

KHAKI DRILL & JUNGLE GREEN

BRITISH TROPICAL UNIFORMS 1939-45
IN COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS



MARTIN J. BRAYLEY & RICHARD INGRAM

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The Crowood Press

Preface

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Dedication

To the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who served
with the British and Commonwealth Forces, 1939-45

During the planning of our last book, *The World War II Tommy*, it became clear that to attempt to include the tropical uniforms worn in the Mediterranean and Far Eastern theatres would severely reduce the variety of items that could be illustrated. Consequently we decided to limit that volume to uniforms produced for wear in Europe and similar temperate climates; and began planning this separate companion volume. At first we foresaw studio-based photography enhanced by a few location shoots for 'atmosphere'; but as the project progressed we warmed to the challenge of producing a book based wholly on location shoots, recreating the deserts of North Africa and the jungles of the Far East as realistically as practically possible. A number of the photo shoots took place on locations in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Far East - a bonus normally far beyond the budget of such a work, but made possible by the travel associated with my military service. We hope that these settings add something to the realism of the photographic reconstructions. Both Richard Ingram and I have been fortunate enough to visit many of the theatres of war covered by our work, and to experience to some degree the climates, discomforts and problems associated with jungle and desert warfare.

The uniforms used in Europe offer a wide variety of different items for study; Khaki Drill and Jungle Green present a large number of variants, rather than wide variety. Consequently we decided to include in this volume the Royal Air Force and, to a much lesser extent, the Royal Navy, both of which used a number of standard Army pattern KD and JG uniform items, particularly as the war progressed. As with our previous works all of the principal items illustrated are original and date from the period portrayed.

Martin J. Brayley
Hampshire
March 2000

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Using this list *The arrangement of this book is basically chronological, with items of uniform illustrated in roughly the order of their appearance in widespread use. Given the realities of quartermaster practice and in-theatre modifications in wartime, however, no rigid sequence is realistic. The campaign chronology of World War II places most Khaki Drill clothing in the first half of the book, and all Jungle Green in the second half; but some items worn in the later Mediterranean campaigns will be found inserted between sequences of Far East uniforms. We have been at some pains to avoid inconsistent combinations of uniform and kit within any photograph.*

Since some items in use throughout the war years inevitably appear on a number of pages, this listing should be read only as a guide to the main subjects in each section, or to their first appearance; some items are listed more than once, to draw attention to useful photographs in later sections.

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Foreword

My first impressions of the khaki drill uniforms of the British Army were gained as a small boy in Cairo in 1938-39. The verandah of the tenement married quarters where I lived overlooked the main barrack square of the 1st Battalion, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. On ceremonial occasions the sound of their band and drums striking up brought us children rushing to our grandstand railings to watch in awe the ranks of fusiliers resplendent in KD service dress, brass buttons glistening, bayonets flashing, and the red and white hackles in their topees fluttering as they marched in the brilliant sunshine. I made up my mind there and then to be a soldier.

The RNF presented quite a different appearance when they raced off to the Egyptian/Libyan frontier in response to the sabre-rattling of Mussolini's Italians. As a machine gun battalion they drove away in a convoy of '15-hundredweight' lorries, dressed in shirtsleeves and KD shorts (sometimes at such short notice that the cooks were still in their kitchen whites). To a child's eyes they looked more as if they were off to play a game of football than to fight; the next year they were fighting, and none the less bravely for having to do so in short trousers.

Twelve years after these stirring events I enlisted, and by 1953 I was a 19-year-old corporal 'commanding' a rifle section in the 1st Battalion, Royal Hampshire Regiment. Under orders for Malaya, we were issued with jungle green uniform and equipment (including shorts) at a barracks in England. My comrades and I sorted the jumble of items, identifying each garment, wallet and strap, until we were left with several green cloth waist belts each with a 'rat trap' buckle. None of us could figure out their use, neither the old soldiers nor the brainy types that National Service was drawing into the Army at that time. The belts fitted nothing; but, having signed for them, we carried them to the Far East - and eventually we carried them back again, handing them in on demobilisation still unaware of their purpose. Years later I discovered by chance that they were intended to be worn with one of the World War II patterns of bush jacket. Apparently, when this item had been struck from the scales of clothing for the Far East its separate belt had been overlooked, and continued to be issued for several years thereafter to no purpose at all.

We soon found the 1950 pattern jungle green uniform to be a most impractical form of dress, fitted neither for active service nor parade use. The bush jacket was a design abortion, requiring the skirt pockets and attached belt to be cut off and the pleats across the back to be opened before it could be worn with comfort. The trousers had a large metal buckle at each side of the waist which rubbed the hip bones raw when equipment was worn. Luckily, large quantities of World War II jungle green uniforms of the types and patterns depicted in this book became available to us in Malaya, and from these a more practical, durable and comfortable uniform was found. In the Middle East too, as late as 1957 KD of wartime vintage was still on issue, much of which also proved to be more practical than the equivalent 1950 pattern.

Tropical uniforms needed to be laundered, frequently; and in barracks and camps this was done by those unsung heroes, the *dhobi-wallahs*. Like Kipling's Gunga Din, they were frequently abused and grudgingly paid; but in centuries of service they never failed to provide clean, often starched and pressed uniforms without the benefit of piped water, electricity or machinery. Their contribution to the health, morale and smartness of the British Army in the East is inestimable. No book on khaki drill and jungle green should fail to acknowledge the *dhobi*.



Although my service did not start until 1952, I have worn many of the patterns of uniform depicted in this book on active service in the Far East and Middle East. It is therefore a special privilege and a pleasure to write a foreword to a book which covers in such a splendid manner the tropical garb of the workaday soldiers of the 1939-45 War. The khaki drill and jungle green uniforms shown here may compare poorly to the red coats of British soldiers of former times; but it should never be forgotten that to the men who wore these drab and shabby garments in action they were the uniform of their King - and often the shrouds in which they were buried.

Martin Brayley and Richard Ingram are to be congratulated on this sequel to their *The World War II Tommy*. Both books provide a valuable source of reference, are obviously the result of years of effort, and are surely destined to become standard works of reference for the uniforms of the British soldier of 1939-45.

Mike Chappell

Introduction

By the 1890s the scarlet wool serge uniform that had typified the Victorian soldier had given way, in tropical climates, to a light-weight, dusty-coloured uniform which both provided a measure of camouflage and was considerably more comfortable. The word khaki originated in India from the Urdu *khak*, meaning 'dust'. The uniform was made from a 'drilled' cotton fabric, giving rise to the term 'khaki drill' or 'KD'. Although khaki uniforms had seen limited and local use long before (as early as 1848), it was only from 1885 in the aftermath of the Second Afghan War that KD became standard for all regiments stationed in India. From 1896 this dress became standard issue in all hot climates throughout the British Empire.

The khaki drill service dress (KD SD) issued to Queen Victoria's infantry in the Sudan and in India differed only in detail from that worn half a century later. The most noticeable modification was the addition of a stand-and-fall collar from the early 1900s, replacing a plain stand collar. Pocket flaps were either pointed, scalloped or straight; photographs indicate that all were worn concurrently, the earliest style being the pointed shape and straight flaps becoming dominant after World War I. Uniforms were made in the UK for issue prior to embarkation, and also in the various locations where troops were stationed. Although uniforms were made to sealed patterns, procurement practices were such that differences in detail did occur, particularly in clothing purchased under local contract in foreign stations. To further add to the range of manufacturers' minor variations encountered, some soldiers had their own uniforms made up by tailors in the local bazaars. These were subject to the whims of the individual, many bending the dress regulations by adding refinements such as skirt pockets - a common practice amongst senior NCO ranks.

Following the universal issue of KD shorts and shirts in the mid-1930s the old KD SD tunic and trousers gradually fell into disuse; issue officially ceased in 1941, although available stocks were to be used up for some time thereafter. The new shirts were manufactured from an open weave 'aertex' fabric which offered both good ventilation and protection from the sun; the shorts, in various patterns, continued to be made in close-weave cotton drill. A slightly more formal KD uniform appeared in the form of long drill trousers and four-pocket bush shirt ('bush jacket' for officers); these appeared in a number of variations of cut and material.

The outbreak of war in the Far East in December 1941 found the British and Commonwealth garrisons dressed in KD. The shorts exposed the legs to injury and dangerous insect bites; and although practical enough when immobile in the dappled shade of primary jungle, the colour was conspicuous during movement against a background of dark vegetation. The immediate stopgap solution adopted in 1942 was the bulk dyeing of all items to a dark green colour, and the issue of similarly dyed KD trousers and Indian-made dark green or brown woollen shirts. The Indian Army went further, producing from 1943 a jungle green ('JG') version of the British wool battledress, consisting of an aertex BD blouse and cotton drill trousers; these were also issued in light khaki for dryer non-jungle terrain.

Although the demands of the war in Europe had always enjoyed priority, the shortcomings of the Indian JG BD and other items in use had not gone unnoticed in Britain. A whole new range of equipment was designed specifically for jungle operations, including a new rifle, clothing and web equipment and a full range of ancillary items. Production began in earnest in late 1944; it was intended that the new



equipment be issued initially to units in the UK preparing to go to the Far East, with units already in theatre being kitted out as production volume allowed. 5 Parachute Brigade were issued the new equipment prior to leaving the UK, arriving in theatre on 7 August, just a few days before the Japanese surrender.

Ironically, the new 44 pattern web equipment set and the No.5 'jungle carbine' were used in Europe some months before their arrival in the Far East. They were issued to members of the 1st Airborne Division who were also preparing for the move to Malaya; however, the fall of Germany presented a need for additional manpower to take the surrender and police the liberated territories. On 11 May 1945 British Airborne troops arrived in Oslo, Norway, wearing battledress, Denison smocks, red berets and the new 44 pattern web set, and carrying the jungle carbine - the first large scale use of the new jungle equipment.

India, 1939

On the eve of the war which proved to be the twilight of the British Army's long service in India, a private soldier of a regular infantry battalion stands sentry duty. Like generations of British soldiers before him, he may have been posted far from 'Blighty' for several years, enduring the boredom of peacetime service on the sweltering plains punctuated by the occasional excitement of a campaign against the restless mountain tribes of the North-West Frontier.

Dressed in 'shirt sleeve order' (warm weather daytime working dress), he retains the old 'greyback' shirt of World War I and before: a blue-grey flannel pullover shirt with a reinforced bib front, a blue-striped cotton neckband and standard gun-metal buttons. In India a locally purchased alternative was the cotton mustrey; of lightweight blue-grey fabric, this followed Indian-made khaki wool shirts in having two pleated breast pockets. Half-fronted shirts like these were manufactured both with and without stand-and-fall collars.

Even after the outbreak of war troops at home enjoyed priority for new patterns of clothing and equipment. It had always taken time for new issue to filter out to the garrisons of the far corners of the Empire, where old stock would continue to be used for years before being passed eventually to locally raised colonial forces. This old 1908 pattern web equipment would still be seen in use in 1940 by troops shipped in from the colonies to fight in the Middle East. The sun helmet was still issued to personnel of all three services on embarkation for India. This particular helmet was manufactured in the UK for the quartermaster and has an Ordnance arrow on its paper size label.



This Wolsley pattern helmet, introduced for officers in the 1890s and standard issue to all ranks by World War I, was made of KD-covered cork with a deep brim to protect the neck and shoulders. This was lined with green fabric; the crown was often lined with silver foil to deflect the sun's heat. The internal leather headband was mounted on split pins for easy removal for cleaning or replacement. The puggaree is also detachable; its folds might have

coloured bands added to denote individual regiments, and some regiments and corps wore flashes of identifying colours and shapes on the side of the puggaree. During World War II the sun helmet would no longer be standard issue to British troops in the field. It was the last vestige of 19th century thinking on the need to protect Europeans from the effects of the tropical sun, epitomised by such items as spine pads and cholera belts.



**Officer,
North-West
Frontier,
1939**

The arid, mountainous tribal territory between the Afghan frontier and the administrative border of British India was populated by warlike Pathans who had remained unconquered since the beginning of British rule in India. The tribes had accepted a degree of political control in return for subsidies, in return for which they were expected to refrain from raiding and looting their neighbours. To enforce this fragile control irregular militia and levies were supplemented by regular units of the British and Indian Armies and the Royal Air Force. A posting to the Frontier during the 1930s almost guaranteed a taste of action, and such clashes were far from trivial: in the Wazir campaign of 1936-37 the Army lost 242 killed and 685 wounded.

This British captain has come to inspect a section of his company installed in a fortified tower defending a Waziri village. His headgear is the flat-topped 'pith helmet' or solar topee, which appears more cumbersome than the Wolsley but was in fact much lighter; from the mid-1930s it began to be issued to all ranks for active service, the Wolsley being retained in peacetime stations. He wears the Sam Browne leather equipment set with two shoulder braces, ammunition pouch and holster for the .455in Webley revolver (both braces were only worn when the revolver had to be supported).

The climate of the North-West Frontier was immensely variable, from baking heat in the summer to freezing snows in the winter. It was not uncommon to see a mix of drill and woollen uniform, particularly wool shirts worn during the heat of the summer, as it was considered that they offered better protection against the sun. Shorts were normally worn, with long woollen hose-tops and puttees; all ranks wore long trousers on some occasions, however, and an officer in the field would follow regimental custom. In the chill of evening this captain will pull on a khaki-brown V-neck woollen jersey.



This officer's private purchase Indian-made woollen shirt features a removable, button-on spine pad. For generations it was believed that not merely covering but actually insulating the spine against the sun was essential to prevent heatstroke; for instance, the neck curtains issued for wear with sun helmets in the Sudan campaign of 1898 were of heavy quilted construction. The utility of such items seems implausible to modern eyes, but was unquestioned in the British Army of the interwar years.

Detail of the inner face of the spine pad, lined in quilted red fabric. The choice of red is deliberate: it was believed that this colour inhibited the sun's rays and further reduced the risk from heat exhaustion. (We may recall that the very modern-looking tropical field caps issued to the German Afrika Korps a couple of years later had red linings.)





Gibraltar, 1939: KD Service Dress

A group of servicemen of the Gibraltar garrison take time out to record an off-duty moment outside the entrance to the naval barracks.

The cut of the KD SD tunic was similar to that of the 1902 pattern serge service dress but without lower pockets, without the reinforced 'rifle patches' at the shoulder, and with a pointed false cuff added. The five buttons fastening the front were of an intermediate size as used on the pocket flaps of serge SD, officially described as 'small 24-34 lines'. The KD trousers were originally identical in cut and style to the wool serge SD trousers issued as part of the pattern 1902 uniform, having a raised rear waist and angled lower cuffs. Khaki drill uniforms were originally provided on a scale of three tunics and three pairs of trousers per man.

Following the universal issue of KD shorts and tropical shirts in the mid-1930s part of the allocation of KD service dress was replaced by these new items. The shirts and shorts were better suited to tropical use than the old KD SD, which

became a parade and walking-out dress. Its use gradually declined, with issue officially ceasing in 1941, although available stocks were to be used up and the uniform remained in limited use for some time thereafter. The loss of the long trousers from the service dress led to the introduction of KD working trousers of a fuller and more comfortable cut than the old SD trousers - as illustrated here.

(Right) Detail of the label found on Army KD trousers, inexplicably showing the shade as 'No.2 (Green)'. Since the colour is a distinct tan shade, and the label describes the item as Khaki Drill, how 'green' got into the equation is not known. This is only one of many examples of manufacturers' labels in service clothing bearing apparently contradictory descriptions.



(Right) The label from a late production tunic, again showing the shade as 'green', and also noting that the tunic was for Other Ranks except Scottish regiments. The latter wore a tunic with the distinctive cut-away 'doublet' front. Royal Marines clothing bore no labels, having only an ink stamp bearing 'inspected' followed by the date in six figures, day, month and year - e.g. '06-11-38'.



(Above) A private of the Royal Engineers wearing standard Army KD service dress for walking-out, with the khaki wool field service cap. While waistbelts are worn, no anklets or puttees were normally used with khaki drill. The Sapper and his 'Bootneck' pal both carry walking-out canes; this optional off-duty item, frequently adorned with a regimental crest, was very popular with British regular soldiers before World War II.

(Top right) The Army KD tunic had a stand-and-fall collar adorned with regimental or corps collar badges normally referred to as 'collar dogs'. These were normally worn upright, placed with 2ins from the centre of the badge to the end of the collar; however, the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers wore their flaming grenade device at an angle of 45°. Brass titles were worn at the base of the epaulette.

(Above right) Detail of the plain stand or 'mandarin' collar and the epaulette of the RM khaki drill service tunic. The collar bore no insignia; brass 'RM' titles were worn at the base of the epaulette, and all buttons bore the anchor and laurel wreath with the wording 'Royal Marines'. Along with khaki shorts and aertex shirt the Marines' KD SD was listed as a tropical landing party uniform for Royal Navy ratings - a decidedly impractical outfit for such operations.

(Right) The cut of the Royal Marines KD uniform varied from Army KD in detail, the most obvious features being the difference in collar styles and the plain cuff. This 'Royal' has chosen to wear the white-topped SD cap worn in tropical stations, bearing the Corps' brass globe and laurel badge.





Royal Air Force KD Service Dress

Both British naval and air power guarded the entrance to the Mediterranean from their bases around the Rock of Gibraltar. Dressed in the Royal Air Force version of khaki drill service dress, an off-duty RAF corporal 'steps out'. Early in the war this junior NCO still carries a walking-out cane as a mark of distinction and for added panache. His tunic and straight-leg service dress trousers are of relatively recent introduction. In 1936 the RAF introduced the wearing of the collar and tie for all ranks, thus requiring home service and tropical tunics to have open collars. The integral cloth waist belt was a further feature of RAF service dress, which on the tropical version was stitched to the tunic across the small of the back. The pale blue shirt and black tie, like the (also recently introduced) blue field service cap, are all as would be worn with the blue wool service dress uniform in the UK.

The white cotton tropical uniform of the Royal Navy rating, with its white-topped cap and white canvas shoes, can be seen in the background. Unlike that worn with the blue serge uniform, the sailor's striped blue jean 'Nelson' collar is a part of the seaman's white tropical jersey, and not a separate item.

(Right) Detail of the tropical version of the RAF Other Ranks' sleeve eagle, in red (faded here) on khaki drill. The corporal's stripes worn with KD uniform are of the same format as those of Army NCOs, in white herringbone on khaki backing, rather than in RAF blues. The use of such insignia is probably a continuation of the practice in 1918-20 when the newly formed Royal Air Force remained in khaki uniforms. The more stylised eagle insignia on this particular tunic may be accounted for by the fact that this example was manufactured for the Air Ministry in what was then the British protectorate of Palestine. Interestingly, unlike the insignia on Army KD uniforms, these are stitched down rather than being detachable.



(Left) Detail of RAF Other Ranks' KD service dress tunic. The standard brass RAF crown and eagle buttons and the buckle of the belt are detachable. The blue cotton Other Ranks' shirt is half-fronted and has a detachable collar. This particular collar, of earlier manufacture, has an additional two loops under the outer collar points which fasten to the stud under the knot of the tie to hold them neat in position.



Middle East, 1939: Officers' KD Service Dress

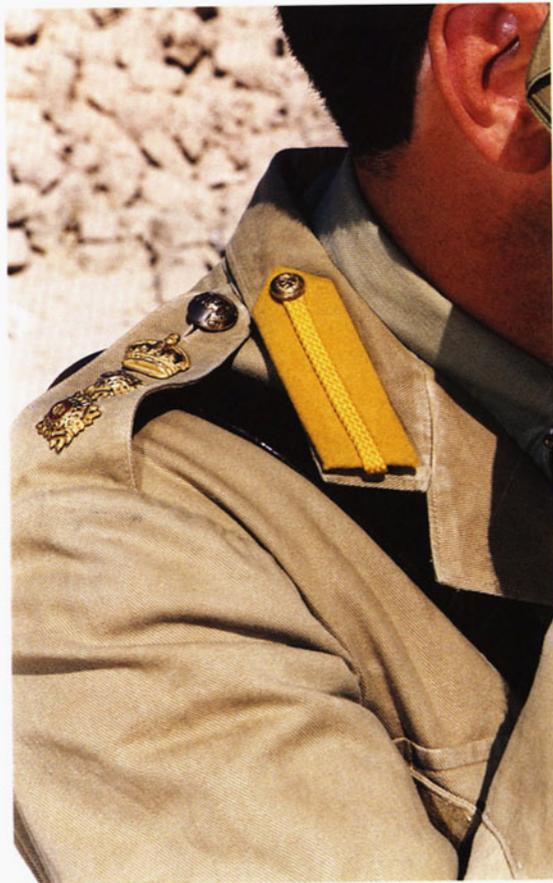
This is a typical example of the British Army officer's service dress for the tropical climate. In design it mirrors that of the wool barathea uniform worn in temperate climates, but is made up in cotton khaki drill fabric. This type of uniform would be privately purchased, and more often than not individually tailored.

This colonel, his rank denoted by the brass crown and two 'pips' or four-point stars on either epaulette, is an officer of the Royal Army Pay Corps, formed from the previous Pay Corps and Department in 1920. Both the gorget patches and coloured hat band indicate his appointment to the staff, and their colour his corps or department. These staff distinctions were worn by officers of ranks more senior than those who might command an individual unit (battalion or regiment), i.e. those holding the substantive rank of colonel and above - full colonels, brigadiers, major-generals, lieutenant-generals, generals, and field marshals.

The most common distinctive colour was scarlet, for general officers and for brigadiers and substantive colonels from the cavalry, infantry, Royal Artillery and Corps of Signals.

Officers from the Royal Engineers wore blue gorgets with a scarlet cap band; Royal Army Ordnance Corps, dark blue until October 1941 and scarlet thereafter; Royal Army Medical Corps, dull cherry; Royal Army Veterinary Corps, maroon; Army Dental Corps, emerald green; Army Chaplains Department, purple; Army Pay Corps, primrose yellow as here; and Army Education Corps, Cambridge blue.

(Right) Details of the colonel's rank insignia and gorget patch. The crown is enhanced with an additional backing of red felt showing behind the voided 'cushions'. The pips, common to all commissioned ranks, are here of the finest full-colour quality; they have at the centre three small crowns symbolising the Union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. The red enamel riband surrounding them bears the Latin motto of the Order of the Bath, 'Tria Juncta in Uno' - 'Three Joined in One' - and this raised boss is surrounded by a wreath of laurel leaves picked out in green enamel. The yellow felt gorget is bisected by a piece of corresponding yellow gimp terminating in a small gilt button bearing the royal cypher.



(Right) The universal pattern officers' service dress cap in khaki wool barathea was worn with KD uniforms. Here the badge is the embroidered gold wire crown surmounted by a lion, the distinction identifying a full colonel or brigadier; all officer ranks wore the leather chinstrap.

Note the regimental or corps tunic buttons, here showing the device of the RAPC. His ribbons are those of the British Empire Medal, for long and meritorious service by selected warrant officers and sergeants, indicating that this officer has risen from the ranks; the British War Medal 1914-1920, and the 1918 Victory Medal. Full medals were only displayed on uniforms for the most ceremonial occasions.

Note here too the collar of our officer's shirt, manufactured with holes to take a collar pin passing under the tie - this was a style favoured by the fashion-conscious since World War I. This particular shirt was purchased from Hawkes of Savile Row; the collar is attached and has a fully rather than half-buttoned front opening.



(Left) The pointed false cuff of the tunic has an added double button fastening, not a typical feature but one sometimes added at the discretion of the individual. As with the majority of KD clothing, all buttons are secured by rings or pins rather than being stitched on, to allow easy removal for the frequent laundering necessary to keep such uniforms in smart condition (which sometimes involved the dhobi-wallah pounding them against rocks on the local river bank). The insignia on this tunic are also removable, the gorget patches being fixed with press studs and the medal ribbons mounted on a pin-back metal bar.



(Above) This RAPC colonel wears a private purchase half-fronted shirt tailored in a lightweight cellular fabric, the added pockets making it appear similar to the Other Ranks' shirt. Undoubtedly designed as an outer garment to be worn open at the throat, it has a convertible collar which also allows for the use of a tie if required - i.e. it can also be worn under a tunic.

(Right) The small style of gorget patch shown here was worn when in shirt sleeve order. From 9 November 1940 they were also authorised for wear on the collar of the battledress blouse (ACI 1366).



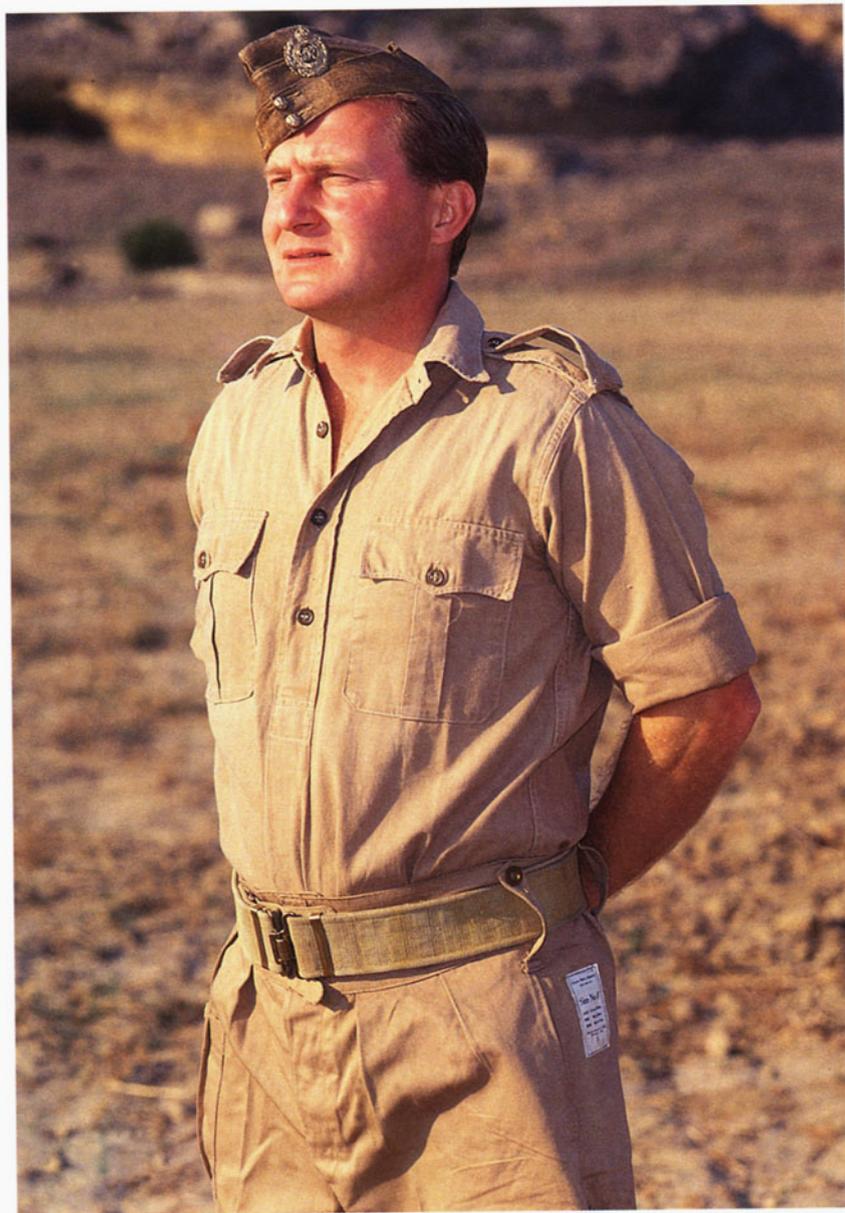
India, 1940: Scottish KD Tunic

The Christmas of 1940 was to be the last respite for men serving in the Far East; the following year things were to be very different. This 'jock' from the 1st Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, stationed in Malaya, has been fortunate enough to get station leave in Bombay - a favourite R&R destination for troops serving in India and Malaya.

