

EXTRACT From: Corps Journal 1967 Qtr 1, Vol 17 No 4. Page 177:

WHAT IS A LANCE CORPORAL?

Written during the 1960s by Capt.later Brig. Norman Allen.

A lance corporal is a budding RSM . . . to himself, 'Arry' to his contemporaries, a "green horn" to his corporal, a problem to his sergeant, "come 'ere Smith' to his sergeant major, "the new one" to his OC, and the vital raw material of the Corps to the PM. A lance corporal wears one large stripe on each sleeve.

A lance corporal comes in one of three sizes slim, thick or very thick.

A lance corporal is made (unlike officers who are born). It takes four months to make a lance corporal, by a complete process known as "licking into shape". He is guided by a polite sergeant who exercises loving care and a shiny pace stick. During his training he compiles a diary of daily jottings which is known as a "Best Book", this is matured for 30 years and then put in a place of honour in a museum.

A lance corporal has a pale green complexion except when posted to sunny climates, when his knees, arms and nose assume a brilliant scarlet hue. He is also wet behind the ears and often has to be taught how to shave. A lance corporal does have guts, but it takes a dark night and an ugly brawl to find them.

A lance corporal is shaky on his first night in the Corporals' club . . . he is 14 Rum 'n' Cokes, 23 verses of "we're off to see the Wild West Show" and a thick head at first parade.

A lance corporal is duty driver, duty desk, duty town patrol, duty stand by . . . duty points-man waving his arms at the uncomprehending traffic.

He is a red top 'n' armband, white belt 'n' whistle, note book 'n' pencil. He likes to wear "Christmas Tree order" all the year round, even at Hogmanay.

A lance corporal is an interpreter in umpteen different languages - "Johnny say you hit him on de nose plenty quick savvy? ... Vo ist der unfall mate?"

A lance corporal likes to drink "civvy coppers" beer, to ride in their patrol cars and to be photographed wearing their caps.

A lance corporal is a kind uncle to lost children, a solicitous brother to distraught mothers, father's friend and everyone's enemy, (he never had a father of his own, that's why he wears a red cap).

A lance corporal has two shining eyes and a dirty thumb, he writes with a blunt pencil and drives with his legs crossed, He spells "Provo Marshall, prosead and dryvel". He enjoys rewriting pages of the DOB and seeing red comments on his reports.

A lance corporal likes to spend his free time twisting with nurses, playing with one arm bandits, football and juke boxes, "blanket bashing", and twisting with nurses. He likes chips and brown sauce, and egg 'n' chips and brown sauce, and half chicken 'n' chips and brown sauce. He does not like porridge, POM or marmalade (that's for officers).

A lance corporal enjoys writing examinations, reading maps upside down and following the North point of a compass. He reads the red book from front to back (and learns it from back to front). He knows all about the "Powers of arrest, definition of burglary, route signing and escorts", but he rarely has time to write

it all down. In this way a lance corporal is graded like an egg, according to his ability to learn by heart and or forecast questions.

A senior lance corporal attends a "Jaypeccee" and comes back depressed. He is marched in on OC's orders and comes out with a faraway look and two stripes.

.... A Corporal walks about with an aura of grandeur, two large white stripes and 'gets big grips' on "greenhorn" lance Corporals.