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PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

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CORRESPONDENCE, LITERARY MATTER, ETC.—*Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," H.M. Customs and Excise, 5, Odessa Street, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16. It is essential that all matter for insertion in the monthly issue should reach the Editor on or before the 10th of the month of publication. Articles submitted need not be typewritten, but the use of one side of the paper renders a great assistance.*

Waterguard Spotlight

"News has been received that Lieut. Stanley Wandless has been awarded the M.C. for gallant and distinguished service in N. Africa."—Lads o' London, p. 14.

C. & E. ORPHANS', WIDOWS' AND WAR MEMORIAL FUND

The Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Committee was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, Finsbury Square, E.C.2, on Monday, 4th January, at 4 p.m. Mr. D. J. G. Moffatt, Vice-President, occupied the Chair. Minutes were adopted, letters were read, and the Quarterly Financial Statement was adopted.

The question of arrears in subscriptions by "loaned" officials was discussed and a resolution was passed directing the Secretary to draw the attention of these members to Rule 7 of the Fund.

Membership.

Twelve applicants were admitted to membership. They comprised the Deputy Chairman of the Board, the Director of Establishments, two Officers, one D.H.C.O., three C.O.s, two P.O.s and two A.P.O.s.

Renewals of Grants.

Ten applications for the renewal of grants—nine Rule 26, one Rule 23—were considered. Five grants of £20 each and three grants of £15 each were voted. One application was rejected and one case was deferred for further investigations.

New Grants.

The Committee voted the following grants: Three grants of £15 each (Rule 26), one grant of £15 (Rule 29), two grants of £36 each to families where there were two children, and three grants of £24 each to families with one child (Rule 23).

Subscriptions—Loaned Officials.

Since 31st March, 1942, members loaned to other Departments have been required to make their own arrangements for payment of annual subscriptions to the Fund. There are still a large number of subscriptions unpaid, or in arrears, for the current year, 1st April, 1942—31st March, 1943.

The Committee will be glad if the members concerned will remit outstanding subscriptions to the Treasurer, either by cheque or postal order. An alternative method suggested is to authorise a banker, until further notice, to pay the amount of the annual subscriptions to the Midland Bank, Ltd., 20, Eastcheap, E.C.3, to the account of the Fund.

CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 10th FEBRUARY, 1943.

PROMOTIONS.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS TO PREVENTIVE OFFICERS (ACTING) (ON DETACHED DUTY):
Bailey, W. J., Grimsby.
Doyle, J. F., Liverpool.
Pullin, T. H. L., Plymouth.
Wardell, T. C., Liverpool.

TRANSFERS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS—

Cambridge, F. D., Newcastle to Liverpool.
Clarke, B. R., Southampton to Inverness.
Niven, H. S., Grimsby to Glasgow.

PREVENTIVE OFFICERS (ACTING)—

Howard, C. T., from special service at Belfast to Grimsby.
Partridge, E. M., from special service at Aberdeen to Stornaway, Inverness.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS—

Catnach, R., London to Liverpool.
Kitchener, F. J., Glasgow to Newport.
O'Connor, J. A., Hull to Port Talbot, Swansea.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT—

PREVENTIVE OFFICER—
Graham, S., Glasgow.

DEATHS—

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICERS—
Lambert, J. W., Barry Dock, Cardiff.
Rapson, J. R., Hull.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICERS

Day, W. S., Waterguard Superintendent, 2nd Class.
Haines, P., Preventive Officer.
Jolly, R., Preventive Officer.
Jordan, J. H., Preventive Officer.
Northway, C., Preventive Officer.
Tracey, W., Preventive Officer.

PLYMOUTH PRESENTATION

MR. T. H. L. PULLIN, P.O.

All the Plymouth staff assembled in the Waterguard Office at Millbay Docks on 15th January to celebrate the promotion of Mr. Tom Pullin and wish him goodbye and good luck at Belfast, where he has been sent on Detached Duty. Mr. W. H. Finley, Waterguard Surveyor, presided, and Mr. G. Stanford, Waterguard Superintendent, presented Tom with a large-size "comforter" (by Dunhill) on behalf of all his colleagues.

Tom has spent all his eighteen years' service in the Plymouth Division, and no Officer has a better right to the description of "sterling character." Every Officer present voiced his high regard of his worth as an Officer, a colleague and a friend. Hope was expressed that his period as an "unfixed" P.O. would be a short one, and a "fillable" vacancy would be found for him in a comfortable and congenial port, where his friends could still enjoy his cheery optimism on all things. Tom managed a smile and a reply, the brevity of which was only exceeded by his arrival telegram to us from Belfast: "O.K." Tom will be O.K. at Belfast.

G.T.C.

OUR BOYS

"It is with the deepest regret that the Sunderland Staff learned of the death, whilst serving with H.M. Forces overseas, of Ralf Miller, son of our esteemed colleague, George Miller.

"We extend our sincere sympathies to George, his wife and family in their tragic loss."