He wears the regimental garrigue with diced band, a kilt in Mackenzie tartan, and a bazaar-made KD tunic with cut-away 'doublet' front as worn by Scottish regiments. The tunic has removable epaulettes, rounded lower pockets, and plain composition buttons rather than the brass General Service pattern normally seen. It is finished off with an O8 pattern web belt, superseded by the 37 pattern by this date but still to be seen in use by prewar regulars wishing to make their status as old soldiers clear to all.

The use of the kilt had been declared incompatible with modern warfare and its issue was suspended in 1939 in favour of battledress, or in tropical areas the prescribed uniform of khaki drill tunic and trousers. It was retained for use by the pipes and drums; and officers and men already in possession of kilts were allowed to continue wearing them until such time as they became unserviceable, at which point they would not be replaced. Such was the national pride in the kilt that officers and warrant officers of previously kilted regiments continued to purchase and wear the kilt, until eventually the Army Council agreed to officers and warrant officers being allowed to purchase Other Ranks' kilts previously held in storage. No provision was made for replenishment of this stock once depleted, and the acquisition of a kilt was deemed optional under Army orders - although at regimental level its purchase was probably not a matter of choice.





Crete, 1941: Tropical Shirt & KD Shorts

This Sapper from the Royal Engineers demonstrates how well the sandy colour of British tropical uniforms blended with the dry, dusty terrain of North Africa and the Middle East.

He wears the standard 'aertex' pullover shirt first issued in 1938. It has pleated breast pockets, and removable epaulettes at the shoulder; the four-button half-front is secured with plastic buttons, as are pocket flaps and epaulettes. Not particularly practical in the tropics, the almost universal khaki wool field service cap was nevertheless preferred to most other forms of head-gear, particularly the disliked 'tropical and pith helmets.

(Below) The double buckle and strap arrangement common to most period variants of issue KD shorts. The buckles might be either pronged or prongless, the latter worn here - they rely on friction to retain the strap. Note the second pattern double-pleated field dressing pocket at front right of these shorts. This type was adopted mid-June 1940, although there was quite a degree of manufacturing overlap with the first pattern, which was single-pleated and buttonless.

(Right) Label on the outside left hip of these 1941-made 'Khaki Drill Shorts, With Turn-Ups'. This particular pair have had the turn-ups removed at factory level, or were manufactured without them, but retain the old labelling as found on true 'Bombay bloomers' - see pages 23-25. At this time it was common practice for the belt loops to be buttoned at the top, although private purchase commercial shorts, as acquired by officers, frequently had the straps reversed.



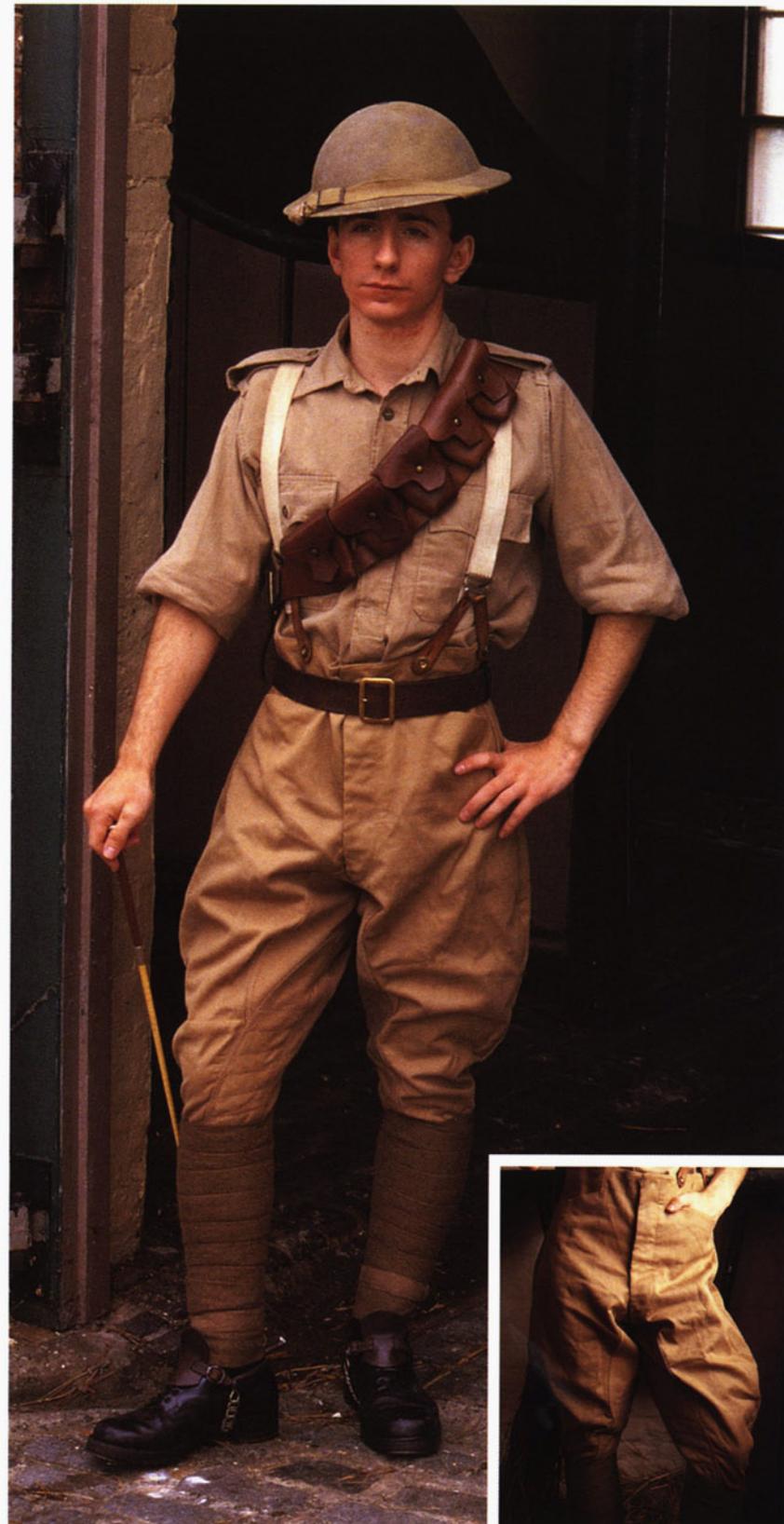
Syria, 1941: Mounted Troops' Tropical Dress

By the outbreak of war in 1939 the British cavalry had been almost fully mechanised, and although their role remained much the same their horses had been replaced with light tanks and armoured cars. The only cavalry formation to escape the loss of their horses was 5 Cavalry Brigade, a Yeomanry brigade comprising the Cheshire Yeomanry, North Somerset Yeomanry and Yorkshire Dragoons.

In 1941 Syria and the Lebanon were under Vichy French control. It was strategically essential for Britain to prevent Axis occupation of the Middle East with its invaluable oil supplies. The Vichy French commander was openly pro-German; and on 23 June 1941 British, Commonwealth, and Free French units invaded Syria. By 14 July the 38,000 French troops had surrendered; of these 5,700 opted to join the Free French. 5 Cavalry Brigade was sent to Syria from Palestine as part of the attacking force, and during the brief campaign were to fight the last ever mounted action by the British cavalry. The North Somerset Yeomanry gained the battle honour *Jebel Mazar*, and all three regiments of the brigade earned the honour *Syria 1941*. Shortly after this campaign the last cavalry units were dismounted.

(Right) This Yeomanry trooper wears the typical uniform as used in the Middle East by mounted troops. It consists of the standard aertex shirt with khaki cord mounted breeches; equipment is the 1903 bandoleer with belt worn without auxiliary pouches. Full-length puttees were worn cavalry fashion, with the tape at the ankle, over standard 'ammo' boots and spurs. Breeches were issued without belt loops but were normally worn without braces, many having belt loops added for the sake of appearance.

(Inset) Detail of prewar British-made khaki cord breeches with two slash pockets to the front, no rear pockets, and brass buttons for the braces. The inner thigh was reinforced with a double thickness of fabric. This pair have no field dressing pocket although this was added to the rear right of some production breeches. Indian-made breeches were also on issue but were of a slightly inferior quality. All KD breeches were made from a very heavy fabric, suited to the wear and tear of mounted use but undoubtedly rather warm.





Western Desert, 1941

The 'Western Desert' straddled the frontier between British-occupied Egypt and Italian-occupied Libya. Much of the North African fighting took place here, starting with General O'Connor's extraordinary rout of ten Italian divisions in December 1940-February 1941 although outnumbered five to one.

With few major ground features, even small rises in ground level were named 'hills' and used for navigation. Cover was generally restricted to 'dead ground', the occasional wadi (dry river bed) and man-made features. Vegetation was almost non-existent away from the limited water sources. The ground varied from soft sand to gravelly 'stone desert'. The extremes of terrain presented problems for movement off designated routes, although with care the surface was generally 'motorable' and obstacles could normally be outflanked.

The heat could affect personnel and equipment badly if precautions were not taken. Sunburn, dehydration and heat exhaustion were constant threats. Provided that the body was covered with loose, lightweight clothing, the head was shielded, and sufficient fluid and salt were consumed, it was easily possible to survive the extremes of heat. Venomous snakes, spiders and scorpions caused a number of casualties; and the countless millions of intrusive flies were a continual torment.

(Above) Two men of the Royal Artillery trudge through the sand with yet another box of munitions. Dressed in FS caps, KD shorts, woollen hosetops, short puttees and boots, they also wear a peculiar dress anomaly - the blue jean collar normally worn by Royal Navy ratings in 'square rig'. There is solid evidence for the issue of this collar to some troops to protect the shoulders from the sun while keeping the hard-working gunner cooler and less restricted than he would be if wearing a shirt.

(Right) 'Never ask a man in the desert where he is going with a shovel'. This RA sergeant has a privately purchased NCO wristlet made in KD fabric rather than the issue leather equivalent, with his brass badge of rank mounted upon it. A khaki handkerchief is tucked under his FS cap to protect his neck. He wanders off behind the privacy of a sand dune dressed otherwise only in Indian-made cotton KD drawers. Fastened with two gunmetal buttons, they have an open fly, and loops at the waistband through which the tabs of trouser braces can be passed when they are worn under trousers. For such troops as artillery in the remoteness of the desert extremes of undress were not unknown even in action. In his memoirs former Gunner Spike Milligan recalls seeing a gun crew serving their weapon clad only in steel helmets and boots.



Libya, 1942: 'Bombay Bloomers'

The arrival in Tripoli of General Rommel's Deutsches Afrika Korps from February 1941 heralded a sea-sawing 18-month campaign, as the DAK and British 8th Army forced one another back and forth along the narrow coastal strip of North Africa between Egypt and Tripolitania. Here a private from the 51st Highland Division rides in the cab of a Morris 15-hundredweight lorry during one of these episodes of 'swanning up and down the blue'. The 51st were known to other formations as the 'Highland Decorators' from their habit of emblazoning their 'HD' divisional insignia on any available surface.

This soldier sports the standard aertex shirt and a pair of the Indian-produced KD shorts with full turn-ups which were nicknamed 'Bombay bloomers' - worn here with their turn-ups folded down. The design was intended both to protect against the severe drop in temperature after nightfall often encountered in tropical climates; and to cover exposed skin from the bite of mosquitoes carrying malaria - hence the draustrung at the bottom of the leg. By 1942 such shorts were considered dated in the desert theatre, and many 'Bombays' were modified by having the turn-ups removed.

(Right) The shorts worn turned down to the ankle with draustrung pulled tight. These early pattern British web anklets have brass ends to the fastening straps; they have no interior reinforcing leather patches at the front and rear.

The issue of mixtures of

Commonwealth-produced uniform items defied the boundaries of nationality in the Mediterranean theatre. Troops embarking from the UK would be issued with a full set of British-manufactured tropical uniform. However, other countries such as India and South Africa were prepared to expand their production of war materials in order to offer maximum assistance to the 'mother country', where production of every kind was subject to strict priorities. Given the great danger faced by ships entering the 'Med' via Gibraltar and running the gauntlet of Axis submarine and air attack all the way to the British base areas in Egypt, and given the time that shipping tonnage was tied up by carrying material from the UK to the Middle East via the Cape, it was much easier to ship resupply stocks directly from other Commonwealth countries via the Indian Ocean and the British-controlled Suez Canal.



(Left) The young 'jock' with his Bombay bloomers turned up. While a breakdown is repaired he has been given his section NCO's .45in Thompson M1928A1 sub-machine gun and told to take up a vantage point - it is probably the first time he has handled one, and he seems to find its 11lb weight awkward. Supplied to Britain by the USA in large numbers under the 'Lend-Lease' programme, the 'Tommy gun' was the British Army's standard sub-machine gun until the arrival of the Sten in large numbers from 1943, and it soldiered on with the 8th Army in Italy well after that date. Here it has the 20-round 'box' magazine, though the original 50-round drum was also widely used during the early part of the desert campaign.

On the epaulettes, slip-ons in KD fabric display the divisional insignia. The practice of wearing slip-ons or stitching divisional insignia and unit flashes directly onto the removable shirt epaulettes allowed their easy removal for the frequent laundering required. Within the 51st Highland Division tartan flashes identifying individual regiments were also worn in conjunction with the divisional badge.

(Below) South African-made Mk I* helmet in sand-colour finish. These SA-manufactured helmets are often slightly irregular in their stamping and rim dimensions; the band covering the raw edge of the brim is sometimes joined at the side (note slight notch here) rather than at the rear as with British and Canadian helmet shells. At the rear of the rim three holes are punched from which a neck flap or screen could be mounted (see page 45). The internal liner is like that of early British production helmets, with an oval pad at the apex.

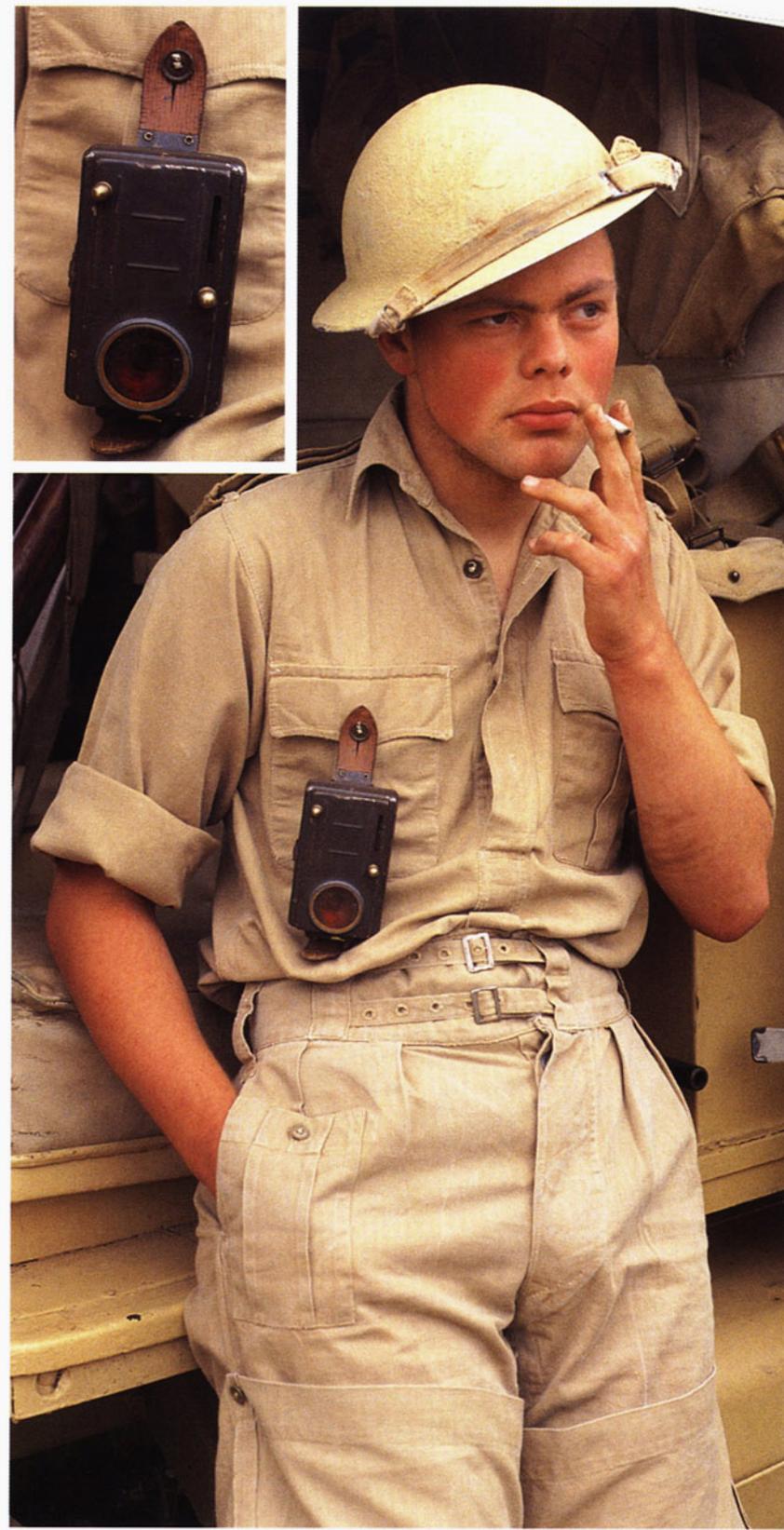


(Right) Royal Army Service Corps driver taking a break during a North African convoy halt, 1942. He wears the standard British-made Mk II steel helmet in sand-painted finish, and aertex shirt with sleeves rolled - according to regulations, above the elbow with a fold three fingers wide. Though not shown here, some KD shirts were produced or adapted so that there was no top button. Instead there were two buttonholes which could be fixed to buttons stitched beneath the collar, thus allowing it to lie flat in a more precise alignment. His 'Bombays' are British-made and have the post-1940 field dressing pocket, with double expansion pleat and button closure, mounted on the right thigh; previously field dressing pockets were on the right rear of KD shorts. The turn-ups are worn buttoned up at the top of the leg.

(Inset) Detail of the driver's Lamp, Electric, No.4 - a torch with leather fob suspension strap which was normally the preserve of officers and NCOs, but which drivers found useful for peering into the dark interstices of engine compartments. It has a switch system with a fixed 'on' position, or the button can be gently depressed to alternate the beam and send Morse signals; it also has sliding red and green filters.

The RASC drivers who carried the lorried infantry and their enormous quantities of necessary supplies and equipment back and forth across the desert were the unsung heroes of the campaign. Each infantry brigade (three battalions) had a Brigade Company RASC attached; the 15-cwt lorry took only six infantrymen, so each platoon needed four lorries, and each battalion's four rifle companies needed a total of 48, apart from those carrying the equipment-heavy HQ company. The brigade also needed 360 3-ton lorries in its RASC Ammunition, Petrol, Supply and Reserve MT Companies.

In the searing sunlight of the desert all metal equipment, such as vehicle bodies and blackened weapon barrels, could heat up to a point where contact with bare flesh caused painful burns. Weapons became more prone to jamming, and vehicle engines overheated easily. The abrasive dust invaded all machinery, and could ruin any moving part; the frequency of vehicle maintenance schedules increased dramatically in North Africa.

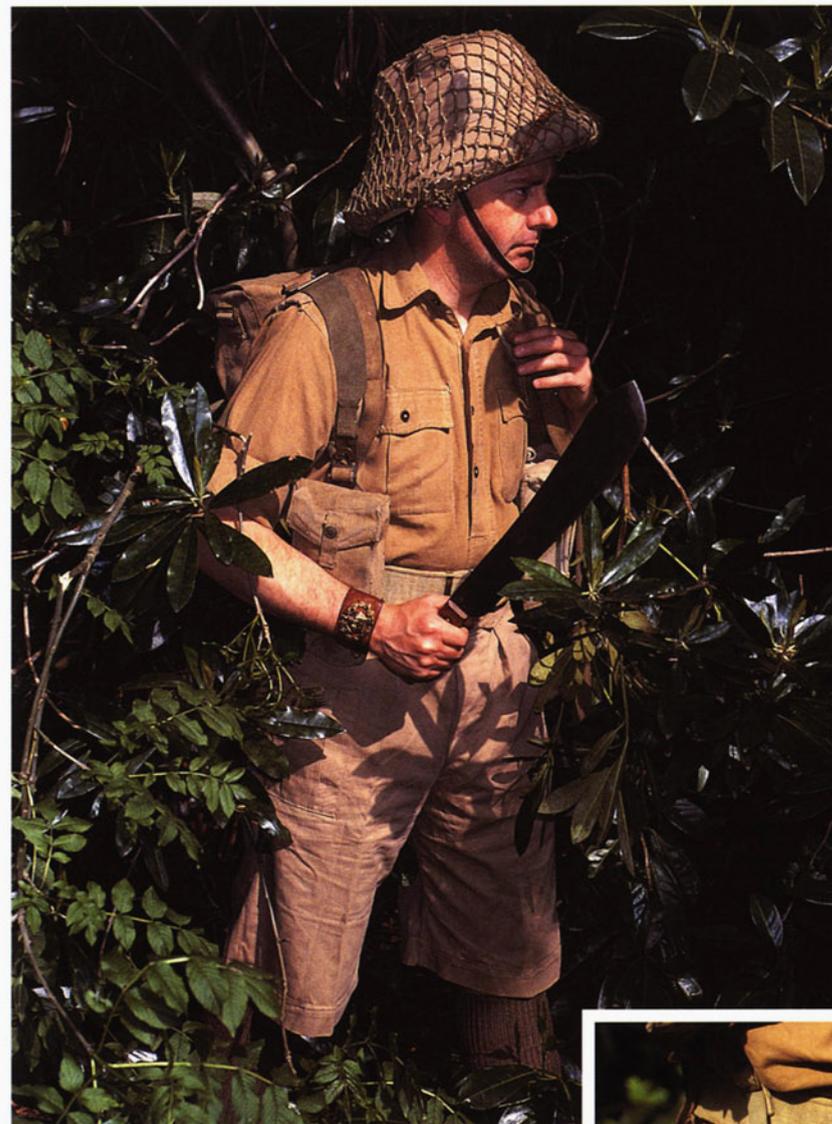


Burma, 1942: KD with Battle Order

February 1942 saw the men of the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment fighting gallantly as part of the Rangoon Brigade as British forces in Burma were repeatedly outflanked by the advancing Japanese 15th Army. Hong Kong and Malaya had already fallen, and Singapore was to surrender on the 15th of that month. By 9 March the Japanese had captured the strategic port of Rangoon, and by the end of May Burma had effectively fallen. The fighting retreat to India gained the 'Glosters' three separate battle

honours, for Taukyan, Paungde and Monywa.

The rank of this Warrant Officer Class II, a company sergeant major, is identified by the warrant badge worn on his leather wristlet. He wears the khaki aertex shirt and KD shorts cut down from 'Bombay bloomers'; the colour did not lend itself well to camouflage in the dense jungle, not even with added foliage. Hosetops and puttees complete the uniform; this was an impractical combination, leaving the legs unprotected from the inevitable insect bites and jungle thorn scratches, which readily became ulcerated in the tropical environment.



(Right) The issue machete was an invaluable tool for penetrating the dense vegetation; in places the jungle of South-East Asia could be so thick that ground covered in a day was measured in hundreds of yards rather than miles. The leather of the machete scabbard was not the best material for humid tropical areas - where all leather equipment tended to rot rapidly - but it was to contin-

ue in use throughout the war. This pattern of scabbard and machete with composition grips was first used during World War I. It was classed as a general purpose cutting implement and was issued all over the world, although the scale in temperate areas was only one per section while in tropical regions it was often issued as a personal item to each soldier.



(Opposite) The tropical pith hat, generally referred to as a topee, was better suited to the arid conditions of India than to the humid jungles of Malaya and Burma. Officially it was worn on Indian service and the Wolseley helmet elsewhere. This example has an Indian-made camouflage net added in an attempt to break up the sharp, pale outline. While being more comfortable to wear than the steel helmet, it naturally offered no ballistic protection whatever. As worn by the Glosters the hat would have been adorned with that regiment's unique distinction, the small sphinx-and-wreath 'back badge' won in Egypt in 1801.

Malta, 1942: Royal Navy Landing Order

Naval personnel might be required to carry small arms when acting as boarding or raiding parties, performing sentry duty or, as in this case, acting as an escort party. His 'white front', white shorts and long blue socks were a standard type of tropical working dress, and the grey-painted Mk II helmet was widely issued to ships' companies.

The naval 1919 pattern web equipment was originally intended for use by RN petty officers and officers armed with .445in revolvers. Designed by the Mills Equipment Company, it drew upon two of their World War I models: their officers' private purchase equipment, and equipment produced for the Belgian Army. Our naval rating is shown here wearing 1919 pattern belt, shoulder braces and water bottle carrier, and armed with a 9mm Lanchester Mk I sub-machine gun - a design copied from the German MP28 in 1940, and used by both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force. To carry the 50-round box magazines he wears two purpose-designed pouches. When first produced these were designed to fit the 1908 equipment belt and shoulder braces then still in common use by the Royal Navy; however, later production pouches were made to fit the narrower 2in belts and narrower shoulder braces of the 1919 and 1937 equipment sets, and most early pouches were retrospectively converted to fit this format.

