



308 (COUNTY OF LONDON) EVACUATION HOSPITAL (V)
RAMC TA

A HISTORY
to celebrate the Unit's

SILVER JUBILEE

1961 – 1986

by
Col (Retd) D N STEWART L/RAMC(V)

This small book is dedicated to the soldiers and servicewomen of 308. Not only to those of the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Army Dental Corps, and the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, representing the Army Medical Services, but also to those of the Royal Corps of Transport, the Army Catering Corps, The Royal Engineers, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the Royal Army Pay Corps, and the Women's Royal Army Corps.

Without them the unit would not exist, and without their loyalty, devotion to duty, and sheer hard work, nothing would have been achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Editor of 'The Times' is thanked for permission to quote from the Times Territorial Army Supplement dated 21st October 1952.

The author is also grateful to the Ministry of Defence for permission to publish this history of the unit.

D. N. STEWART
Colonel (Retd) L/RAMC(V)
May 1986

"Perhaps the commonest question the unit is asked is who are you, why do you do it and finally what do you do? Rather than present a bare account of our training, the writer felt it might be of interest to try and answer these questions.

We are a sponsored unit. Our liaison with Central Volunteer Headquarters, Army Medical Services, is a happy one and we hold our Commandant and all his staff in our highest esteem. It is well worth reporting that over a number of years we have never appealed in vain for help and advice.

Our RAMC officers include junior hospital staff, general practitioners, consultants, a professor and even a Group Secretary. The QARANC officers vary from our lady at the Department of Health to District Nurses, Ward Sisters and even those rare birds – Theatre Sisters.

Many, many occupations are covered in the unit but it is not quite true that a large town telephone exchange has to close down when we go to camp. We are lucky in having a fair quota of those military men who are masters of all trades and who form the backbone of any unit. However, we are all volunteers, proud of the fact and prepared to work. The experience of our elder personnel covers practically every theatre of war during 1939–45 and many practical lessons learnt the hard way have been discussed and taught.

As to why we do it there is not any simple answer. In a few cases it may be for money but the writer believes this is a rarity. The spirit of service, the comradeship, the change from one's normal life, a great interest in the Army are among many factors concerned.

What do we do? We try and produce a disciplined, thoughtful unit, which can function as a whole or in parts".

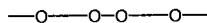
Army Medical Services Magazine Supplement 1970

308 (County of London) General Hospital was born on 1st April 1961. It is, perhaps appropriate that it was born with the guidance of Colonel Tony Charles, consultant obstetrician at St. George's Hospital, London, who was the first Commanding Officer. During the twenty five years since then the infant he delivered has developed into a very healthy adult.

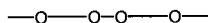
Before embarking on the story of 308 it is of historical interest to consider the background to its formation. The first volunteer medical force was conceived by Sir James Cantile at Charing Cross Hospital in 1882. The first parade was in 1883 and the force was officially recognised in 1886. In 1908 the Volunteer Medical Force was incorporated in the new Territorial Force Scheme. On the 18th February 1920 this was reformed as the Territorial Army which included 86 medical units. Prior to the emergence of the Territorial Army the Supplementary Reserve was formed. The Territorial Army was a complete army with fighting troops and logistic support troops. The Supplementary Reserve, however, consisted only of logistic units for most of which there was no requirement in the Regular Army in peace, but whose existence was essential in war. The Supplementary Reserve was reconstituted in April 1950 and renamed the Army Emergency Reserve. Whereas Territorial Army units existed in all parts of the country and recruited locally, the Army Emergency Reserve was a national organisation recruiting tradesmen and those with specialist skills nationwide. The AER was planned to provide specialists where and when they are needed in time of war. Despite the reorganisations of the AER and TA since then, the basic principles remain unchanged.

In 1960 the medical units of the AER consisted of five General Hospitals and several minor units. At that time each General Hospital was commanded by a colonel and consisted of, approximately, two lieutenant colonels, two majors, two

QARANC officers and a handful of sergeants and soldiers. Obviously, such units were of no value as reserves, and in April 1961 a major reorganisation was undertaken which resulted in four colonels becoming redundant, only one being retained as the Commanding Officer of the newly formed 308 (County of London) General Hospital. 51 General Hospital AER formed the nucleus to which was added elements from 5, 9, 12 and 27 General Hospitals. It is believed that these General Hospitals were formed in 1950 or earlier to cater for the compulsory reserve forces following National Service. The unit numbers allotted were those of war-time General Hospitals. So far as is known General Hospitals did not exist in the old Supplementary Reserve. In addition to 308, several smaller units were formed, many of which have been modified since that time. 308 General Hospital is the only major AER medical unit to have survived unchanged since 1961. Despite the fact that its role has been modified from time to time, it is still the same unit as in 1961. 307 Field Dressing Station eventually became 307 (City of Liverpool) Field Ambulance, and 304 Casualty Clearing Station was upgraded to Field Hospital before becoming 304 (City of Glasgow) General Hospital in 1973. As has been stated, the AER units recruited nationwide, so it may seem rather odd that in 1961 the three major units were granted the titles of Liverpool, Glasgow and London. In 1961 the theory was that the three units should recruit within a radius of 100 miles from the three cities. This theory, however, did not work, and all three units recruited, and continue to recruit, nationwide. At one time 308 even had one soldier from Inverness, and still has many from the North of England, the Midlands, and South Wales. The titles, however, are now traditional, and the general opinion is that they should be retained.



The early years of 308 can be divided into three parts, each corresponding with the periods of command of the first three commanding officers. Colonel Tony Charles was responsible for the unit's childhood, Colonel Harold Davis for its adolescence, and Colonel Ian Henderson for its early adult life. That these three phases of development represent the periods of command of the first three commanding officers is entirely coincidental. They, in fact, represent the changing attitudes of the Regular Army. During the period of Colonel Charles' command the Army Medical Services of the Regular Army, regrettably, had little concern with the AER medical units. During the command of Colonel Davis the Regular Army began to realise that the AER and the TA were of some importance. When Colonel Henderson was commanding, the Regular Army realised that they could not go to war without the medical reserve army. Much of the credit for this must go to Major General Robert Mitchell, then Deputy Director of Medical Services of Strategic Command, about whom more later.



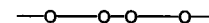
Colonel Charles commanded from 1st April 1961 until 31st March 1965. Unfortunately there are few records of the unit's activities during this period. Annual training was based on Keogh Barracks from 2-16 July in 1961 and 30 June-14 July in 1962 with some field training at Mytchett. The training programmes in those years consisted of lectures, map reading exercises (usually in cars) and tent erection. The QARANC officers and the girls proved to be experts in the latter. Their expertise proved invaluable in 1962 when a small tented hospital was established.

Similar training programmes were carried out at St. Martin's Plain, Shorncliffe in 1963 and 1964. Two memories remain. First, Colonel Charles was allergic to bag-pipes. The camp was shared with a Scottish unit in which the pipes were played at reveille and at dusk. He requested the Officers' Mess secretary to protest, but discretion being the better part of valour, the latter took no action. The second memory is of an expedition to France arranged by the Administrative Officer, Major Jim Cheeseman. All except four caught the ferry home. Two of the four were sergeants who managed to hitch lifts back to Dover. The other two, one RAMC officer and one QARANC officer spent the night in France and returned to the unit the following day. Colonel Charles was not amused. Both officers left the unit. There was no question of impropriety, but if the sergeants could do it, why could not the officers?

In 1964 Colonel Charles decided that the nursing officers should have their own mess. Despite, or perhaps because of the fact that he was an obstetrician and gynaecologist he was as allergic to women in the mess as he was to bag-pipes. The Army Medical Services Magazine in October 1964 reported that "308 General Hospital completed their mixture of individual and field training at St. Martin's Plain Camp, Shorncliffe. The Nursing Officers organised their own Mess in a most efficient manner". Unfortunately, the conduct of the QARANC Mess was not "most efficient", but an absolute disaster. The RAMC Mess was obliged to bail out the QARANC Mess in a sum in excess of £200. This was despite the fact that many RAMC officers spent evenings in the QARANC Mess, swelling the bar takings and reducing the profits in the RAMC Mess. That was the first and last QARANC Mess.

The nominal rolls for annual training in 1963 and 1964 are still in existence. In 1963 the officer strength was RAMC 20 (including 2 attached), QARANC 32, ACC 1. There were 92 ORs including 11 attached, 9 QARANC and one RADC. The ACC fielded four and the RADC one. In 1964 the officer strength was RAMC 15, QARANC 22 plus six attached, and ACC one. There were 105 RAMC ORs plus 15 attached, and 11 QARANC. The ACC numbered seven, the RASC five and the RADC one. There is no copy of the training programme, but the allocation list shows that 45 soldiers and three QARANC servicewomen undertook nursing courses under the direction of SSgt Curry SEN, Cpl Penny SRN and Cpl Beale SRN.

Without doubt this training was organised and controlled by the one and only Major Betty Brailsford QARANC(V) who was at that time the senior nursing tutor at the Middlesex Hospital in London. In addition to the courses in the unit, fourteen soldiers and servicewomen were attached to the Military Hospital, Shorncliffe, for practical training in the real life situation.



1965 saw the end of Colonel Tony Charles' command, the appointment of the first RSM to 308, the appointment of the first Matron, and the introduction of the BOUNTY Exercises. Colonel Harold Davis assumed command, Jim Campbell was appointed RSM, and Captain Eileen White became the first Matron of 308 in the rank of Major. Her promotion to Matron was welcomed by the majority of the unit, as she was the only QARANC officer with the right qualification and experience for the post, despite the fact that she was only a Captain at the time. Eileen White was than an Assistant Matron at University College Hospital in London. Her appointment led to the resignation of several senior QARANC officers, and to the end of knitting in the Mess. Perhaps Tony Charles was right!

Prior to her appointment, the senior QARANC officer had acted as Matron, designated as Senior Nursing Officer, but exercising little influence on the nursing in the unit. Many of the nursing officers were relatively elderly, but with much war service between them, and tended to isolate themselves in little cliques in the Mess and at work. Eileen White, with the support of three successive commanding officers endeavoured to replace the older QARANC officers, the majority of whom were Health Visitors, with younger, proper "nursing" nurses. She was successful in her efforts which resulted in a tremendous improvement in the motivation, the morale, and the efficiency of the QARANC. It also led to better training for the soldiers and servicewomen, and to the establishment of a very happy combined Officers' Mess. Her efforts were marked by the award of the RRC in the New Years Honours in 1974.

The Army Medical Services Magazine, July 1965 reports as follows:

"The 1st April heralded important changes in the command of three AER units. Colonel Charles leaves 308 General Hospital on completion of his tenure of command. He is the senior Colonel in the AER. He has commanded the General Hospital since it was formed and has guided the unit through the difficult period of its growing up; he leaves a unit where he was much respected by all ranks and the AER is poorer by his retirement. We all wish him a happy retirement and hope that the opportunity will arise for him to continue his interest in AER matters and 308 General Hospital in particular".

Annual Training in 1965 was under canvas at Camp 18 adjacent to Mytchett Place. The following reports from the Army Medical Services Magazine provide accounts of training in that year. The first is from HQ AER and the second from 308. This was the year that sandbags were necessary to control the flood of water across the floor of the Officers' Mess tent.

"The rains came! Everything became wet, dampness pervaded the tents and equipment, but nothing could suppress the enthusiasm to carry out the training programme.

More AER units than usual did their annual training under canvas, yet rarely has there been such a long period of consistently wet weather. However, rain was no barrier to the interest aroused, particularly for units carrying out an exercise aimed at providing a 50-bedded hospital.

The narrative described the setting of the exercise as being in a semi-tropical country. The 'unit' arrived by air and were advised that modified equipment was available in a local Mob store. Transport, which consisted of a 1 x 1-ton truck, 2 x 3-ton trucks and a water truck or trailer was provided from local resources. The CO was then on his own, and had to lay out and erect a 50-bedded tented hospital. Later he was to receive patients evacuated to him by air deemed to have spent six hours in travel since injury. Evacuation from the hospital was by air at night, and involved a journey estimated to be three hours.

