them and steps taken to see that everything was done, within the limits of Army schedules, to ensure their comfort. Special attention was given to the details of the reception arrangements so that the Z men had the feeling at the outset that they were really welcome. A personal letter was written to every officer and man giving him an insight as to what he could expect and indicating the attractions of fourteen days' soldiering on Salisbury Plain.

The response on the part of the reservists to this human approach was apparent on their arrival, when it was evident that all, from ballet dancer to bricklayer, were resolved to make the best of the occasion and co-operate to the full in making the training a success. Reception was a cheery affair and nearly everyone appeared in good spirits. As truck-loads of reservists arrived from the station and were shown to their quarters, the camp came to life and the men were given a hot meal before being fitted out at the Quartermaster's Stores.

They emerged in all their glory to repair to the canteen to renew old friendships and discuss, over pipe and ale, days and campaigns already beginning to fade. It was a heartening sight to see older men in uniform again, with breasts bearing battle honours which they were proud to have a chance to wear once more. For the camp staff, the long months of preparation were over and, as the day wore on and things worked out smoothly, there was a sensation of relief.
Much thought had been given to the training programme, which was designed to cover as much of the technical ground as could be digested, flavoured with lectures on Current Affairs, the Geneva Conventions, Civil Defence and a demonstration by the Gunners of latest methods of causing casualties, some 12 per cent. of which, it is reckoned, will require resuscitation. Models were prepared to demonstrate the transport and deployment of the new transfusion supply organization in the field and a mock-up resuscitation ward set out in which the treatment of casualties from the front line to the base was demonstrated.

The Army Transfusion Service, built up during the last war, was second to none, but its raison d'être disappeared at the close of hostilities in 1945, soon after which it rapidly disintegrated. The large reserve of crystalloids and transfusion equipment was more than enough to meet peace-time needs for some time to come, while the National Blood Transfusion Service undertook the supply of whole blood to the army at home.

By 1948 these stocks had begun to deteriorate (along with the international situation) and the position was reviewed. It was decided that in a future emergency, the production of whole blood and plasma for the Services would be the responsibility of the National Blood Transfusion Service and that the remaining functions of the former Army Blood Supply Depot at Bristol would be adopted by the Army Vaccine Laboratory at Everleigh (since renamed the "David Bruce Laboratories" after the distinguished army pathologist General Bruce, who worked in its predecessors at Millbank and Netley). These functions would include the collection of whole blood and plasma from Regional Transfusion Centres for distribution to forces overseas; the production of crystalloids and transfusion equipment; training; and the mobilization of field transfusion units.

During the past eighteen months the army transfusion arrangements and field organization have been re-examined with special reference to the functions of the National Blood Transfusion Service, the David Bruce Laboratories and the Army Medical Equipment Depot. Proposals have been made for a new set-up for a Base Transfusion Unit. This is to be organized into a Headquarters and a Company (each with its Mobile Blood Bank) and two or more Forward Banks to provide storage facilities in the Corps maintenance areas, thus rendering the unit more flexible and adaptable to modern tactical conditions.

For this reason it was decided to take an early opportunity to train officers and men of the Reserve in the work of the transfusion service in the light of the proposed reorganization, and so the personnel of two Base Transfusion Units and a number of Field Transfusion Teams—some 160 officers and men—were recalled, for the first time in peace, as part of the Z reservist programme for 1952.

The fortnight culminated in a two-day exercise in the field (code name, Exercise "Dracula"), which was a good example of harmonious inter-Service co-operation embracing the National Blood Transfusion Service, the Royal Navy and the R.A.F. In brief, the exercise involved the deployment of the company of a Base Transfusion Unit and three Field Transfusion Teams (F.T.U.s. of the last war) to provide the transfusion service for an army, engaged in a
defensive role on the continent of Europe, for which South-West England did service. This proved the most popular part of the training, its success being due to the enthusiasm of those taking part and particularly to the ready cooperation of the sister services.

At the base was the headquarters of the Company with its four technical sections, viz., the Crystalloid Production Section; the Equipment Servicing Section; the Plasma Processing Section, and the Base Blood Collecting Section, all augmenting supplies from the United Kingdom which, so the legend went, had proved inadequate. It was served by an airfield near by from which supplies were flown by the R.A.F. in Ansons to the Forward Blood Bank, sited on an airstrip in the Corps maintenance area. Thence supplies were delivered by jeep and trailer to the casualty clearing stations and forward medical units. In the Divisional area was an Advanced Surgical Centre where a naval helicopter from Gosport demonstrated an effective method of supplying blood into the arms of the "recipient" by winch and hawser.

It was arranged that a number of Z men could hop lifts as air escorts which, by adding to the fun of the day, killed two birds with one stone. Over 100 pints of blood were taken from volunteers in the course of the exercise, so one might add that this was got out of the stone as well! A number of points were brought out affecting the new organization, especially regarding the proposed staff and allocation of transport.

A visit by the Director-General and a number of senior officers was much appreciated by the reservists, who felt that their welfare was at the heart of the "powers that be." They all responded by doing their best—illustrating the tonic properties of "brass." Several transfusion pundits of the last war also gave up their time to come down and talk to the men, many of whom had served with them during the war and were glad of this opportunity of meeting again.

The fortnight was rounded off by a visit to Stonehenge as part of a "map-reading exercise" and, when the time came to say good-bye, the impression was gained that the camp had been an instructive and not unenjoyable experience.

As one frank Z man wrote, in a letter of appreciation: "I had visualized a completely wasted fortnight, but I can assure you, sir, I came away with a completely different opinion." With regard to the men undergoing training, he added: "They are certainly the type of men that helped to win the last war. They worked well as a team and, in the event of the balloon going up, I sincerely hope I will have the honour of serving with them again." This might be said to reflect the general spirit of a successful venture.
Down Among the Z Men

M. H. P. Sayers

*J R Army Med Corps* 1954 100: 65-67
doi: 10.1136/jramc-100-01-10

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://jramc.bmj.com/content/100/1/65.citation

These include:

**Email alerting service**
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/