(Below) Rear of the 1919 pattern three-piece belt, allowing adjustment by moving the position of the two rear parts of the belt. Note too the frame-style 1919 water bottle carrier with single top closing strap fastening on the front, rather than the two-piece top-closing 37 pattern type.



(Left) The Lanchester was designed to take the 1907 sword bayonet of the Short Magazine Lee Enfield rifle; a bayonet was considered necessary on a sub-machine gun for the close-quarter fighting which a boarding party might encounter (it was for the same purpose that cutlasses were still held in Royal Navy armouries). The bayonet and scabbard are carried on this webbing set using a 37 pattern frog. The Lanchester was reliable and impressively well made, its working parts machined from steel billets and furnished with rifle-quality wood and brass to prewar manufacturing standards. It was therefore too expensive for wartime mass production in the numbers required by the Army - thus its limited issue to services whose personnel seldom fought with small arms.

(Right) Detail of Lanchester pouches, each of which was divided internally to carry three 50-round magazines. They came as pairs, with one pouch having an additional front pocket to carry the loading tool - see his right hand pouch here. Some Lanchester pouches were later converted by being shortened to take the Sten magazine. Note the front of the 1919 pattern belt and buckle fastening. The buckles themselves are stitched to the belt ends, unlike a 37 pattern belt.



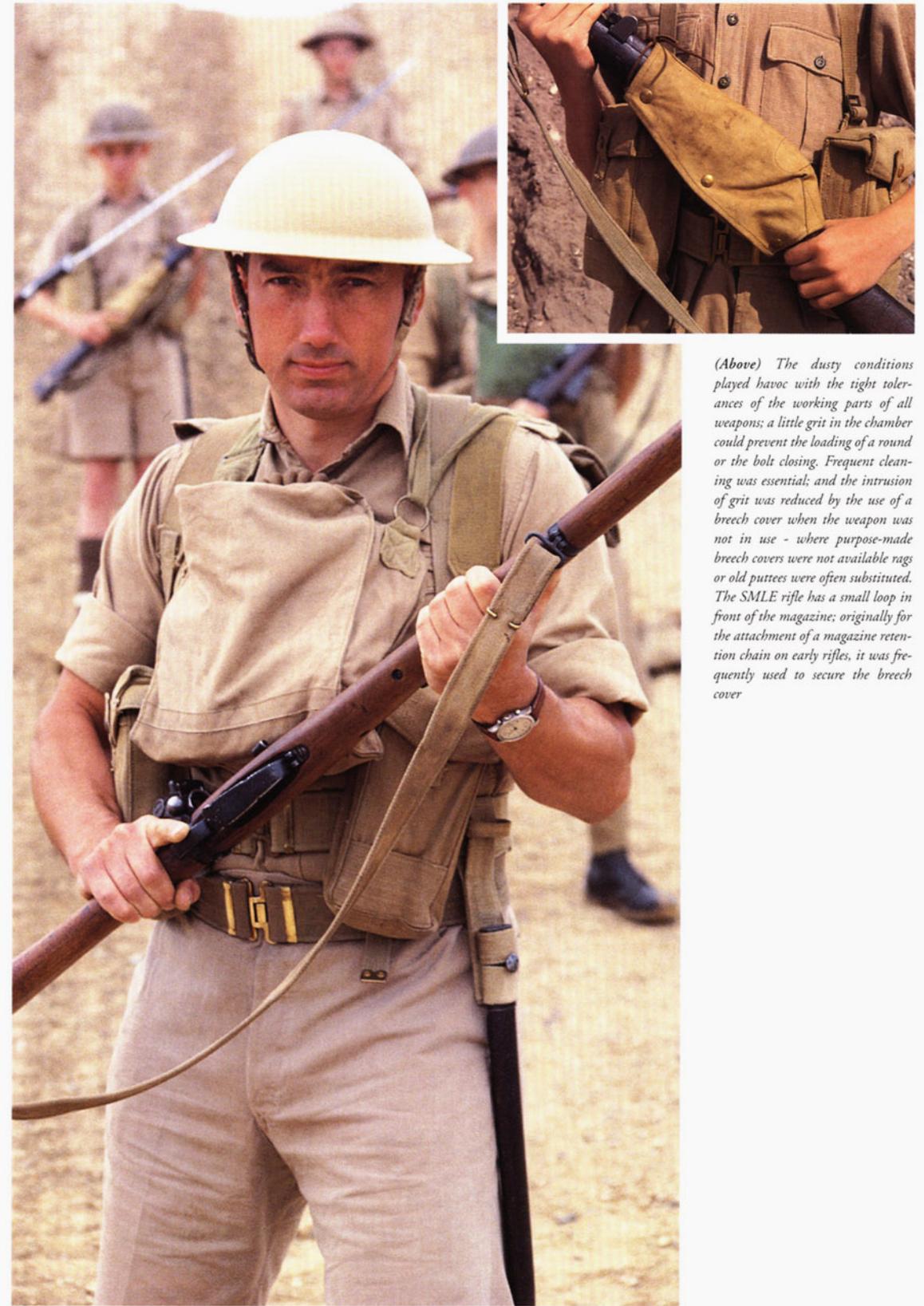
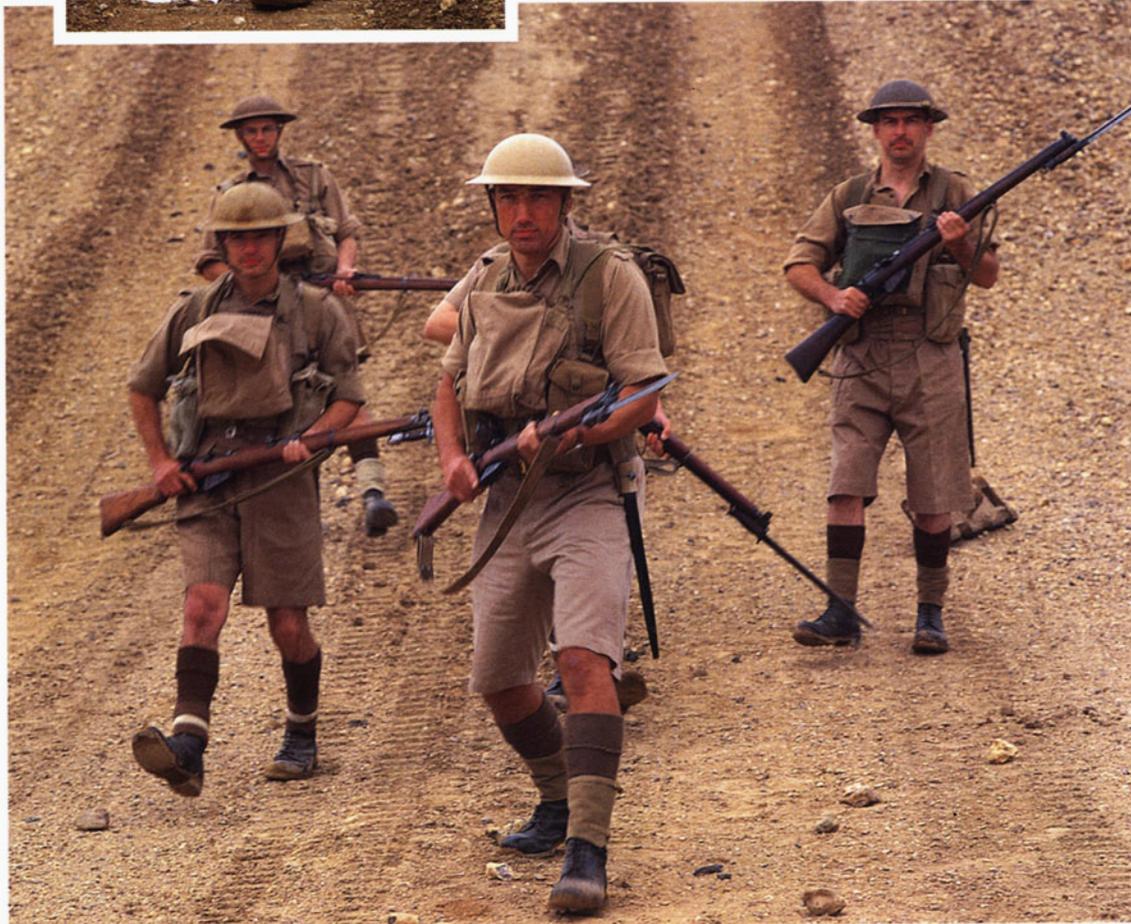
**Western Desert, 1942:
KD with Battle Order**



Bayonets fixed, British 8th Army infantry advance under enemy fire. The vast open expanses of North Africa proved ideal terrain for tanks, but were much less attractive to infantry, who had little cover from enemy small arms or the devastating effects of mortar and shellfire once they left their slit trenches to advance. 'Digging in' was often very difficult, with rock just beneath the sand; and the stony terrain also increased the deadly fragmentation from artillery and mortar bursts.

These men echo the popular image of the typical 8th Army infantryman, wearing aertex shirts,

KD shorts, woollen hosiery with web anklets or short puttees, and hobnailed 'ammunition boots'. Their equipment consists of the sand-painted Mk II steel helmet, 37 pattern web equipment in 'battle order', Mk V respirator haversack, bayonet No.1 Mk I (1907 pattern), and the SMLE Mk III rifle with magazine cut-off device. The soldier in the right rear sporting a bright green panel on his respirator is wearing an Indian-made Mk V haversack which has been modified to Mk VI standard by the addition of an external pocket in a mismatched shade of fabric.



(Above) The dusty conditions played havoc with the tight tolerances of the working parts of all weapons; a little grit in the chamber could prevent the loading of a round or the bolt closing. Frequent cleaning was essential; and the intrusion of grit was reduced by the use of a breech cover when the weapon was not in use - where purpose-made breech covers were not available rags or old puttees were often substituted. The SMLE rifle has a small loop in front of the magazine; originally for the attachment of a magazine retention chain on early rifles, it was frequently used to secure the breech cover



New Zealand Battledress

The Long Range Desert Group's deep penetration patrols included officers and men from many backgrounds. This private, sheltering from the evening chill against an old Italian bunker, is identified by a New Zealand-manufactured BD blouse having a tab and button fastening at the neck rather than hooks and eyes. The white-on-black national titles were worn on the shoulders of both BD and KD uniforms. He wears the universally issued 'cap comforter', a

knitted woollen tube closed at both ends that can either be rolled to make a cap or used as a scarf. Full BD uniform and greatcoats were widely worn against the cold of the desert night; some LRDG personnel even used the heavy Tropical watch-coat. The officer wears a standard dismantled officers' pattern great-coat with ornamental turnback cuffs; the regimental buttons of the 5th Jats identify him as from an Indian Army formation. Around his SD cap are goggles with tinted teardrop-shaped lenses and leather sides, issued in a brown leather-effect cardboard box.



Bren Gun Position

During the fighting for the German position known as 'the Cauldron' in the Gazala Line battles of May-June 1942, an infantry section of the Northumberland Fusiliers prepare to move out from cover. The Bren gun group, consisting of a lance-corporal and two gunners, will provide a good base of fire for the manoeuvring of the seven-man rifle group led by the corporal section leader. Here the gun is carried by the No.1, while the No.2 brings up the rear with the gun's optional tripod mount carried on his back. The lance-corporal and members of the rifle group carry extra magazines in their pouches or, on occasion, in metal boxes holding 12 magazines.

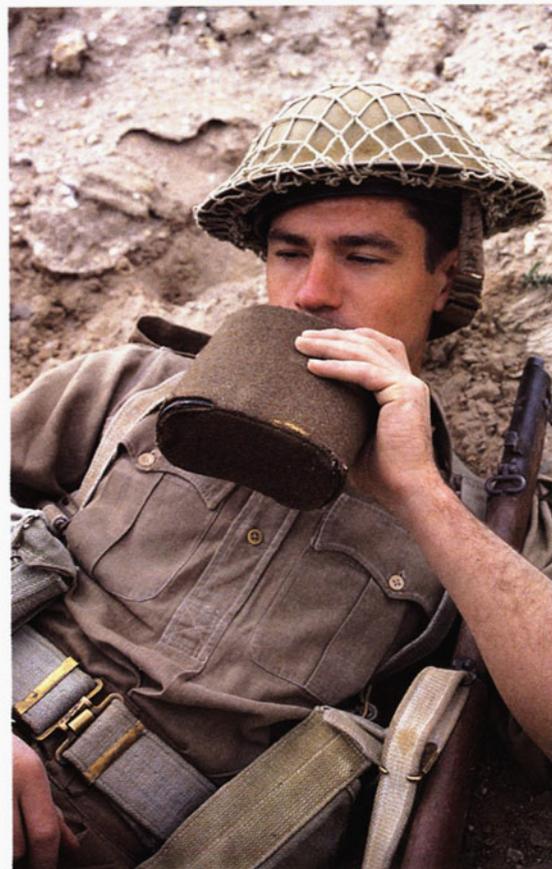
The Bren tripod used in the sustained fire role weighed 30lbs (13.6kg); when set up it could be carried by fitting two rifle slings to

slots in the traversing arc and Ds on the main A-shaped frame. Here it is collapsed for carriage; the legs are folded, with anti-aircraft leg extensions stored in the main A-frame, and the traversing slide is clamped in place on the traversing arc. The standard tripod 'mounting pivot (ground)' is visible at the top of the A-frame level with the No.2's helmet; the AA mounting socket is fitted to the front leg extension visible just below his belt. The AA two-section leg stored within the A-frame fitted a bayonet-type catch next to the mounting pivot (ground) when the tripod was used in the anti-aircraft role. If the leg sections were lost or damaged the bayonet lug of the SMLE rifle fitted the catch, enabling a rifle to be used as an emergency leg.





(Above) Defending a prepared position, the Bren group have mounted the gun on the tripod in its sustained fire role.



(Left) The water bottle Mk VI held two pints. Water was the most precious single commodity in North Africa; it was often unavailable in sufficient quantities, and its absence meant certain death. Troops were sometimes forced to survive on as little as one pint per man per day; two pints daily was essentially the minimum to ensure survival, and considerably more was required to keep men healthy and fit - a hard-working soldier could get through as much as three gallons of drinking water daily. Regulations suggested an average of one gallon per man as sufficient for daily drinking and cooking purposes, this figure rising to five gallons in standing camps, and 15 gallons if bathing facilities were also provided. These figures give some idea of the logistical problems of supplying tens of thousands of men with sufficient water alone.

(Opposite top & bottom) 'Stand down': taking the opportunity for some well-earned rest, the team relax at their post. Mounting the Bren on the tripod in its ground role enabled it to be fired 'on fixed lines' - defensive fire at previously selected targets using fixed points of elevation and traverse. Once set up during daylight the weapon could fire at recorded targets through smoke, dust or under cover of darkness with some degree of accuracy. A second gun was normally used to provide enfilade fire; the arc of traverse was limited to 42° in marked 1/2° increments. The fixing points for the two rifle slings used for carriage are evident here; the Bren sling has been removed, to prevent snagging during a traverse, and lies next to the tripod. In an emergency the gun could easily be dismantled and used on its integral bipod, which was folded forward when the tripod was employed. Note the forward fixing on the 'mounting pivot (ground)', and the butt fixed to the elevating gear. Also visible is the bayonet-type catch used for mounting the AA leg. The large green-painted metal box held 12 loaded magazines, each of 30 rounds.





Western Desert, 1942: Tank Overalls

The 8th Army was 'armour heavy'; the desert terrain suited rapid movement by armoured forces, and battles between opposing tank units, or tanks and anti-tank gun screens, played a large and decisive part in the campaign. While most of the area of operations was 'tankable', even the relatively flat coastal plain was scarred by deep, wide, dry watercourses or wadis. To this squadron commander of 3rd or 5th Royal Tank Regiment, inspecting such a feature during the 'Knightsbridge' battles of May-June 1942, it may offer either protective cover or a frustrating obstacle.

He is dressed in the black Royal Armoured Corps beret and an Indian-made private purchase one-piece overall suit in KD cotton. It has short sleeves, two breast pockets and two thigh pockets with, respectively, scalloped and pointed flaps. The major has cut a piece of fine mesh desert camouflage net to make a neck scarf; a veteran campaigner, he has acquired a pair of German service binoculars, German optical equipment being much admired.

On his epaulettes the major wears his badge of rank on the yellow backing of the Royal Armoured Corps; press studs show where he has removed his formation insignia. His .38in Enfield revolver is carried in a modified tank crew holster with short suspension strap, 'blancoed' in the yellow shade used in the tropics; this example is of Indian manufacture and has an additional leather tab at the end of its closing strap.



Malta, 1942



(Left & below) From autumn 1940 until late 1942 the strategically important Mediterranean island of Malta, with its British naval base and airfields, held out doggedly against a continual Axis air onslaught. For two years every necessity was dependent on convoys fighting their way through a German and Italian air, naval and submarine blockade, at heavy cost in ships and lives. Eventually the tide turned, and RAF units from Malta were able to ravage the Axis sea lanes in their turn. To mark the heroism of the civilian population during the long siege Malta was - uniquely - awarded a collective George Cross.

An integral part of this defence were the men of the Royal Artillery Anti-Aircraft regiments who - at first with very limited fighter support - took on the enemy air armada seeking to pound them into submission. Here an artillery spotter heads for the rooftop to go on duty, wearing

standard KD shirt and shorts, helmet, and respirator in Mk VI haversack at the alert position. As an artilleryman this gunner wears 37 pattern double cartridge carriers on his basic web equipment set rather than the Bren pouches of the infantry. Note the white tapes added to his puttees as an enhancement for parade ground or walking-out dress.

(Opposite) At the height of a raid the spotter takes shelter, and is joined by a lieutenant of the Royal Naval Reserve Medical Branch. Shore-based naval officers, as part of a mixed establishment, would choose to wear KD uniform rather than whites. When in shirt and shorts long khaki socks are worn, and this officer chooses to wear black officers' pattern ankle boots, which have no separate toe cap. (When in whites, white buckskin shoes would be worn.)



(Right) On the sand-coloured background his helmet has been painted with an irregular camouflage pattern suggestive of the freestone walls of which many structures on the island are built; this particular camouflage - also used on vehicles - was distinctive to Malta during the siege period.

(Below & right) The RNR officer has a privately tailored KD shirt; although the open-top pockets copy those of the RN officers' white tropical shirt, it buttons all the way down, unlike the half-fronted white version. These shorts come from Army stocks and could well be cut-down trousers. The medical branch is identified by the red band between the lieutenant's rank lace on his shoulderboards; these are detachable, fixed by laces through holes in the shoulder and a long-shank button secured with a split ring. Medical red has also been incorporated into the badge of rank painted on the helmet front. The additional white paint on the helmet, for high visibility, was more relevant to shipboard duties - in action, quick

identification of the ship's medics was important. The Mk VI respirator haversack is worn on the hip with an additional waist strap; it contains the long-hose version of the service respirator often used by naval personnel, who would find the chest 'alert' position restrictive.



El Alamein, 1942: Long-Arm Mine Detector

(Below) A significant preparation for the 8th Army's attack at El Alamein in October 1942 was the sweeping of lanes in the massive minefields which divided the armies by Royal Engineer detector teams. Mined areas often contained a mixture of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. 'Own' minefields were supposed to be mapped when they were laid to allow safe recovery in due course; but the sand was not absolutely static and mines could creep - apart from the problems caused by the difficulty of identifying datum lines in the almost featureless desert.

The 'Polish type' mine detector was devised in 1941 by a Free Polish forces signals officer based in Scotland. Basically it consisted of

two coils, one attached to an oscillator transmitting an oscillating current of audible frequency, the other to a telephone receiver (tuned to suit the operator). When the detector head was passed 3ins to 4ins above the ground any buried metal object would disturb the current between the coils and send an audible signal via the telephone receiver.

The two-piece handle screwed together and had a counterweight at the upper end. The operator's right arm rested parallel to the handle cushioned by a web pad, the right hand gripping below the point of balance and the left at any comfortable point. The upper torso swivelled in a rhythmic motion, first to the left with the right foot forward, then to the right with the left foot forward,

so as to cover an arc of 180° with a slight overlap; an experienced man could sweep up to 35 times a minute, ideally with a rest every 15 minutes so as to maintain concentration. The operator worked with a No.2 who checked for booby-trap wires, probed the ground, marked detected mines with cones, and if necessary lifted and disarmed anti-personnel mines.

Nine-man sections were deployed, with three detectors, to create an eight-yard gap; the three two-man teams would move in a staggered line 20 yards apart, first checking and marking - with 20-yard lengths of white tape - the right flank. Clearance was done in stages, and it was not always necessary to penetrate the whole depth of the minefield on the first sweep.

(Opposite top) The long-arm detector disassembled to fit into its carrying case, with (left) oscillator and amplifier box and headset, (centre) a short-arm detector and double-sided instruction card, and (right) the web arm rest pads for both, and spare batteries.

(Right) Rear view of the detector operator with back pack. The box inside this contains the electronics of the battery-powered oscillator and telephone amplifier. (Photos R. Ingram)

(Far right) Frequently worn for manual labour, the Indian-made leather jerkin was similar to the British-made item but unlined. It also had removable buttons, held on the inner surface by a single long leather thong passing through all the shanks.



El Alamein, 1942: Tank Overalls

In July 1942 General Auchinleck halted the rampaging advance of the Afrika Korps on the El Alamein line, only 60 miles west of the British base port of Alexandria. The 8th Army command passed to General Montgomery, who insisted on waiting to build up sufficient strength to attack with confidence. Men, guns, fuel, tanks - including many new American M4 Shermans - flowed into the base areas, and the morale of the war-weary 'Desert Rats' improved. On 23 October 'Monty' launched his offensive, and after two weeks of costly fighting he decisively defeated the Axis armies and drove the survivors into a head-long westward retreat which did not stop until they reached Tunisia. In November the British 1st Army and US forces also landed in French North Africa, behind the Germans' Tunisian redoubt. The end in Africa was no longer in doubt.

The price of the victory was high. One of the formations virtually wiped out at El Alamein was 9 Armoured Brigade, consisting of the 3rd Hussars, Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry and Warwickshire Yeomanry, which was attached to 2nd New Zealand Division. Tasked with breaking through Rommel's powerful screen of anti-tank artillery by night, they were caught in front of the guns with the rising sun behind them.



Preparing for battle, this trooper of the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry represents a typical tank crewman of the time. The bow gunner/co-driver of a Sherman, he is removing the .30-06in M1919 machine gun for cleaning.

The black beret of the Royal Tank Regiment was authorised for use by the whole Royal Armoured Corps (i.e. the RTR plus the regular and yeomanry cavalry regiments, and other units later converted to the armoured role) in 1940. The cap badge of the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry - the senior yeomanry regiment - was the Prince of Wales's feathers, coronet and motto.

Our trooper wears Indian-made overalls manufactured in khaki drill fabric. These were not an item specifically issued to armoured units, but rather for MT (motor transport) and general duties. Unlike the various suits developed for temperate climates, no specialist clothing was designed for AFV crews operating in tropical regions. The overalls have single breast and thigh pockets with side slash pockets. The rear view shows the adjustable half-belt and the field dressing pocket on the rear right hip. He is conventionally armed with a .38 Enfield No.2 Mk I* revolver in the modified 'short strap' AFV holster.

A white fern leaf painted on a black square on the glacis plate of the tank was the divisional sign of the 2nd New Zealand Division. A white '86' and a standing white horse painted on a green panel were the tactical signs of the RWY and 9 Armoured Brigade respectively.



North Africa, 1942: Infantry Officers' Battle Order

A major commanding a company of the 2nd Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment has set up his field desk in a dry gully. Around him company riflemen rest, some wearing the woollen BD blouse against the chill of evening. The 2nd West Yorks served in North Africa between April and October 1942 with 9 Indian Infantry Brigade, gaining battle honours for Defence of Alamein Line, Cauldron and North Africa 1940-43.

Typical field dress of a British officer consisted of a khaki SD cap with bronze regimental badge, khaki aertex shirt with rank displayed on epaulettes 'slip-ons', KD shorts, and 37 pattern pistol set. The holster for the No.2 revolver and ammunition pouch are worn on the left side and the compass pouch on the right, without the binocular case which, along with the valise, would complete the set; this particular pistol set is of Indian manufacture. He carries an early version of the field map case made from medium weight canvas; this was later manufactured in a webbing fabric.

This officer presents a 'regulation' appearance; however, the onset of the cold desert nights would generally bring out a bewildering array of private clothing, including all kinds of sweaters, duffle coats, sheepskin coats and goatskin poshteens, as typified by the famous 'Two Types' characters created by the popular cartoonist Jon.

(Opposite top) The major is briefing a South African liaison officer: the 1st South African Division served with 30 Corps at El Alamein. This subaltern wears a South African Mk I* helmet, with its three distinctive perforations in the rear rim, and South African-made 37 pattern web equipment - the government inspection stamp of an arrow within a 'U' is just visible on the left shoulder brace. South African web equipment was the least well made of all, even by comparison with Indian-made webbing. The fabric was coarse and lightweight, frequently being made up from layers of very thin webbing. Metal fittings were of flimsy alloy, which bent easily and corroded readily.



(Left) The standard issue revolver was the .38in Enfield; this No.2 Mk I* (like the Mk I**) has no thumb spur on the hammer and can therefore be used double-action only - a highly inaccurate method of shooting an already inaccurate weapon. Generally speaking, a revolver is a useless battlefield weapon at anything over hand-to-hand range. It takes talent and long, regular practice to shoot accurately, and few front line officers had either. Alongside it are an opened box of .38in revolver ammunition; two nickel-jacketed .455in rounds as used in the old revolver No.1, which was similar in design to the No.2 but somewhat bulkier; and, for comparison, two .303in rifle rounds and a Sten magazine with 9mm rimless rounds. The paper target was for use on small bore rifle ranges; when used at ranges of 25-30 yards it appeared the size of a kneeling man at 200 yards.



(A) (B) (C) (D) (E)



Khaki Drill Shorts

Before 1935 shorts had been an optional item provided at regimental expense, but from that year they became an Ordnance issue item. The British never seemed quite content with the design of their tropical shorts; new patterns came out almost annually, and there were also a number of minor manufacturers' variations. The unsightly prewar 'Bombay bloomers' were not particularly popular despite their practical value; they filled a niche between shorts and KD trousers, but failed to replace either, although they were still being manufactured as late as 1941.

The pattern of the field dressing pocket was to change, and a surprising amount of thought was clearly given to whether it was best applied to the front or rear. The first pattern had a single expansion pleat and no button; the second pattern, from June 1940, had a double pleat and a top button. Belt loops were deleted as an economy measure; but with no provision for braces or suitable waist adjustment other than the limited front fastening this soon proved to be a mistake, and by 1945 they had been restored. Throughout the war the double-strap front fastening remained unchanged, though the buckle type varied between manufacturers, both pronged and friction-hold examples being found. All shorts had internal pockets at each side.