As was to be expected, CO tackled the problems enthusiastically, and

different layouts of the hospital were seen. Problems concerning the reception and treatment of patients were studied, as were the requirements of equipment and staff. The exercise over, discussions were held at unit level from which interesting and valuable criticism came from all ranks.

With the unit nearing full strength, successful annual training for 1965 was carried out under the shadow of our military home, on the camp site at Keogh Barracks, during the period 12th to 26th June.

Colonel Harold Davis, FRCP, made his debut as Commanding Officer (formerly Officer i/c Medical Division) in succession to Colonel A. H. Charles, who has retired after a long association with the Corps and has been appointed Honorary Colonel. Another new appointment is that of Major E. M. White, QARANC, AER, as Matron, the first to be so appointed.

Brigadier J. A. D. Johnston, Commandant of the Depot and TE and also Commandant HQ, AER, RAMC, visited the unit in the first few days; the interest and assistance given by him and his staff was most helpful and appreciated.

A very full training programme was carried out, the two highlights being Exercise "Bounty" and Exercise "Envoy IV".

Exercise "Bounty" was the setting up of a 50-bedded hospital on the lines suggested in the Knott Report, and was commanded by Lieut-Col I. D. Henderson. The narrative required the preparation for the receipt of sick and wounded in a semi-tropical climate. A signal (tongue in cheek) was sent back to HQ, AER, RAMC to the effect that the monsoon had broken! This turned out to be nearer the truth than had been envisaged. The difficulties encountered as the result of the very bad weather did, however, have the advantage of further moulding a spirit of goodwill and co-operation between all ranks, so vital in a volunteer unit. Many lessons were learnt both by the unit and HQ, AER. Perhaps this is the moment to deny the rumour that a "Crookham Star" is to be issued for this campaign.

Exercise "Envoy IV" was the name eventually given to Exercise "KAPE" (Keep the Army in the Public Eye), but better known as the Aldershot Army Display. This was a wonderful exhibition and display, showing every aspect of army activities. The Army Medical Services had numerous sections showing many facets of the Corps, and we were privileged to present the field operating theatre under the command of Major M. D. M. Staunton. In competition with such items as the Massed Bands of Aldershot District, the Gurkhas, sky diving and other spectacular presentations, and in very hot weather, large audiences were held continually from 2.0 until 8.0 p.m. each day. Two teams enacted a series of operations with uncanny realism, and the question "Is it real?" was constantly being asked, some spectators coming back for a second look, to try to find out. The commentators worked unceasingly and Major M. (Dimpleby) Staunton took every opportunity to include a "commercial" for the AER. The assistance of the make-up team from the Field Training School was most appreciated, not forgetting the long suffering patients who played their parts so well.

The less spectacular, but equally important, training activities were just as successful, and included comprehensive courses for AMN II and III under the Senior Tutor, Major M. E. Brailsford, QARANC, AER and her team. A high standard was maintained and examination results good. Other courses included attachments to the Cambridge Military Hospital and Blood Transfusion Depot, whilst a party of clerks visited the Medical Services Recored Office at Winchester. Visits to the School of Health and the Sandhurst and RAMC Museums were also enjoyed.

The officers, in addition to participating in the foregoing activities, undertook courses at the School of Health and the Field Training School, which included a flight in a helicopter for a chosen few; the assistance of Col. D. G. Levis and Lieut-Col. J. L. Kilgour, RAMC, and their staff is also appreciated. Lectures were given by Cols. Matheson and Adam, who brought us up to date with military medicine and surgery; Lieut-Col. F. J. Hebbert newly appointed O i/c Medical Division, making all the detailed arrangements. As a side line, a popular duty was that of RMO to a WRAC TA unit stationed at Crookham.

Another newcomer was WO1 J. O. Campbell (RSM), RAMC, AER, and a welcome was extended to him.

The day-to-day running of the camp went smoothly with clerks, cooks, mess staffs, drivers, regimental police and, the very important sanitary orderlies (complete with fags hanging from mouths) played their respective parts. Time also had to be found to fit in identity card photographs, yellow fever and TAB injections, medical examinations, and a host of sundry documentation, not forgetting the very important arrangements for pay, ably coped with by Sgt G. C. Thompson, RAPC, AER.

As part of the entertainment for an Officers' Mess "At Home", the Band of the Junior Parachute Company, the Parachute Regiment, "Beat Retreat", to which all ranks were invited.

The non-medical trinity of Major J. T. S. Cheeseman, Admin. Officer, Major R. W. Henning, Quartermaster, and Captain W. H. J. Garland, Company Officer, all RAMC, AER were more than fully occupied and a particularly good job was done by the QM and his advance party.

An All Ranks Dance was held in the Depot dining hall, which was made the more enjoyable by the aforementioned WRAC TA; an organised swindle in the form of a raffle was organised by a small committee who made the arrangements (headed by Pte. Conway, with PRI paying the bills).

During this time, lurking in the wings, were our military guardian angels Major S. J. Seaman, Assistant Commandant, HQ, AER, RAMC and Lieut-Col. W. J. James (Rtd.), the Paymaster. They had their prompt books at the ready to help us remember our lines, and assistance given by them and their staff perhaps appears to be taken for granted, but is, never-the-less, appreciated.

One disappointing feature was the discovery that so many regular officers and soldiers had little or no knowledge of the Army Emergency Reserve. We hope that during our two weeks at Mytchett we dispelled, at least, some of the mythical ideas, that AER annual training was one big party.

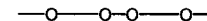
With anxious glances at the skies, and memories of the previous rain, the tentage was struck, stores handed in and 308 went its separate and many ways.

There were, however, 22 left behind who volunteered to stay an extra day to take part in the Corps Sunday Parade. They acquitted themselves well and were a credit to the unit, and to the drill instructors of the Depot, who had given them literally a square bashing.

We are now considering, and speculating on, training for 1966. The official channels can see no future for training in BAOR or other foreign parts, but, with a ridiculous optimism backed by very strong rumours, from the grape vine and other places where rumours are said to originate, it is thought that this might still be".

The platoon representing 308 on the Corps Drumhead Service Parade was excellent. This parade is held annually in June or July at Keogh Barracks to commemorate the foundation of the RAMC on 23rd June 1898. The drill and marching of the 308 platoon was equal to that of the Regular platoons making up

the rest of the parade. 308 men were outstanding in that they were the only ones still wearing the old fashioned battle-dress of blouse and trousers – which always came apart in the middle. In uniform, as in so many other aspects of equipment, the Reserve Army lagged years behind the Regular Army. It was to be many years before the QARANC were issued with suitable uniform and boots for field training. No matter where it may function, in tents or in buildings, a general hospital is a field unit, to work in which, proper combat uniform is essential. There is no place for nice grey skirts and black shoes. It should be stressed that these problems have all been resolved.



1966 saw the unit at Devizes from the 14–28th May. The choice of Devizes proved a good one from most points of view, although it was a last minute change of plan. The original venue proved impossible as the camp had been double booked. Once again, the main item in the programme was Exercise BOUNTY which has already been described. The camp at Devizes was shared with the Sharpshooters from London and the Dorset and Somerset Yeomanry. The latter was in camp complete with band, which, at other times, was the Yeovil Town Band. The presence of these two all male units seriously reduced the number of QARANC officers in the Mess in the evenings, and also led to an attack with thunderflashes by the Sharpshooters. This time Colonel Harold Davis was not amused, one of the QARANC officers having been slightly wounded. On the credit side the Dorset and Somerset Yeomanry Band entertained the Officers' Mess of 308 to an evening of music. Guest conductors: Colonel Harold Davis and Major Eileen White.

In 1967 the unit was back at Camp 18, Mytchett. The main part of the programme was concerned with Exercise BOUNTY. This was the last year of the BOUNTY exercises, and, for a change, the weather was fine. The official view was that "The value of using the 50-bedded hospital . . . confirms conclusions that this size of exercise is well within the capabilities of units, and provides an insight into the equipment to be used in medical units and experience in administration and documentation which would be lost in a larger unit". This was undoubtedly true, but the exercises also revealed that the 50-bedded hospital without means of casualty evacuation was not a viable proposition. The report of the OC BOUNTY stated that "the unit would be capable of dealing with about 10 major surgical cases per day, and a proportionate number of medical cases. With a Field Surgical Team attached . . . the number of surgical cases could be doubled. In either case the unit would cease to function within 2 or 3 days unless adequate and early evacuation were possible".

This was the final Exercise BOUNTY. They were enjoyable little exercises, and to say that they were well within the capabilities of the unit was the understatement of the 1960s. A great deal was learned from them, but the major factor on the credit side was that the Regular Army was beginning to appreciate the value of the AER.

1967 was the year in which a major reorganisation of the AER and TA was implemented on 1st April. The two forces were integrated into the Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve (TAVR). The old AER units became the Sponsored Units of the TAVR, so-called because they were sponsored by Central Volunteer Headquarters of each arm of the service. The old TA units became the Independent Units. The change made no difference to the previous AER units, but many TA units were disbanded. 308 benefitted by receiving a small number of officers, soldiers and servicewomen whose units had been disbanded. One of these, Major Bill Davison, eventually became Commanding Officer.

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY
by
BRIGADIER R. J. NIVEN, M.C.
Commandant Central Volunteer Headquarters
Army Medical Services
Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve
(CATEGORY IIB)
1st APRIL 1967

1. From today you serve in Category IIB of the Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve and you come under the administration of a new Headquarters, which replaces the Headquarters, Army Emergency Reserve RAMC

2. Those of you who have served in the AER will find little change in your conditions of service, and I ask you to keep up your fine record. Those of you who have previously served in the Territorial Army will have to settle in with new comrades in a new unit and become accustomed to new conditions of service. I welcome you to the ranks of the T & AVR and I hope you will soon settle down and help to create a reserve that will be second to none.

3. To Commanding Officers and those concerned in the training and administration of units I wish a happy and rewarding future, as you strive to produce well-trained units capable of taking their place on mobilisation with pride and confidence

R. J. NIVEN
Brigadier Commandant

1967 was also the year in which Major Jimmy Seaman RAMC retired. For six years he had been Officer in Charge, HQ, AER, RAMC, aided and abetted by Lieut-Col. Jimmy James, RAMC (Retd.) Jimmy James was responsible for Pay and Personnel, while Jimmy Seaman carried out all the duties performed by the much larger staff of the later CVHQ AMS. Apart from pay and postings, Jimmy Seaman controlled everything else. No matter where one met him, even at a Mess dinner, Jimmy always had his little black notebook, and action followed every entry. The medical units of the AER owe a great debt to Jimmy Seaman who was dined out on the 19th November 1967.

In 1968 Ian Henderson was appointed Commanding Officer. As has been stated previously this also coincided with the realisation by the Regular Army that the TAVR was of vital importance. The CO was aware of this, and under his direction the unit was rapidly made aware of the fact that it had grown up. Those present will never forget the CO's first address to the officers, followed by an hour on the drill square. The CO made it apparent that a new era had commenced.

1968 also saw the emergence of the Field Training Section whose activities were aptly described by its title. This unit was under the command of Major D. N. Stewart who retained this position until 1972. Why he was chosen is a mystery. Possibly it was because he served during the Second World War in a Field Ambulance and as an infantry Regimental Medical Officer, and later in a TA Field Ambulance. He had, in fact, no General Hospital experience, and, probably, this was the best place to put him. No record is available of the unit training, but the Field Training Section was subjected to intensive instruction in tentage erection, camouflage, Thomas' splint,

map reading, orienteering and field hygiene. A visit to the School of Infantry was included, and the training ended with a night exercise. Exercise NIGHT HAWK was basically a map reading exercise at night with a few casualties thrown in to confuse the issue. 9 QARANC officers and 17 RAMC soldiers formed the main body plus two or three RAMC officers. Split into three teams their tasks were to establish a bivouac area (probably the first time the QARANC had seen a "bivvie"), to patrol given areas during darkness, to treat and evacuate casualties from a given point and then return to bivouac area. All three parties returned to base with a white lantern in front and a red lantern in the rear.