ADMIRALTY DRAUGHTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Applications are invited for the appointment of General Secretary and Executive Officer of the Admiralty Draughtsmen's Association (membership 2,500 approx.) at a salary not exceeding £500 per annum. Applicants should forward particulars of age, experience and qualifications to E. C. B. Lee, Esq., Eastern House, Beechen Cliff, Bath.

CURRENT COMMENTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

THE February meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee (P.S.A.) will take place at the Offices of the C. & E. Federation, Walter House, Strand, London, at 10 a.m. on the 25th of the month.

WATERGUARD SECTIONAL COMMITTEE.

The following is a brief report of some of the main items on the rather lengthy agenda of the Sectional Committee Meeting held on the 19th January.

Detached Duty.

The Official Side maintained that "mere length of absence could not in itself be accepted as hardship." The Staff Side contended that one year should normally be taken as the limit for periods of this duty. In the hopes of finding a solution acceptable to both sides they suggested that:—

(i) Waterguard staff with continuing liability in their home ports should not normally be retained on Detached Duty for periods exceeding twelve months.

(ii) Waterguard staff who have been absent on Detached Duty for periods in excess of two years should, on request, be allowed to return to their home ports, where this is possible, for a period of at least three months.

(iii) An Officer who becomes redundant in the port of his Detached Duty should be allowed to return to his home port forthwith if not required elsewhere immediately.

Seizure Rewards.

The Staff Side made their supporting statement for the abolition of automatic rewards for Preventive Officers, and, after several questions, the item was adjourned for consideration by the Official Side.

The proposal that rewards should not be paid on seizures of less than 8 ozs. of tobacco goods was withdrawn by the Staff Side in view of the attitude of the Official Side and the evidence that the number of petty seizures was not great.

After some discussion on the proposed change in the limit of automatic rewards, during which the Official Side opposed any change, the item was re-adjourned.

On the proposal to raise the limit for option for Chief Preventive Officers, the Official Side pointed out that, out of 2,000 seizures, in only 76 cases was the duty between £5 and £10. In adjourning the item they agreed to consider a suggestion that in certain circumstances C.P.O.s could be authorised to exceed the limit of £5 duty.

The Official Side promised to look into the question of Fines on Vessels and the effect thereon of the increased rates of duty.

Seven-hour Day.

A review of all ports schemed to the seven-hour day was claimed, and, after some discussion, the Official Side promised to consider this proposal.

Rummage Crews.

The Official Side agreed that the normal strength of rummage crews should be three A.P.O.s, and gave an assurance that they had no intention of departing from this general principle in normal times. They sought adjournment, however, to consider the immediate effect of adoption of the full reference.

Preference Limit.

In reply to our suggestion that the limit of 50s. (C.C. 2, 24, para. 72) should be raised, the Official Side intimated that they would probably be able to agree to this, but they would like a further look at it. The item was adjourned.

C.P.O. Salary Scale.

The Staff Side made a lengthy statement in support of their claim for a maximum of £600 for the Chief Preventive Officer Grade, and the Official Side took the item away for consideration.

War-time Staffing.

This is a matter in which both sides are agreed that full consultation and agreement are desirable, and the reference seeks to ensure this, if necessary, by the issue of fresh instructions.

Small Port Allowances.

Acting on instructions from the Annual Conference, the position at Allowanced Small Ports has been examined and claims for increases in eleven cases have been tabled. The Official Side is considering (a) a general review and (b) the setting up of an *ad hoc* Sub-Committee to examine these and any other cases.

STAFF IN ORKNEYS, SHETLANDS, ETC.

In our December notes we referred to the £50 allowance which was being paid to certain Civil Servants in these out-landish places, and said that the question of its general application and improvement had been taken up by the National Staff Side.

Since then the Customs and Excise Group have considered the matter and have decided that an immediate claim should be tabled in this Department for the payment of the allowance to Waterguard and other Customs and Excise Officials employed in these places, and whose salary and war bonus does not exceed £420. This is now being done.

WAR DUTY ALLOWANCES.

Way back in May, 1941, shortly after the introduction of the 51-hour week in the Service, the Treasury suggested the abolition of the complicated system of overtime payments and the substitution of a percentage addition to salary, termed a War Duty Allowance, yielding roughly the same amount as overtime pay calculated on the normal basis. It was understood that the fluctuating overtime element in remuneration would be converted into a fixed allowance equivalent approximately to their overtime earnings for a standing working week of "x" hours — "x" being determined by ascertaining the standard average working week throughout the Service under existing conditions.

For some reason the Treasury dropped the matter, but the question has now been re-opened by informal approach by members of the National Staff Side. The issue has now been passed to the Executives of constituent bodies. Our own Executive Committee gave full consideration to the suggestion and unanimously agreed to oppose its operation in the Waterguard. We have reason to believe that the other Associations in the Customs and Excise Group have reached similar decisions.

ALLOWANCES AND ISSUES TO CREWS.

Members will recollect that, arising from reports made at the Annual Conference, the Association decided to institute an enquiry into the whole question of allowances and issues of dutiable stores to ships' crews—e.g., the adequacy of quantities allowed, the effect of differentiation as between officers and men, and the incidence of issues. The Board were advised of our intention and arrangements were made to pass the information on to them in due course.