(Opposite:)

(A) Khaki drill shorts with turn-ups. The quality of alteration would suggest that these Bombay bloomers have been cut down at unit level or by the individual himself. Many early shorts were modified in this way.

(B) KD shorts with first-pattern field dressing pocket at rear right. Same pattern as shorts with turn-ups, but manufactured as true shorts.

(C) 1941 pattern KD shorts with second-pattern field dressing pocket on the front right.

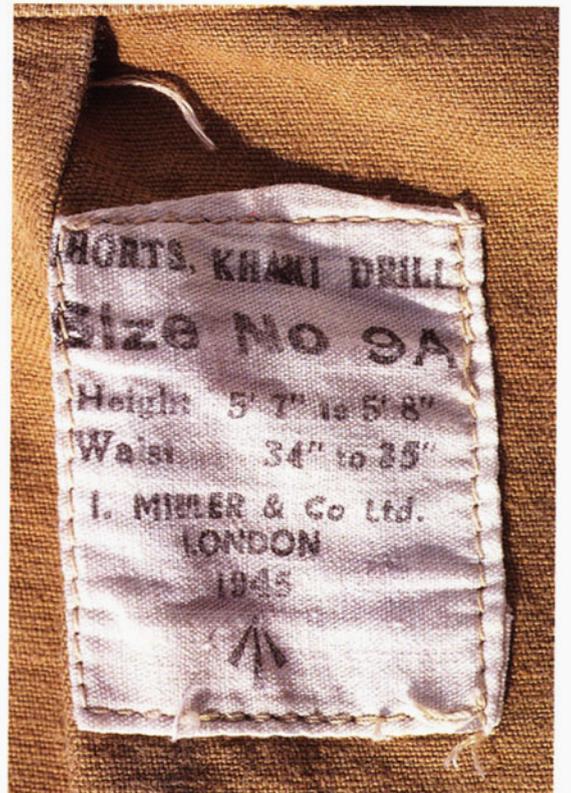
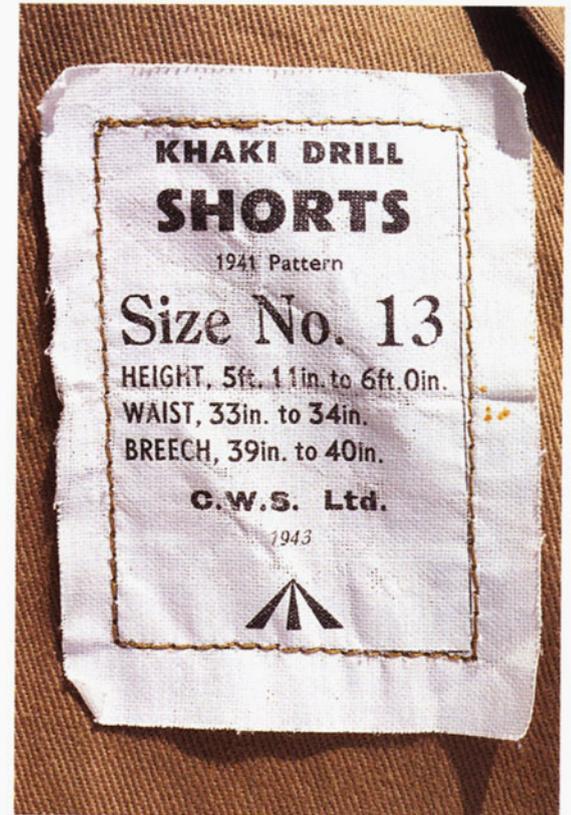
(D) 1942 pattern KD shorts, economy pattern manufactured without belt loops. Second-pattern field dressing pocket at front right.

(E) 'Shorts Khaki Drill', no pattern date but of late production. Fixed belt loops have been re-instated, and the second-pattern field dressing pocket has been moved back to the rear right.

(Right) External label as found on 1941 pattern KD shorts (example C, opposite), this pair manufactured in 1943.

(Below) External label on KD shorts of 1942 pattern (example D, opposite), manufactured in 1943.

(Below right) Interior label on the final pattern of shorts to be issued during World War II (example E, opposite); no pattern date but manufactured in 1945.





Tunisia, 1943: Officers' Commercial Webbing Set

As the African campaign nears its end a young acting company commander, from one of the four battalions of the Green Howards serving in 50th Division, leads a cautious advance - some elite units shipped in to reinforce the hopeless last stand of the Panzerarmee Afrika are still determined to make a fight of it.

Away from the strictures of the parade ground and the depot, soldiers and especially officers on campaign in various climates developed an individual and informal appearance to suit their own comfort and battlefield experience; this was particularly noticeable in North Africa and later in Italy.

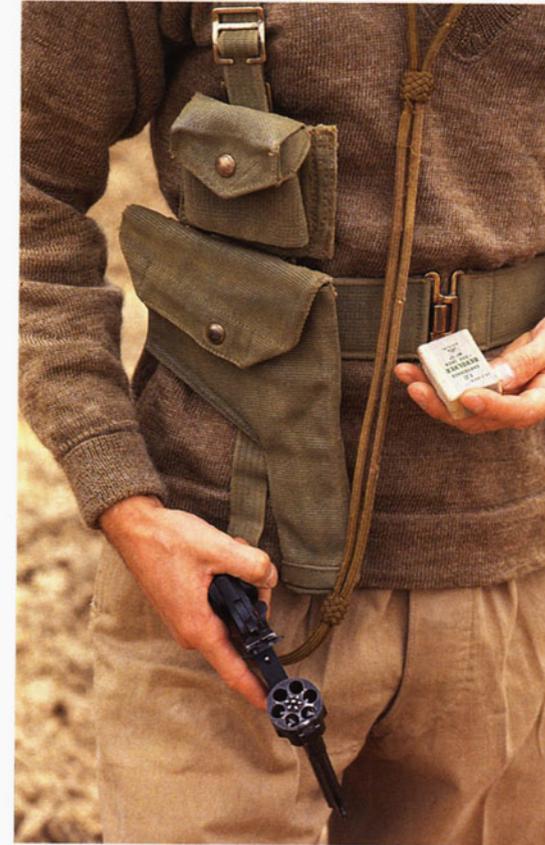
The captain wears a KD shirt and trousers, with an army jumper as the outer layer. This British-made jumper has been modified by having two openings put into the shoulders to permit the epaulettes of the shirt to be worn outside, displaying his rank and regiment on 'slip-ons'. This feature is copied from the Indian-manufactured pullovers widely used in this theatre.



(Left) Detail of the (probably locally-made) slip-ons with captain's rank badges and, more unusually, the regimental title. Rank pips were made in buff and brown embroidery on a backing of arm-of-service colour (e.g. red for infantry), but early-production plain khaki backings were also common on field dress.

(Above) Originating in the British Indian Army, these chuppli sandals were worn by both Indian and on occasion by European troops. They were the local footwear among the Pathan tribesmen on the North-West

Frontier of India, where they were issued to British-officered Indian units. Popular for their practical comfort, they spread from Indian to other units of the 8th Army in North Africa. This particular pair were privately purchased from the bazaar. Non-regulation items such as these were widely used by irregular units like the LRDG. Egyptian, Sudanese and Middle Eastern units of the imperial forces were issued sandals with a closed front, open slatted sides and a covered heel. Reversed leather (suede) chukka boots or desert boots with lightweight crepe rubber soles were equally popular.



Our captain is probably a prewar Regular or from a family with a military tradition, since he has purchased - or more probably inherited - the commercially manufactured Mills equipment set for officers. First made during the Great War, this seems at first glance the same as the 37 pattern equipment, but it has a number of noticeably different features.

The brace attachments have additional D-rings below the buckle (see opposite top). The belt has no brass retaining loops, as it is of three-piece construction and adjusts at the rear as on the naval 1919 pattern. 'Skeleton order' is shown here, with the binocular and compass pouches left off the left side. These, like the revolver ammunition pouch and holster balancing them on the right, were joined together rather than being separate items as with 37 pattern webbing. (However, this particular set has the pouch and holster modified so that they can be worn separately as with the 37 set.)

In manufacture the web fabric is slightly lighter and of a finer weave than that used for the 37 pattern equipment, and the holster is larger, being designed to take the .445in revolver. The shoulder braces

have lines of stitching running vertically along them as further reinforcement to the narrow sections.

(Below) The haversack resembles a 37 pattern small pack in shape but, like the officers' haversack of that set, has a carrying handle to the rear. The three-piece belt has brass D-rings below the buckles for the shoulder braces. These, used in conjunction with the D-rings below the braces attachment at the front, allow the attachment of other equipment with spring clip fasteners, such as map boards.





North Africa, 1943: Bazaar-made Shirt

This Royal Artillery gunner serving with the 1st Infantry Division wears a non-regulation aertex shirt similar to the US style, distinctive in having a full front opening, unpleated pockets and fixed epaulettes. It was probably purchased from one of the many Arab tailors making a living providing such items to the Allied (and, a few months previously, the Axis) armies.

At the top of each sleeve this soldier wears the white triangle sign of the 1st Infantry Division superimposed upon the halved red and blue diamond of the Royal Artillery a non-regulation but widely displayed insignia. He also carries an Indian-made khaki drill universal pattern field service cap. The Indian cap had provision for folding down the side curtain but - as issued - it had no front fixing to the curtain and no front buttons.

Hanging on the truck is an Indian-made Mk VI respirator haversack. This differed from the British version in having brass stud-and-eyelet fastening to the flaps rather than press studs, and was made of a considerably lighter and more coarsely woven fabric which was less durable than British-manufactured items.



Tunisia, 1943: US War Aid KD

Two soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment serving with 7 Indian Infantry Brigade, 4th Indian Division, have left their 3-ton Bedford QLT lorry during a convoy halt and lose no time in 'getting a brew on' by means of the desert soldier's traditional 'Benghazi burner'. The water is poured from an old-style 2-gallon 'flimsy' petrol tin, painted white and stencilled. The improvised urn is an adapted biscuit tin; tea, sugar and tinned milk will be added together. Both these and cut-down 'flimsies' were also used for the lower component of the cooker, in which petrol was mixed with sand or earth and set alight - in a barren landscape almost devoid of natural fuel this was a practical solution to the Tommy's requirement for constant supplies of hot tea. Note in the background the length of pierced steel 'sandtrack', made so that it can be linked together to create areas of hardstanding on soft terrain.

(Right) The bare-chested soldier is wearing a pair of American-made 'War Aid' KD shorts. Produced in a cotton drill fabric similar to British material, they are styled on the post-1941 British shorts with the field dressing pocket on the front, but with only one expansion pleat, and button closure to prevent the field dressing from having to be stitched in. This particular soldier has chosen to roll up the legs, which in length match those of the British design.

(Bottom right) A pair of US-produced War Aid KD trousers. The pattern again matches the British model, to be worn with either tropical shirt or bush shirt. The tab to various button positions permits waist adjustment, and is a feature of both British- and Indian-manufactured trousers in KD. The buttons used on both War Aid shorts and trousers are of an American design in brown plastic.



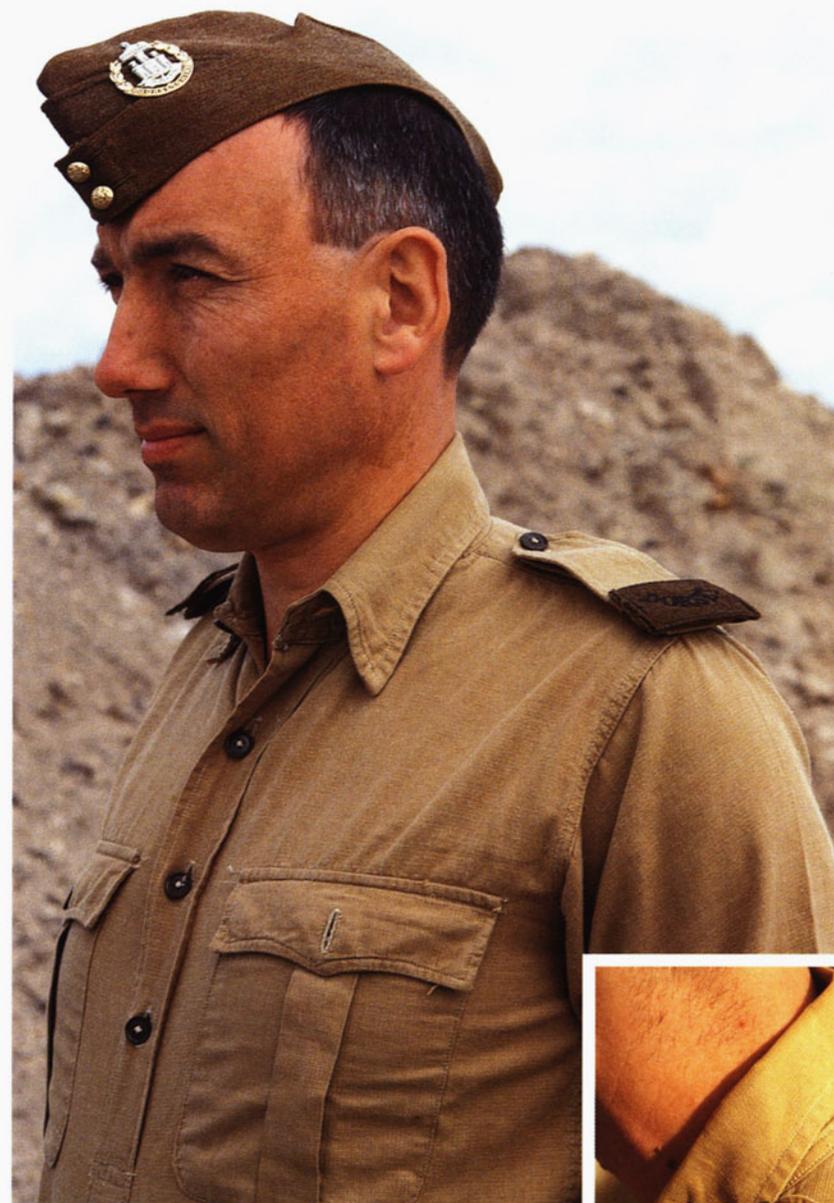


Taking their turn as air sentries manning a Bren gun on an AA mount, both soldiers now wear War Aid KD bush shirts. These again mirror the British design, though they are manufactured in a herringbone twill cloth with US Army plastic shirt buttons. War Aid material such as these KD uniforms and woollen battledress began to appear in the Mediterranean theatre in 1943, once the United States armed forces were operating in North Africa in significant numbers. Their landings in French North Africa as part of Operation 'Torch' in November 1942 brought direct shipments of war material from the USA. Supplies of War Aid uniforms to the British Army were simply another form of assistance offered to the UK thanks to America's inexhaustible resources and manufacturing capacity.



(Above) The early version of the Bren gun's ground tripod mount came with an extra straight leg, by using two of the other legs and the main body of the tripod a taller tripod could be formed from which the Bren could be suspended and fired in a standing position, with a 360° traverse. The gun was fixed to a bracket on the vertically-supported third leg of the tripod stand. (See also page 35.)

Sicily, 1943



This private of the 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment serving with 50th Infantry Division wears the universal pattern khaki wool serge field service cap, with his bi-metal regimental badge on the left front of the body. He also displays woven black-on-khaki cloth slip-on shoulder titles; introduced at the beginning of the war to replace the earlier brass titles as an economy measure, they were worn on wool BD, khaki drill SD and the aertex shirt. Apart from rank badges and slip-on divisional insignia these were the only badges normally worn on the aertex shirt.

This variant of the standard aertex tropical shirt had fixed epaulettes; and a broad pleat across the central third of the back, rather than the normal 1/2in pleat found on shirts with detachable epaulettes.

Among the Commonwealth-made equipment issued to British troops in this theatre were boots of New Zealand origin, identifiable by the absence of a separate toecap.





(Above) A KD bush shirt is worn over an aertex shirt, providing the extra warmth needed when full woollen BD was not worn. Woollen serge BD trousers are worn here, in a not uncommon combination with the KD upper garments; the similarly-cut lightweight grey-green trousers of the 'overalls, denim' were also commonly used. The Indian-made basic pouches are slightly smaller than the British type, making fastening the top flap difficult even when the stud tab is repositioned - in this example it has been moved up half an inch from its original position but still only just closes over two Bren magazines.

(Right) The second model helmet for airborne troops had a band of hard rubber around the rim, and leather straps and chin cup. (The first pattern was similar but had a lip and rearward extension to the rubber rim. The rubber rim was deleted altogether on the third pattern helmet, which was initially issued with leather strapping - this was progressively replaced by webbing from early 1944.) The interior of the second pattern helmet shows

Air Landing Brigade

The seaborne assault on Sicily in July 1943 was preceded by glider and parachute landings intended to draw Axis troops away from the beachhead. High winds, inexperienced aircrew and 'friendly fire' from Allied ships led to many of the gliders coming down in the sea, with heavy casualties. Few airborne troops landed anywhere near their designated LZs, but there were examples

of great heroism by small, scattered parties of soldiers. At this high cost lessons were learned which would prove invaluable over Normandy on the night of 5/6 June 1944. The seaborne landings were entirely successful, and soon Montgomery's 8th British and Patton's 7th US Armies were advancing across the island.

This youthful glider trooper of the 1st Battalion, Border Regiment from 1 Air Landing Brigade, 1st Airborne Division, is chosen to remind us that in World War II British boys could enlist when 17½ years old, and could be fighting overseas a year later.



the thick rubber padding around the inner rim, three-section web cradle and oval rubber pad in the crown.

(Opposite) Rear view of equipment showing 37 pattern small pack with attached mug, frog for the No.1 bayonet modified to accept the spike bayonet of the No.4 rifle in the upper loop, and one of the variants of wire cutter, this particular style of cutter and case being introduced towards the end of World War I. Like the machete, a pair of wirecutters were to be found in each infantry section.

(Inset opposite) Detail of No.4 Mk II bayonet and scabbard. It is secured to the 37 pattern frog by an additional leather strap, which has a slot at one end to fit the boss of the scabbard. The strap is passed over the loop of the frog and a brass fitting at the other end slots back over the boss to make it secure. This is essentially an adapter to get around the fact that the 37 pattern frog is too broad to hold securely the small bayonet for the No.4 rifle. Interestingly, this bayonet and scabbard have been given a coat of sand-coloured paint.





(Opposite) The Denison smock was occasionally used in North Africa and Sicily, although the KD bush shirt was a far cooler alternative. This 1st Bn, Border Regiment trooper wears the famous red beret of Airborne Forces with his regimental cap badge (see above). He uses as a scarf a yellow marker panel, as issued to ground troops to identify the limit of their advance to friendly aircraft, and for other air signalling purposes. (In World War II casualties to mistaken Allied air attack were frequent and heavy, and were generally accepted as one of the unavoidable hazards of battle.) Note the second pattern GS Bergen rucksack in canvas, issued as an alternative to the small pack to some assault troops who had to be self-sufficient for extended periods.



(Above) The variety of 'mixed and matched' tropical KD, wool BD and other temperate clothing was limited only by what was available to the individual. This lance-corporal of the 1st Borders wears aertex shirt, KD slacks and BD blouse with a scrubbed 37 pattern web belt. This ensemble was practical in the cooler evenings, and provided a good base

for the display of regimental and other insignia - usually reserved for a best BD blouse used for parades and walking-out. On the sleeve is the non-regulation regimental title in yellow and green on purple, above the pale blue and maroon Pegasus patch and tab of Airborne Forces, and his badge of rank. The blue epaulette tape identifies a member of

the battalion's S Company; HQ Coy. wore yellow, A Coy. green, B Coy. white, C Coy. red, D Coy. pale blue, and T Coy. black. (B Company later changed to purple, and T Coy. was redesignated R Company.) Note also (left) the blue glider badge worn on the right forearm only.



Australian-made Battledress

(Opposite) This young Royal Engineers major wears Australian-manufacture BD trousers and blouse over an open-neck aertex shirt - typical of the disregard for the strict regulations of the prewar Army seen among some 'hostilities only' officers. (Prewar engineer officers were all graduates of Cambridge, where young officers, having already passed out from RMA Sandhurst, took a two-year course in mechanical science.) Australian troops normally wore a woollen service dress uniform; Australian-made battledress was not common, being restricted to specialised units. It was of a softer fabric than British BD and had a noticeably darker, browner hue. It is adorned here with the blue and red RE arm-of-service strip, and RE rank badges on their dark blue backing.

This officer is serving with a bridging company equipped with the prefabricated Bailey bridge; such units would be much in demand as the Allies slowly clawed their way up the length of Italy against stubborn and skilled German resistance which lasted until 1945.

(Above) A crewman of 44th Royal Tank Regiment wears the black RAC

beret with silver RTR badge; and denim trousers with KD shirt, a sensible and not uncommon combination - the KD trousers and shorts were not robust enough for the hard wear involved in tank soldiering. As the war progressed a one-pint brown mug (see page 55) gradually replaced the old white enamel pattern after failed attempts to paint the latter's smooth surface a less conspicuous colour. A smaller half-pint type, shown here, saw limited issue but was unpopular for its inability to hold a decent-sized brew.

(Above right) This second lieutenant of the Border Regiment in Italy, 1943, represents the tendency during this campaign for a greater 'crossover' of uniform items between the many nations involved. This subaltern has acquired a US Army enlisted man's wool shirt, but modified by the addition of epaulettes to allow the display of rank badges.

(Right) The Border Regiment's private-purchase field service cap in regimental colours, with flat officers' buttons bearing the design of the cap badge.

(Bottom right) A non-regulation leather jerkin of waistcoat style, typical of the ad hoc clothing worn in the Mediterranean theatre.





India, 1943: Officers' KD Service Dress

(Opposite) An officer of the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) goes out in the midday sun while stationed in India as part of 16 Brigade, 70th Infantry Division.

Made up in khaki cotton fabric, this privately purchased uniform was no different, in design and cut, from the khaki wool barathea service dress worn back in Europe. In the context of the war such uniforms were worn 'for best only'; in the field or as working dress, tropical or bush shirts, shorts or long trousers would be the norm. Buttons, collar badges and rank 'pips' were all of regimental pattern and would be removed each time the uniform was laundered, when copious amounts of starch would be used to further smarten the overall appearance.

The officers' service dress cap material remains in khaki barathea. Although versions in KD do exist, they seem not to have been widely used. Alternately a KD cotton cover could be worn over the cap, partly to prevent the colour fading in the strong tropical sun. The cap badge and 'collar dogs' of this ancient regi-

ment - recalling their infamous 17th century nickname of 'Kirk's Lambs' - are worn in bronze finish, as was normal in wartime.

(Above & above right) Our officer of the Queen's wearing a KD wool half-fronted, detachable collar shirt with corresponding tie. His SD trousers, straight cut, have additional styling pleats at the front of the waistband. Over this he is wearing the detachable belt from his KD service dress tunic as a supplementary trouser belt - a practice not unknown among all ranks.

This actual form of dress is the kind of 'mixed bag' a more senior officer could devise informally, being neither shirtsleeve order with open collar and rolled sleeves, nor service dress, as the tunic is not being worn.

(Right) This officer - identified to the Royal Tank Regiment by his buttons - wears an adapted Sam Browne leather holster (unusually, a left-handed version) slung from the sword D-rings with the straps from a sword frog. This was probably a practical prewar adaptation, before the widespread introduction of webbing equipment, which has continued in use with the dress uniform when the officer was required to be under arms - perhaps when making inspections as the duty officer.

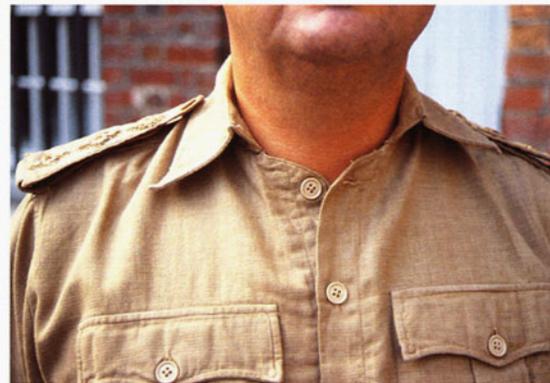




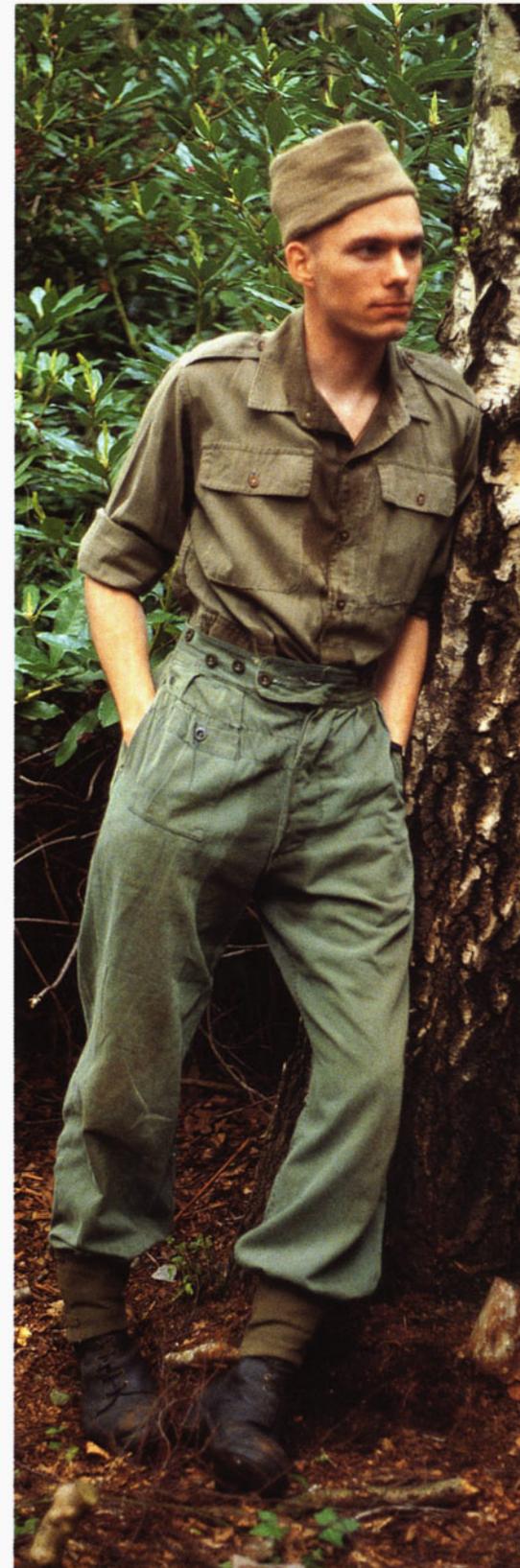
Officers' KD Working Dress

This captain of the 2nd Queen's serves as the battalion adjutant, responsible to the commanding officer for day-to-day administration and discipline at battalion level. Despite his junior substantive rank the adjutant could have a major effect on the efficiency and morale of a unit; it is significant that the appointment had to be approved by the GOC-in-C and notified to the War Office. This officer carries a copy of King's Regulations, a work with which any adjutant would need to be intimately familiar.