In August 1968 Major Stewart, not for the first time in his military career, was guilty of a breach of instructions. Without MOD permission, as Mr Stewart, he travelled in his old Bentley to Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. He is certainly the only member of 308, and probably of the whole of the TAVR AMS who has seen the Red Army in action at uncomfortably close quarters. It was somewhat disconcerting to be surrounded by tanks and to be looking down the muzzles of their guns a few feet away, with the sound of small arms fire in the near distance. On the 20th August he arrived in Prague. The Russians chose to arrive the same night. The Russians stayed, but he escaped to Austria the following evening after a very adventurous day.

the small town of Grik in northern Malaysia near the Thai border where the communist terrorists were active. This required three months leave from the National Health Service and a personal directive from the Director General, Sir Norman Talbot, to CVHQ AMS authorising this attachment. The then staff at CVHQ were not happy to receive this directive from above. Had the officer concerned applied through normal channels the request would, undoubtedly, have been refused. The thought of three month's pay for one officer would have guaranteed this a negative response. This was also the first time that an officer in the TAVR had been issued with Boots DMS. This greatly upset the QM (Maintenance) at Keogh Barracks, but as the authority for the issue was signed by the DG himself there was nothing he could do apart from grumble. As someone once said "It isn't what you know, but who you know that counts".

Apart from the research aspect into what is commonly known as jet-lag, three months with the SAS was an experience never to be forgotten, but not to be reported. It was during this three months that Major Stewart worked with WO2 Eddie Bustin RAMC. At that time the latter was very dismissive of the TAVR. Major Stewart must have worked on him however, for when he left the Regular Army the following year he joined 308 as WO2, later becoming commissioned as Personnel Officer which appointment he held until he resigned in 1976 and went off to the Middle East.

Whilst in Grik a medical team was flown by helicopter to the isolated village of Temengor which was in the jungle two and a half days walk from the town. In the jungle distances are measured in hours or days, rather than in miles. The village was a long straggling collection of houses in a small river valley with about 800 inhabitants who relied on rice and rubber for their livelihood. The object was to determine the prevalent diseases, and offer treatment if possible, and to advise on the problems of hygiene and the prevention of disease. The team consisted of Major Stewart, WO2 Eddie Bustin and five RAMC NCOs who were Public Health Inspectors or PHIs in training, plus one sergeant RAMC who was a laboratory technician/entomologist, who when not collecting insects, had a microscope for blood and other specimens. The last member of the team was an SAS trooper with a radio to keep in touch with base at Grik. This was the staff of BMH Temengor.

When the team arrived in uniform and all armed with rifles, the villagers vanished, but returned when the team re-appeared in non-uniform without visible weapons. The rifles were for real and loaded at all times in case of an encounter with the terrorists. A rifle is a hard bed mate, but that was the only safe place for it at night.

The schoolmaster, who spoke reasonable English acted as interpreter, and having informed the head man, the surgery was opened and the medical work started. At the same time the hygiene experts started their work on the water supply, the sanitation, and malaria control. To start with the only patients to appear were men. Then the mothers started bringing the children, but would not attend themselves until the village midwife, complete with cigarette, was enlisted as chaperone. About half of the inhabitants attended as patients, the average being about 40 a day.

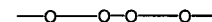
Records still exist of the 407 consultations. At least 80 were suffering from more than one disease. 118 had scabies, 52 had beri-beri, and 27 had hookworm. Although it was a highly malarious area only 16 cases were found. The team, of course, observed strict anti-malaria precautions, and the hygiene members did their best to reduce the mosquito population in the village. 28 patients had anaemia of unknown origin in addition to those with hookworm who were all anaemic. The community was strictly Muslim, and all were non-drinkers, but they were heavy smokers which probably accounted for 23 clinical bronchitics. 16 cases of yaws accounted for the last large group of common diseases, followed by round worm and thread worm infestations and amoebiasis. Two congenital lesions were seen,

a child with twelve toes, and a man with cleft palate. It was interesting that in such a small community three cases of gross multiple neurofibromatosis were seen. It was impossible to determine whether they were related or not.

It was interesting that very few of them knew how old they were. Of the 407 recorded, an estimate of age was elicited in only 23, 19 of whom were under the age of 10.

It was obvious that having seen half the population, there was a very high incidence of chronic disease due to parasites, malnutrition, or both. Although short term treatment was provided it is probable that the team's efforts did little to help the villagers. They were, however, grateful for the help given both on the medical and on the hygiene sides. This was probably more than that of the State doctor who had spent twenty minutes in the village two years earlier. The team had arrived in Temengor under a cloud of suspicion, but departed in their helicopter with garlands around their necks.

Although this is not directly part of the history of 308 it does illustrate the sort of activities in which the TA can participate provided they have the right contacts in the Regular Army. It also illustrates that TA officers, and other ranks too, should never miss an opportunity to recruit new members wherever they may find themselves. Even in a jungle camp thousands of miles from home it is possible to catch one!



In 1970 308 General Hospital was part of Army Strategic Command (STRATCO). This has long ceased to exist, but at that time its role was world-wide, but primarily in support of NATO. From the security aspect it is probably safe to record that one of 308's options was, from photographs, a very nice-looking hotel on the seaside in Greece. This held more promise than the tented camp in pouring rain on Salisbury Plain which was their lot in July of that year. Under the direction of Major General Robert Mitchell, OBE, DDMS of STRATCO, the largest medical exercise since the war was planned and executed. It was probably the largest ever, as it is doubtful is a similar purely medical exercise has been attempted since. The cost was enormous, and the amount of work during the year it took to prepare was equally enormous. General Mitchell was the first senior Regular commander to be seen to take the TAVR seriously. He realised that without the volunteers the Regular Army Medical Services could not function. He, therefore, organised Exercise SWINGFOG which was to deploy all the major medical units of the TAVR in a chain of casualty evacuation. SWINGFOG itself was designed to test units in the reception of their proper war tentage and equipment, in the erection of the necessary tentage for each unit, and in the setting up of the various wards and departments in preparation for the reception of casualties during the second exercise, ESPRESSO TETRO. The following extracts from the Army Medical Services Magazine Supplement 1970 provide a good account of these two exercises. It should be noted that in addition to the TAVR units, the Regular 2 Field Hospital and the RAF played valuable roles. During the setting up stage of SWINGFOG, 308 started work at 0800. This was just as well, because General Mitchell was frequently on site at the same time.

"In July 1970 all medical T&AVR units allotted in support of Army Strategic Command assembled at Salisbury Plain Training Area in exercise SWINGFOG, which was the largest T&AVR medical exercise yet held.

Major sponsored medical units involved were the 308 (County of London) General Hospital, the 304 (City of Glasgow) Field Hospital and 307 Field

Ambulance. Attached to these units were three Field Surgical Teams, a Hygiene Platoon and Section, a Medical Platoon and a Forward Medical Equipment Depot. 260 Ambulance Squadron RCT(V) provided ambulances and trucks for equipment outloading.

These reserve units were to work in close association with regular units 2 Field Hospital RAMC and 1 Air Evacuation Unit of the RAF.

The exercise director was Major-General R. I. Mitchell, DDMS, Army Strategic Command, assisted by Lieut-Colonel D. Smith, ADMS and Major G. Somerville, DADMS. The controller was Col. A. M. Ferrie, ADMS 3 Div."

"During Annual Training 1970 we had for the first time the opportunity of carrying out the role for which we exist; i.e. the establishment of a general hospital in the field and practice in the handling and treatment of sick and wounded.

Under the command of Colonel Ian Henderson ERD, FRCS, we joined other units of the Army Medical Services TAVR at Aliwal Barracks, Tidworth to prepare for Exercises SWINGFOG and ESPRESSO TETRO which involved setting up a complete chain of medical evacuation from field ambulance to general hospital, culminating in the handling of approximately 300 casualties.

Our hosts were 15 Field Ambulance RAMC commanded by Lieut. Col. Dennis Matthews. The way we were looked after was quite outstanding and set the tone for the entire period of training.

The exercises were under the personal direction of Major General R. I. Mitchell, OBE, DDMS, Army Strategic Command whose interest in the Reserve Army goes back to the days when he held senior appointments at the Field Training Centre at Mytchett. The fact that this interest has been maintained was very evident and was of tremendous encouragement to reservists of all ranks. Interest such as this is vital to the success of the TAVR.

Our particular task was to erect sufficient canvas for 300 beds and supporting clinical departments and also for administrative and domestic needs. This being done, the physical handling of something in excess of 100 tons of stores and equipment ensued. We were thin on the ground for bodies and short of time and were glad of the assistance of the Royal Pioneer Corps which included two fork-lift trucks. Our Regular Army colleagues never ceased to be amazed when full laden four tonners were off-loaded by working parties the lowest rank of which could be a major; also the initial embarrassment some of them experienced by seeing officers QARANC undertaking similar activities almost brought tears to ones eyes. The importance of the time element being appreciated by all ranks undoubtedly contributed to the success which was achieved.

We made mistakes and learned from them (that is why we go to camp) but, not only did we learn; the DDMS was gracious enough to tell us that Army Strategic Command likewise had benefitted by the results of our joint activities.

The arrival by helicopter of the GOC in C Army Strategic Command was an added item of interest and his visit was appreciated.

It was an interesting and pleasant experience being associated with our colleagues in other TAVR units and stressed our dependency on each other. It so happened that, for the second time running, 308 General Hospital was awarded the Niven Cup for overall efficiency; whilst being delighted with our good fortune, the heart of the writer (who was one of those who never won prizes at school) goes out to our unsuccessful competitors and commiserates with the umpires and judges who obviously had a difficult and unenviable task.

Little mention has been made of the weather; we perhaps now take it for granted that at least during part of annual training we get very wet and that the temperature on the first night under canvas will be the lowest since records have been kept. There are even some who would be disappointed if this did not happen. It has been suggested that a "personal representative on earth" of St. Swithin is a member of the unit; they are much encouraged by the thought that he is nearly due for retirement!"

The extract just quoted from the Army Medical Services Magazine was written by Major Jim Cheeseman. It is, perhaps significant that since his retirement 308's camps have been blessed with good weather.

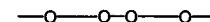
In the account above mention is made of the Royal Pioneer Corps. There were no problems with all the marquees erected by members of 308, but during the following week several of the tents erected by the professionals threatened to collapse. One of these was the Officers' Mess. Unfortunately the tent pitchers had forgotten to insert the vital locking pins in the ridge poles. By means of ropes and pulleys between the tops of the upright poles total collapse was averted.

308 has always been renowned for its hospitality, and this paid off on Salisbury Plain. A deputation from 260 Ambulance Squadron RCT(V) asked the PMC if their officers could use 308 Mess. Apparently a similar request to a nearer medical unit had been refused. They were welcomed into the Mess, and in return they provided 60 men from the squadron to help with the setting up of the hospital. This was a handsome reward for taking in the stranger at the gates. Their presence in the Mess was also appreciated by the QARANC officers who always outnumber the males.

SSgt Ted Veal ACC was commissioned as lieutenant in 1970 after several years of battle with CVHQ ACC. His predecessor as Catering Officer resigned in 1974 and Ted Veal took over. His first year in charge of the unit's catering resulted in a bill for the Officer's Mess some £200 less than the previous years. This saving was not due to a fall in standards, but to economical and sensible purchasing. The fact that he occasionally asked the Mess Secretary for a bottle of whisky for the butcher or the baker certainly helped to keep the bills down. This may not have been strictly ethical, but it was well worth it. The standard of catering for all ranks in 308 improved dramatically.