These enquiries are now complete and the results have been communicated to the Board.

IN YOUR GARDEN.

We must admit that we shared the generally accepted view that the Customs and Excise Horticultural Society had ceased to function for the duration of the war. We were, therefore, pleasantly surprised to learn that arrangements had been made to supply past members with good-quality vegetable seeds on favourable terms. A list of seeds available is being prepared and can be obtained on application to Mr. A. H. Ross, King's Warehouse, Custom House, E.C.3; Mr. R. W. Curtis, Registry, City Gate House, E.C.2; or Mr. R. Matthews, Customs and Excise, Fenning's Wharf, Tooley Street, S.E.1.

WE REGRET—

That through lack of space we have been unable to publish Bangor; Co. Down Patter; Sunderland Calling; Tyne Topics; Correspondence from a D.D.O., Plaistow and "Whiskers"; together with copy from C.F.S., H.E.P.B., "Tyrconnel" and John Kennedy.—Ed.

Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

The two hundred and fifty-eighth meeting of the Council was held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 27th January, 1943, the Chair being taken by Sir Archibald Carter, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

OLD AGE PENSIONS WORK.

The Official Side said that since the last meeting of the Council developments had occurred: the transfer of pensioners to the Assistance Board had been effected as from 1st January, 1943, the number so transferred being about forty per cent. As a result the number of Women Pension Officers to be regarded as surplus to present requirements was thirty. Interviews with a view to transfers of this surplus had taken place; ten Women Pension Officers had been posted to definite appointments through the Treasury Pool; five had been accepted by the Ministry of Health as Assistant Inspectors, and three by the Ministry of Labour as 3rd Class Officers. Of the balance, ten had been selected for Pool appointments and would be taken as vacancies arose. These ten would be retained in the meantime as a reserve and would be usefully engaged in assisting where necessary. There did not appear to be any probability at present that Women Pension Officers would be required to go to the Ministry of Labour or Assistance Board as Employment or Assistance Officers. The result of further interviews was awaited and it was hoped that all the surplus would eventually be going on promotion to other Departments.

In view of the foregoing statement the Official Side observed, and the Staff Side agreed, that the question of release to H.M. Forces or Civil Nursing did not now arise.

In regard to the right to remain in the Service until the age of sixty-five, both Sides agreed that there was no general Whitley agreement, but the Staff Side thought that this had never been refused where it had been requested on behalf of a basic grade. The Official Side said that in view of the probability that all transfers would be promotional this issue was unlikely to arise, since on transfer to higher grades transferees must accept all the conditions of such grades. The Staff Side agreed. The Official Side said that the matter of the transfer of the Old Age Pensions work to the Assistance Board had turned out more satisfactorily than had been anticipated at an earlier date. The Staff Side agreed, and said that the item might be retained on the Council agenda pending further developments.

REMUNERATION FOR EXTRA WORK PERFORMED BY CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENTAL GRADES.

This item was re-adjourned at request of the Staff Side.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER QUESTIONS.

(a) Staff Side proposal that Officers successful at the last two Surveyorship Examinations, but not yet appointed to the Surveyor Grade, be given a presumed date of appointment based for each of these Officers on the date upon which a vacancy would normally have occurred in the Surveyor Grade, such presumed date to govern salary and conditions of service at the date of actual appointment to that Grade.

In reply to the Staff Side's inquiry regarding the rejection in other Departments of similar proposals for the fixing of a notional date, the Official Side instanced the case of telegraphists in the Post Office who had been compulsorily retained in their posts because they could not be replaced, although due for promotion to the Clerical Class. This case raised the issue of notional promotion in a more aggravated form, inasmuch as clerical vacancies existed, and the telegraphists would have been promoted to fill them; notional promotion from the date on which they could normally have been promoted had nevertheless not been conceded. The Staff Side thought there was no exact parallel outside this Department for the refusal of a notional date to people who had been declared successful candidates after examination for superior posts, as was the case in the present proposal. The Official Side emphasised that in the case of the successful Surveyor Grade examinees there were no vacancies, and observed that both the telegraphists in the Post Office and the successful examinees here were unfortunate owing to the exigencies of war-time. This Department was not

an expanding Department, and the whole question was a general and far-reaching problem. The Official Side would be prepared to consider the matter further but could hold out no hope of any concession being made.

The item was re-adjourned.

(b) Staff Side proposal that all vacancies in other Departments should be advertised generally to members of the Customs and Excise Department, and that transfers on loan to other Departments should be notified to the Staff Side immediately they are made.

In submitting this proposal the Staff Side referred to correspondence which had passed on the subject and pressed strongly for the general advertisement in all cases of vacancies in other Departments. They instanced the case of Air Ministry Overseas Audit posts which had not been communicated to Departmental Clerical Officers, and they did not think that the possibility of a flood of applications was valid reason for limited advertisement. As regards notification of transfers to other Departments, they were prepared to accept notification to the Staff Side as an alternative to general publication in printed orders, and to this the Official Side agreed.

