

H.M.S. "SCOTIA"

This is our introduction to the pages of "The Communicator," and at first sight you may unknowingly think it our introduction to you. But really it is an introduction to very few, for most of you have met us personally at sea. H.M.S. *Scotia* hoisted her commissioning pendant in January, 1942, and has sent 20920 Communication Ratings to the Fleets and Naval Service all over the world. When H.M.S. *Valkyrie* closed down the entire entry and training of Hostilities Only Communication Ratings was centred in *Scotia*. Also all the Wrens who previously learned to "spit brown to windward" in H.M.S. *Cabbala* transferred their charm and seat of learning to us. Then too, there were our Allies the Norwegians, Dutch, French and Belgians all of whom in their hundreds received their training in *Scotia*. Each of these nationalities, be it added, were not only well to the fore in the life of this co-ed school, but also made for themselves a prominent place by their bearing and enthusiasm while on course, and upheld the highest standards on the occasions of inspections. It may have cost us a lot of wedding presents but, too, there will ever remain the happiest memories of great friendships between both officers and men.

It is perhaps interesting to record briefly the history of this Establishment which has handled the bulk of the training of the "Civilian Navy" communication ratings during and after the war. In addition to Allied ratings, in January, 1943 3,190 ratings were "on the books" under instruction.

Originally the beginning of a Butlin Camp in Ayr, situated on the sea shore of the Clyde approaches, the Admiralty completed the buildings to the holiday camp lay out, and so commissioned H.M.S. *Scotia*, under the command of Captain P. K. Enwright, C.B.E. Royal Navy, now promoted to Rear Admiral. Commander E. H. Kitson was the first Training Commander who set the wheels in motion assisted by Signal Lieutenant R. H. Curram, and Telegraphist Lieutenant H. D. Hynd, the good work being carried on by Commander Charles Bushe with Signal Lieutenant Lambie M.B.E. and Telegraphist Lieutenant Owen, and such personalities as C.Y.S. Froud and C.P.O. Tel. Criddle.

In December, 1946 the Camp at Ayr was returned to Butlin, and *Scotia* transferred to two adjacent Camps near Warrington. All the V/S, Teleprinter and Telephone Switchboard training is concentrated in North Camp, the W/T training being centred in the South Camp. The North Camp is fully equipped with flag hoisting masts, dispersed Aldis positions, signalling projectors, etc. There is an extensive Teleprinter Section with Switchboards and also instructional Telephone Switchboards for the Wren Switchboard Operators. The instructional block in the South Camp is still in process of building and, when completed about October, 1947, will provide for 840 ratings under training. Meanwhile the National

Service Ordinary Telegraphists are dispersed temporarily to the Signal Schools at Fort Southwick and Cookham Camp.

Ayr had many attractions in the way of a beautiful countryside on the doorstep, bathing and playing about on the beach, and few of the distractions that Manchester, Liverpool and Warrington offer for those with a shilling or two to spend! On the other hand in the present camps of brick built buildings there is a radiator in each cabin which sleeps two ratings, and constant hot water day and night! We do, however, miss the sea, and regretfully have to admit that due to the concentration of initial training inland the Ordinary Signalman and Ordinary Telegraphist joins his ship without ever having seen the sea, let alone without having even a nodding acquaintance of the "King's Ships."

So the war over, *Scotia* continues her same function in the training of National Service Ordinary Signalmen and Telegraphists, together with Wren Teleprinter and Telephone Switchboard ratings, and when the Master at Arms reports "the bodies have arrived from Depot—National Service Sir" we trust you will not be wondering what strange visitation has befallen you.

Of course we are apt to be absorbed in the sense of our own importance, for example Smith announced under examination that "... he will receive his message on the appropriate Naval Message form from the Yeoman or Flag Officer and selecting a good background and using the best possible angles he was taught in *Scotia* in this way even a very ordinary signallman can deal successfully . . ."