Major Ted Veal still demands, and gets from his staff, a very high standard for which the unit is well known. The ACC of 308 will produce only the best possible.

Whilst on the subject of catering, mention should be made of the small, but devoted band of ACC and WRAC cooks. Inspection of the nominal rolls over the years reveals the same names appearing year after year, old serving names being replaced by more long serving names. Promotion to senior NCO ACC is poor in 308 as most of the staff sergeants remain in the unit until they reach the age limit. This is another reflection of Ted Veal's influence. He is a good team leader who holds his team together. Is it significant that he lives in Cook's Lane?



1971 was Colonel Ian Henderson's last year of command and annual training was at Crookham where he had started his military career as a newly recruited medical officer before departing for the wilds of the North West Frontier of India. The following reports are quoted from the Army Medical Services Magazine Supplement of 1971, and the Army Services Magazine of July 1971.

"Annual Training 1971 was held at Crookham Training Centre during the period 24 April to 8 May. While the Camp Commandant and his staff did all within their powers to make our stay as comfortable as possible, the fact that this establishment had been "run down" maintenance-wise with a view to closure was very evident and the "sows ears and silk purses" principle was appropriate. Accommodating volunteers in buildings of this type is not the best of recruiting mediums, particularly with the personal introduction aspect.

However, it is people and not bricks and mortar (or even tents) which make a good Unit and morale was as good as ever.

Related to Exercise Swingfog in 1970 the programme this year was comparatively gentle (except for an item referred to later) with Medical Assistant training both at Classroom and Hospital level – a Casualty Reception and Documentation Exercise and the practical application of the various Regimental Duties, a vital basic element in the efficiency of any Unit.

The less gentle activity to which I have referred was the T&AVR Medical Challenge Shield Exercise.

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TAVR Medical Challenge Shield Exercise 1971

This major exercise was held at RAMC Training Centre on 8th and 9th May 1971.

The winners were 257 (Southern) General Hospital, an independent unit who were awarded the Challenge Cup. Much more remarkable, however, was that the runners-up were our own sponsored unit 308 (County of London) General Hospital who received the Fell Cup. 308 General Hospital are warmly congratulated on their well deserved success.

It has been said that this Competition "just isn't on" for Sponsored Units. At first many of us did in fact have doubts; however when 308 General Hospital entered in 1970 and made favourable comparison with their Independent counterparts the doubts which existed rapidly disappeared. The Team Leader was Major Bill Bryett, RAMC(V) who had his own particular brand of enthusiasm and capacity for hard work injected into the Team and although we meet normally only for two week-ends and fifteen days training with an occasional extra week-end they were ready for the "off" at the commencement of Annual Training at Crookham on 24th April, 1971.

When on arrival in Camp it was learned that Major Bryett had been involved in a motor accident and was seriously injured the outlook was for the moment very black – a further complication was that as the Competition immediately followed annual training some members of the Team could not have the extra day off from their employment and, at D-12 serious consideration was given to withdrawing from the Competition.

In accordance with the spirit for which the Reserve Army has long had a reputation, Major Roger Arthur RAMC volunteered to "have a go" and ably supported by WOII Eddie Bustin and with a near scratch team put everything they had got into training for this event.

At the Parade which opened the Exercise the Team had an air of confidence and a high standard of morale for which Major Arthur could be justly proud and which was maintained during the two days of activity.

When the time came to receive the Fell Cup from the Director General – Lt. Gen. Sir Norman G. G. Talbot, KBE, TD, QHS; this was a proud moment not only for the Team but also for the Officer Commanding, Col. I. D. Henderson, QHS, ERD, and eleven officers who were spectators. No words can adequately express the thanks due to Major Arthur and the Team for what was in all the circumstances an outstanding achievement.

The fact that a Team can achieve such a good result with limited training time speaks well for both the content of the Exercise and the basic individual standard of training of those who participated.

The majority of successful enterprises have a back-room organisation and in our case credit must be given to the energy, enthusiasm and skill of the Team Manager/Trainer, Lt. Col. D. N. Stewart, RAMC(V) supported by Major Sid Kane, RAMC, Training Officer CVHQ and his staff; not forgetting Major Bryett who I am glad to say is well on the way to recovery and who must have been very sad at being absent".

Major Roger Arthur did a magnificent job, taking over the team at the last moment without having trained with it. Had Major Bill Bryett been able to lead the team with which he had trained the outcome might have been different. This is in no way a reflection on Roger Arthur, but Bill Bryett might have produced the extra 33 points out of 1000 required to win. It was, nevertheless, a gallant effort, which, once again, proved that 308 was a force to be reckoned with. 1971 was the last year the General Hospitals were allowed to enter the competition. From 1972 onwards a new trophy was awarded to the hospitals based on the annual inspection by the Deputy Director of Medical Services United Kingdom Land Forces and the TA Adviser to the Director General Army Medical Services. This change was a sensible move as the Challenge Shield Exercise was basically a test of field ambulance work which required a different type of training from that in a general hospital. First was tactical loading of a 4-tonner and trailer so that the last items on were the ones to be needed first, and everything loaded in exactly the same order and same place on each occasion. No sorting was required when setting up the medical post which was for primary first aid and life-saving treatment only. Camouflage, security, casualty collection, and the application of the Thomas splint (in a slit trench, of course) – counted for many points. Other tests were with various items of field equipment, in hygiene and water sterilisation, NBC, map reading and first aid. It was all valuable training and the team enjoyed it, but it is doubtful if it justified taking a number of people out of hospital training with the unit to concentrate on the skills demanded by the competition.

Two Regular RAMC sergeants were watching 308's team collecting casualties from an overturned lorry with fire burning nearby. One was heard to say to the other "We shall have to stop calling them week-end soldiers".

As a souvenir of this memorable exercise Major Roger Arthur presented the Officers' Mess with a replica of the Fell Cup which stands on the table at every Regimental dinner night.

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Week-end training at Crookham on 26th and 27th February 1972 marked the end of an era, and the beginning of a new phase in the unit's life, particularly on the management side. It was Colonel Ian Henderson's last appearance as Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hebbert's last appearance as Officer in Charge Medical Division, and Major Jim Cheeseman's farewell as Administrative Officer. Jim Cheeseman's official retirement on 6th March was to result in the promotion of Captain Bill Garland to Major as Administrative Officer, and the appointment of 2/Lieutenant Eddie Bustin as Company Officer. Jim Cheeseman and John Hebbert were dined out by the officers that week-end. Both were founder members of 308.

John Hebbert was a wartime Guards Regimental Medical Officer, and his bearing

was always that of a Guards officer. He was an expert military historian with a wealth of information on battles long ago. Fulfilling his interest in military history he became a very active member of the 'Sealed Knot' re-enacting the battles of the Roundheads and Cavaliers of the 17th century.

Jim Cheeseman was a long-serving pre-war TA officer and very experienced civilisational hospital administrator, being the Hospital Group Secretary in Worthing. Despite being rather pedantic, he was an excellent Administrative Officer who always knew what was going on, and he set a very high standard for his successor to follow. He served in North Africa and Italy during the wars and is probably the only non-medical officer ever appointed as medical officer in charge of a troopship. He was fond of relating the story of how, as a Captain RAMC, he was given this appointment. As he was boarding a ship from North Africa to Italy he was stopped at the top of the gangway by a Royal Military Police Corporal who said, "You are ship's medical officer, Sir". Jim replied, "I am not a doctor". "Sorry, Sir, my instructions are that the first RAMC officer aboard is the ship's doctor".

Bill Garland who was to take over from Jim Cheeseman as Administrative Officer was nearly a founder member of 308. He was attached to the unit in 1961 and posted in as Company Officer in 1962. In civilian life he was, and still is, in personnel management, which proved invaluable during his period as Company Officer and then as Administrative Officer.

Mention must now be made of the most senior member of the non-medical trio, who, with the assistance of succeeding Commanding Officers, ran the unit. Major Bill Henning was the first Quartermaster of 308 who retired in 1968 having been royally dined out at a week-end camp. Bill Henning was the epitome of the old school Regular Army Quartermaster, except that he never simply said, "I haven't got it", or "I've got it but you can't have it". If he hadn't got it, he found it, and if he had it, he provided it. He had risen from Boy Soldier in the RAMC through every rank to Major, so he was well acquainted with all the tricks and stories some people tried to get away with. They probably never did. He enjoyed being back in the Stores environment each year, away from his desk as a Civil Servant. After his retirement he visited the unit on Salisbury Plain at the conclusion of Exercise SWINGFOG. On seeing the vast array of tentage for the 300 bed hospital his only comment, repeated several times, was "Bloody Hell".

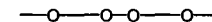
Bill Henning was succeeded by Captain George Freeman who served with the unit until late in 1970. George Freeman had strong views on quartermastering. What he had was to remain in the stores. If no one could use it, nothing was lost. Memories of blankets at Sennelager, and washing bowls on SWINGFOG.

In 1969 Lieutenant Roy Nelson was posted to 308 as Assistant Quartermaster. He succeeded Captain Freeman towards the end of 1970 and has retained the appointment ever since. A senior haematology technician in Swansea, he was a Laboratory Technician during National Service, and then in the AER was commissioned as a Quartermaster. At that time commissions for laboratory technicians did not exist. That is probably as well from 308's point of view, for while he would have proved an excellent Laboratory Technical Officer, the unit has never been better served by the Quartermaster's department. From his point of view it is fortuitous that he was granted a Quartermaster's commission. Promotion for Laboratory Technical Officers in the TA is virtually non-existent. He is now a major, and with a certain amount of luck could finish his career as lieutenant-colonel.

Unlike traditional quartermasters he has always played an active part in training, and insists on turning out on formal parades from which quartermasters are always exempt.

Like Ted Veal, Roy Nelson has always run a very efficient department, and like the cooks, his staff have stayed with him for many years. Names that spring to mind are WO2 Joe Egerton who was RQMS many years ago, and his successor SSgt John

McBride. John McBride retained the position until he retired in 1973. He was one of the characters of 308 who was a very efficient RQMS, with a background of war service in the Royal Navy. In the earlier years his sparring partner was the rather formidable Q/Sgt Grace Ward, who, as the only female member, kept the Sergeants' Mess more or less under control.



In 1972 Colonel Donald Steward assumed command on the retirement of Colonel Ian Henderson. By now the liaison between the Regular Army and the Reserve Army was firmly cemented. Major General Robert Mitchell had retired, STRATCO had been abolished and the United Kingdom Land Forces established in its stead with Major General John Gray as Director of Medical Services and the redoubtable Brigadier Jimmy Miller as his deputy. From this stage onwards it becomes more difficult to report 308's activities. Security now becomes an important factor. From 1972 the unit became more and more involved into the battle order of the NATO forces. Many of its activities in the 1970s were directly related to its present role, and must, therefore, be subject to limited reporting.

In 1972 the unit carried out training at Browndown Camp near Gosport. The main part of the programme was to establish a 100 bed hospital, and to receive and treat 100 casualties. The object of the exercise was to study progressive patient care, i.e. high, medium and low medical and nursing dependency, and also to consider the establishment and equipment of a general hospital. The exercise proved successful and it is interesting that many of the conclusions on establishment were recommended about ten years later when the concept of the Advanced Surgical Hospital was produced. By that time the idea of progressive patient care had been abandoned. The Army Medical Magazine Supplement of 1973 reports the training in 1972.

"This unit is renowned for 'wet weather' camps. When we heard we were to train in October everyone started packing raincoats, gumboots and, the more pessimistic, greatcoats. As it happened we broke the tradition and had two excellent weeks - apart from the night before our field exercise when the 'heavens opened'. Many were the comments 'This is more like 308!!'