The Official Side said with regard to the first part of the proposal that various factors had to be considered; vacancies involving promotion were generally advertised, whenever practicable, but some vacancies did not fall within the rule, because of the urgency of the matter, or the special qualifications required. There had been occasions in which the delay inevitably resulting from general advertisement had resulted in the posts being filled before applications from this Department could be considered by the responsible authority.

The Staff Side were not convinced that in present and future circumstances there would be such urgency as perhaps in the past, and as regards special qualifications required for certain posts, they were not sure that the Official Side were always aware of qualifications legal, technical, or other, held by individuals.

The Official Side felt that the circumstances of each case should be the deciding factor as regards general advertisement. If there were a considerable number of vacant posts, and no pressing urgency, they agreed that general advertisement was desirable. Under the arrangements just agreed to, the Official Side would consult the Staff Side regarding the procedure to be followed in each case.

(c) **Retirement: Effect on Promotion of Re-employment or Deferment.**—The Staff Side said they understood that in the Waterguard there were three retained officials in grades where there were declared redundants, viz., one Waterguard Superintendent, one Waterguard Surveyor and one Chief Preventive Officer. The Official Side said there was no redundancy in either the Superintendent or the Surveyor Grade. There was one Chief Preventive Officer over retiring age and action for his retirement was being taken.

(d) **Upgrading of Temporary Clerks, Grade III.**—The Official Side intimated that a Circular to Collectors listing the duties appropriate to Grades II and III, and requesting a review of the work in the light of these lists, had been approved and issued. On receipt from the Collectors of their proposals on the grading of posts in accordance with that Circular, another meeting of the Sub-Committee would be held.

The Staff Side intimated their confirmation of the list of duties specified in the Circular.

MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) **Units for Old Age Pensions Work.**—The agreement reached on the Outdoor Service Sectional Committee for the units for Old Age Pensions work remaining after transfer of certain pensioners to the Assistance Board was ratified.

(b) **Units for Office Attendance and Attendance on the Public outside office hours.**—The Council ratified the agreement recorded on the Officer Grade Committee that any claim for increase in the normal units for Office Attendance and Attendance on the Public outside office hours would be considered on a Schedule 2 basis in the light of the facts.

(c) Two agreements from the Officer Grade Committee on daily travelling expenses in individual cases were ratified.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on 24th February, 1943.

OBITUARY

SUB-LIEUT. (A) ERIC HEWITT, R.N.V.R.

His many friends will learn with profound regret that Eric Hewitt, A.P.O., is presumed dead as the result of a flying accident which occurred on Sunday, December 27th, 1942, when a plane he was piloting on a non-operational flight from a station in Northern Scotland to another station in North-West England crashed into the sea. Neither the plane nor the body have been recovered, so that the cause of the accident is not definitely established, and it can only be assumed that some mechanical trouble developed en route.

It seems terribly tragic that this likeable, unassuming young man should lose his life in this manner at a time when he was ready to render his country most valuable service. He had just completed the final stages of his training as a Fleet Air Arm Fighter Pilot and was accustomed to handling the latest types of Sea Hurricanes and Spitfires. He was, indeed, due to start leave the following day, prior to being posted to operational duties aboard one of H.M. Aircraft Carriers.

His Christmas Card and a cheery message of good wishes for the New Year arrived only a few days before the news was received that he was missing, since when further word has been received confirming our worst fears.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his parents, on whose shoulders the burden of this tragedy must lie heavily. It may be of some comfort to them to know that he leaves behind in the Waterguard Service many friends who are proud to have worked and played with him.

It is as a sportsman that we in Liverpool choose best to remember him. He was the left full-back in our winning Lupton Cup team, and he was frequently a member of our Cricket XI.

Actually a Rugby man converted to Soccer, he played a hard, skilful game, never sparing himself, and he was always most successful when the opposition was toughest, for he possessed terrific grit and stamina.

If one were asked to write an epitaph it would be short and simple: "He never shirked a tackle." That sentence sums up his attitude to work and play alike. We can ill afford to lose men of his calibre.

W.C.H.

MR. J. R. RAPSON, A.P.O.

It is with deep regret that we record the sudden and tragic passing of our colleague, J. R. (Joe) Rapson, at the early age of thirty-nine. He had an accident on his motor-cycle a few weeks before Christmas last, but when everyone expected his return to duty, we heard that Joe had been removed to the hospital, where he died after a short illness.

Joe entered the Service as a Boy Messenger at Hull in September, 1917, subsequently joining the Preventive Service in December, 1921, at Manchester. He transferred to Hull and remained in his native town for the remainder of his service.

At the funeral on January 22nd, the Waterguard Superintendent and about thirty members of the staff attended to pay their last respects. In view of the state of the weather on that day, this will convey the fact that the staff realise that Joe was a character who will be missed in the watch-house.

To Mrs. Rapson and her daughter, and to Joe's mother, we can only tender our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement.

W.H.T.

MR. A. E. BURKE, P.O., LIVERPOOL.