Suitably dressed for the Indian climate, this officer wears non-regulation shirt and shorts; in barracks plain Oxford shoes are worn with khaki wool stockings. The shirt and shorts are typical of the variants available to officers purchasing their own kit. Such items could be individually tailored or purchased directly from the QM's stores. This shirt is generally similar to the issue aertex type, with half-buttoning front, pleated pockets and removable epaulettes; however, it has a distinctive tailored collar.



(Right) The shorts bear little resemblance to the issue pattern, lacking any field-dressing pocket and having belt loops with the button at the bottom rather than the top. A buttoned adjustable tab is positioned at each side of the waist. Full-length trousers of an identical pattern were also available to those purchasing their own clothing.



Burma, 1943: Redyed KD as Field Dress

In February-March 1943 Brigadier Orde Wingate's 77 Indian Infantry Brigade - the 'Chindits', named after the protective mythical beasts whose statues guarded Burmese temples - took the war back to the enemy. Some 3,000 British and Indian troops crossed the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers in a deep penetration raid to gather intelligence and harass Japanese supply lines, and also to prove that air-supplied troops could operate far behind enemy lines. The theory was proved and the foundation laid for future success, at a cost of 30 per cent casualties.

Before the advent of a new jungle green battledress uniform troops on the Indian/Burmese border used a combination of redyed khaki drill and the first items of purpose-manufactured jungle green clothing. This Chindit from 13th Bn, King's Regiment (Liverpool) has an Indian-made four-pocket bush shirt, worn here tucked inside the trousers. A matching aertex belt, fixed through two loops at the rear and fastened at the front with a two-prong brass buckle, was normally worn only

with walking-out dress. The typically Indian buttons are made from coconut husk. Photographs show felt slouch hats camouflaged with nets and by painting them with green splodges; but the preferred headdress here is the woollen cap comforter, often used in Burma during operations at cooler high altitudes.

(Below) The British-made 'trousers, KD, long' have been redyed jungle green; note details of tab fastening and field dressing pocket. For the Chindit operations wholesale redyeing of all items was necessary, including white towels and underwear (this was even taken to the point of colouring green the mules which transported the supplies and heavy equipment). The Indian-made web anklets resemble the second British pattern with shorter web fastening straps.



Burma, 1944: Jungle Green Battledress

In February 1944 the Japanese launched major attacks in the Arakan region of north-east Burma, pre-empting a planned offensive by General Slim's British/Indian 14th Army. After three weeks of hard fighting - most dramatically, around a position called 'the Admin Box' at Sinzweya - the Japanese were turned back.

(Below) This Bren gunner of the 11th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, from 72 Infantry Brigade, patrols in the northern Arakan wearing the Indian-made jungle green version of battledress introduced in 1943.

The 1943 pattern JG BD was of a similar cut to the woollen BD uniform. The blouse, made of an aertex fabric, had pleated breast pockets, fixed epaulettes and a short adjustable waist strap. An internal pocket was positioned inside the left

breast; as the blouse was worn next to the skin its button fastened outward through a loop in the body fabric, the button then being visible inside the outer breast pocket. Blouse buttons were all made from coconut husk. The cotton drill trousers had two side pockets, a double-pleat field dressing pocket on the right front, a single-pleat hip pocket on the right rear, and a map pocket on the front left thigh. Adjustable double straps, as on the issue shorts, secured the front; there were no belt loops. Both trousers and blouse were manufactured from fabric vat-dyed a grey-green colour; the differences between the two fabrics and repeated washing tended to fade them at different rates leaving a mis-match in shades.

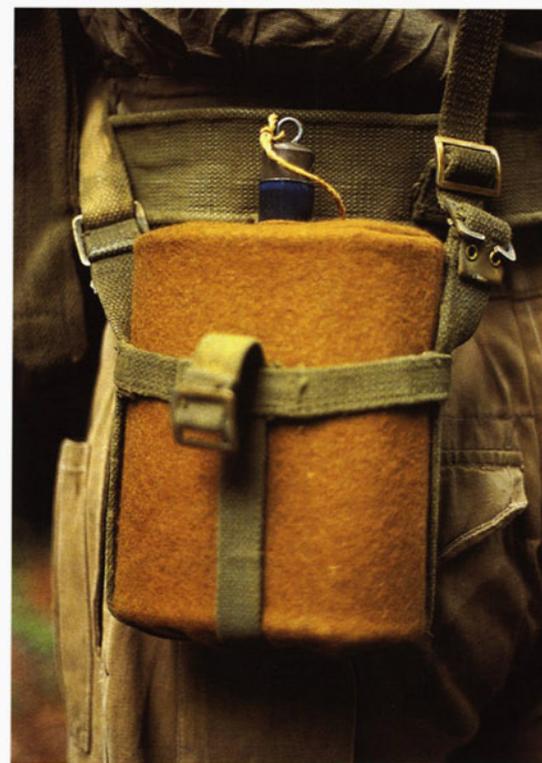
The felt bush (or slouch) hat here bears the metal cap badge of the Devonshires on the cloth puggaree; this was not usual, although cloth divisional patches were frequently mounted on the underside of the left brim, to show when it was worn fixed upright by its press stud (to keep it out of the way of the 'slope arms' position during arms drill).



(Above) Although the bush hat was the favoured headgear in the Far East the use of the steel helmet was often prudent. This is the standard Mk II helmet, fitted - as was usual in this theatre - with a broad-mesh Indian-made camouflage net.

(Opposite top left) The field dressing pocket had a double pleat and was fastened with a stamped steel button with a corrosion-inhibitive zinc finish.

(Opposite top right) Unlike that of the woollen BD, the pleated map pocket on the left thigh allowed for a degree of expansion and thus for carrying items bulkier than a map.

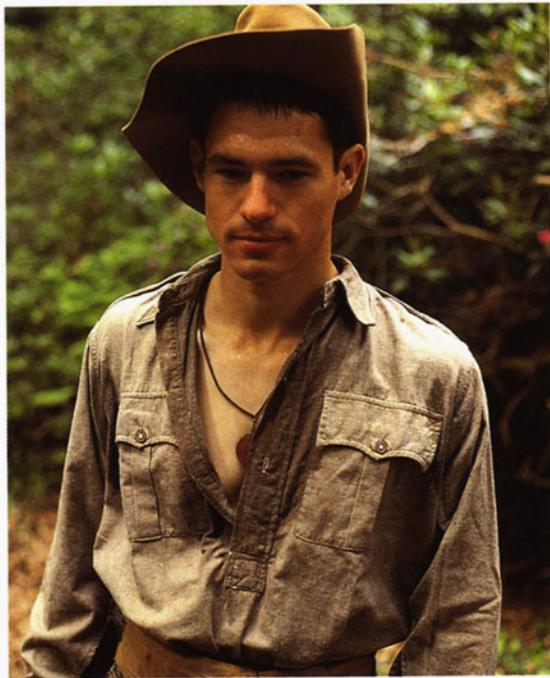


(Left) Typical of the Far East supply situation - a New Zealand Mk VI water bottle in an Indian carrier. Note the ruffled lower edge of the brown blanket covering; the NZ-made bottle cover has an open drawstring closure in the middle of the base, allowing it to be removed easily. Indian carriers used a buckle fastening rather than the British press stud.

(Above) The BD trouser legs had no straps or other fastenings at the bottom; they were designed to be worn tucked into web anklets or short puttees. These early pattern Indian web anklets retain brass tips to the straps. Made of lighter webbing than British anklets, and lacking leather chafing pieces to reinforce the interior, they tended to wear out far more quickly.

The second Chindit operation was a far more ambitious venture than the first, involving some 9,000 men of 13 British battalions, six Gurkha and one Nigerian. The leading brigade marched deep into Burma in February 1944, followed a month later by a second force delivered by gliders. Airstrips were cleared and a continuous supply link was set up using C-47 Dakotas. The main

objective was to cut Japanese links to their troops then threatening Imphal and Kohima far to the north, and this end was achieved; but later orders committed the already exhausted units to further fighting in support of General Stilwell's Chinese, and 3,628 men became casualties. After both Chindit operations most of the survivors were judged unfit for any further active service.



In light patrol order, this Chindit of 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment carries only his rifle and a disposable bandoleer of .303in ammunition worn tied round his waist; he might also carry a couple of hand grenades in his pockets. His dress consists of the bush hat, an Indian-made shirt, JG battledress trousers and 'ammo' boots worn with short puttees. This style of Indian shirt was made of light-weight grey-green wool flannel; it had an integral collar, half-button front, fixed epaulettes and pleated patch pockets on the breast.

(Opposite top) A variant of the Indian wool shirt was this collarless pattern made in dark brown flannel, otherwise identical to the type above. This Chindit grabbing a quick rest protects himself and his gear from the damp jungle floor with an Indian-made groundsheet. This useful item had rows of brass eyelets along either edge, allowing it to be rigged as a shelter in a number of ways.

(Opposite) Since the high humidity tended to rot fabric and leather readily, the issue ID tag cord was often replaced with a privately acquired chain. Rot-proofed cords were issued, but not until late in the war.



The Infantryman's Load

Troops operating in the jungle were often at the extreme limits of supply routes, and sometimes well beyond resupply; they therefore needed to carry enough equipment to be self-sufficient. It was acknowledged that the practical weight limit for men entering combat was 40lbs (18kg), with an ideal of no more than 35lbs (15.8kg); but in reality men sometimes found themselves struggling under burdens of up to 60lbs (27kg). This was obviously far more than was practical in the exhausting climate and terrain of South-East Asia, and whenever possible troops going into combat tended to carry the minimum of kit compatible with their task, as represented by the Chindit opposite. Nevertheless, the official individual requirements for clothing and 'necessaries' to be carried on jungle operations were as follows:

Haversack, with: mess tin, mug, knife, fork, spoon, emergency ration; towel and washing kit; spare socks, pullover, groundsheet or cape; folding stove and fuel blocks; mosquito cream; unconsumed rations.

Pack, with: spare shirt, spare trousers, spare underwear, spare boots, house wife, mosquito net, blanket, steel helmet (if not worn).

Respirator haversack, with: respirator, anti-dim, eyeshields, anti-gas ointment, cotton waste.

On the person: 1937 pattern web equipment, steel helmet or bush hat, anti-gas cape, field dressing; personal weapon and ammunition; bayonet, machete, clasp knife.



Indian-made Pullovers

(Left) Just as in the North African desert, high daytime temperatures did not mean that the nights could not be cold. In Burma, depending upon the season and the altitude, European soldiers often felt the need for warm woollens - and wherever possible they marched along high ridge lines, where the forest foliage was more manageable. The soldier pictured here is wearing an Indian pattern pullover with buttoned collar, and openings at the shoulders to pass shirt and blouse epaulettes through. This particular variant is of a grey rather than a khaki hue, and has been made without cotton drill reinforcement patches over the elbows. Particularly among Indian-made clothing and equipment such variations need not necessarily be interpreted as distinct pattern differ-

ences. Often such variations can be attributed to oversights or experiments during the manufacturing process. From photographic evidence this style of pullover would seem to have been used throughout the war.

(Below) A 14th Army man wearing the same design of pullover but in a lighter, browner shade, filling a water bag from a tropical stream. These bags or chagils were an idea borrowed from the Asian peoples. The canvas bag was soaked before use; this made it watertight, and the resultant gradual evaporation helped to keep the water cool. Local water required sterilisation before drinking; for this purpose sodium thiosulphite tablets could be added from the small glass bottle shown.



(Right) Detail of JG battledress blouse epaulette buttoned through the shoulder opening, and displaying a locally-produced Royal Signals slip-on title.



(Left) In the wake of a clash with the enemy a Royal Signals soldier, wearing an Indian pattern pullover variant made with khaki drill cotton elbow patches, examines some trophies of war. Hanging on the bamboo is a set of Japanese Type 30 leather equipment for the Arisaka rifle. An abandoned NCO's sword would make a desirable souvenir - but for the soldier on foot it could be just another piece of useless junk to carry around, and as a radio man he is probably overburdened on the march already.



Agean and Mediterranean, 1943-44

After Greece's heroic and successful resistance to the Italian invasion was crushed by Germany in 1941, the many Greek islands were occupied by Italian and German garrisons. During 1943 a few hundred British special forces, operating alongside the local andartes resistance fighters, tied down tens of thousands of Axis troops and inflicted considerable damage and casualties in a series of audacious raids.

When Italy surrendered to the Allies in September 1943 the British attempted to take over important islands in the Dodecanese group in the southern Aegean, off the Turkish coast; one aim was to bring neutral Turkey into the war on the Allied side. Spearheaded by the Special Boat Service, several battalions were landed on the islands of Kos and Leros; but the plan failed. Little naval or air power was available, due to the simultaneous Allied inva-

sion of mainland Italy; and the Italian garrisons did not support the Allied effort as effectively as had been hoped. A powerful German reaction supported by superior Luftwaffe forces eventually obliged the landing force to surrender with considerable losses.

(Above & right) Members of the Long Range Desert Group were also among the special forces sent out on Motor Torpedo Boats to move in to the smaller Aegean islands. One such officer is seen here in conversation with the local priest, who is showing a warlike interest in the virtues of his knife. The raider is dressed in the informal and individual style typical of such units: a cap comforter, a KD shirt, and an unofficial pair of corduroy trousers. He is armed with a captured German 9mm MP40 sub-machine gun, a revolver, a model 1907 bayonet shortened for use as a general purpose fighting knife, and a BC41 knuckleduster knife; no doubt he also carries a



(Left) Rear view of the Bergen rucksack. This is an earlier model in a tan webbing-type fabric, with leather reinforcement round the flaps.

(Below) With a No.36 grenade for scale, the BC41 knife, which was based on the World War I 'Clemmens knuckle knife'.



Royal Marines Fatigue Dress

The 'Royals' retained a number of prewar orders of dress - notably, in the United Kingdom, the 'blues' for parade and walking-out. In the Middle East and Far East Royal Marines continued to wear the old KD service dress. Based at a shore establishment in the 'Med', this Marine prepares to go on fatigue duty. As he is technically in working

dress the white-topped service dress cap is replaced by the khaki FS cap. He has yet to put on his tunic; under it he has a Royal Navy white woollen singlet. The trousers have belt loops, unlike the Army model (these were also present on the khaki woollen version of RM service dress trousers). He wears a 'waistbelt, blue drill, Royal Marines'.

**Indian Ocean,
1944: Royal
Navy KD**

Naval tropical dress closely followed that of the Army, with standard aertex shirts, KD shorts and trousers being issued to RN ratings and purchased by officers as working uniform. This Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve lieutenant stands on the upper deck of a British warship somewhere off the coast in the Bay of Bengal. He wears a khaki-covered peaked cap, a standard aertex shirt with cut-down sleeves, and Indian-made shorts.

The service cap with khaki tropical cover bears the Royal Navy officer's silver anchor, coloured crown and gold wreath badge.

This early production aertex shirt has a very distinctive open weave and green rubber buttons. The removable epaulettes are fitted with slip-ons displaying khaki-on-khaki rank insignia, here the two loops and curl of a lieutenant in RNVr 'wavy navy' style.

These Indian-manufactured shorts are distinctive in having belt loops with the button at the base. The waist fastening straps are secured with friction buckles and so are not pierced. Uniquely, this pattern also has a small fob pocket beneath the front right belt loop. The rear of the shorts have a small patch pocket on the left side and a buttonless field dressing pocket on the right.



(Top right) A Royal Navy commander's aertex bush jacket made by Army & Navy Stores Ltd, Bombay. The khaki-topped cap has the gold peak braid worn by the ranks of commander, captain and commodore second class. Like their Army counterparts, Royal Navy officers wore a khaki tropical service uniform, with cuff ranking. For less formal occasions the bush jacket was worn as illustrated, with rank shoulderboards in khaki, or gold on black as shown here.



Middle East, 1944: Royal Air Force KD

By the latter part of the war the Royal Air Force, like the Army, had reacted to the need for tropical clothing to be practical as well as smart. By 1944 a new pattern shirt ('bush, collarless') was introduced to replace the old drill tunic, which had simply mirrored the design of the wool serge jacket used on home service. The most noticeable difference between this and the Army bush shirt was its pleated breast pockets. It had a detachable matching waistbelt, unlike the fixed belt of the previous pattern. This particular example has khaki plastic buttons; brass or black plastic RAF buttons would more usually have been fitted.

(Above right) The bush shirt tucked in, to show the detailing of the Royal Air Force pattern KD shorts. Unlike most Army patterns they have no belt loops. Their most distinctive features are the tab and buckle adjusters on either side of the waistband. This particular example is stamped inside with the Air Ministry mark, a crown surmounting the letters 'AM'.

(Right) Rear view of shorts showing waist adjustment straps and rear field dressing pocket.



(Above) This Polish aircrew chorazy (warrant officer) flying with one of the Free Polish squadrons of the RAF in the Mediterranean wears the issue WO's pattern KD bush jacket. His Polish Air Force rank insignia - in this case a single five-point silver star and a red stripe - would be worn on the epaulette, and RAF rank on the sleeve (the Polish insignia generally reflecting one rank higher than the British). This tunic has been customised by the addition of Polish buttons, and the Polish Air Force observer's insignia is worn on the left breast. His headgear is the first pattern RAF Type D tropical flying helmet with the 'mask, microphone carrier', and Mk VIII goggles.

(Right) Officers' pattern KD bush jacket, here being worn by a flight

lieutenant of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and customised by the addition of NZ buttons and NZ pilot wings. It is essentially identical to the WO's pattern tunic; officers were obliged to purchase their own uniforms, and this example is lined and bears a Christchurch (NZ) tailor's label. The flying helmet is the first pattern Type E worn with Mk IV goggles. Made from an aertex fabric, this was designed for Coastal Command crews, but its light weight and excellent ventilation made it popular with all aircrew in tropical areas.

(Top right) The RNZAF flight lieutenant wearing the Royal Air Force field service cap with the officers' and WO's gilt crown and eagle badge on the left front.





**SHIRTS, Bush
Size No. 3**
 Height 5 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft. 8 in.
 Breast, 38 ins. to 40 ins.
 Waist, 34 ins. to 36 ins.
 The BELFAST COLLAR CO., LTD.
 FAHAT FACTORY, BELFAST.
 1943.

India, 1944: KD Bush Shirts

The Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps was formed in 1939, the title changing to Pioneer Corps in 1940. The corps was essentially a pool of labour, drawing upon older men or those who for some other reason were deemed unfit for service in the infantry. The Pioneers provided much of the manual labour required for tasks such as road building and the construction of defensive positions; depending upon the area of operations their manpower might be heavily supplemented with locally hired civilian labourers. The corps served in the front lines; Pioneer units were armed, and when necessary undertook offensive and defensive combat roles. Here two pioneers in North-East India work on a makeshift dam across a stream in order to provide a sustainable source of water.

Both are wearing bush shirts. This is the term on the labels; this four-pocket garment was essentially a jacket, but the latter was only properly used to refer to the officers' pattern.

(Right) A British-made variant of the bush shirt was manufactured in aertex fabric. This pattern differs in having a five-button front; apart from the fabric it is otherwise identical to the KD pattern.

(Inset) Internal label from the aertex bush shirt. This example was manufactured in 1943 by the Belfast Collar Co. Ltd. Size is listed in height, breast and waist measurements.

(Opposite) Indian-made bush shirt manufactured in khaki drill fabric. It has a four-button front fastening, fixed epaulettes, buttoned-flap patch pockets on the breast and buttonless flap pockets at the skirt. This pioneer is armed with the General Service pick - like the GS shovel wielded by his mate, an unglamorous but essential part of any front line unit's armoury.



Burma, 1944: Battle Order

In March 1944 the 100,000 men of General Mutaguchi's Japanese 15th Army launched a determined offensive - 'the March on Delhi' - toward two important British positions just inside the Indian/Burmese border. One thrust swept through the Chin Hills to the vital base area on the Imphal plain; another struck north

at Kohima in the Naga Hills, 5,000 feet higher, where a much smaller garrison guarded a key road. The attack on Imphal had been anticipated, and by mid-July the battle ended in decisive victory for 4th Corps. Meanwhile at Kohima a less well prepared garrison of some 3,000 - 161 Brigade, with the 4th Royal

West Kents and Assam, Rajput and Punjabi units - held out stubbornly against savage attacks by the Japanese 31st Division. Not just riflemen, but cooks, clerks and civilians were thrown in to hold the line, often at hand-to-hand range. Resupplied from the air, the garrison held out for two weeks until 5

Brigade from the 2nd Infantry Division fought their way through to join them in mid-April. Intense fighting continued until early June, however, before the Japanese conceded defeat and pulled back. This was the turning-point of the campaign, destroying forever the already battered myth of Japanese invincibility.



'Jungle' is densely vegetated tropical forest, usually hot (upwards of 80°F), with 80-95% humidity, and receiving as much as 80ins of rainfall annually. The underlying terrain is rugged and often mountainous. Primary jungle is mature vegetation which forms a layered overhead canopy; this restricts the light, but the clear floor allows relatively easy movement. Secondary jungle is found where clearings have been made but abandoned; the rapidly regrowing vegetation slows movement dramatically, with little shelter from the sun and very limited visibility. In this environment materials quickly rot or rust, and food and other stores are ruined if not carefully kept. Disease is the greatest cause of casualties in the jungle. Extreme bowel disorders are commonplace; the chafing of wet clothes and equipment cause almost universal skin diseases; and heat exhaustion and dehydration are constant threats. Scratches, and the bites and stings of insects, fester within hours to cause severe infection and incapacitating ulcers. The logistic problems for armies are enormous, and the consequent shortages of supplies can drain tired men to the point of life-threatening exhaustion very quickly.

(Opposite) A Bren gun team from a 2nd Division battalion wait for the sounds of the next Japanese counter-attack. The No.1 is wearing bush hat, Indian JG battledress trousers, and an Indian-made vest produced in a JG jersey fabric, with a low-cut round neck and short sleeves.

(Above) Men of a 5 Infantry Brigade unit - perhaps the 2nd Dorsets, or 2nd Royal Warwick's - move cautiously through relatively open jungle. Ambush was a constant hazard and close range contacts were unavoidable; usually bayonets were permanently fixed. Jungle green BD is worn along with vat-dyed Indian web equipment. Many sets of complete khaki web equipment were dyed after manufacture to meet the need for jungle camouflage, 'blanco' being unsuited to the conditions.

(Above right & right) The machete was normally carried on the right side. This is an example of the US War Aid machete supplied for British use; it has a distinctive black plastic handle secured by four rivets. The blade conformed to the British pattern, however, and it was carried in the standard pattern leather scabbard.





(Opposite) Whenever possible only the basic minimum of kit would be carried. Here a jungle green 'monsoon cape' is rolled and tied to the rear of the shoulder braces, with additional necessary items rolled inside. Apart from his weapon and ammunition, his equipment is completed by the bayonet scabbard, a water bottle, and a mess tin stowed in a second water bottle carrier. Mess tins were often cut down, and it was common practice to carry only one of the paired set. Similarly the KFS (knife, fork and spoon) would generally be reduced to just a spoon, with the issue clasp knife substituting for the others.

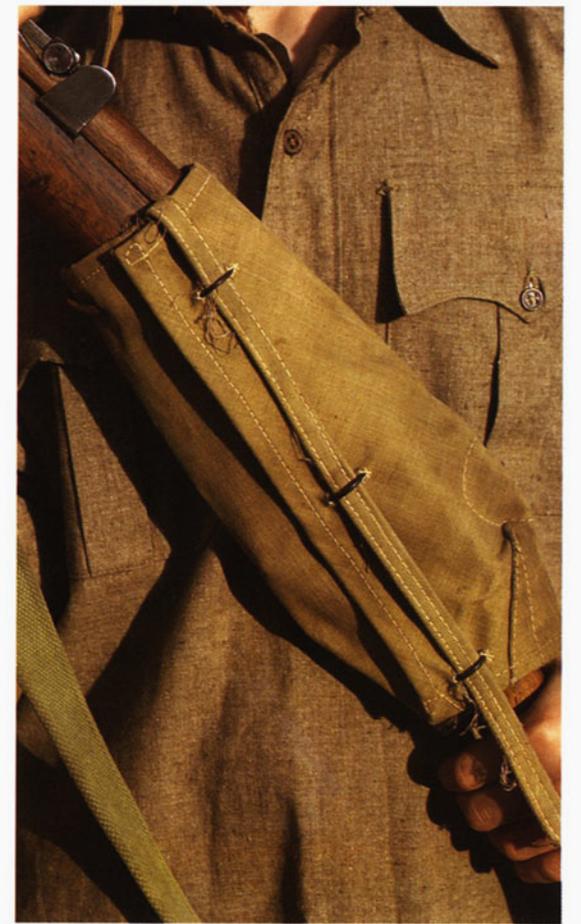
(Above) This relatively open swamp gives an idea of the obstacles presented by such terrain. Enemy dispositions or geographic features sometimes dictated that the only way forward was through such ground. Dense vegetation had to be laboriously cut away, and each step forward became a fatiguing struggle against the clinging mass of stinking mud and rotting vegetation. Stagnant water hid leeches, which greedily attached themselves to suck blood from any exposed flesh; it also bred malarial mosquitoes.

Burma is cut by several major and countless minor rivers, which became swollen enough during the monsoon season to present major

obstacles to movement. Despite this, drinkable water was in limited supply in the dry season; local water was generally unfit for consumption unless boiled - an often impractical option - or filtered and purified. During the rainy season ground-sheets rigged as cover during the daily tropical downpours could also catch quantities of clean water. Unfortunately, the rains added to the humidity, swelled rivers and deepened swamps ...

Here the 'point man', rifle at the ready, is alert for all noise or movement. Any he observes will generally be caused by local wildlife; the first sign of the enemy is all too often a burst of 6.5mm fire from a Nambu light machine gun.

(Right) The bolt-action .303in Short Magazine Lee Enfield, or Rifle No.1 Mk III*, was the mainstay of troops in the Far East. It had a magazine capacity of 10 rounds and was reloaded using five-round charger clips carried in the basic pouches or in disposable 50-round bandoleers. In particularly muddy or dusty conditions a breech cover could be used to protect the action; this Indian-made JG canvas example is secured by a strap and three D-loops. Being water-repellent, it not only keeps water out, but in high humidity also tends to trap moisture inside, thus encouraging rusting.