With the guidance of our new CO, Colonel Stewart, a lot of work was done. During the first week RN Hospital, Haslar, gave Ward Training to our up and coming MA2s and we also raised tentage and equipped 100 beds, plus hospital departments. The latter was required for a 24 hour exercise, directed by DDMS UKLF, to study the principle of progressive nursing care in a General Hospital. 100 RAMC Apprentices descended upon us during the morning of 10th October and disappeared into the depths of Browndown, only to reappear as well simulated casualties. The whole exercise was most realistic and gave excellent experience to everyone involved. Our Catering Staff, led by Capt. Ted Veal, again reached their usual high standards. The only problem being controlling our 'casualties' appetites. Some were heard to boast that they had got through three helpings at one sitting.

All ranks looked extremely smart on the COs Parade, at which Pte 'Bosun' Richardson was presented with his Efficiency Medal. 'Bosun' joined as a Trainee Clerk many years ago, but insisted this should have read Trainee Cook. He has been happily cooking ever since, and nobody has had cause to complain of his efforts.

QMS McBride has unfortunately got to retire after many years fine service. He will be very much missed. We have heard that he has been awarded the Lord Lieut of Kent's Certificate for Meritorious Service. This recognition was never more deserved.

SSgt Horkin attended a two weeks Drill Course at the Guards Depot, Pirbright earlier this year. He graduated as the Star Pupil and was awarded a Pace Stick to prove it. What an achievement, considering he was the only RAMC member on the course, all the others coming from TAVR Combatant Units. Obviously his appearance helped – his 'leg of mutton' moustaches and 'looking glass' boots are a joy to behold.

The Unit Dance was a great success!! Hasler nurses were imported and, together with our QAs, there was no shortage of partners. Due to finish at midnight, pleas went up for an extension to one o'clock. But the 24 hour exercise was due to start the following day and a halt was called at 12.30.

Training visits were made to HMS Dolphin and 220 Hovercraft Squadron. We thin all our QA officers returned from 'Dolphin'. They were last seen clambering in and out of a submarine, much to the Navy's delight.

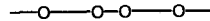
We were pleased to welcome back Ex/WO2 Gower and Ex/Sgt Firth, who joined us as Civilian Employees. It is stalwarts like these who provide an additional impetus to our training. We hope they will come back again.

Next year Germany? It's on the cards, but we will go anywhere, anytime".

The report above mentions WO2 Gower. He had been Chief Clerk of 308 from its formation until his retirement in 1971, but he was back in his old job in 1972. He knew it backwards. The author feels sure that the then Brigadier Jimmy Miller, later to become Major General, will not object to the record of his encounter with Mr Gower at about midnight when the Brigadier was inspecting the Command Post. The Brigadier queried the number of Admission and Discharge Books, AB 27A. Loyal Gower produced the appropriate regulations which stated that several books were required, one each for soldiers, officers, RN, RAF, and foreign forces. As the CO and the Brigadier left the Command Post the latter murmured, "He made me look a silly bugger, but he did it so nicely."

In many ways this was one of the better exercises undertaken during the 1970s, in that realism was maintained throughout the whole period. One hundred casualties were produced to fill the hundred beds and none was re-cycled. In later exercises re-cycling became the norm. Re-cycling certainly exercises the Reception Department, the Command Post, and to a lesser extent the operating theatres, but is of no value for ward training nor for training the ACC in the provision of hospital meals. An empty bed labelled "gun shot wound" cannot be used by the sisters to instruct MAs in nursing techniques, nor can it be fed by the cooks who have prepared meals for the number of patients alleged to be in the wards.

It was about this time that the establishment was changed. From the formation of 308 the CO had been entitled to a batman, the Officers' Mess had a staff of ten headed by a sergeant, and the WOs' and Sergeants' Mess had a staff of four. The new establishment banished all these soldiers from the messes, and, quite rightly, allocated them to hospital duties. This caused no undue problems. Meals became self-service which worked very well. Less popular at one camp was when a rota was drawn up for RAMC and QARANC to wash up after dinner. Even the CO was seen drying dishes.



In 1973 the unit made its second expedition to Germany to carry out hospital training at the British Military Hospital in Rinteln. Once again, the Supplement to the Army Medical Services Magazine 1974 has the story.

"United we stand, divided we . . ." – it will not be said because it does not apply to 308! Many BAOR Units were made well aware of our presence during 1973, primarily BMH Rinteln, but also BMHs Hannover, Munster and Berlin. And we did not restrict ourselves to Germany. Our much travelled CO, Colonel Stewart, appeared at BMH Hong Kong, and we also sent representatives to Cyprus. We do get around!

There were many sceptical remarks early in the training year regarding the practicability of training in BAOR with bodies dispersed between four BMHs. However, it was done and, might we say, successfully done. Our main sponsor unit, BMH Rinteln, pulled out all the stops to accommodate us. Every one slept in tents scattered in batches around the hospital grounds. The weather, generally speaking, was fine which helped considerably. While sweltering in a German heat wave we read in the newspapers that half the UK was flooded and Ascot had been rained off. We were sorry!

All departments at BMH Rinteln received a ration of 308 personnel. Whether these departments will ever be the same again we may never know, but our hosts were polite and kindly complimentary on the help we gave. We ran our own training school headed by our redoubtable Q/Maj Betty Brailsford, who sometimes appears to wield the sword without the velvet glove, but who has a heart of gold and is loved by everyone. She should be pleased with the 90% pass rate in the examinations.

Social activities included a Unit Dance, at which the only cabaret act was the debagging of Corporal Bailey (Captain of 308 Wanderers) and a brave young Dental officer.

There was also an outing to the Pied Piper town of Hamelin and two football matches. The results of the latter will not be published, but conclusions can be drawn from the cabaret act mentioned above.

Our only official visitor was Brig. R. P. Bradshaw, Commandant CVHQ AMS. Unofficially the DANS, Brig. Helen Cattnach, called upon us during the middle weekend, but she was really the guest of BMH Rinteln. We were delighted to welcome them both.

One of the major topics of conversation during the first few days was the birth of twins in the BMH assisted by personnel of 308. Our greatest surprise was to find that they were the grandchildren of our new IOC CVHQ AMS Major Peter Bryant, whom we were delighted to meet and indoctrinate. The babies' heads were well and truly wetted, and we hope that Mrs Bryant has by now forgiven us for keeping her husband out so late on 'official business' on the night of the celebrations.

It was a good annual training camp and a great deal was achieved. It would be impossible to list everyone who helped to make it so successful, but special mention must be made of Colonel O'Brien, the Commanding Officer, and Lieut-Colonel Dawe, the Matron of BMH Rinteln. Our thanks go to them and their staff, and, indeed, to the COs and staff of the other BMHs who looked after us so well.

During 1973 we said farewell to a long serving and much respected member of the unit. Colonel A. H. Charles, ERD, TD, QHS, FRCS, FRCOG relinquished the appointment of Honorary Colonel which he had held since his retirement as the founder Commanding Officer of our hospital. This unit owes a great deal to Colonel Charles, particularly for his steady, strong, but kindly leadership in the early years when 308 was but a child. He is succeeded by Colonel Ian Henderson, ERD, QHS, FRCS who needs no

introduction to anyone with any service in the Army Medical Reserve. Those of us who know him well have always felt that he would return to 308 in some capacity, and varying uncomplimentary capacities have even been suggested to him. To date we have known him as Training Officer, OIC various 'Exercise Bounties', consultant in map reading, 2IC and from 1968 to 1972 as a tough but well loved CO. Many people have contributed towards making this the best General Hospital in the Reserve Army, but none has contributed more than Col Ian Henderson. We are delighted that HM The Queen has been graciously pleased to appoint him our Honorary Colonel.

IN 1973 serving at BMH Rinteln, was Major Keith Stenson RAMC who was approaching the end of a Short Service Commission. On leaving the Regular Army he joined 308, and at the time of writing is the Commanding Officer. At about that time in the early seventies 308 received an influx of ex-Regular RAMC officers. In addition to Major Keith Stenson, Lt. Col. Kim Dimond and Major Ian Ferguson came directly from the Regular Army. Major David Southcott joined after a period as a civilian surgeon, and Major Roger Green came from a commission in the RAF Medical Services. The addition of these fully trained officers was a great bonus to 308. As a few of the officers had war service and most of the others were ex-National Service officers, the officer cadre was well trained, and their training undoubtedly had a tremendous impact on the overall efficiency of the unit.



308 General Hospital was at that time out of phase with the three year training cycle of the other sponsored medical units. In order to bring them into line, 308 was posted to BAOR for the second year running. This time it was to Olen Camp in Belgium from the 8th to 22nd June 1974. Conditions have improved since then, but at that time accommodation was cramped, rather primitive and the whole camp was unhygienic. A major irritation was the presence of hordes of four-engined mosquitoes. The greatest problem, was that 308 was, for the first and last time, hosted by a unit whose representatives were singularly unhelpful. Perhaps unhelpful is an understatement, obstructive and bloody-minded might be more accurate. Following representations by the CO to higher authority the officer in charge of the detachment and several of his subordinates were replaced and returned to their units for disciplinary action. Sufficient time has elapsed for the following paragraph of the annual training report by the Commanding Officer of 308 to be published, particularly as no names of individuals or units are disclosed.

"There was no co-operation by the members of the sponsor unit in location. On 9 June it was pointed out to the CO of this unit that the standard of the Regular Army was different from that of the TAVR. This was not accepted by CO 308 Gen Hosp but was proved by later events. No member of 308 was disciplined during the period of training, but RMP were called on two occasions to deal with members of the Regular cadre. There were, in addition, other occasions on which the Orderly Officer or OSM were called in to deal with them. It is considered that with better Regular leadership relations might have been satisfactory, but it is also considered that COs Fd Ambts had taken the opportunity of disposing of troublemakers by posting them to Olen for the training period".

The replacement of the sponsor cadre was too late for 308 to benefit, but future units did not suffer in the same way. Despite the shortcomings of the camp itself, the poor quality and quantity of equipment, and the problems with the Regular

cadre, it was a good camp. The main part of the training programme was Exercise DOUBLE BUNK, which was a casualty exercise which provided the basis for the later MINI-MASH exercises. Exercise DOUBLE BUNK was controlled by Lt. Col. Chris Ticehurst RAMC who also joined in with the activities of the Officers' Mess. To quote from Colonel Ticehurst's report on defence and security: "The overall defence and regimental duties were generally well done especially during the hours of darkness". The then Commanding Officer well remembers a call from the Guard Room asking if he could identify a gentleman in civilian clothes with no means of identification who stated he was Colonel Ticehurst! This episode was the beginning of the night when Colonel Ticehurst and members of the 308 Officers' Mess played croquet at dawn. It has been alleged that problems were caused by moles poking their noses out of the grass and deflecting vital shots. It is not known who won this croquet match, but as it was after Exercise DOUBLE BUNK it is probable that it did not affect Chris Ticehurst's report. Yet again reference is made to the Army Medical Services magazine Supplement No. 6 of 1975 for a report on the training at Olen.

"Two consecutive years outside the UK for annual training is unique for us. Not that we ever wish to return to the days of lodging in the Aldershot area. June 1974 saw us in Belgium and we had a very enjoyable and instructive camp (we always do!). The site and facilities were not ideal – but are they ever? – this perhaps makes training that much more interesting. We were controlled by Lt Col Ticehurst and his merry team of umpires throughout Exercise 'Double Bunk'. The name was only too apt – 'Treble Bunk' would have been more correct as into a 50-bed, equipped and staffed hospital we received and treated nearly 130 patients during 24 hours.