The death occurred, at 10 p.m. on Monday evening, 25th January, 1943, of Mr. A. E. (Arthur) Burke, Preventive Officer, who, during his many years' service in Liverpool, had endeared himself with the local staff in a manner given to few men to achieve.

His capability and devotion to duty, coupled with an innate kindness and consideration for others, was of a kind all too infrequently encountered, and it was indeed a privilege to work with him.

We had known for the last two or three years that his heart had been troublesome—a condition which was no doubt aggravated by blitz experiences; but few, if any, could have anticipated the suddenness of his end, for he was on duty seemingly quite well and cheerful up to 4 p.m. on the day of his death.

His passing creates a gap in our ranks that will not readily be filled.

A large number of his colleagues and many friends from outside the department attended, on Friday, 29th January, 1943, to pay their last respects. Following a service at St. Matthew's, Queens Drive, the interment took place at Yew Tree Cemetery, West Derby, the coffin being borne to the grave by six Preventive Officers in uniform.

The splendid turn-out and numerous floral tributes testified to Mr. Burke's popularity, and we tender to his widow and family our respectful sympathy in their great loss.

W.C.H.

Southampton Notes

A concise column this month. What news we have is good, and we take no news of the other lads as being in the same category.

Ron Greenhalgh has been transferred from Coastal Command to the R.A.F. Ferry Command, and a recent card conveyed his greetings and news of his well-being. Jack Welsh, still up North and recently seen in Maryport, is A1, and conveys good news of George Haywood from the Midlands. Les Twentyman sends airgraphs from the Middle East; he is very fit, but finds the change of climate from the Cape to be trying. The friends of L.A.C. D. Pearce, until recently A.P.O. at Penzance, will be glad to know of his well-being up North. He is at the same station as Jack Welsh, and was a January visitor to the Manchester Watch-house.

Steve Goodyear, Sergeant, with the I.C. in the South-West, was in this area early in January, and we had much to yarn about. He is kept busy, likes the job, and is well settled in his war-time port. He gave us the news of a stroke of bad luck which has befallen one of his I.C. colleagues who is also an A.P.O., London, namely, A. D. (Bert) Finch, who received severe injuries following a motor-cycle accident on 31st December, 1942. We are pleased to add that our colleague is making satisfactory progress, and we hope that he will soon be back on duty.

Another bad piece of news was that of the death on active service of Eric Hewitt, F.A.A., whose loss will be greatly lamented on Merseyside. A grand lad, indeed, and one whom the Soton exiles of 1940 have cause to remember gratefully. The report of his death, immediately following a letter which told of his well-being, was a severe shock to us all, and we join with Liverpool in their sympathy extended to those who were so near and dear to him.

Brief but satisfactory is the current news of Bill Sykes, Arthur Cheney and Joe; they are all very well and busy.

Exiles, and pleasing news from our P.O. contingent on Merseyside and on the Clyde, with the odds on the former. Our latest D.D. addition is that of H. G. (Sexton) Blake, now at Rosyth, where we hope he will enjoy the change of air; likewise two of our former P.O.s, now in the ports of Inverness and Preston, namely, Messrs. Clarke and Gray, respectively. Mr. B. R. Clarke has for many years been the P.O. Whitley Councillor and the South Coast P.S.A. Councillor for his grade, and we take this opportunity of recording our thanks to him for his efforts on behalf of the staff, locally and nationally.

Home news, and we're glad to know that the lads at Soton, Poole, Weymouth and Pompey are A1. Home Guard topics flavour of the watch-house conversation these days, and duty on A.A. sites is the lot of certain of your old pals. We remain intrigued by the news of one of our colleagues being O.C. Bellringers!! He's done plenty of leg-pulling in his time, so he should be the right man for that job. "Gently does it, Guv'nor!"

Cheerio, Forces!

L.B.

O WAD SOME POWER

"The Custom Officer in this country is usually so unobtrusively dressed that he is often overlooked. His opposite abroad strikes terror by his very appearance, and he is usually arrayed in a semi-military uniform and is hung about with sword and revolvers."—"Ships and the Sea," by Pay Lt.-Comdr. E. C. Talbot-Booth, R.N.R.

The Lads o' London

As the "C.J." has been reduced in size it has become necessary for Port news to be cut to a minimum, so as to permit a little news and views from anybody desirous of giving same. Therefore, in the future these notes will be half their usual size. Due to domestic reasons, I have temporarily returned home to London, and shall be glad if letters can be addressed to me at 29, Scawen-road, Deptford, London, S.E.8; or, if that address is mislaid, c/o Room 11, Custom House, London, E.C.3. It is hoped that colleagues in the Forces who happen to be home on leave or passing through London will contact me.

Stan Wandless has gone overseas, but it is not yet known whether he has arrived at his destination. Les Walker has landed in South Africa to complete his flying training. Ted Crowther, now happily recovered, has been very ill due to hernia, and is looking forward to another spell of leave. Roger Withey passed on a legitimate grouse. The M/V Pomona, which was in the West India Dock at the outbreak of the war, has just been condemned as good and lawful prize by the Prize Court — she has since been sunk after being renamed. Roger obtained a newspaper cutting about the Prize Court's condemnation, and it ascribed the saving of the ship from scuttling by its German crew due to the prompt action of the military and dock police. Apparently that was not the case, as he, together with Mr. B. James, P.O., had been instructed by Mr. G. Grey, then the station C.P.O., to search the ship for time bombs first before handing it over to the other controls concerned. The Customs action was not even mentioned, and frequently complaints are received that such is the case. The department has always been modest.