(Far left) The Indian No.1 Mk I* bayonet, introduced in 1941, was the 07 pattern with the blade cut down to 12 inches. This was a unique Indian modification, as Britain was already preparing to replace the SMLE with the No.4 rifle and spike bayonet. Five minor variants bore only three classifications - No.1 Mk I*, Mk II and Mk II* (though type marking was sometimes misapplied). Note the trousers worn here, originally KD but dyed jungle green, thus obliterating the external label.

(Left) This example, from early 1944, is a Mk II* with squared pommel, slab-sided grips and unfullered blade with false point. A later variant of this pattern had no false edge to the blade tip.

(Below) The Nepalese kukri of Gurkha troops was also issued to many British units, particularly those serving with Indian divisions. This heavy-bladed, single-edged chopping knife was a treasured tool; although a fearsome close-quarter weapon, it was more often used for clearing vegetation or opening boxes; it often had a metal pommel, useful for hammering. A small sharpening steel and short-bladed 'skinning' (utility) knife were provided in the sheath behind the grip. This 2nd Division sergeant cutting a path through dense bamboo wears his rank as a JG wristlet rather than the more visible sleeve chevrons.



Mosquito Protection

Malaria, the highly incapacitating disease spread by the mosquito, could be the greatest single cause of casualties among troops operating in malarial territory - and this applied in some Mediterranean areas as much as in the Far East. During the two-month Sicilian campaign the Allied armies temporarily lost the equivalent of two whole infantry divisions due to malaria: the British 8th Army suffered 7,798 battle casualties but 11,590 to malaria, and in the US 7th Army the corresponding figures were 8,375 to 9,892.

While quinine proved an effective treatment, prevention was better than cure. Troops were issued atabrine suppressive tablets, insecticide sprays, mosquito repellent, nets and mosquito-proof clothing. All ranks were required to attend regular lectures on prevention, which stressed the importance of self-dosage with atabrine, and of keeping the skin covered between sunset and sunrise when the mosquitoes were most active. Despite the extreme difficulties endured in the Burma campaign contraction of malaria was considered to be virtually a self-inflicted injury. One malaria victim took up to four other men to carry him out of the line, with a huge impact on manpower.

(Left) This private of the 1st Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment wears a British-made mosquito hood - its effectiveness would be improved by tucking the loose edge inside the fastened shirt. The green tape stiffener at chin level helped keep the mesh clear of the face, but it was not 100% effective; it still allowed the skin to come into contact with the net, and mosquitoes settled on the mesh could bite the man through it.

The 1st Royal Sussex served in 7 Indian Infantry Brigade, which along with 5 and 11 Brigades formed the 4th Indian Division; note the epaulette slip-on with the divisional sign, and the brass prewar R.SUSSEX title. The division served in North Africa, Sudan, Cyprus, Palestine, Italy, Greece and Austria.

(Below) Preventative measures. Left to right: Canvas and leather anti-mosquito boots; wooden box containing 78 packs of three insecticide sprayers (shown centre); anti-mosquito gloves; Indian-made khaki and green mosquito hoods; Air Ministry pamphlet 160, Health Hints for Warm Climates (1943), and Army pamphlet Health Memoranda for British Soldiers in the Tropics (1944).





(Left) Indian-made jungle green mosquito hood; this type was also manufactured in khaki. It was considerably better than the British pattern, with two rigid rattan hoops which kept the mesh clear of the face and neck. Its effectiveness was also improved by having the lower edge secured by tie tapes passing under the armpits and across the chest. Neither pattern of hood, nor the mesh used in bed nets, kept out the small but very irritating sand fly, although liberal application of insect repellent to the mesh did help.

(Below) Suede leather anti-mosquito boots; a heavier and more expensive version of the canvas boot, they had a smooth leather sole. They were unsuited to prolonged jungle use or extensive marches; considered a base camp item, they were generally issued to RAF ranks serving in the tropics. The rear view shows the tie tape securing the top against insects. As well as protection from mosquitoes the leather did give a greater degree of defence against snakebite than the canvas version.



Burma, 1944: Ablutions

(Opposite) Even in the most inhospitable of circumstances it was still policy that wherever possible a soldier should always be washed and clean-shaven. Sitting by a Burmese stream the soldier is using the larger half of his mess tin set as a makeshift basin. He is wearing a white aertex singlet of Indian manufacture; the green towel in ribbed cotton by his side is also of Indian origin. Rolled next to it is a white cotton roll holding his washing and shaving kit.

The close-up shows the unusual design of the mess tin, produced in India and of oval rather than the typical rectangular shape. They were issued, like British mess tins, in pairs, one of which was slightly smaller and fitted inside the other. This example was manufactured in 1944.





(Left) In the foreground on top of the removed clothing sits a washing and shaving holdall in KD fabric. This held a mixture of issue and useful privately purchased items such as a soap tin and shaving stick holder; non-rusting materials such as bakelite and aluminium were favoured for tropical use. One soldier, with a white cotton Indian-made issue towel over his shoulder, is entering the water - somewhat gingerly, given the leeches, water snakes and other jungle horrors which probably lurk within.

(Below) Two types of Indian-manufactured drawers in jungle green. The right-hand pair are in jersey fabric, and the left in a more comfortable aertex. Both have draustrung waistbands to hold them in place, and open fly fronts - a feature not without certain drawbacks. Note that the identity tags were worn at all times. The universal pattern was used in all theatres: of pressed fibre composition, one round and brick red, one octagonal and dull green, both bearing the name, regimental number, and an abbreviation indicating the religion. In the event of death the green tag remained on the body; the red - worn attached to the green by a separate loop - was removed and handed in to the unit clerks.



Protective Capes

(Opposite) Burma, late spring 1944 - with the breaking of the monsoon the jungle is drenched by daily downpours of rain. Unlike the British Army, the Indian Army did not have a combination ground-sheet/cape, so a raincape was issued; with the supply of many Indian-made items to the multi-racial 14th Army it found its way into the hands of British troops.

The Indian cape was made in canvas duck and was not rubberised. It extended to mid-thigh and was closed at the front with five bone buttons. Internally the shoulder area was double-lined; and two long tapes crossed on the chest and fastened behind to hold the cape in place (as on nurse's capes) when not buttoned up. Along the internal edges small coconut husk buttons were provided to which a liner could be fastened in cold weather. When it was worn closed two vertical openings permitted the hands and arms to pass through so that the wearer could handle his weapons without having to lift the cape at the front.





(Above) Closer image showing the vents in front of the cape through which the arms can pass. This version of the cape, made in jungle green, was seen in the later stages of the Burma campaign. It was not until 1943 that all items of uniform and equipment manufactured in India begin to be made in JG. The bayonet on the muzzle of the SMLE is the short Indian Mk II, with a non-reflective blued blade.



(Above right) Earlier Indian-made raincape, in tan duck fabric.



(Right) Australian infantryman, 1944, wearing a tan-coloured Australian-manufactured groundsheet/cape combination. Like the earlier British groundsheet/capes it has a heavily rubberised exterior and a plain matt interior. The brass eyelets along the edge allow two capes to be joined as an improvised shelter.



Burma, 1944: Officers' JG Field Dress

This lieutenant-colonel, Royal Artillery, perhaps serves with a 4th Corps regiment in the Imphal garrison. He is dressed in standard JG battledress; the expansion pleat in the thigh pocket shows clearly here. The halved red and blue diamond on the bush hat is the insignia of the RA - as well as being worn as a cloth patch on the bush hat it was also occasionally painted on the steel helmet. The large field map patterns.



(Opposite, top left) Indian-made 'ammo' boots were distinctive in having a brown edge to the sole and heel; the toecap was also different from British boots in having a crescent-shaped, rather than a straight, rear edge.

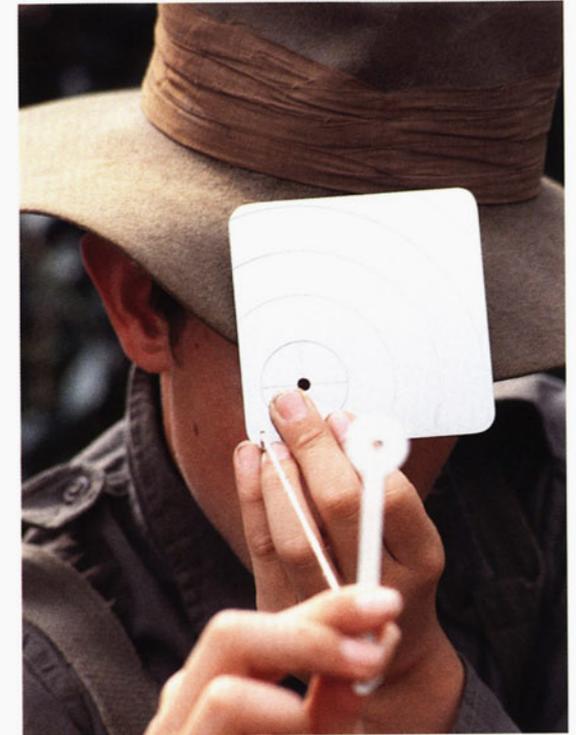
(Opposite, top right) Field map case folded and worn over the shoulder. It has numerous pockets for storage of pencils and plotting instruments.

(Opposite, bottom left) The crown over star rank badge of a lieutenant-colonel ('half-colonel'), with regimental designation in black, on a JG epaulette slip-on.

(Opposite, bottom right) Typical equipment needed by an artillery officer would include maps and case, compass, binoculars, and instrument case containing a selection of dividers, protractors and pencils for artillery plotting. The folded JG BD blouse shows the internal manufacturer's ink stamp typical of those found on Indian-made clothing; this

one has the letters ZZ, over 8 (arrow) 43 (for August 1943), over MC within a disc.

(Below) The liquid-filled brass-cased prismatic compass was expensive to produce, and from 1943 it was replaced by the lighter and less expensive Bakelite-cased 'compass, magnetic marching, Mk I'. The mirror used for reading the reflected image of the compass bearing was also useful as a signalling heliograph. When not in use the instrument was stowed in the padded compass pouch of the 37 webbing; this Indian-made example bears typical production stamps in brown/black ink. The map, showing the town of Imphal, is typical of the type issued in Burma and India, displaying grassy plains, rice fields and the close contours of the surrounding mountains (normally marked as covered in dense jungle or bamboo). Towns or villages holding regular markets also bore a note of the market days; this seemingly odd notation was actually most useful, allowing troops to supplement their rations by purchasing fresh local provisions.



(Above) The hand-held heliograph was a useful signalling instrument, when line-of-sight and clear sunny skies allowed - which was not a foregone conclusion in the Far East. The intended target was simply lined up through the hole in the mirror and the hole in the 'aiming wand'. The mirror was then tilted until the cross engraved on it lined up with the hole in the wand; when the two coincided the reflected sun was aimed directly at the target. Involuntary movement of the hand ensured that flashing would be visible from the target, and a skilled operator could use the device to send Morse messages. It was not possible to use this type of heliograph with the sun directly behind the user, although a second mirror could be used to reflect it onto the main mirror. A smaller (quarter-size) heliograph was issued in aircrew and other survival kits.



SE Asia, 1944: Rations & Cooking

(Above) Out of range of enemy guns, four 14th Army men relax while one prepares their day's rations. The soldier at far left wears Australian boots with their distinctive heel plate and stud arrangement. All wear shorts - seldom seen in the jungle, where legs needed the protection of full length trousers.

(Right) Jungle green shorts made in India and the UK had minor differences. Front fastening was by the standard double strap and buckle. British shorts (left in both photographs) had a double-pleat field dressing pocket at front right, two patch pockets on the rear, and no belt loops. Indian shorts had a single-pleat, buttonless field dressing pocket at right rear, fixed belt loops, and rear buttons which attached to the BD blouse. Both types had internal side pockets. The officer's Indian private purchase shorts (right, in lower photo) have three button-down belt loops and no external pockets.

Every effort was made to ensure that men ate from centralised field kitchens serving field service rations. Where this was impossible it was essential that individuals or small

groups were competent to prepare their own rations in mess tins or section 'dixies' (cookpots). Enough men in each platoon or troop were trained, by the unit's senior NCO cook, to supplement unit cooks as needed. Minimum training included:

The use of the No.1 petrol cooker - a well-liked piece of kit, but for use only when improvised cooking equipment could not be used.

Mess tin cookery, using folding stove and hexamine fuel blocks. Camp kettle (dixie) cookery.

The construction of improvised apparatus for boiling, frying, baking and roasting (including oil drum ovens and cut-down 2gal petrol cans or biscuit tins); and cooking of issued and acquired rations by these means.

Before 1943 the 48-hour mess tin ration was standard; this was replaced by the 24-hour ration as an operational or assault ration, together with theatre and supplementary ration items. The 'Compo' (composite) ration served 14 men for one day; packed in a wooden crate, it might contain any of seven different variants of contents, coded A-G.

The emergency ration, packed in a small tobacco-type tin, was also on limited issue to certain troops and aircrews. It contained high calorie vitamin-enhanced chocolate, and was only to be consumed on the specific orders of an officer.



Type P1 Pacific Compo (6 Men) Ration Pack

Typical of those issued in the Far East, this contained food and ancillaries for six men over 24 hours. Its contents and suggested use were listed as follows - items marked * were noted as 'also to provide for other meals':

BREAKFAST	TEA / SUPPER
Rolled oats 1 tin	*Tea, *sugar and *milk
Bacon 2 tins	*Biscuits *Margarine
*Tea 1 tin	Cake 1 tin
*Milk powder 1 tin	Meat & kidney
*Sugar 1 tin	pudding (½ hr) 4 tins
*Biscuits (1 large, 2 tall) .3 tins	Vegetables (½ hr) 2 tins
*Margarine 1 tin	Tinned fruit. 2 tins

(Also, in a single tin):
Sweets, matches, salt (also in tablet form), compound vitamin tablets, mepacrine tablets

MIDDAY SNACK
6 'snack' meals, with separate instructions packed therein, are packed in the large biscuit tin.

Cigarettes (8 per man) . . . 1 tin
Water sterilising outfit. . . 1 tin
Latrine paper (6 pieces per man)
Soap (1 tablet)

(Left) Cooker, Portable No.2. This petrol-fuelled stove was issued to small groups such as AFV and gun crews, and could provide cooked food for six to eight men. The unit consisted of a metal box with carrying handle, windshield, fixed burner with perforated ring, utensil grid

and fuel tank; it packed inside the cooker box along with a funnel and spanner. The fuel tank was fitted to the outside and pressurised using the integral pump. A slightly larger unit, the No.3, could meet the needs of up to 15 men; of a similar design, it had two burners.



(Above) Label on British-made 'shorts, jungle' manufactured in 1944 by Bignell, Phillips & Greene.

(Right) The Essentials of Japanese Military Grammar have got the better of this young officer, snoozing beneath his bush hat; this was officially reintroduced in 1942 to replace the Wolesley helmet and pith hat. Note the stud used to fix the brim up, twin ventilation holes (sometimes three), and one method, among many, of shaping the crown (e.g. 4th Royal West Kents favoured the 'pork pie' look, as on page 64, while 1st Queen's creased them 'fore-and-aft'.) There is no lining other than a leather sweatband. Australian slouch hats were also issued to British troops.





India, 1944: Indian-made Bush Jacket & Shirt

(Above) A second lieutenant wearing a locally-made bush jacket in typically Indian wool/flannel shirting fabric. It is of similar cut to the issue bush jacket, but has pleated top pockets and removable epaulettes in the style found on aertex KD shirts. The buttons are Indian, being hand-cut from bone or horn. Such a garment re-emphasises the degree of personal preference enjoyed in the purchase of individually tailored items in areas such as India. Here flannel shirting was thought preferable to aertex or cotton drill, perhaps because it was ordered in northern India in the cold season? However, it was believed by old soldiers that flannel offered the greatest protection from the heat of the sun and was the most comfortable material.

(Above right & right) A Royal Artillery gunner walks out off duty in khaki aertex bush shirt and long KD trousers and sporting his regimentally-coloured private purchase field service cap. The khaki aertex bush shirt is of Indian origin; unlike the British version it has pleats in the

breast pockets. The buttons on this particular jacket are made from compressed vegetable matter, another variant sometimes found on Indian-manufactured uniform.

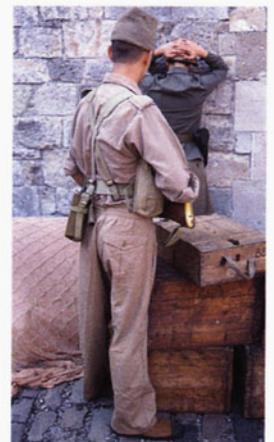
One might guess that he is a recent arrival in theatre, as he is wearing a late-production British web belt with economy webbing loops rather than the usual brass belt retainers. During 1943-45 web equipment was generally manufactured with gunmetal fittings to save on brass, though this example retains brass buckles. The rear view shows that it has been made from two off-cuts joined together.



Greece, 1944: KD with Battle Order

British forces were despatched from neighbouring Italy in October 1944 to try to fill the power vacuum left by continuing withdrawal of German occupation troops from Greece. During the occupation there had been serious hostility between rival Greek underground movements each with its own agenda for the postwar period. The Communist ELAS movement was particularly reluctant to co-operate with those loyal to the king and to the Greek government in exile; the British landings - first by Commandos in the Peloponnese, and later by paratroops around Athens - were to pave the way for that government to return. An uneasy truce between the ELAS and ENES movements would break down before long, leaving British forces caught in the beginnings of a bitter civil war.

This private of the first liberation force belongs to No.9 Commando. Standing guard over a German prisoner, he is dressed in a khaki drill shirt and Indian-made KD battledress trousers. The knitted cap comforter remained popular for all kinds of raiding and patrolling. Although it is late 1944 he is still armed with the SMLE rifle; Commandos and other special troops were often surprisingly low on the procurement list. The back view shows the rear pocket on the Indian BD trousers. The British soldier's standard issue brown canvas and rubber plimsolls were useful when stealth was required, and a comfortable hot climate alternative to ammunition boots.



India, 1945: Tropical Khaki Battledress

KD service dress had all but disappeared by late 1941. While troops continued to wear khaki aertex shirts, KD shorts, trousers and bush shirts, it was felt that a single combat uniform would best suit most needs. Based on the proven design of the wool battledress, the lightweight tropical version was introduced in

the Far East in 1943; as we have seen, priority was given to the jungle green version, but a khaki BD soon followed. Both JG and KD versions of the 1943 Indian battledress were also issued to the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, as an RAF field dress and a landing party and landing craft dress for RN ratings.



(Above) The Indian issue khaki drill FS cap. This example has GS buttons added to the front and is worn with the full size RA gun badge.



(Opposite) Warrant Officer Class 1, Royal Artillery, wearing the khaki version of the Indian tropical BD uniform. The khaki and jungle green lightweight BD suits are identical in cut. The blouse is made from an aertex fabric and the trousers from medium weight cotton drill. Proud of regimental traditions, this WOI wears the optional coloured field service cap in RA red and blue with a full size 'gun' badge; the 'flaming bomb' badge was the prescribed insignia for FS caps, but the gun produced a more striking effect.

(Above) Slip-on regimental and corps titles, based on the early war wool versions, were manufactured in khaki and jungle green finish, or - as in this case - in intermediate shades. Note also the warrant badge worn on a KD wristlet. While the WO provides an example of the smartness possible with the tropical BD, the gunner's failure to achieve the same standards is drawing unwelcome attention. He wears the Indian khaki aertex BD blouse with British-made KD trousers. When the KD service dress trousers were discontinued in 1941 the need for long trousers led to the introduction of this model not as service dress but as workwear; these have belt loops with lower fastening, no exterior pockets but two interior side pockets. By contrast (see opposite) the KD battledress trousers had a second-pattern field dressing pocket at front right, a single-pleat map pocket on the left thigh

and a flap-top patch pocket on the rear right.

(Right) Ink stamps on the interior of the khaki drill Indian BD trousers, showing the date (12/44) and manufacturer's code letters, together with the appropriate blouse size, in this case Size 5.

(Bottom right) Two versions of economy pattern 37 web belts, inner faces uppermost. (Left) Dated 1941, an early simplification using plain webbing strips with additional sections stitched to the inner face to provide pockets for the end tab hooks; it retains the full size brass end tab with two attachment hooks. (Right) Dated 1944, with darkened steel fittings and web 'keeper' loops. It retains the full-length integrally woven loop series for the end tab hooks, but the brass tab is replaced by stitched webbing retaining a steel hook.



**Middle East, 1944:
RAF New Pattern
Bush Shirt**

By 1944 the RAF were introducing a 'new pattern' bush shirt, illustrated here. This hybrid garment was in fact of the same design as the Army bush shirt with two minor differences: the inclusion of a removable belt, and secondly holes through which to mount buttons - the Army version came with flat shirt buttons already stitched to it.

On his right sleeve this air-craftsman is wearing a black-on-red Movement Control brassard. Movement Control personnel could be from the RAF or the Army; their job was to oversee personnel in transit at the point of embarkation, ensuring that all documents were in order before they boarded any aircraft.



(Right) Detail of Movement Control brassard, and printed Royal Air Force tropical sleeve eagle in red on khaki.

**India 1945: RAF
Khaki Drill
Trousers**

This air-craftsman wears an Army-pattern KD bush shirt which has been cut down and converted into a battledress-type blouse. The printed eagles and black plastic RAF buttons suggest that this alteration was made later in the war - perhaps in imitation of the later war Indian-made KD battledress blouse? The trousers are a pair of Indian KD slacks, dated 1943, with a top fastening system of straps in the waistband that fix through a buckle on either hip. On closer inspection this can be seen to be a local modification to a pair of service dress trousers; there is no evidence of a field dressing pocket, but this feature was not always present on Army service dress trousers in KD.



(Right) Details of UK-produced embroidered Royal Air Force tropical sleeve eagle in red on khaki; and of modified trouser waistband, showing side-fastening straps through crude Indian-made brass-coloured friction buckles. This type of closure and adjustment was used on one pattern of British-made KD trousers before the end of the war.



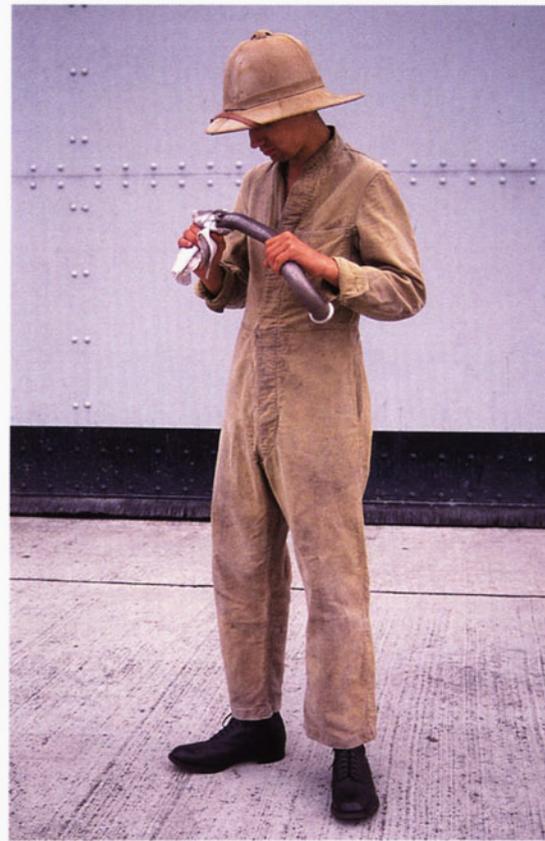
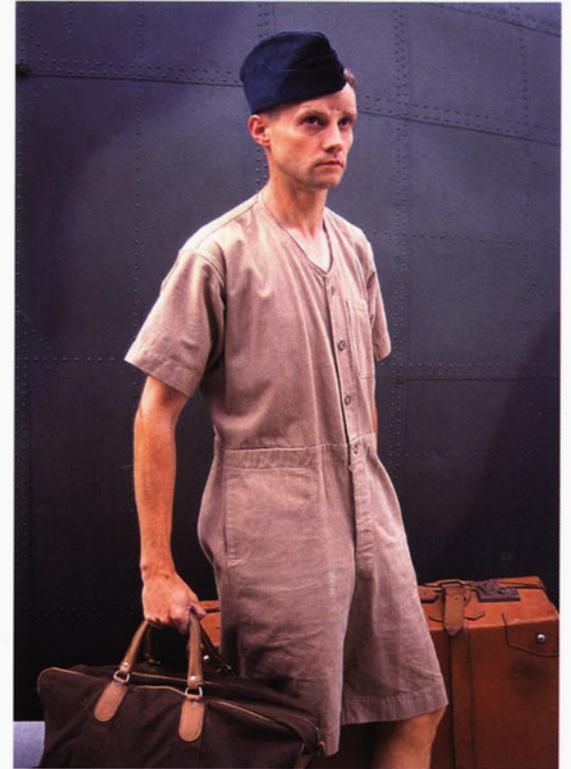
Middle East, 1945: RAF KD Working Dress

Two 'erks' of an RAF baggage party take a smoke break while unloading baggage from a transport aircraft. Transit baggage varied in style depending on the owner's spending power, but was invariably well marked with his home or unit address.

ACI 1484/43 limited the baggage of officers proceeding overseas to a mere 168lbs (75kg), although a suggested baggage list from the period includes the following essentials: Valise: Three blankets, greatcoat, spare boots, slippers or shoes, pyjamas, second suit (battledress or an old SD), inflatable mattress, writing materials. Pack: Changes of socks and underclothes. Haversack: Towel and toiletries.

This list was admitted to be rather austere, but was justified by stating that those joining fighting units would be wise not to exceed it. It was pointed out that officers would find it more convenient to purchase additional items found to be necessary when in the field from mobile RAOC officers' shops, rather than to arrive in theatre with items which proved unnecessary.

The brown canvas and leather officers' flight bag was introduced in 1945; it was meant to hold essential items for the flight and any short overnight stops, thus avoiding the need to unpack any baggage stowed in the aircraft.



(Above left & above) The somewhat ridiculous-looking tropical 'combination suit' was in effect a cut-down version of khaki drill working coveralls. It had short sleeves and mid-thigh length legs, and was collarless; pockets were limited to a single open-top breast pocket and two side slash pockets. In the rear it had a broad pleat running the length of the upper back; minimal size adjustment was made by a short integral belt across the rear of the waist section. This unflattering garment at least had the advantage of being a cool working overall for tropical conditions. Principally an RAF issue, it was occasionally seen in use by some less fashion-conscious soldiers.