"SCOTIA"



"Can Stripey have some rads for the 49, please Chief"

COOKHAM

Hitherto this word has always been associated, in Naval parlance, with the word "fry,"; Cookham Camp, however, is an up-and-coming Signal School, near Rochester. In fact, it is assuming such importance that it is not uncommon to hear it stated that Rochester is situated near Cookham Camp!

It owes its origin to the fact that during the recent unpleasantness with the Hun it became obvious that R.N.B. Chatham would probably become an enemy target. It was decided therefore to instal underground all important equipment and to evacuate all the Intelligentsia to a safe place—of course the Communications Branch were transferred. The site decided on was Cookham Wood, a large expanse of primeval forest near H.M. Borstal Institution. We have no connection with the firm next door, and any similarity is purely coincidental.

The camp itself lies due North and South, and is divided into approximately halves by the "main road." On entering the camp it is apparent that the drab atmosphere sometimes associated with naval establishments, is missing. The Guardhouse and Leave Office are bounded by an elegant profusion of roses, which tends to produce an old world atmosphere. This effect is heightened by the fact that all the accommodation (desirable residences designed by Mr. Nissen) has been erected on sites cleared from the original wood, much of which still remains.

On the western side of the camp exists a large expanse of grazing land, which, when cleared of sheep, provides admirable facilities for recreation, whilst at the southern end we have that always interesting establishment, "The Wrennery."

During spells of fine weather the camp is a picture to delight any eye, but during the "chestnut season" it is unwise to linger and survey the beauties of nature, as bricks, sticks, etc. have a nasty habit of descending from above.

To the newcomer, Paradise is in sight, and the R.N. has indeed turned over a new leaf and provided a place free from regulations and musters. This delusion is quickly dispelled however, for in such matters we are as punctilious, if not more so, as any contemporary establishment. In the sphere of instructions, we cater for C.S., S.S., N.S. Classes and, at times, even that despised creature, the "Dockyard Matey," and no effort is spared in order that as much knowledge as possible is imparted. In fact, during the past cold winter, in spite of being in an exposed position, subject to rain, snow, hail, burst pipes, fuel shortage and other novelties, instruction continued almost without a break.

Last November the camp was peacefully invaded by a large number of National Service Ord. Tel. trainees from *Scotia* and these now form half our complement. However, many Continuous Service Ratings are now arriving from all over the world, and it makes a pleasant change to hear again the

familiar phrase, "Roll on my twelve," instead of "Roll on my demob group."

With regard to entertainment, we have the usual "talkies" and gramophone recitals. In addition dances are held twice weekly, spot prizes and refreshments being provided. Now you know why we have a "Wrennery." Musical and Variety shows are also put on periodically by the camp concert party and very good shows they are. If the above are not enough, additional amusement can always be obtained by watching fire practice each night in the dog watches.

Early this year we were honoured by a visit from the First Sea Lord, which necessitated quite a few dummy runs before we attained the required peak of efficiency. We received Sir John with an armed guard of S.S.X. Ord. Tels., under the command of a Commissioned Signal Boatswain R.N.V.R., a combination which we think has not often been turned out.

Recently we have received three more classes ex "Glenholt," and it is our firm conviction that we get these extra classes because of the finished product we turn out, which can be described only as a "Superior Article."

Before concluding we should like to wish all Signal Schools, at Home and Abroad what we wish ourselves. "Good Classes, Good Results and Good Luck."

Lastly. This is Commander Napier, Officer-in-Charge, Cookham, writing—

"I use this means to address as many as possible of you, Chatham Communication Ratings, in whatever part of the world you may be serving.

When your time comes to return to Cookham, either for a Course or for your time ashore at home in Depot, it may well be that you will bring with you some question—to do with advancement, pay, examination results, private affairs, etc.—to which you wish to know the answer.

The standard to which Cookham works is "An answer, if only an interim one, on any question within five minutes." So should you have a question, take it as soon as you arrive to the Divisional Officer, Lieut. Bacon.

About the only thing we cannot guarantee to do is to provide you with a house, as one optimist asked us to do! To you all—Good Luck, a happy commission, and a safe return home."