Capt. E. V. Williams, of the Yorks and Lancs Regt., and formerly of this department, has expressed a wish to be remembered to all his old friends. He is now in India. Jack Bushell has left the Royal Artillery and has transferred to the Motor-Boat Section of the R.A.S.C. He thanks the Plymouth Waterguard staff for their hospitality during the time that he was stationed in that town.

I regret to announce the news that Lt. Stanley Wandless, of the 1st Parachute Battalion, has been reported missing as from the 7th January last in North Africa. He was attached to the 1st Army, and had only been overseas for a short time. One can imagine that Stanley, if he is a prisoner, will be looking for an early opportunity to escape, and that he proved a tough handful for his captors. Our hopes for his safety are high, and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Dick Jones has been promoted to Lance-Sergeant, and at the moment is awaiting a call to begin a course of study at Winchester with the Intelligence Corps. He will, I know, be of immense value to that body.

Bob Kidd is now in Algiers, and is enjoying life out there, but said that the "Prospect of Whitby" would be an excellent prospect just now.

Jack Bushell wished me to thank the Plymouth staff on his behalf for their excellent hospitality extended to him during his stay there. Jack is now in a Motor-Boat Coy. (R.A.S.C.) station near Colchester.

An airgraph was received recently from an old colleague of ours, Capt. E. V. (Billie) Williams, of the Yorks and Lancs Regt., who is now in India. His greetings are passed on to all his former colleagues.

Frank Cozens and Jack Matthews have returned to London from Liverpool and Kirkwall respectively, owing to the illness of his wife in the case of the former, and on hardship grounds in the case of the latter. Welcome home, lads!

Don't forget the new address!

Let's hear from you then,

Till the lights o' London shine again.

R.J.L.

STOP PRESS.—News has just reached me that Lieut. Stan Wandless has been awarded the M.C. for distinguished service in N. Africa,

R.J.L.

LIVERPOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL MEETING

A hundred per cent. attended meeting of the Liverpool Detached Duty Officers was held at the Landing Stage on 19th January.

Mr. J. Carter, P.O., was in the chair. Mr. P. A. North, P.O., District Secretary, said that the meeting had been convened at the request of those present to discuss Detached Duty matters. He pointed out that Officers on Detached Duty in the country now formed a considerable section of the Waterguard staff, and he would suggest that any action to be taken should, in the first instance, be through the Association and not by any individual. The Association was at the service of the members, but a case was needed to put forward. He said that this particular gathering could claim to be experts on the problems of Detached Duty, and he had no doubt that a fully comprehensive case could be presented to the Association for action.

He went on to describe the present chaotic conditions, and said that no system had yet been evolved and put into general operation. Detached Duty had been allowed to develop into a vine which, unattended, had produced bunches of very sour grapes. Practically every Detached Officer had expressed great concern that no steps had been taken to control the injustices still being heaped upon one section of the staff. He would say at once that unity of purpose had been lacking; each Officer had a set of problems of his own, but the problems merged. He was confident that an astounding case could be made out for immediate action to be taken to relieve the great financial and domestic hardships. He had been informed of the wishes of the meeting, and suggested that the entire gathering formed the Committee. This was unanimously agreed; all present undertook to supply the necessary data to be collected for transmission to the General Secretary. Messrs. Davis, North, Richardson and Skinner were deputed to prepare the case as early as possible.

It was further agreed that the final draft should be made available to Officers on Detached Duty at all Ports for their information.

In proposing a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Mr. North said that he was greatly impressed by the sincerity and one hundred per cent. unity of the meeting, and was confident that the case they were about to present would be put forward by the Association, and merit the full support of every Detached Officer in the country.

BILL HUGHES.

Merseyside News

Forces news takes first place this month, with the Navy well to the fore.

Alex Donnan, training for his Commission as a Fleet Air Arm Pilot, has moved to a station nearby, and was a recent visitor. He looked fit and well and is expecting to go to Canada shortly to continue the course. He made up one of a Waterguard Party at the recent Everton v. Liverpool Cup Match—and didn't think much of Everton, either!

Two other visitors—both serving aboard the same ex-American destroyer—were Tom Brown and Bert Langley, two of our peace-time footballers. Another caller was Fred Ridley, back home again after nearly twelve months on escort duty, including a spell running between New York and Caribbean ports. Bert and Fred are both expecting to take a course for a Commission shortly and we wish them the best of luck. Tom Brown sends kind regards to his Holyhead friends.

Jack Rankmore, also in port, was aboard one of the larger type vessels used in the North African campaign, and he had many exciting experiences to relate.