The main social highlights of annual training were the Junior Ranks Club, the unit outing to Amsterdam at the middle weekend, and the usual unit dance. Operating our own Junior Ranks Club was a new venture for us, and it proved highly successful. Ably run by a hard-working and enthusiastic committee it provided extremely good recreational and 'liquid' facilities which much enjoyed and appreciated. The guiding light behind the Club was our new RSM, Mr Gwilym. For this venture, and indeed throughout the whole camp, he was a tower of strength, and we would like to extend to him our thanks and a very warm welcome to 308. (Comment from a corporal at the unit dance, fairly late in the evening, "He's a B, but he's fair". What better recommendation for a RSM!).

One incident we would like to have witnessed occurred when one of our youngest and most attractive nursing officers was carrying out her duties as QARANC Orderly Officer. On being confronted by four Regular Army streakers, without batting her long eyelashes she lined them up at attention to take their numbers, ranks and names.

Travelling to and from Belgium was organised conveniently and comfortably by our staying overnight each way at the Air Mounting Centre, South Cerney, where we were most efficiently administered and catered for. The only snag on the return journey was a blitz by HM Customs at Fairford who closely inspected every single individual's baggage and parcel of goodies.

At a weekend training earlier this year we staged a 'Depot style' medal presentation ceremony, inspection and march past. Many old soldiers' hearts quivered with pride to see the magnificent display of 'bull'. We were delighted to have Brigadier Bradshaw as our Inspecting Officer. Our collection of Efficiency Decorations, medals and bars gets bigger every year, something of which we are very proud. To join our long service boys (and girls) we have welcomed many new faces into the unit. We hope that they will all stay long enough to pick up their 'gongs'.

It is sad that we also, sometimes, have to say farewell to old friends. In particular this year, we must mention two of our senior nursing officers, Major Betty Brailsford and Major Mary Hamilton. Both these ladies retired in 1974 after long and faithful service in the QAIMNS and QARANC(V). They were both founder members of 308 and have, each in her own way, contributed to its growth. A special mention for Betty Brailsford, who as our Senior Sister Tutor and Deputy Matron insisted, and succeeded when insisting, that our very high standard of nursing training should always be maintained. How right she was, and is! Very many members and ex-members of 308 have cause to be grateful to Betty for the example she always set and for the help she always readily gave. We are also grateful for her many and hilarious stories of life in the wartime QAIMNS.

At long, long last our new establishment has been approved. The most exciting changes include provision for male nursing and laboratory technician officers. After many years of representation to higher authority we are delighted that these professional are now able to apply for commissioning within their own fields of activity.

So changes take place, we lose old friends and welcome new ones, but the original and senior sponsored Reserve General Hospital continues to flourish. It is the enthusiastic team-work that counts – and that we have in plenty”.

Reference has been made above to the new RSM. The posting of WO1 Gwilym to 308 was outstandingly successful. Without being unkind to his predecessors, 308 had, at last, a real RSM. His predecessors were good, but he proved to be outstanding in that position. His posting was the result of a period of bargaining between the Commanding Officer of 308 and the Commanding Officer of 307 Field Ambulance with which unit Mr Gwilym was then serving. The price was one pint of beer. A price well paid. The Commanding Officer of 308 at that time and Mr Gwilym had served together in 27 General Hospital prior to the formation of 308. The only lasting memory of their association was when Major Stewart inadvertently trod upon the brilliantly gleaming toe cap of one of Sergeant Gwilym's boots. That never to be forgotten episode occurred in the White Swan in Ash Vale in the days when a whole General Hospital could retire to a pub in the evening in two or three cars.

Vince Gwilym served as RSM until he was commissioned as Personnel Officer in 1980. In 1983 he was awarded the Lord Lieutenant of Powis' Certificate for Meritorious Service. He retired in January 1986 in the rank of major.

The change in the regulations to permit the commissioning of RAMC SRNs was welcomed first in the Regular Army and later in the Reserve Army. Prior to the formation of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps on 1st February 1949 the nurses in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service were not commissioned officers. Although they wore the insignia of officers on their shoulders, they were Nursing Sisters of varying ranks. The fact that SRNs in the new QARANC could be selected as commissioned officers was a sore point with the RAMC SRNs who were denied commissions for about another twenty five years. At the time of the change there were four male SRNs in 308. WO2 Roy Penny, who joined the unit in 1962, and Sergeant Don Sydney applied for commissions which were granted. Private Steve Carroll and Lance Corporal Dave Rawlings opted to remain in the ranks. Steve Carroll waited until 1979 before asking for a commission, and Dave Rawlings remained in the ranks, ultimately being appointed RSM when WO1 Gwilym was commissioned.

In June 1975 the unit was back at Browdown for an Individual Training year. Training was largely concerned with experiments with the new range of frame tentage, which proved much better than the old Marquees, Universal, with which the unit had much experience, with intensive NBC training, and with MA training both at Browdown and at RN Hospital, Haslar. For the medical officers additional training was provided by the Institute of Naval Medicine and the Royal Naval Air Medical School. As in the past, the staff of RN Hospital Haslar proved extremely helpful, and the Institute of Naval Medicine and the Air Medical School produced first class programmes for the medical officers.

Once again there is a report in the Army Medical Services Magazine Supplement of 1976.

“For 308, 1975 has been an Individual Training year with the accent of employment and promotion courses. It is gratifying to note that out of 11 officers' training, 9 were additional to annual training, and out of 33 courses for soldiers and servicewomen, 18 were additional training. The same applied to hospital attachments, of a total of 16, 11 were in addition to annual training.

Our first Out of Camp weekend was at Crookham on 5 and 6 April. As personnel arrived they were processed through a Temporary Mobilization Centre, and then the weekend was devoted to lectures and films on various aspects of mobilization and NBC warfare.

Annual training was at Browdown Camp near Gosport from 21 June to 5 July. The weather was kind to us with sunshine almost every day and all our outdoor activities were completed as planned. A total of 104 personnel were in camp.

During the first week all ranks paraded for drill at 1700 hrs daily in preparation for a parade during which TAVR Efficiency Medals were to be presented by our Honorary Colonel. The soldiers were drilled by the RSM, WO1 Gwilym, whilst the officers, male and female, were instructed by Captain Penny. This training was enjoyed by all and produced a good standard of bearing and marching for the parade when Colonel Henderson presented the medals.

For the first time, 308 was able to gain experience with the new range of tentage and by the end of camp all personnel were familiar with this much superior equipment. A great deal was also learned regarding the possible use of this tentage in the hospital situation.

There are several Royal Naval medical establishments in the Gosport area, and we were given every assistance by them. Some of our nursing officers and soldiers worked in the wards at the RN Hospital Haslar to broaden their experience, and the medical officers enjoyed excellent sessions at the Royal Naval Aviation Medical School.

Two Command Post exercises were held, one for officers, and the other for the Admin staff. Each exercise lasted twelve hours, and the DS (Directing Staff), Major Loyn and Captain Bustin, threw all sorts of spanners in the works to make things realistic. This even extended to an attack by “Orchadians” (SSgt Nelson ACC, Sgts Bailey and Hart RAMC and Lcpl Brennan RCT). Their attack, designed to test the unit defences, resulted, lamentably, in the destruction of the Command Post!

On 2 July a party of NCOs and soldiers went off to the New Forest to take part in an orienteering competition organised by Major Rabjohns. All managed to complete the course, but not without a liberal coating of mud, as even after several weeks of dry weather there were still large mushy areas in the forest.

During camp we were pleased to be visited by Brigadier Lapper, Brigadier Oliver, TAVR Adviser, and Brigadier Evans, Commandant CVHQ AMS. The Chief Nursing Officer of the Department of Health and Social Security also came to see us, her first visit to a TAVR unit.

On the last Friday of camp the Army Air Corps Centre, Middle Wallop, provided us with two Gazelle helicopters, one piloted by Major K. Edgington, RAMC, and all personnel were able to get experience in Casevac by helicopter. Most of us managed a short flight, either as a patient in a litter, or as a medical assistant in the front seat.

From this short report it can be seen that we had a very busy two weeks, but the social aspects were not neglected. We ran our own Junior Ranks Club, and the committee organised an excellent All Ranks Dance. Both the Sergeants' and Officers' Messes held Regimental Dinners and our catering staff achieved a very high standard of cuisine. The guests of honour in the Officers' Mess were the Director General of Army Medical Services, Lt. General Sir James Baird, and the Director of Army Nursing Services, Brigadier Helen Cattanach.

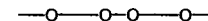
Just as we were going to press we heard the good news that our Commanding Officer has had his tenure of appointment extended by a year. Whilst on the subject of appointments, we are sorry that Major Bill Garland found that the pressure of civilian work forced him to resign after many years of valuable service to the unit, for which we are grateful. We are very pleased however to welcome Major John Rabjohns in his place. He has brought with him a vast amount of professional military expertise which we are finding invaluable".

The above report does not mention the behaviour of the QARANC officers. During the final rehearsal for the parade mentioned above. The Commanding Officer was standing in for the Inspecting Officer. During the March Past, when he was poised to return the salute, the contingent of QARANC officers headed by the Matron, marched past without any indication of his presence, No salute, no "Eyes Right", not even a glance! They did it properly on the day.

The final paragraph of the report quoted above mentions the advent of Major John Rabjohns as Administrative Officer. John Rabjohns came to the unit after more than twenty years as a Regular RAMC soldier and officer. Originally trained as a Dispenser, he was commissioned in 1965 having previously served in Nigeria. He then served in Aden and Cyprus, following which he came straight to 308. The troubles in Aden and Cyprus probably gave him valuable experience when it came to dealing with 308. It is well known that the Regular RAMC was very sorry to witness his departure for an ever ascending career in the National Health Service and then in private hospital management. His professional military expertise was, indeed, valuable to 308, not only as an administrator, but as a skilled field officer in the true sense, and an enthusiastic organiser of, and participator in competitive walks, and other activities outside the normal training programme. Unfortunately for the unit his ever increasing civilian commitments forced him to resign in the spring of 1983.

Apart from John Rabjohns taking over from Bill Garland, further changes in the administrative staff occurred in 1975. The title of Company Officer was abolished, being renamed Personnel Officer, and a new appointment of Assistant Personnel Officer was created to look after the interests of the QARANC rank and file. This appointment was for a female, and was the first time that non-nursing commissions became available for QARANC servicewomen in the TAVR. There being only two sponsored General Hospitals, only two commissions were available. Both were granted to corporals in 308, and they were commissioned in the rank of Second

Lieutenant. June Oxby remained with 308, and Doreen Cadwallader was posted to 304 General Hospital. June Oxby joined 308 in 1967. She had previously served with the WRAC in a Territorial Unit in Southampton which was disbanded in the major reorganisation that year. She rebadged as QARANC and has served with the unit ever since.



Annual training in 1976 was planned for Crookham Training Camp for the period 1st to 15th May. On 22nd March the Commanding Officer was informed that two General Hospitals were to train there at the same time. He considered this to be totally unacceptable. As those who knew Crookham Camp will appreciate, there was enough accommodation for one General Hospital, but not two. The Commanding Officer rebelled, and a last minute change was made to Warren Camp at Crowborough in Sussex. This proved an excellent choice. A problem arising from the change was that Lt Colonel Chris Ticehurst RAMC had spent a great deal of time producing Exercise CRISS CROSS resulting in 52 pages of scenarios and problems based on the unit being stationed at Crookham. It was decided that the change of location made little significant difference provided that all concerned imagined they were in the Aldershot area, so the exercise went ahead as planned. As the exercise was almost entirely theoretical, the change to Crowborough did not diminish the impact of this most valuable contribution by Chris Ticehurst. The croquet lawn at Crowborough was slightly better than that at Olen when Chris last played with 308.

The issue of the Ash Vale Review of October carried a report on the year's training.

"For 308 General Hospital 1976/77 has been a Collective Training year. During our first weekend training at Crookham on 3/4 April the Officers' Mess dined out Lt Col White who had been Matron for many years. She is succeeded by Lt Col Stella Houghton. We were very pleased that Colonel Ian Henderson, our Honorary Colonel, and Colonel Tony Charles, his predecessor in that appointment, were able to be present. On the training side, the weekend was devoted to further instruction in NBC.