(Left) Standard RAF khaki drill coveralls were used for such dirty tasks as engine maintenance. The coveralls had a similar pocket arrangement to the combination suit, a short 'stand' collar, a fly front, and sleeve cuffs fastened with a single button. This fitter wears an old and battered Wolseley helmet as sun protection, and standard RAF boots without separate toecaps. These boots came with soles of either leather or reclaimed rubber, the latter intended for use by personnel working on aircraft.



India, 1945: RAF KD Service Dress

The war is coming to a close, and the time has come for those who have been overseas the longest to return home for demobilisation. Relieved of most duties, a time-expired airman waits in a transit area to be processed before taking his leave of India; he has a little time to 'suan about in his best' during the last few days, but the RAF has not finished with him yet. First he has to be screened for security, warned against carrying contraband goods, and medically updated. Arrangements have to be made for forwarding of pay, and consigning any excess baggage by sea or shipping agent. Before departure his mosquito net, mosquito boots, small arms and any excess webbing are to be handed in. This will leave Other Ranks with two kit bags and a set of web equipment; that is their fixed allowance. Carried externally for requirements during transit are two blankets, greatcoat, pullover, gloves and socks so as to keep warm at altitude; and 'it is advised you keep your mug

handy as tea will be served during the flight'. The SD tunic worn here is another curiosity, having been manufactured in Cairo.

(Below) The distinctive old-style raised cut of the rear waist of the RAF KD service dress trousers, which have a field dressing pocket on the right rear.

(Inset) Label detail of this pair of 'trousers, khaki drill, airmen, 1937 pattern'.



India, 1945: Officers' KD Bush Jacket

The KD officers' service dress provided a tropical uniform for walking-out and formal use; the bush jacket served as a smart and practical alternative for less formal occasions and for field use. The bush jacket differed from SD in a number of ways. It was cut much fuller and generally had button-fastened cuffs. Pocket design varied but generally followed the current trends of wool and KD service dress styling; early jackets had pleated breast pockets and 'bellows' skirt pockets, and later patterns - as illustrated - plain breast pockets and internal skirt pockets. This was in keeping with the austerity measures introduced from March 1942, and applied to officers' wool and KD service dress as well.

This major of the 1st Battalion, Devonshire Regiment - enjoying a spot of leave from active service in Burma with 36th Infantry Division - epitomises the casual approach to dress standards adopted by many officers in the tropics. He wears an Indian (Ordnance issue) officers' KD bush jacket with KD battledress trousers, a non-regulation cravat, and a private purchase khaki wool beret with his regimental cap badge. The bush jacket has a five-button pleated front fastening, button-down flaps to the breast pockets, flap-top internal skirt pockets, and matching KD cotton waistbelt with brass buckle. All buttons are of brown composition material.

(Inset) The major's embroidered badge of rank in buff and brown is worn on epaulette slip-ons; and the 14th Army patch is temporarily attached with press studs or pins to save it from fading with frequent washing of the jacket. His cane is a battle trophy, previously the property of a Japanese officer; the carved inscription bears a reference to 'the man of the mountains'.



1944 Pattern Jungle Clothing and Equipment

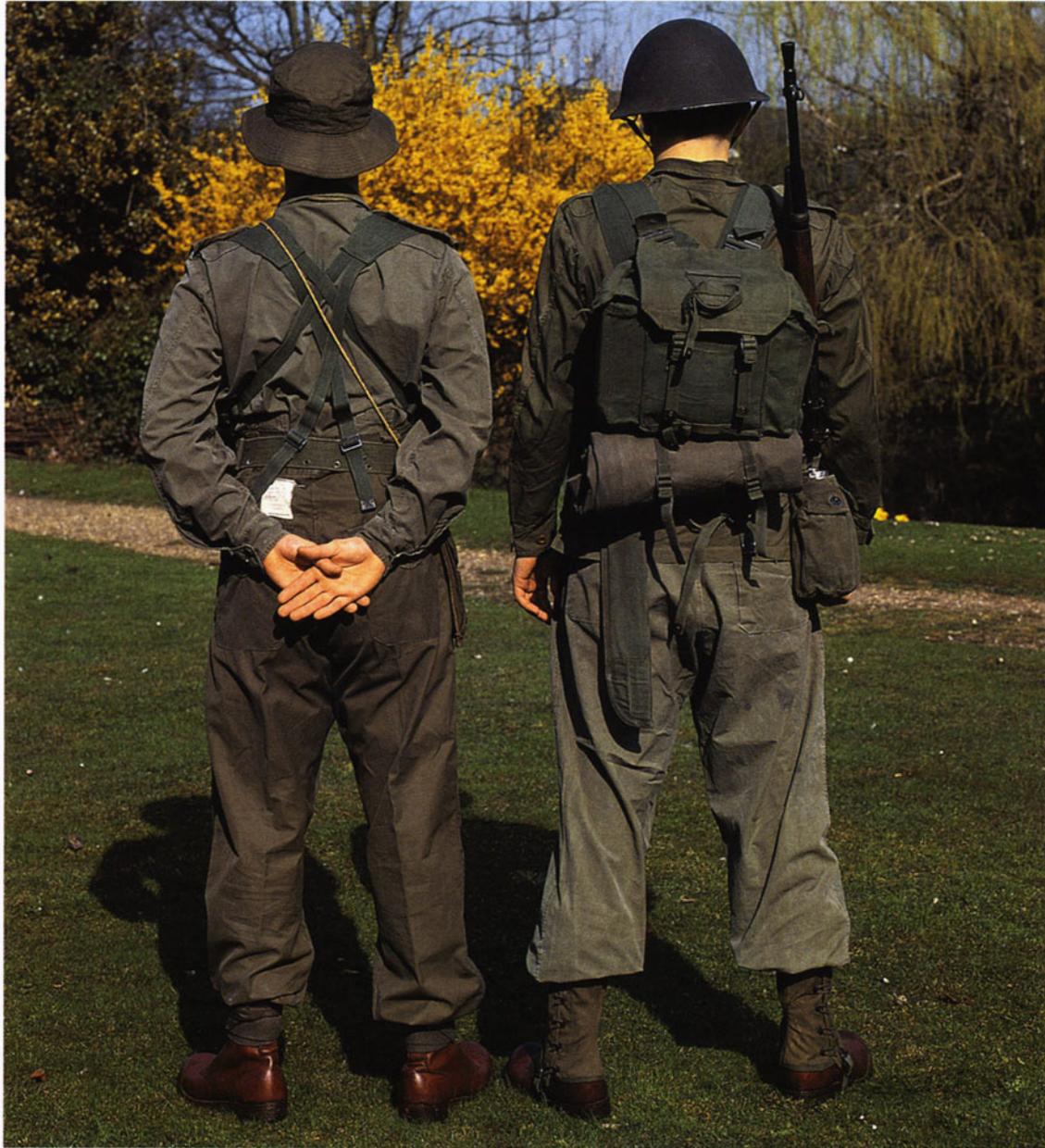
In June 1943 a joint service venture designated 220 Military Mission was approved by the Chiefs of Staff, with the task of assessing the clothing and equipment currently in use and making recommendations on replacement or modifications where necessary. Better known as the Lethbridge Mission after its leader Major-General J.S.Lethbridge, this group toured the Far East between October 1943 and March 1944, meeting troops on the ground to learn at first hand of the problems encountered. They also consulted the

military authorities of India, Australia and New Zealand.

The end result of this mission was a recommendation for a complete new range of uniforms and equipment. It was particularly felt that the 37 pattern web equipment was not suited to use in tropical regions, and it was decided to produce a new set of lightweight equipment specifically for tropical use. The web set needed to be lighter, with dulled and corrosion-resistant metal fittings, and of rot-proof material pre-dyed jungle green. The new

haversack was to have a waterproof interior.

Along with a number of items copied from US equipment, the new 1944 web set was to provide a reasonable attempt at fulfilling the needs of jungle warfare. The set was also produced in khaki, albeit in limited quantity; but a plan to adopt the 1944 equipment as a universal replacement for the 37 set never came to fruition - doubtless because of the vast quantities of 37 equipment that were already held in store.



(Opposite & below) United Kingdom March 1945: members of a demonstration and evaluation unit display the new equipment being issued in preparation for the final offensive against Japan. They show the new 1944 pattern jungle uniform, with officers' (left) and riflemen's (right) web equipment sets. The officer wears the new jungle service hat, the soldier the Mk IV helmet. Both wear the new jungle boots, a brown waterproof version of the ammo boot with stud arrangement similar to the Australian type, with JG puttees and,

at right, the jungle anklets based on US M1938 dismantled leggings.

The officers' set consists of the three-section belt, brace attachments, braces, pistol case, ammunition pouch, binocular case, compass pouch and small map case. Note the wide shoulder section of the braces, and the double rear extensions which give better support to the belt and the items it supports.

The soldier wears belt, braces, basic pouches, L-straps and haversack, rolled poncho, water bottle and machete. The small strap hanging

below the poncho is a chest strap that could be worn fastened at the wearer's front to add extra stability to the haversack.

The SMLE and the No.4 rifle which was gradually replacing it were both considered to be too long and unnecessarily heavy for the restricted confines of jungle warfare. By the end of 1943 a modified No.4 rifle had been produced and named the 'No.4, lightened', later 'rifle No.5'. This soldier carries the new weapon - popularly known as the 'jungle carbine' - and its bayonet.





(Left) The basic pouches were paired left and right. Both had quick-release fasteners on the top flap, and the left hand pouch (illustrated) had loops on the outside surface for attachment of a No.4 bayonet. (A separate frog was provided for use with the No.5 bayonet, and this also had an additional eyelet for the No.4 bayonet). If sufficient force was used the No.5 bayonet could just be fitted to the pouch; it was then very difficult to remove from the undersized upper loop, and the tip would frequently refuse to fit into the lower loop.

(Right) Detail of the haversack showing its main body, two additional side sections, and lower straps holding the poncho. The straps on the rear face of the haversack hold the shovel or pick.



(Above) Right side of the equipment showing the water bottle carrier, and the belt loop which secured the small of the No.5 rifle stock, thus reducing swing when it was carried slung.

The No.5 was some 5in shorter than the No.4 and weighed 1lb 14.5oz less, with a lightened action. It differed mainly in having a sling loop set in the right side of the butt, a rubber butt plate, shortened fore-end woodwork, and a conical flash-eliminator at the muzzle (this was necessitated by the 5in-shorter barrel - propellant was still visibly burning when the round left the muzzle). The reduced barrel length increased the already robust kick of the No.4 (thus the rubber buffer on the stock), and limited the range and accuracy; the sights were calibrated from 200 to 800 yards rather than 1,400 yards. This was not initially considered to be a problem, due to the short battle ranges at which the enemy was generally encountered in jungle terrain; but it was one of the factors that led to the rifle's postwar demise and a decision not to adopt it for general issue. In March 1944 100,000 'lightened No.4' rifles were ordered, and 251,136 No.5 rifles



(officially approved for service under that designation in September 1944) were completed before the end of the war.

(Above right) The No.5 bayonet had an oversize muzzle ring to fit over the flash-eliminator on the jungle carbine. It had full 'wrap-around' grips secured by a single central screw, and a new blade design with a 'bowie' or clipped point; this feature was to be retained on a number of postwar bayonet patterns.

(Right) Left side of the equipment showing first-pattern machete and sheath, and the bayonet frog with scabbard for the No.5 bayonet fitted. The small cut in the upper loop allowed the fitting of the No.4 bayonet scabbard.





(Above left) Lieutenant wearing the new pattern jungle shirt, trousers and neck cloth, and 44 pattern web equipment with brace attachments. On his left side is a 44 pattern 'pouch, motor transport'; this fixed to the belt by a webbing loop rather than being clipped on with a metal buckle. This allowed vehicle drivers to adjust its position for comfort behind the wheel - it sits much lower than the basic pouch. These MT pouches were not made in handed pairs, but were all of left-hand pattern with bayonet loops. An MT pouch for the 37 set also began production in 1944.

(Left) A new pullover was produced with reinforced elbows and shoulders; the shoulders are slotted to allow shirt epaulettes to be buttoned through them.

(Above) Rear view of 44 pattern equipment without the pack. The broad shoulder straps and double rear braces allowed better distribution of the weight of the belt equipment to the shoulders. The broad straps also reduced the problem of slipping and chafing encountered with the 37 pattern in the tropics. Note the two rear pockets of the new

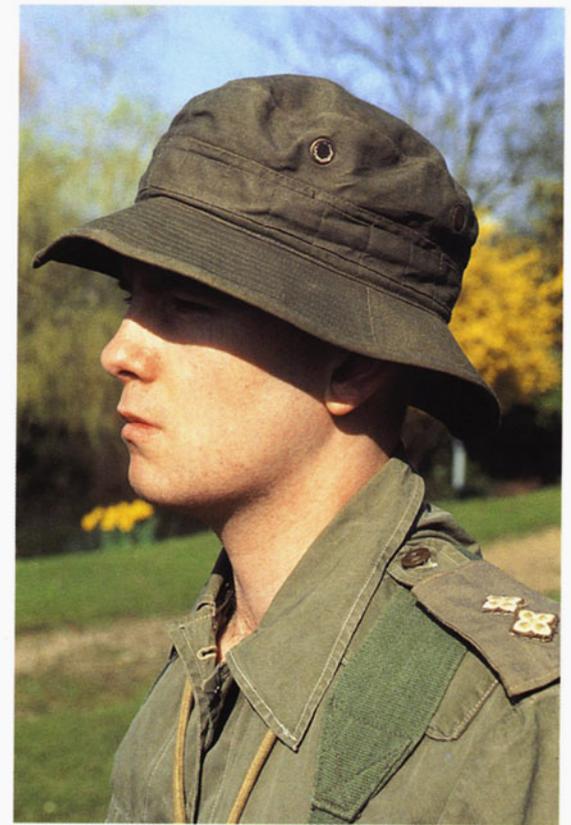
jungle trousers in close-weave cotton, the deeper and more comfortable waistband, and the white sizing label. The two horizontal loops low on the back of the shirt were intended to engage the trouser belt loops to ensure that the shirt did not come untucked - another sign of the Army's mosquito mania.



(Top) 44 pattern officers' haversack, in form and dimensions not much different from the 37 pattern equivalent, though some internal water-proofing fabric was added.

(Above) The aluminium 44 pattern water bottle and its carrier - a good example of the total redesign of an item of equipment, and clearly influenced by American experience. Vastly superior to the 37 pattern, it is made of non-corroding material, has a secure cap, a much wider aperture for easier filling, and an integral cup with folding handles which fits into the carrier - thus removing the need to carry a separate enamel mug, for which there was no designated place in the 37 equipment. The easy-fitting carrier also has an internal pocket for a plastic container of water sterilisation tablets.

(Above right) The jungle service hat was probably inspired by American, Chinese and latterly Indian headgear of similar design used in the Far East theatre. Its broad brim deflects rain from the face and neck while shading the eyes from the sun; it is better ventilated than the felt slouch hat; being flexible, it can be rolled up and stowed in a pocket when not in use, and where necessary camouflage can be passed through the loops around the band.

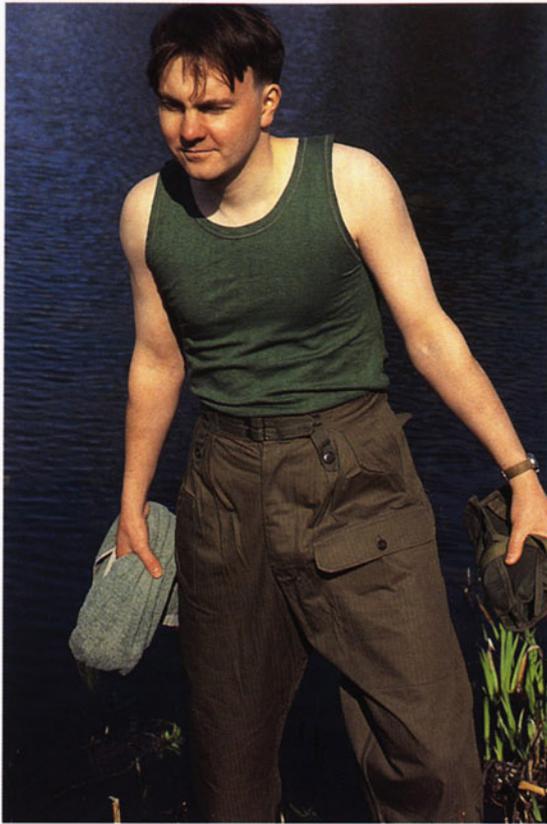


(Right) 'Gaiters, jungle' were obviously inspired by the US Army's leggings, which were also used by Australian troops in the Pacific theatre - a reminder that the Lethbridge Mission took into account the experience of the US, Australian, Indian and New Zealand armies when formulating requirements for this new equipment. An improvement on the original design was making detachable (and thus replaceable) the instep strap passing under the boot, since this was the part most susceptible to wear.



(Bottom right) The sole of the new jungle boot had the type of metal cleats also found on late-war Australian boots for jungle use; another variation found has clusters of bifurcated studs. Note too the heel cleats replacing the ammunition boot's 'horseshoe' heel plate. The new boot had extra thick soles, water-proofing, non-rusting metal fittings, and rot-proof stitching and laces. A leather loop at the rear allowed the laces to be tied around the ankle and, combined with a 'bellows' tongue stitched to the boot all the way up the sides, provided a close seal against insects and water - which was further improved by wearing puttees or gaiters, and trousers with drawstrings.





(Above) New design of vest worn with US War Aid jungle trousers. In early 1945 American manufacturers produced a suit of jungle shirt and trousers copying the design of the new 1944 pattern British jungle clothing, but in herringbone twill fabric, with typical American plastic buttons and with metal buckles on the waist adjustment straps. Like the new British uniform, this did not see service in the Far East before the end of the war.

(Above right) New jungle underwear: lightweight vest, and cotton drawers with a broad waistband and black rubber buttons - these were less liable than plastic to break with frequent and abrasive washing. 'Socks, jungle green' were made of non-shrinking wool and had an oily texture to make them rot-resistant and waterproof.

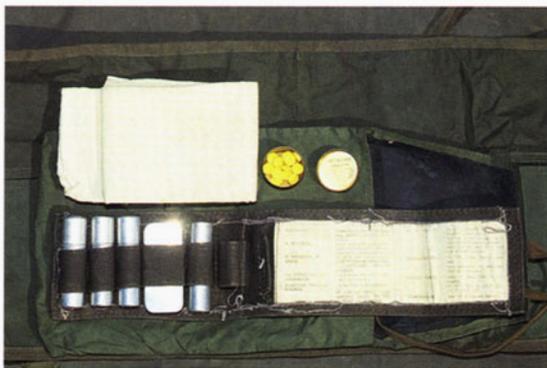
(Right) Clip-together cutlery sets, which in 1945 were being projected as eventual new equipment for the whole British Army. The larger of the two was manufactured in both 1944 and 1945, the smaller set (which when new was packaged in a cardboard carton) only from 1945.



The soap dish, and the clasp knife with both tin- and bottle-openers, were manufactured from 1944 onwards, but the scarcity of 1944 examples suggests that first contracts were only placed at the end of that year.

(Bottom right) Jungle medical kit, laid on the washkit holdall; these were issued one per section. The kit contained:

Sulpha-Mez tablets. If wounded, or suffering dysentery or diarrhoea, a series of doses were to be given with plenty of water, at intervals over three or four days. Not to be given for belly wounds, when water was to be restricted to sips and the morphine ampoule syringe was to be used. Apcod tablets for headache, toothache, neuralgia, sore throat and head colds. Antiseptic pen for cuts, chafes, blisters, insect bites. Styptic pencil for leech bites. Aperient tablets for constipation. Also shown is a tin of atabrine or mepacrine anti-malarial tablets. These were unpopular; they turned the skin a yellowish cast, and there was a strong rumour that prolonged use rendered a man impotent. They had a bitter taste, and caused retching.



(Above) Wearing the new pattern poncho and anti-mosquito hood, this soldier uses the new water filtration bag to filter water into a Mk IV helmet shell. The green rubberised poncho, with a drawstring neck, also served as an anti-gas cape; there is an internal pocket for an anti-gas ointment tin. Press studs allowed the cape to be gathered into sleeves; it could be buttoned to form a sleeping bag, rigged as an individual shelter, or joined to others to make larger shelters. The fishnet anti-mosquito hood came with gloves and socks which were treated with anti-mosquito ointment before use.

(Right) The cover and wallet for carrying the fishnet anti-mosquito hood, gloves and socks, a green light respirator haversack, and a tin of No.6 anti-gas ointment marked for tropical use. They are laid out on the green waterproof carrying bag, in which items such as spare clothing were stowed inside the pack or rucksack to keep them dry.





(Left) Three styles of 1944 type British jungle shirts. (Left) is a pale green shirt dated 1944, in tight-weave cotton. (Centre) is the standard jungle green shirt in tight-weave cotton, claimed to be 100% mosquito-proof. (Right) Dated 1944, this shirt is in a jungle green cotton drill fabric; unlike the plastic battledress-style buttons of the other two, this one has black rubber buttons. All three have a 'gas flap' (so stencilled) behind the front opening. This, and their sizing system (by collar size and length of back, e.g. '15 x 32') suggest American influence.



(Opposite) British 1944 jungle shirts and trousers, (left to right): jungle green, with shirt outside trousers, canvas gaiters and jungle boots; jungle green, with shirt tucked in, short puttees and jungle boots; camouflage fabric uniform.

the least glamorous: the using up of surplus stocks of the 'windproof' camouflage fabric. None of the known examples are labelled as shirts or trousers 'camouflaged' - merely as 'jungle'.

(Above & above right) 'Trousers, jungle' and 'shirt, jungle' in camouflage fabric. Identical in design to the jungle green version, the shirt has two pleated breast pockets, reinforcement doubling on the front of the shoulders, an internal 'gas flap' and plastic battledress buttons. The trousers have six pockets: field dressing at front right, map at left thigh, two rear and two side. The broad waistband fastens and adjusts with two straps passing through two toothed buckles of a new design, and there are draustrings at the bottoms of the legs.

The most likely explanation for the production of this uniform is also

(Right) The 44 pattern rucksack, designed to replace both the 08 large pack and the kit bag. Made in lightweight duck fabric, it closes at the top with a draustring which is then covered with a flap; under the latter a convenient waterproof pocket gives instant access to small items. Around the outside are two side pockets, which would each accommodate a spare boot and sock, and a large rear pocket. On the top flap is the same fixing point for the shovel and its cover as on the 44 pattern small pack, with a loop on the pocket below to take the haft of a shovel or pick. All flaps close with quick-release fastenings.





The 'carrier, manpack, general service' was new to the British inventory, though a similar carrier had been in use with the US forces throughout the war - this was designated 'packboard, Yukon', after the rig used by 19th century prospectors.

(Above & above right) Worn with chest and waist straps fastened, it has four crossmembers upon any of which the load platform can be attached, normally being mounted as high as possible to maintain a high centre of gravity. The four broad straps serve to hold the carrier away from the body and have to be kept tight for maximum benefit; the important lower strap allows some of the weight to be supported across the lower back/hip region. The three narrower utility straps are used for fastening the load in conjunction with the moveable platform. A separate forehead strap can also be worn - a method familiar to native troops but rarely employed by British soldiers.

(Right) The 1944 pattern rucksack had three D-rings on the outer edge of the back panel, allowing it to be strapped to the GS carrier. This gave superior distribution of weight, and far better ventilation across the back, so avoiding excessive sweating and consequent chafing.



Early 1945: sergeant of the Royal Tank Regiment demonstrating the jungle tank suit devised as part of the new equipment for the war in the Far East. The anticipated liberation of Malaya followed by the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands would have involved larger British armoured forces than the three mixed British and Indian brigades which fought in Burma.

Made in a close-weave mosquito-proof pale green cotton fabric,

it is a unique design - although the influence of the 1944 'tank suit, denim' can be noted. Like the two-piece jungle uniforms it has reinforced shoulders, and the buttoned cuffs and drawstring legs which were alleged to discourage mosquitoes. The buttons are of black rubber. Like other British AFV crew suits it has a pair of integral braces inside; and the shoulder area is very loosely cut, to allow freedom of movement even when seated.

Jungle Tank Suit





(Above) The tank sergeant holds a 44 pattern vehicle map board. His badges of rank are printed on a 'rank brassard, jungle', fastened at the rear by the same kind of sliding grip buckle as found on the waist straps of the British 1944 jungle trousers.



(Right) Demonstration of rear 'evacuation flap' being unfastened; unlike the other patterns of tank suit, this one did not have to be completely removed during a visit to the latrine.

SE Asia, 1945: Australian Field Dress

Following the victories of the 8th Army in North Africa the last Australian Imperial Force troops left Suez in early February 1943, returning to help defend their homeland and the neighbouring region of the South-West Pacific against the Japanese. Their first great contribution was in the long, grim struggle for New Guinea, where the 'Diggers' fought side by side with US units in some of the worst conditions on earth. The battle for the Kokoda Trail in the 13,000-foot Owen Stanley Mountains, fought partly by Australian militia battalions before the arrival of the AIF 7th Division, became infamous. Australian troops did not fight in Burma, but went on to serve in several other campaigns including New Britain, Borneo and the Solomons.

Like the British and Indian forces in theatre, the Australians initially had to make do with uniforms at first of khaki drill, and later of KD dyed green, but they were quick to learn from their experiences in New Guinea. Specialised jungle equipment was developed, and new clothing began to appear, designed to provide camouflage and to resist the rapid rotting of all kinds of organic materials in the humid jungle.

Most Commonwealth forces tended to follow the lead of the 'mother country' with regard to uniform, but Australia always employed homegrown patterns or variants. This 'Dig' wears the jungle uniform adopted in 1943, consisting of dark green half-buttoned pullover shirt and grey-green drill trousers. Fabric was rot-proofed, all buttons were plastic, and all metal fittings used were of non-rusting alloys.

The SMLE No.1 Mk III* with the old 17in No.1 Mk I bayonet remained standard service issue to Australian troops throughout the war; it was not replaced by the No.4 rifle. Effort was put into developing Australian sub-machine guns, such as the Owen and Austen guns, with some success. Web equipment is the Australian 'jungle' version of the 1937 pattern, refinements including the broad section to the shoulder braces designed to distribute the weight more evenly over the shoulders, and wider basic pouches.





(Above left) The slouch hat was expensive and did not stand up well to jungle damp. It was therefore planned to replace it with this unlined jungle beret, similar to the British GS cap but made from rot-proof green cotton. It saw limited issue, but was notoriously unpopular with the Diggers, whose national identity had become synonymous with the slouch hat.