Mention of boats and North Africa takes one, in the approved cine-magazine style, to a letter received from Jack Burrough, who is now serving out there with a Motor Boat Company of the R.A.S.C. He tells of "pongy" pedlars straight from Tommy Handley's programme hawking fine quality wine for the proverbial song, and enjoying Turkish baths with massage at a bob a time. Oranges and tangerines are literally ten a penny, and altogether his letter strikes a most cheerful note. As a cricketer the hot weather suits him A.1.

A recent departure is John Young, who has been called up. John, who was married just before joining the Navy, has been

stationed in Cornwall, from where he sends his good wishes to all friends.

Turning to Service matters, congratulations to Messrs. J. F. (Joe) Doyle and T. C. (Cyril) Wardell on their long-delayed promotion. The news created quite a pleasing surprise, and we are all hoping that it won't be long before many more of the vacancies are filled.

Glasgow Officers will welcome news of our old friend, Mr. R. J. (Bob) Keefe, P.O., on loan to the Travellers Censorship Office at Liverpool. Ran across him the other day aboard one of H.M. Transports. Says he's enjoying the change, and pleased to be back in his home port again. **BILL HUGHES.**

Just A Minute !

A few home truths, with acknowledgments to a 1942 issue of the Federation Journal . . . "Democracy consists not only of 'Rights; it also involves 'Duties.'" If this is true of citizenship, it is also true of Association membership. Officers have rights, and they have formed themselves into an Association to protect those rights. Having done this, they immediately accept duties, duties to their colleagues in the Association. In saying this, we do not confine our remarks to the duty of serving as officials. There is more in it than that. Membership of the Association carries with it the duty to be constantly watchful of Departmental interests and to be active whenever and wherever those interests are in danger. It is not enough to grumble and to ask, "What is the Association doing?" It is not enough to murmur in the office.

Murmuring will achieve nothing, individual action which concerns itself only with the interests of the individual, will bring little result. But that other kind of individual action which is concerned with the rights of *all* officers is capable of far different things.

At this point we would add that recent discussions in Parliament on the Government's wage policy showed very clearly that the Government places great faith in Whitley procedure, and that it has taken a firm stand on a policy of maintaining collective bargaining, with arbitration as a means of settling wages disputes. The corollary to this is the existence of Trades Unions or Staff Associations. Therefore, if anything is to be done for the Preventive Staff it must be done through the Association. This, in our minds, establishes the overriding need for the Association and for every officer to be a member. The member's responsibility does not stop with the payment of his subscription. His dependence upon all the other members forces upon him the duty of *active* membership. It is the essential corollary to his rights as a member.

It all seems so plain, so straightforward, so obvious. And yet there are vacancies in local offices and on Local Whitley Committees, even as there are men who murmur and complain, but only among themselves. "CHOOSE!"

BATTSHAW.

Hull News

The funeral of Mr. J. R. Rapson, A.P.O., took place on 22nd January. A very good representative muster of Officers adequately expressed the sense of loss experienced by the whole Port. An Obituary by a colleague will be found elsewhere in this Journal.

During the past month we have had visits from Messrs. Richardson, P.O., and Walton, A.P.O., now stationed at Ayr, and Mr. Head, A.P.O., now at Greenock. All three were looking fit and well and finding plenty of interest in the work at their adopted Ports. The common and apparently very much justified complaint was the lack of accommodation, digs, being barely obtainable and houses out of the question. **N.S.M.**

Bristol News

The many friends of M. G. Mott, A.P.O., will be pleased to hear that he is now a Sub-Lieut., H.M. Navy, R.N.R. "Did I hear that Admiral Doentz, U-boat chief, will have to look to his laurels?"

A recent visitor here was E. H. Daniels, A.P.O., who is now qualifying for Pilot, R.A.F., and is expected to go abroad soon to complete his training.

Interesting letters were received from G. J. Hibberd, A.P.O., now going strong in the R.A.F. Wireless Section. **B.J.B.**

Correspondence

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Mr. Editor,

In moving round and around the country—at least that's what it seems like on D.D.—I have come up against quite a lot of the lethargic spirit, or open opposition, which seems to prevail, in some places, in regard to Association affairs.

I quote such remarks as these :—

"Why should I pay any subs.? I've never got anything out of it."

"They" (I never can really find out who "they" are) "never do anything for us."

"When I put forward so-and-so for this port I never got any support."

I have even come across members of our staff who flatly refuse to believe that Association principles have done anything for the betterment of their conditions at all in the last ten years. When one mentions such things as rises of pay, improved office accommodation, improved boats, improved uniforms, improved subsistence, they still regard these things as having been dropped to them like Manna from heaven.

Having heard this variety of views, I, an A.P.O. with just under fourteen years' service, should like to put forward my own views as to why it is so vitally necessary that our Association should be as strong as we can make it when the present war is over. Strength of an organisation like ours consists not only of subs., but of a good supply of ideas and arguments, and of councillors going to a conference with a bag-load of instructions to be debated.