Annual Camp was to have been at Crookham from 1-15 May, but this was, of necessity, changed to Crowborough Training Camp, Sussex. As it turned out this was a very popular change with all members of the unit. Crowborough is a most attractive area and we had never trained there before. When it came to map reading and field training the country provided variety and challenge. A total of 121 of all ranks attended annual training and the general opinion was that we should train at Crowborough again sometime soon.

A three day field exercise, 'Wild Horse', was held in Pippingford Park Training Area for 25 QARANC officers and 40 soldiers. The activities included practical map reading and orienteering, siting and erection of bivouacs, improvisation of shelter, use of generators, individual water sterilisation, field cookery, casualty evacuation, camouflage and concealment, and guard duties. All this and CS gas too!

The RAMC officers were kept very busy by a three-day TEST (Tactical Exercise Without Troops), Exercise 'Criss Cross', which was written and conducted by Lt Col Chris Ticehurst RAMC. This proved extremely valuable and interesting and we are very grateful to Chris Ticehurst for his assistance.

The other major activity was a 50 bed exercise 'Rabbit Run', during which we were visited by Lt Col Ron Welsh RAMC, ADMS, HQ UKLF. This exercise provided many problems, and much to discuss afterwards. The lack of sufficient numbers of casualties, however, made it impossible to create the crisis situation planned by the CO.

A very interesting symposium on survival was conducted by Col (Rtd) Jim Adam, late RAMC and WO2 Reg Taylor, RAMC of 22 SAS Regt. Added to this were the recent startling experiences of our Personnel Officer, Capt. Eddie Bustin, who had just returned from a tough three week combat survival course with the SAS. Further interesting lectures were given by Lt Col Peter Clarke RADC(V) of facio-maxillary injuries, and by Major Jenny Taylor QARANC(V) on the organisation of a major NHS accident department.

For the first time for many years we had two members of the Regular Army with us throughout our training. From CVHQ was Sgt Lea whose expertise and enthusiasm was most welcome. From the Royal Herbert Hospital came Major Jean Redhead QARANC who joined in all training with great energy.

A regimental guest night was held by the officers to dine out Lt Col Roy Hooper, the second in command, who had been posted to 300 FST. He has been succeeded by Lt Col Gren Loyn who has been our training officer for the last two years. The DDMS HQ UKLF, Brigadier Jack Lapper was also a guest on this occasion and on the following morning a medal parade was held during which the Brigadier presented medals to Captain Sydney, SSgt Lee, Sgt Jones, Cpls Southgate and Scrivener, and LCpl Church.

The Sergeants' Mess also held a very successful Regimental Dinner, there was a most enjoyable All Ranks Dance, and the officers held a cocktail party at which the principal guests were the DGAMS, Lt Gen Sir Jaimes Baird and Lady Baird. A highlight of this evening was Beating Retreat by the Corps of Drums of the Sussex Cadet Force. Some of them may have been very small, but their turn-out, marching and music were superb".

Major Jean Redhead QARANC from the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, wrote a most interesting report on her two weeks with 308. Parts of this are reproduce as it is very readable, and provides some insight to the reactions of a Regular QARANC officer on her first exposure to training with the TAVR.

"I was attached to 308 General Hospital from 1-15 May 1976 and participated in the two main exercises that were carried out at Crowborough.

During the first three days we had lectures on nuclear and chemical warfare and an introduction to the NBC suits, knowledge of these were put into use during our first exercise.

Exercises "Wild Horse" was undertaken by QARANC officers and RAMC NCOs and Junior Ranks. This was a three day exercise which took place at Ashdown Forest Training Area. After a four mile trek across country with maps for guidance, we arrived in time to help with the unloading of Compo stores, water and fuel, etc and were given instruction on how to get the pressure burner going in order to prepare a meal. The rest of the day was spent in casualty search procedure, stretcher bearing, siting and putting up of bivouacs, latrines, and the use of pressure lamps, primus stove and the importance and use of the Millbank bag for water filtration and sterilisation.

That night we were thankful to climb into our sleeping bags and hoped for sleep. Needless to say, with the pouring rain and the "enemy" trying to get through our guard lines, sleep was something we did not have.

0500 hours came and the whole camp went through stand-to procedure, then, after a cold dip in the stream, breakfast was at 0600 hours. Another energetic day had been organised for us. This time casualty searching and

ambulance loading was done in NBC suits and respirators. Compo rations and its varied uses were put into practice and discussed. The use and safety procedures of thunderflashes; starting, stopping and maintenance of the generator were explained to us.

The third day of the exercise, our prowess at orienteering and map reading were put to the test followed by cleaning and packing up of the location. Lt Col Loyn seemed well pleased with the exercise and that we got through every that had been planned.

During the second week Exercise Rabbit Run took place at Warren Camp. This meant organising a fifty bed hospital for a casualty exercise lasting 24 hours. Brick buildings were used, but several tents had to be put up. I was thankful for my knowledge gained from 2 Field Hospital on the putting up of frames for the tents and the lacing together of the various pieces of canvas. Beds and equipment had to be distributed and set up in the correct departments. The aim was to manage the flow of casualties in conventional and mass casualty situations.

The exercise was successful in the fact that many problems were raised and discussed at the De-briefing.

The whole two weeks had been extremely well organised and was of interest for all concerned, but exhausting to say the least. Everyone was most kind and helpful and the atmosphere of community working together was very obvious. I felt that Matron, Lt Col Houghton was pleased to have me there and went out of her way to explain any queries I had.

The TAVR QARANC officers are certainly aware of their role and commitments in wartime; more so than perhaps the Regular QARANC officers.

I feel the attachment was most beneficial providing an insight to what could be expected in a time of emergency".

Although the cap eventually proved successful, there were many initial problems. Credit is due to the Quartermaster, Capt Roy Nelson for solving all the problems regarding the vehicles and equipment deficiencies through contacts on the 'old boy net' and by local scrounging. A great deal of petrol was consumed, but he produced the results.

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In the spring of 1977, 308, with the backing of CVHQ, launched a recruiting campaign in South East London with advertisements in the local press. By courtesy of the Commanding Officer of the Royal Herbert Hospital arrangements were made for interviews, medical examinations, and enlistment attestations to be conducted in the hospital on Saturday mornings. The arrangements ensured that a potential recruit could be "processed" from recruit to enlisted soldier in one operation. This recruiting exercise coincided with the closure of the Royal Herbert Hospital. The first sessions were at that hospital, and the last in the newly opened Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital. The help rendered by the Commanding Officer, Brigadier Roger Freeman, was greatly appreciated. Apart from providing the facilities, no assistance was required from the Regular Army, as 308 was able to produce all the personnel required to man the operation.

The advertisement gave the name, address and telephone number of the Commanding Officer, and this led to many letters and innumerable telephone calls. Possibly the best of the latter was from a man who rang to ask where the holiday camp was! All those who appeared interested were sent the proper forms, and in the end about forty to fifty were enlisted. The Commanding Officer and the Administrative Officer attended each session to interview the applicants, and for those who were acceptable and passed the medical examination, the Commanding Officer was empowered to attest on enlistment. The remainder of the team consisted of two medical officers, two nursing officers and a clerk. These were all from the London area, and the majority were only required to devote one day to the programme. Many of the applicants had very odd reasons for wishing to join the TAVR, apart from the one who was interested in the holiday camp, and most of these were rejected. Perhaps the oddest of all was the lady who wished to join in order that she could persuade the Army to lay down its arms and make friends with the Russians. Needless to say, she was not offered a medical examination.

A bizarre offshoot was that for some years the Commanding Officer received advertising literature from a firm supplying office equipment addressed to the "Managing Director, TD QHS". Colonel Stewart TD QHS was, perhaps, the managing director of 308, but the firm of TD QHS does not appear in the telephone directory.

In 1977 the unit paid its second visit to Olen Camp in Belgium to undertake another large scale hospital exercise. By this time the conditions in the camp were very much better, and on this occasion there were no problems with the Regular Army sponsor detachment. Their help and co-operation were excellent. This year, also, the standard and scale of the equipment was very good. It appears that the powers that be had taken note of criticisms from the first General Hospitals to visit Olen in 1974.

Apart from the hospital exercise the only noteworthy item in the training programme was a visit by the whole unit to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe in Brussels. This was kindly organised by Lt Col Davis, Royal Signals, a friend of ex-Regular Lt Col Kim Dimond of 308. Colonel Davis had previously helped the unit when he was with 2 Division Signals Regiment in Germany. During the unit's training at Rinteln in 1973 he arranged an excellent course in signals procedure for the administrative staff, clerks, and other key personnel of 308.

On 1978 a recruiting drive in London was organised by CVHQ AMS. The Army and Careers Information Office in The Strand was taken over from the 28th February until the 19th March, with a window display of an operating theatre. This was organised by 308. Two clothing shop dummies were acquired from an unknown source. As readers who look in shop windows will know, these dummies are always somewhat exotic in appearance. The male, who became the surgeon, was extremely handsome. Perhaps more so than the surgeons of 308. The female,

appearing as the theatre sister was very glamorous indeed. The only problem with her was that, because of the extraordinary position of her legs, it was difficult to stand her beside the operating table. Inspect any ladies' clothes shop and you will see the problem. 308 theatre sisters do not assume such glamorous positions, at least, not beside the operating table. For the first week of this campaign representatives of 308 were present to answer queries and to steer recruits in the right direction. For the remainder of the period the office was manned by personnel from CVHQ. The exercise was planned to attract recruits for both sponsored and independent units of the medical reserve. Although many people looked through the shop window at the display, few were tempted to enter the premises, and even fewer were persuaded to take steps towards enlistment. Although it was worth trying, the results were very disappointing compared with those from the 308 advertising campaign in 1977.

On the 1st April 1978 Colonel Gren Loyn became Commanding Officer of 308 General Hospital. He had previously commanded 382 Field Medical Company and then served in a Field Surgical Team before joining 308 in 1972 as a consultant anaesthetist. This was the beginning of a period of experimentation and transition when the unit changed from a standard General Hospital to its present role.

1978 was an Individual Training year in which many people were seconded on courses, and the programme for the remainder was aimed at the teaching of military skills, including a 48 hour exercise on the training area and a night navigation exercise. The fortnight coincided with one of the recruit training courses run by Major David Price RAMC, the Training Officer at CVHQ AMS. This caused some problems regarding accommodation but had its compensations. David Price's close contacts with the Director of Music RAMC provided a band concert on one evening, and music for the Officers' Mess cocktail party.

During this camp more attention was paid than usual to drill for all ranks. The reason for this was a parade to be held on the last Friday of camp in honour of the outgoing Commanding Officer. The Administrative Officer, Major John Rabjohns, used his expertise to organise a most impressive parade and the numbers were swollen by the recruit's course who used this as their passing out parade. The RAMC Band again played its part with its usual excellence.

At this time Brigadier Ferrie, who was DDMS HQ UKLF, came to the conclusion that hospital exercises as previous carried out in UK were not satisfactory, and conceived the ideal of a "Petit Mash" much on the lines of the BAOR "Mini-Mash". He found a suitable site in the barracks at Tidworth and organised directing staff, umpires and casualties from the Regular Army. As 308 was due for a Collective Training year in 1979 it was chosen together with two Independent General Hospitals to conduct the "Petit Mash" exercises that year. Annual training commenced with a mobilisation exercise at Mytchett, whence personnel were moved by bus and car to Longmoor. After a night there, the unit moved in Field Order to the exercise location at Tidworth. There were some problems with the evacuation department during the initial stage of the exercise, but after a halt for reorganisation during the early stages, the exercise worked very well. The Command Post functioned efficiently even after all key personnel had been taken prisoner.