(Above) Australian 'boots A.B.' of russet leather; early examples had plain toecaps. These have the distinctive jungle stud arrangement, and the leather and laces were rot-proofed. The 'gaiters, canvas, American', and American HBT (herring bone twill) uniform trousers were widely worn in the Pacific.

(Left) Examples of the 'hat, khaki, fur felt' differed in minor details depending on the manufacturer. Some had a hook-and-eye arrangement to fix the left brim up against the crown, others a press stud; some had plain-edged brims, others a cloth binding. The most prolific manufacturers were the Akubra company. Note the famous national badge, with its 'sunburst of blades', pinned under the left brim so as to show when it was fastened up.



The Australian machete, issued from 1944, had the same blade as the British type but a plastic handle and a rot-proofed green canvas scabbard.

The small pack is carried on the left hip, in its 'field service marching order' position. For jungle use the bayonet frog and water bottle carrier were modified by the addition of brass books (as used on the rear of the basic pouch), allowing them to be fixed directly to the belt. Web equipment items thus modified for jungle use were only issued in limited numbers before the war ended.





SE Asia, 1945: General Officers' Field Dress

A British major-general visits an Australian unit in the Dutch East Indies. Such routine visits by staff officers to troops in forward areas enhanced the high command's appreciation of conditions, and was believed to boost morale - although the appearance of high-ranking staff personnel in combat areas was generally met by a degree of cynicism. (This attitude did not always extend to brigade and divisional commanders, most of whom shared much of the discomfort and danger of Asian campaigning, and a few of whom were conspicuous for their lack of concern for personal safety. Dozens of British formation commanders were killed in action during the war.)

The major-general wears a jungle green version of the bush jacket made to early war specifications, with pleated breast pockets and bellows skirt pockets. His rank badges - a star over crossed baton and sword - are worn on JG epaulette slip-ons, and his staff status is marked by small pattern gorget patches. The latter would seem to make it rather pointless for him to have removed his

formation's sleeve patch and his medal ribbons for security, leaving only their press stud fasteners visible; the gorget patches would show up clearly to a Japanese sniper.

His private purchase Mk II style steel helmet has a general officer's bronze insignia (a crown surmounting crossed baton and sword surrounded by a laurel wreath) brazed to the front. This practice, common during the Great War, was not widely adopted during World War II. The non-standard leather liner seen in the interior view shows that it is a private purchase item retailed by Herbert Johnson of New Bond Street, London. (This particular helmet is of historical significance; it is named to Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, C-in-C Middle East 1939-41, C-in-C India 1941, Supreme Commander Far East 1942-1943, Viceroy of India 1943-47.)

The officers' valise is manufactured, like his belt and revolver holster, from green webbing with blackened metal fittings. This type of equipment was first made in 1944 and, unlike earlier sets, was made up from pre-dyed webbing - hence the variation in colour between individual fabric sections.





Burma, 1945: Modified 1937 Pattern Web Equipment

A lieutenant of the 1st Battalion, Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), serving with 33 Infantry Brigade, 7th Indian Infantry Division in July 1945. His uniform is the standard Indian JG battle-dress, and all webbing is of Indian manufacture.

Despite the popular idea that all soldiers in the Far East wore bush hats, steel helmets were in common use; apart from anything else, they kept the rain off better. If nets were not worn, mud would be smeared on to reduce reflections. Inside the helmet a small bag of salt might be carried - as effective as a cigarette end for removing leeches, and making no give-away smoke.

Many officers carried the service rifle and bayonet, and by this date some No.5 jungle carbines were available. This officer has managed to get hold of a US .30in M1 carbine and ammunition, perhaps by trade with one of the many American transport pilots who supported 14th Army. Japanese snipers were skilful, and no wise infantry officer would carry a revolver - or visible binoculars, which were slung and tucked inside the shirt. For the

same reason no rank badges are worn here, and the lieutenant wears basic pouches like his men. These also provide more carrying capacity; he uses one for his maps and his bakelite 'magnetic marching compass No.1', the latter on a lanyard.

Carrying capacity was important when patrolling for a number of days. Like some other units - notably the Chindits - 1st Queen's modified the 1908 large pack by adding basic pouches to each side; some soldiers also had a 37 pattern small pack stitched to the flap. Both the pack and the belt have additional modifications. Leather cups, cut from boot tongues, are sewn to the back of the belt facing up and to the front surface of the pack facing down, and wooden slats are inserted between them to transfer some of the weight to the waist. The side pouches contain rations, ammunition and washing gear; the pack contents would include spare clothing, a lightweight blanket, and a ground-sheet on top of all.

The belt has had its rear buckles replaced with sections from pack cross straps, so that equipment - the water bottle, or a monsoon cape or entrenching tool - can be attached independently without having to wear web shoulder braces. This modification, recalling the old 1908 belt, means that only one set of straps - the L-straps of the pack - cross the shoulders, so reducing chafing.





Burma, 1945: Battle Order

(Opposite) Since December 1944 General Slim's offensive into Burma had been forcing the Japanese back from one strategic position after another. In January 1945 they were defeated on the Arakan front; Meiktila and Mandalay fell in March. In April the British 33 and 4 Corps raced south in parallel along the lines of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers, and Rangoon was liberated in May. That month the news of final victory in Europe lifted morale. War production was at last geared to winning the war in the East.

While the logistic situation of the three Japanese armies in Burma was desperate they were still fighting with stubborn courage. British offensive patrols, normally lasting between 24 and 48 hours, probed their lines for weak points and harassed their withdrawal. Here a tired patrol of 1st Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment, from 29 Indian Infantry Brigade make their way back to their battalion position after a patrol along the Irrawaddy during May 1945.

They wear Indian jungle green battledress, Indian JG web equipment introduced in 1944, and the

Indian JG jungle hat. They are armed with the No. 4 rifle, a weapon previously limited to the European theatre but seeing widespread issue in the Far East from 1945. It was the policy in some units, though evidently not the 1st Worcesters, to remove the sling from the rifle altogether when in hostile territory, leaving no option but to carry it at the ready at all times.

(Above) The Indian JG jungle hat provided a superior alternative to the felt slouch hat, being water-resistant, rot-proofed, and easy to fold up and stow away. The crown was well ventilated by a series of reinforced mesh-covered holes and a sectioned strip across the front half provided loops for camouflage. The fabric could also be saturated with water, allowing the wearer some degree of cooling by evaporation. This design was to set the trend for all postwar jungle hats.

(Right) Worn with the JG web set is the American M1942 machete, issued in large numbers to troops in India and Burma. Its US-style belt hooks, designed for the eyelets of the US rifle and pistol belts, obviously did not fit British webbing; so two slots were cut in the rear of the scabbard and the 37 web belt was threaded through.





(Above) The waist buckles of the Indian JG battledress blouse normally followed the standard toothless friction buckle or the toothed bar style as used on woollen BD; however, some manufacturers used this distinctive buckle instead.



(Right) While British water bottles were enamel-finished the Indian equivalent was of zinc-coated steel, with a rough wool blanket cover. It is supported here by the water bottle carrier of the Indian JG web set. Unlike the earlier dyed 37 web equipment, this set was made up from predyed rot-proof web with blackened metal fittings. The fact that it is made up from predyed material, rather than being dyed after manufacture, is evident from the off-white stitching on this example.

(Top right) While infantrymen used the basic pouches, 20-round cartridge carriers were issued to men of other arms, who did not need to be able to carry magazines for the infantry section's Bren gun. The grey-green fabric and blackened brass fittings of the Indian JG web set are clearly shown in this image.

(Centre right) A Royal Navy pattern waistbelt - 'money belt' - dyed jungle green, typical of the variety of items which will be found that have been dyed for jungle use. This pattern of belt dates to 1945.

(Below) The issue of the No.4 rifle in the Far East brought with it a number of variants of bayonet and frog. All of these were used in theatre (left to right:)

No.4 Mk I with cruciform section blade; Mk I scabbard; and early 37 pattern frog with slit cut to take the scabbard boss (later 37 frogs were manufactured with an additional slit enabling use with the No.1 or No.4 bayonets).

No.4 Mk II with simple spike blade; Mk I scabbard; and Airborne Forces frog. Intended for issue to airborne troops armed with the Mk V

Sten, it was also issued troops in the Far East armed with the No.4 rifle.

No.4 Mk II*, of two-piece construction (separate blade and socket), this example bearing the 'crown over IG' Indian government mark; Mk II scabbard; and frog made in India from modified 37 frog for the No.1 bayonet (broad upper loop replaced by narrower section of web). Others made up 'from scratch' did not have the hilt-retaining loop present on modified examples.

No.4 Mk III; plastic scabbard, frequently designated Mk III; and Indian JG frog. As Indian troops were not initially armed with the No.4 rifle the JG frog was not produced with the No.4 scabbard slit in the upper section. It could be cut in, or the scabbard could be retained by the large central slit.

No.4 Mk II; American War Aid 'Victory Plastics' scabbard with integral web frog.





The No.4 Mk I rifle was nothing more than a modernised SMLE with improved aperture sights, longer sight base, and lighter bayonet. First tested in 1931, it did not receive approval until 1939, with the first rifles completed in 1941; widespread issue did not commence until 1943. The 'Germany first' policy ensured that all available weapons were issued in Europe, none being made available for the Far East until the defeat of Hitler was assured. A Mk I* rifle was made in North America from 1941 but differed little in general appearance, being the product of economies in manufacture rather than any major design change.

(Above) Comparison of a No.4 Mk I* rifle with a SMLE Mk III. (Top) The breech of the No.4 shows the rear sight mounted above the bolt; this gave a longer sight base and a correspondingly more accurate aim, assisted by an aperture rather than the U- notch of the SMLE. However, this stop-gap Mk II 'battle sight' was used only because of an extreme shortage of graduated adjustable sights. It has two flip-up apertures, one sighted for 300 yards with fixed bayonet and the other for 600 yards with bayonet removed. It

was intended that these would be replaced as graduated sights became available.

Below this SMLE (bottom) note the magazine removed and two charger clips of five .303in ball rounds. The rear sight, mounted forward of the breech, gives an idea of the difference in sight base.

Confusingly, this No.4 rifle has an early pattern cocking piece, while the SMLE has a replacement of a later type frequently found on the No.4 also.

(Left) The muzzle ends of the two weapons differ considerably. The No.4 (top) takes a bayonet fitting directly onto the barrel, while the SMLE has a separate bayonet boss protruding below the muzzle and a separate fitting for the bayonet hilt beneath the barrel. This 1907 (No.1) bayonet is of Australian manufacture, identified as such by the MA (Munitions Australia) stamping on the ricasso.



The patrol take to the muddy water, dense vegetation on the banks making land movement impractical. Rivers were a frequent obstacle in Burma; what few bridges remained intact tended to be ignored, as ideal locations for ambush or booby-traps. On occasion dense jungle actually made rivers a more practical route for military movement by boat and raft,

allowing great distances to be covered much faster than by land. As with any other discernible path, rivers were an ideal killing-ground for ambushers, and were also just as easily booby-trapped as bridges, with wired grenades being placed beneath the water's surface. In 1945 the swollen Sittang River - site of a British defeat in 1942 - trapped a defeated and

starving Japanese army, which nevertheless fought stubbornly for every fortified village and defensible feature. The Bren group commander leads, followed by the No.2, while the No.1 covers their rear with the Bren gun. (The sharp-eyed will spot that Bren commander's rifle is not cocked - an oversight that could prove costly if the patrol come under attack.) Once

thoroughly soaked their kit stands little chance of drying out properly in the high humidity. Their discomfort will be increased by discovering fat black leeches clinging to their legs and groins when they eventually wade out. Photos of infantry platoons in Burma at this date show a mixture of out-of-battle headgear: slouch hats, wool GS caps and FS caps.



Malaya, 1945: Officers' JG Service Dress

A captain serving on the staff of Malaya Command in September 1945, at the time of the re-occupation following Japan's surrender, wears an officers' tailored jungle green bush jacket in aertex fabric with matching trousers in cotton drill.

The jacket of what is basically a service dress uniform demonstrates a combination of features dictated by the climate. It has the pocket configuration of an officers' service dress tunic, but the shirt-style collar of a bush jacket, since a shirt and tie would not be worn underneath. It has buttoned cuffs, so that the sleeves can sometimes be worn rolled up; but metal buttons have been added, and the material is fiercely starched - its function is clearly that of a tunic rather than a shirt. Beneath the corresponding fabric belt on either side of the waistband are adjusting tabs and slide buckles, though these are more decorative than functional. Similar adjusting tabs are placed on the waistband of the trousers. His headgear is the Indian JG general service cap.

(Top) The doubled epaulette is detachable, passing through a loop at the shoulder with both pieces buttoning at the neck. The three rank pips of a captain are embroidered directly on to the epaulette slip-on. The sleeve insignia is that of Malaya Command - the traditional wavy-bladed Malayan kris dagger in yellow on a green background.



This view shows the interior of the jungle green cotton General Service cap, in this case lined with tan aertex fabric; and the buttoned cuffs of the tunic.

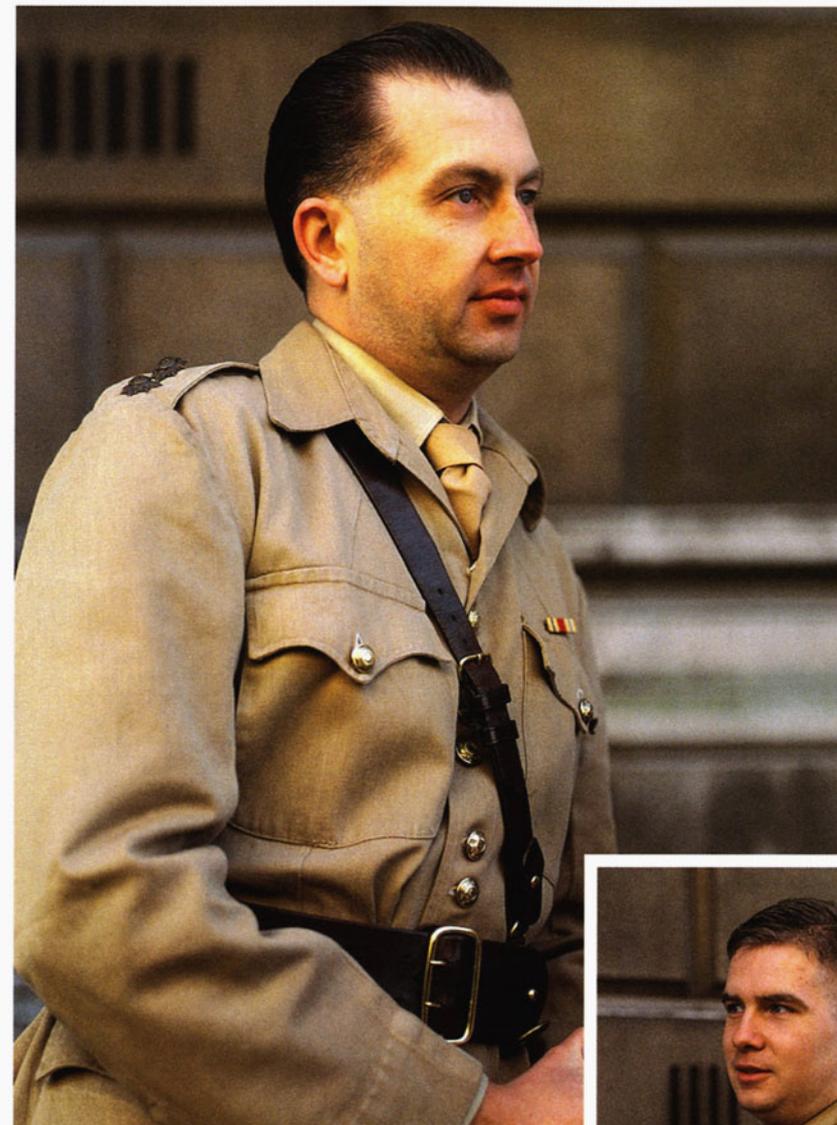


(Right) Rear view of an Indian JG cotton GS cap, with embroidered ventilator eyelets, and the headband split at the centre rear with a size adjustment lace - somewhat like an old pattern Scottish bonnet.



(Above) Singapore, 1945: a staff sergeant of Royal Artillery wears an Indian-made jungle green aertex bush shirt as working dress. This follows the pattern of the British bush shirt, with plain top pockets and concealed-entry flapped skirt pockets. Its buttons are typically Indian and cut from coconut husk. A separate belt in matching fabric existed for wear with the bush shirt, fastened with a brass two-prong buckle. In keeping with the order of dress this is replaced here by a late war Indian belt manufactured in green webbing with black non-reflective fittings. This was part of the complete set of 37 web equipment manufactured in jungle green from 1944. His headgear is a GS cap in jungle green cotton drill, also of Indian origin; this pattern was introduced from 1944. The Royal Artillery cap badge is the 'flaming bomb', here a wartime economy type in brown plastic.

(Right) Detail of locally-manufactured regimental slip-on for the Royal Artillery. His badge of rank is worn as white tapes and a simple diamond (representing the crown), sewn directly onto the right sleeve. This follows the precedent of shirt-sleeve order, where rank badges are worn on the right sleeve only; but it was not unknown for NCO rank to be worn on both sleeves. With KD uniforms tapes made from herringbone chevron lace mounted on KD fabric were sometimes sewn on or fixed to the sleeves with press studs or hooks-and-eyes.



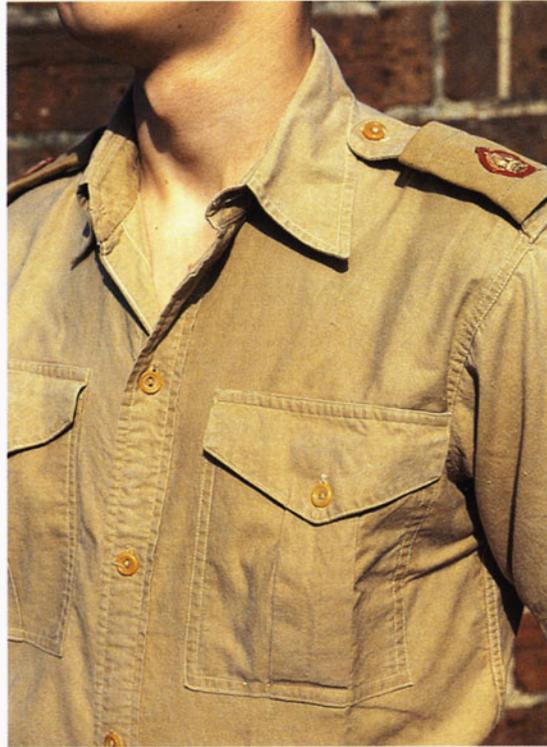
Italy, 1945: Officers' KD Variants

(Left) A lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards wears the khaki drill service dress tunic cut to the regulation Guards style, which differed in detail from the standard KD tunic. No collar badges were worn by the Foot Guards, and the cuffs were plain. Buttons were arranged in the distinctive regimental style as on the khaki wool barathea SD: three spaced evenly for the Grenadier Guards, three sets of two for the Coldstream Guards, two sets of three for the Scots Guards, two sets of four for the Irish Guards, and a single row of five for the Welsh Guards.



(Right) The regimental variations found among officers' wool service dress were also applied to the tropical SD uniform. The Rifle Brigade and King's Royal Rifle Corps - most of whose battalions during 1941-45 provided the mechanised infantry for armoured brigades and divisions - wore black composition buttons, and black Sam Browne belts with white metal fittings. Although the frequently ignored economy modifications introduced in 1942 applied to both the wool and KD uniforms, they were applied with even less rigour on the tropical tunics. This officer sports a tunic to the pre-1942 specifications, manufactured in a fine quality woollen gaberdine fabric.

(Right) An officer's private purchase lightweight cotton shirt with attached collar and full-length front opening, manufactured for tropical wear in 1941. Although the regulation aertex shirt was frequently used by officers such privately acquired shirts were not uncommon.



(Below) The variety of styling found in KD trousers is almost beyond the principles of 'uniform'. One common type manufactured in the UK and issued in quantity to all ranks of the three services from 1945 had this peculiar waistband arrangement, with a slotted wrap-over front waist extension and straps passing to each side, where they were fastened with a single-prong buckle. Each outer leg seam had an internal pocket, and a field dressing pocket was located on the rear right hip.



Royal Army Chaplains Department

The Army Chaplains Department was founded in 1796, gaining the title Royal in 1919 following outstanding service during the Great War. As well as attending to the spiritual needs of the men the battalion or regimental padre was responsible for their general welfare and well-being. Although not holding the King's commission members of the RACbD enjoyed the same status as officers, with relative rank, and lived in the officers' mess. Chaplains' duties were listed as Sunday services, baptisms, churchings, funerals,

attending the sick in hospital and reading prayers with convalescents, visiting soldiers under sentence in military prisons or detention barracks, and giving religious instruction to children, boy soldiers, officers, soldiers and their families.

On active service many chaplains worked closely with the unit medical personnel; and in prisoner-of-war camps - particularly under the atrocious conditions of Japanese captivity - many chaplains gave devoted care, often at the cost of their own lives.



(Left) Chaplains wore the same uniform as regular officers; it had black composition buttons and waist belt buckle, with denominational badges on the tunic collar and cap.



Netherlands East Indies, 1945: Indian JG Field Dress

(Above) While his section rest during counter-insurgency operations in the re-occupied Netherlands East Indies in November 1945, this junior NCO of the 10th Gurkha Rifles keeps a watchful eye on the approaches; the Sten just visible slung over his right shoulder suggests that the location is safe from any immediate attack.

(Right) Detail of the Indian jungle green GS cap with 10th Gurkha Rifles regimental cap badge, its design combining the traditional kukri with the stringed buglehorn of the Rifle regiments.

(Opposite) The Sten gun marks this Gurkha out as a junior NCO, perhaps the lance-naik leading a Bren section, but to avoid attracting the attention of the enemy he wears no badges of rank on his Indian JG battledress. The Nepalese hill people have pro-

vided soldiers for Britain's armies since 1816; collectively these soldiers from a number of martial tribes were known as Gurkhas. Their fighting prowess, good discipline and cheerful response to the demands of soldiering are legendary. During World War II manpower demands led to recruitment from some tribes not normally considered to have the necessary fighting spirit, and hurried training occasionally led to a diminished esprit. However, these were isolated cases; wherever the Gurkhas served they gained the respect of their comrades in arms, and the fear of their enemies.

Ten Gurkha regiments served during the war: 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment); 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles); 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles; 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles; 5th Gurkha Rifles (Frontier Force); 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Gurkha Rifles.

Gurkha Other Ranks used the Indian Army rank system, using the same badges of rank as their British equivalents: rifleman (private), lance-naik (lance-corporal), naik (corporal) and havildar (sergeant).





The dropping of the atomic bombs on 6 and 9 August 1945 led to Japan's unconditional surrender, signed on 2 September aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. The sudden end of hostilities brought its own problems. After years of harsh occupation many Asian peoples resisted a return to the prewar colonial status quo, and many Allied soldiers who had hoped to go home at last found themselves in action again, against insurgents among the very peoples they had liberated from the Japanese. The 10th Gurkha Rifles were among troops sent to the Netherlands East Indies to quell one of many such insurrections.

(Above left & above) Details of the Indian JG pouch. The heavy web with blackened steel fittings varied in shade even between the individual components of a single pouch. The base has three brass drainage eyelets. All pouches have the three loops for ballistite cartridges inside the flap, like early production British Mk 1 pouches.

(Left) Manufactured from 1943, the Indian-made machete had a square-ended blade, and a leather sheath which opened along its full length to allow easier withdrawal. Note also the quick-release tabs on the Indian pouches, which replaced press studs on new production examples from late 1945.

Great Britain, 1945: Coming Home

(Opposite) On a bright December day in 1945 a Royal Artillery gunner, one of the first draught to be sent home, arrives back at his local railway station. After three long years of separation his family are waiting, alerted by a call made from the dockside to one of the few neighbours 'who's on the phone'.

Our gunner is still unacclimatised, and in the chill English winter wears his greatcoat, in this case of Indian manufacture in an extremely coarse fabric. In pattern it is a copy of the British 1940 pattern 'greatcoat, dismantled'. As part of this new kit muster an equally coarse Indian-made suit of battledress is worn beneath. His white cotton kit bag, also replacement issue, is of Indian manufacture and has a drawcord at the opening rather than a series of eyelets through which a cord or lock could be passed. In his other hand he proudly carries a souvenir of his war service, formerly the property of a Japanese officer. Officially, returning with weapons was frowned upon, but in many cases determination succeeded in overcoming both official disapproval and covetous hands along the way.





Father and son reunited. Still proudly worn, his felt slouch hat marks him as a man who has returned from service in the Far East, one of Slim's 'Forgotten Army' (some soldiers nicknamed it the 'IWT hat' - 'I Was There.'). On its upturned brim it displays a flash in Royal Artillery colours, originally worn on the puggaree.

(Left) Detail of Indian-manufactured web anklets which have been modified with the addition of leather straps, less likely to slip than the original webbing. They also have added leather reinforcement along the bottom edge to stop the poor quality web material fraying.



Ephemera



(Left) With its windshield folded and lid closed down, the No.2 cooker doubled as a makeshift writing desk or card table. Shown here are period playing cards, cigarette lighter, Indian-manufacture AB64 paybook with white rather than brown cover, a packet of the infamous Indian-made 'Victory V' cigarettes, an airgraph letter from home, a picture of a loved one and period Christmas cards.

(Right) A selection of paperwork and ephemera relating to service in the Mediterranean and Far East theatres of operations. Laid out on a silk map of Burma are Italian lire occupation currency, Japanese occupation currency, and a selection of lettergrams and correspondence, including POW letter cards to and from a soldier in Japanese captivity at Malai, Singapore.

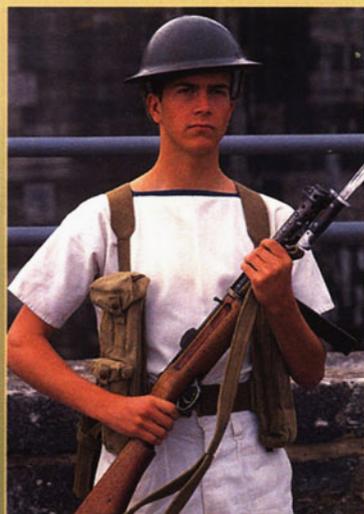




Kranji Military Cemetery, Singapore

Last resting place of but a few of the British and Commonwealth troops who gave their lives during World War II.

LEST WE FORGET



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