My view is that when the war is over this Department may have a very desperate fight to retain what it holds. Whilst I sincerely hope that we are in a position to work towards that Arcadian period visualised by a correspondent a couple of months ago, I feel that we may probably have to resist attempts to take work from us to provide jobs for the very great supply of labour that will no doubt be available. Now whilst these lads deserve every consideration of the nation, charity begins at home, and I think that we would be doing our best if we saw to it that when our own lads return to the Waterguard there is an organisation fit to look after their interests.

History has it, if the information I have gathered at various times from older colleagues is correct, that after the last war we lost the Immigration work. It went to another Department who boosted it up to its present position, which, as most Baggage Port Officers know, is one that to-day carries considerable weight, with salaries for the members of its staff that would be promotion for many Waterguard Officers—all from a side-line of our own service!

Who knows but what, after this war, when some re-named "Geddes Axe" is floating around, it may be proposed, in the mad scramble of readjustments and economy, that we lose all "quarantine work," all "deck cargo work," or some other portion of the work that we now perform? With a loss of work would go a loss of prospects, and eventually a loss of solid cash.

It appears to me that we have not shone too well in this war. We have carried on under the same conditions as most people—that is, with short staffs, in the black-out, and, in many cases, with homes split up; but we have performed no work outstandingly useful, as far as I can see, in the war effort. We have taught new war-time Departments their job, and our own job to other services who, after three-and-a-half years' experience, now on occasions attempt to teach us back again—and we seem too often to have to take it.

An Association may not seem, on the face of it, a very useful proposition at the moment, but I do feel that we must be prepared for all eventualities; and although I hope we may be able to improve our conditions and expand our work, we may have to stall off attacks.

My view is that a strong and powerful Association is the best horse to back. Pay up our subs. and take an active interest to see they are properly expended.

C.W.S.

CORRESPONDENCE—continued.

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,

It seems to me that the period from now until the cessation of hostilities affords the greatest opportunity (and excuse) for reorganising this job of ours and placing it on a one-grade footing such as the Officer Grade. Despite the recent belated promotion of a few men from the last examination, nothing can persuade me there is any prospect of many promotions until some years after the war is over, for the governing factor is the shortage of numbers in the A.P.O. Grade, and it will be a considerable time after the fighting finishes before our lads return to their pre-war jobs this time. Obviously, no further promotions from the much depleted grade can be expected "until the boys come home," and if an exam. was held it would be most unfair to those of them who would miss it. It is patent to all, peace or war, that much is wrong with the present system, and it has generally been accepted that a change must take place sooner or later.

Let us review just a few of the snags of our present system which spring readily to mind: the awful fear of being a "failed A.P.O.," the luck of being born in the "right year" or being a victim of stagnation (old Adolph is rather concealing what would have been a period of stagnation), the luck of one's circumstances at the time of an examination—who can deny that a family man is severely handicapped in competition with others when preparing for an examination, not to mention the extra chances of domestic troubles upsetting him on the vital day (yet it is our duty to the Nation to be family men and produce children). Then there is the drawback of promotion to C.P.O. Grade when a man has to pack up his home, ruin his children's education and travel the country on an Irishman's rise. Is it any wonder there is not much ambition prevalent? Digressing for a moment, it would be interesting to know the size of family of all the members of C.P.O., Surveyor, and Superintendent Grades. I may be wrong, but those I readily bring to mind include a large percentage of childless men, which is a most significant fact. (This cannot be too greatly emphasised).

Anyway, without looking any further at the well-known existing disadvantages, let me submit my blue-print for a reconstructed and happy Waterguard. The basic grade to be known as Preventive Officer, with a minimum salary equivalent to the A.P.O.'s minimum, ranging to a maximum equivalent to the C.P.O.'s maximum; the other two grades to be existing Surveyor (with increased personnel) and Superintendent grades. Existing A.P.O.'s work could be performed by P.O.s up to ten years' service, and existing C.P.O.'s work (other than supervisory) by the senior P.O.s. After all, when a Naval Officer obtains his commission as Sub-Lieutenant, he proceeds through the grades to Lieutenant-Commander after prescribed periods of service, peace or war. Why shouldn't we be the same? And while we are drawing comparisons with the Navy, why not similar uniform markings, say, one gold band up to ten years' service, two gold bands from ten to twenty-five years, and two and a half from 25 years onwards. The relevant wearers could be styled Junior P.O.s, P.O.s and Senior P.O.s. But what is in a name? Overtime could be pro rata, but I suggest it be eliminated as far as possible by increasing the personnel, and there is every reason to do this, as the Government will have to provide jobs in due course to help to avoid unemployment when demobilisation does commence. Of course, there are many details to be settled, but nothing insurmountable: and what would be the result of such a reconstruction? Well, above all else, it would mean that a member of the Waterguard could settle down and build a home and rear a family (his duty to the Nation) without fear of it spoiling his chances of advancement, in the knowledge that he would reach a reasonable salary without having to work all hours and every Sunday, and with a fair chance of not having to travel the country once he has settled. The wandering could be done by a single man, junior men and those who like it. Who will deny that such a scheme would benefit everyone, including those still in the Forces, and lead to a happy and contented service, with no "Failures" or "Disappointed"?

"A. J. RILEY."

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