It appeared that 308 did better than the two Independent units, and as a result Colonel Loyn was summoned to a meeting with Major General Trevor Hart, DMS HQ UKLF, who congratulated 308 on their conduct of "Petit Mash" and invited the unit to take the place of a Field Hospital on Exercise CRUSADER, a major exercise in BAOR due to take place in 1980, which was widely reported in the press and on television when it was in progress in September that year. The concept of the Advance Surgical Hospital, which was to be 308's role, was the brain child of Major General Norman Kirby OBE who was then the Director of Army Surgery. Apparently his ideas were not acceptable to medical authorities in Germany, but, in the end, he won the day, and the event proved his thinking was correct. For this Exercise in Lemgo the unit was expanded to a total of 281 personnel, including eight surgical teams, with reinforcements from other TA units, from the Regular Army and the Royal Air Force. Amongst the attached RAMC officers were Lt Col Mike Owen Smith, Professor of Military Surgery, and Lt Col Jack Coull, Adviser in Orthopaedic Surgery. They were invaluable additions to the unit. In the work-up stage, they both went to great trouble to instruct members of the unit in the Advanced Surgical Hospital concept. During the active period of the exercise, they worked as surgeons, one on each shift and the example they set was an inspiration to their colleagues.

On the 1st November 1980 Col Loy, Lt Col Dimond and Lt Col Southcott presented their reports on 308's activities during CRUSADER to the AMS Specialist Teams Symposium at Keogh Barracks. These were excellent presentations, following which General Kirby wrote as follows:

"Your hospital gave a really excellent presentation of the new unit. It was quite obvious that your hospital had caught the spirit of the Advanced Surgical Hospital and were determined to make it work. What particularly impressed me were that the minor incidents, where the thing could have fallen down, were thanks to the initiative of you and your staff quickly settled and an answer found in the shortest possible time. All the reports I have had back from the regular surgeons working with the unit all praised the spirit of the unit and felt that they were delighted to go to war with it. Personally I can only thank you for the effort you have put into making such a success of this trial which was very important indeed. This is a theme we have been developing for many years, which you gathered from my presentation, and it is a great pleasure to me to find that the experiment has worked. Not only has it worked but you team's description has helped convince everybody that we can now go ahead with our plans for the future.

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On the 1st April 1979 Colonel Ian Henderson finished his appointment as Honorary Colonel and was succeeded by Colonel Donald Stewart. In the New Year Honours List of 1981 Lt Col Stella Houghton QARANC(V), Matron of 308, was awarded the RRC. She was the second Matron of 308, and the second to be given this award. Stella Houghton, after four years as Matron was succeeded by Marilyn Williams who is currently in her sixth year as Matron. She too, was awarded the RRC in 1985. Major Josephine Jones took over from Marilyn Williams as Deputy Matron, and is now Matron designate for 1987. Apart from Eileen White, who was the first, the other two, and the Matron designate, are theatre sisters. There is something special about theatre sisters.

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On the 1st April 1981 Colonel Bill Davison took over from Colonel Gren Loyn to command what he has called the 308 Research and Development Hospital. As has been recorded above the unit was deployed to research and test the Advanced Surgical Hospital concept, and was to be used during the period of Colonel Davison's command to research two further projects which will be mentioned later.

In 1981, for the first time ever, 308 crossed the border into Scotland for two weeks individual training at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, highlighted by Exercise LOWLAND DORMOUSE masterminded by the intrepid duo of Majors Keith Stenson and Roger Green. In addition to the field exercise, courses resulted in the upgrading of twenty-five soldiers and servicewomen as Medical Assistants. For the uninitiated, the Medical Assistant is the basic 'trade' of the RAMC. All new recruits are expected to qualify as MA3 on conclusion of their induction course. For promotion the grades of MA2 and MA1 are essential.

There were several changes in the appointments of senior officers in 1981 and 1982. As has been mentioned earlier, the Administrative Officer, Major John Rabjohns resigned in April 1981. On the promotion of Bill Davison, Major Colin McIntosh was appointed second in command in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and was later transferred to Officer in Charge Medical Division on the resignation of Lieutenant Colonel Kim Dimond. On the 1st November 1982 Major Keith Stenson was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel as second in command.

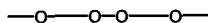
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1982 was a second Individual Training year in succession. The three year cycle had become a four year cycle for once to enable the powers that be to move in mysterious ways to allow 308 to perform wonders of a research and development nature. Mention has been made on several occasions to Individual and Collective Training years. For those who do not know, Individual Training years are those in which the unit is on its own, to arrange courses for upgrading of soldiers and servicewomen, and to train the remainder in military and specialist skills. The Collective Training year is the one in which the main item in the training programme is a hospital exercise organised by the Regular Army. The third year in the cycle is hospital training in BAOR in the unit's mobilisation role.

During training this year two special events were staged at Longmoor. The first was a Promenade Band Concert by the RAMC Band instead of the usual unit dance. The second was a special unit parade at which the Inspecting Officer was Colonel David Stewart. This parade was to mark his final appearance as Honorary Colonel and to mark the twenty-first birthday of 308.

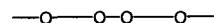
Colonel Stewart was succeeded as Honorary Colonel by Major General Norman Kirby OBE who had just retired as Director of Army Surgery. General Kirby was a Territorial officer before joining the Regular Army, so he knows more about the TA than most Regular Army officers. From its formation the Honorary Colonels of 308 had all been retired commanding officers. For some time it had been felt that, although such appointments maintained the family atmosphere, they were not necessarily in the best interests of the unit. Colonel Bill Davison wisely decided to break with tradition and recommended that Her Majesty the Queen appoint Norman Kirby. The role of Honorary Colonel is a mystery to most people. He has no authority, but considerable influence. His tasks are to represent the interests of the unit and to foster alliances with the Regular Army. This is where the 'old boy net' helps. He should be consulted regarding senior officer appointments, and must be

prepared to give his advice to the Commanding Officer when asked to do so. Although he must show an interest in the unit, he must not, however, interfere with the way in which it is run.



In 1983 the unit, in its research role, conducted an official Port Hospital Exercise, despite the fact that the concept had already been abandoned. Apparently a certain amount of confusion was caused when ambulance convoys arrived at the front door of the hospital and announced that they were ships in the docks, or an expected ship in the docks turned out to be an ambulance train.

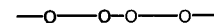
Once more in its research and development role 308 was back at Olen Camp in Belgium in 1984 from the 12th–26th May, to experiment with the newly proposed Evacuation Hospital, which has been further developed since then.



During the period of Colonel Loyn's command the unit succeeded in winning the Niven Cup for overall efficiency in 1978 and 1980.

In 1980 the Army Catering Corps team from 308 General Hospital achieved second place in the South East District Field Cookery Competition. The team, the only one from a medical unit, consisted of Staff Sergeant Deryk Foster, Corporal James Cuffy and Corporal Les Gardiner of the ACC, and Lance Corporal Linda Atwal QARANC. 308 fielded the only girl in the competition. Although a Medical Assistant she was the team's driver and found herself washing up. The team members were presented with their silver medals to mark their second place, only ten points behind 233 Squadron RCT(V) who won the competition.

This was also the period when teams from 308 began entering various marches around the country. Major John Rabjohns was largely instrumental in creating interest in these marches, ably supported by Major Alan Harrison RADC(V) and Major Roy Penny RAMC(V), together with several QARANC officers and other ranks, both male and female. They tackled the Hadrian's Wall Walk, the Rutland Water Walk, and on several occasions the Royal Military Policy and City of Chichester Walk.



On the 1st April 1985 the unit officially adopted the new role of Evacuation Hospital with which role experiments had been conducted the previous year.

On the same day Colonel Keith Stenson assumed command from Colonel Bill Davison. Each new commanding officer, hopefully, produces new ideas. They don't all work, but are always worth trying. The ones that do work help to continue the ever upward progress of the unit. Colonel Stenson and his team of senior officers have produced several new projects which, so far, have proved successful, and when they have been fully tested, should prove of great benefit to the efficiency of the unit.

Firstly, the personnel of the unit have been formed into small permanent teams of three to six people. Some are concerned in triage in reception, some with stretcher bearing, some in the operating theatres, and others are nursing teams in the wards. With this system every member of the unit knows his, or her, task, and, it is hoped, each is satisfied with that task. It abolishes the arbitrary allocation by the Personnel Officer and ensures continuity of training for each individual.

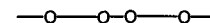
The second innovation was the introduction of a Recruiting Cell under the control of Lieutenant Colonel Roger Green to study all aspects of recruiting, and, in particular, to endeavour to find the main reasons for resignations. If a cure for the latter can be found, the Recruiting Cell will have proved its worth.

Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare defence training has, apparently, been rather neglected in recent years. The third new scheme is the formation of a NBC cell headed by Captain Hilary Robinson QARANC(V) whose aim is to keep the unit up to date in this very important aspect of training. One of the problems with NBC training is that it seems almost impossible to get all the protective equipment required. On many occasions in the past respirators have not been available, have proved defective, or just didn't fit. If the respirators were satisfactory, then there were no gloves. With luck, Hilary Robinson may be able to persuade those responsible to provide all the equipment necessary when it is required.

Another new idea was an Officers' Study Day at annual camp. This was first tried during annual training in Edinburgh in 1985. It was an extremely successful and instructive venture and is to be repeated at every annual camp.

A unit librarian, Sergeant Jacobs, has been appointed, with a stock of training manuals and reference books at Mytchett, which will be available to all ranks during annual training periods. In the past it was always difficult to provide the soldiers, and the officers, access to the various books they wished to consult. This new appointment should solve that problem.

In the inter-unit field a new competition has been introduced. Exercise WALKOVER is designed to promote endurance and adventure training combined with trade and technical training in medical units. This includes map reading, cross country marching by day and by night, with casualty treatment and evacuation involving a river crossing, canoeing, and range firing. Under the control of Captain Young RAMC(V) and Captain Ascott QARANC(V) teams will be formed and trained throughout the year. Each team consists of an officer or senior non-commissioned officer, a driver and three other ranks. The Walkover Trophy is the prize for the winning male team, and the Grimshaw Cup is that for the winning female team. It is hoped that this will become an annual event in 308's calendar. They said that 308 did not have a hope in the Challenge Shield Competition, but remember what happened.



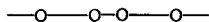
Only two of the founder members of the unit are still in 308. Major E. H. Veal ACC(V) and Sergeant D. S. Gibbs RAMC(VC) are now the sole survivors from 1961. Major R. A. Penny RAMC(V) joined in 1962, and is, therefore, almost a founder member. He was posted to the unit following National Service to fulfil the compulsory obligation for a period of Reserve service. This story ends with Private Penny's first reactions on joining 308, and his opinion in 1986.

"On arriving at Keogh Barracks on the first Saturday of camp, I, along with four other 'volunteers' were directed to one of the barrack rooms. The barrack room was already occupied and my immediate thoughts were that those who possessed uniform had obviously come from different units from all over Great Britain – I had never seen so many army flashes and insignia. Senior NCOs and below were all mixed in together.

After settling in on the Saturday the RSM came into the barrack room and announced "I don't want to see any of you until Monday morning". Four of us borrowed a tent and went to Brighton for the week-end.

When eventually the unit paraded for roll call my impression, no doubt coloured by my experience as a Drill Instructor during National Service, was 'what a shambles'. I gathered that 308 was being made up from remnants of the old National Service reserve and TA units, so we could not be called a unit. It would take time and training to achieve that.

And so, for my part, looking at our unit now, I can say 'we have arrived'. Over the years we have shown ourselves through training, through our ability to be flexible in whatever role we have been asked to function, and in our commitment and zeal not to be just a unit, but The Unit. Well done 308".



Let us salute the 'civilian soldier'. Whether he is the man who willingly learns to become a soldier in his spare time, or the man who dedicates the skill of his peace time trade to the Army in time of need, he merits our admiration and gratitude; for he, no less than his Regular Army comrade, is the very essence of our safety.

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