BOY E. J. SEARLE
Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Having enlisted as a Boy Soldier in the Recruiting Office and Medical Centre situated above Burtons Gents Outfitters shop at Chatham in Kent, on the29 March 1943 I left the family home with a few personal bits of luggage and was accompanied to the railway station in Dartford by my step mother, I'd probably said my farewells to my Father and Marianna my step sister at breakfast. My three elder sisters Molly, Kitty and Sheila had all left home before me to become Nurses in Wartime Hospitals. Having been sent a Railway Warrant with my joining instructions I had to report to the R.T.O. at the station prior to my departure. The train arrived I got into a Third class compartment and stood looking out of the open window at its lowest point with only a minimum of the leather strap used to raise and lower it showing. A blast on the Guards whistle a wave of his green flag a great snort of steam from the locomotive and we gently eased our way out of one environment and into the unknown next phase of my life, waving to the lady who'd cared for me over the last nine years of my life who slowly faded from my view. I can't remember too much about the journey but the devastation in south-east London due to the Blitz will always be with me. We pulled into Waterloo station where I left the 'loop-line' train from Dartford and navigated my way to the main Waterloo Terminus of Southern Railway with its 'umpteen' platforms on which most of the people were wearing uniforms of British, Commonwealth and Allied Servicemen and women.
Once again I sought the R.T.O.'s office and followed the instructions given regarding the Platform and departure time of the train to Aldershot. (They also advised as to where I could find the Church Army Mobile Canteen for a welcome cup of tea to help the sandwiches that mother had made for me down) When I found it I joined the end of the Queue (you queued for everything in those days). Eventually the carriages were shunted into the vacant platform the sliding gates were eased open and the passengers picked up their baggage in all there various forms from kitbags for soldiers and airmen to rolled hammocks for the sailors, everyone of course carried their gas-mask and some like me carried their bits it a brown-paper carrier bag with string handles. Slowly the queue eased its way to the barrier each of us offering our ticket/warrant to the uniformed official who duly cut a V shaped notch into one edge to prevent it from being reused. Eventually the queue I presume came to an end all the doors slammed to and the only ones remaining on the platform were the staff and the wives, sweethearts and relatives who'd come to see their loved ones off. It must have been an unwritten rule that those being seen off had the door position so that they could enjoy that final hug and kiss and get the last message "Don't forget to write!".

As the train slowly wended its way out of the station into the open air, I couldn't get over the vast area taken by the numerous pairs of lines as we negotiated a path across them at Clapham Junction and the train gathered speed to leave the metropolis and into the open country, the only stations I can remember after that were Surbiton and Woking. One other sight is firmly embedded into my memory is that of the advertisement for a brand of paint which took the form of two men at either end of a ladder appearing to be walking across a field in the countryside as we passed through.

Eventually we arrived at Aldershot, I think the Porter must have been a retired Drill Instructor as no-one was in doubt that we'd arrived (this was necessary as all Stations and Road signpost's had their names removed at the outbreak of the war so that any invader would have to find his way about with no help from the defenders) and where I and other lads were picked up from the RTO's Office where we'd been told to report on arrival and transported to

Parsons Barracks in a 15 cwt. Truck with a canvas canopy. We'd arrived on RAOC 'ground' and were the Second Wartime intake of Boy Soldiers.

We soon found out that the Company Sergeant Major's name was Searle (no relation) and we nicknamed him 'Panda' as he wore a black and white printed panda's head badge on his upper sleeve denoting Aldershot District or Southern Command area.

By coincidence another boy of the Third intake also bore the same surname of Searle, he was George and came from Little Bookham in Surrey, as our service proceeded we became very close friends. Other boy's names that I recall from No 1 Squad who had arrived a few weeks prior to us were:

Des Halsey, Les Quick, Hugh Webley, D. Griffiths, Sam Sly, W. Potter.

I think the first few days will always be remembered as being a bit 'hazy' because we were all having to readjust ourselves to a new way of life, from the privacy of our own cosy homes one day to the communal life of a barrack-room the next. One thing that fascinated me was listening to all the different dialects, until then I'd never heard a Scouse, Geordie or a West-country accent.

Parsons Barracks was quite close to the town and was a collection of two storey brick built accommodation blocks. These had front and rear central access doors with stairway to upper floor and Barrack Rooms on either side. The barrack rooms were centrally heated had sash type windows and hard wood floors, the beds were twin bunks and were quite high with metal mesh to support the three ' biscuits' in lieu of mattress. There were the usual administration buildings, Company Office, Guard-room with Flag-pole, Armoury and Quarter-masters Stores. The NAAFI was a wooden building at the Town end of the Barrack site and contained all the usual restaurant and games facilities. As our weekly income was nine shillings per week (45p) we were very restricted compared to a Private whose basic pay was twenty seven shillings (£1.35). Later we had a pay rise of one and sixpence (7½p).

We were all issued with SD uniforms with GS badges on the buttons, these were soon changed to Corps. Buttons giving us an opportunity to use our new Housewives.(an issued sewing kit in a linen roll secured by tapes, containing needles, cotton and a ball of wool….grey, socks for the use of!!)

We marched daily to the Education Centre about half a mile away in the direction of the Field-Stores, I think we were all quite good at square bashing as most of us had been in the Army Cadets after leaving school. (I know it was in my case as my father had been a CSM in the RASC and at this time was serving in the same capacity in the local Home Guard (ex LDV), being a good tutor I was soon promoted to Sergeant in the Royal West Kent's Cadets in Sutton at Hone where we used to meet weekly at St. Johns.)

The Officer responsible for our schooling was Captain Hackett assisted by WO1 Salabank and Sergeant Julian Duguid all of the RAEC. The latter we understood to be an author with several books to his credit. Their combined efforts saw us all achieve our Second Class Education Certificate. I for one was very grateful to be able to improve my education as having lived in North Kent from the outbreak of the war our school-time was reduced as some schools were converted into Hospitals etc., the children from these were then spread over the remaining schools resulting in 'part-time' education for most of us i.e. Boys in the mornings and girls afternoons. Further disruption was caused by Air-raid's, every time the

siren's sounded we would evacuate the classroom's and proceed to the allotted shelter, shepherded by Teacher's and Prefect's.

Behind Parsons Barracks was a small hill with a flat top that had been hard surfaced with Tarmac (The Redan?) It was climbed by a long flight of steps and from the summit had a good view of Aldershot Town Football stadium. Here we were taught the art of square-bashing by a Corporal from the Rifle Brigade and his standards were the highest, we were eager to learn and responded well.

Opposite our barracks was an older barrack complex that was occupied by Canadian troops rumour had it that there were 37,000 Canadians in and around Aldershot at that time, (the raid on Dieppe had occurred earlier in the year). This barracks had an enormous 'square' and when we were proficient our squad went on parade here with the whole area to ourselves, and as we went through our comprehensive routine, each squad member taking it in turn to bark the orders from a great distance. This spectacle attracted a big audience of North Americans and as our session concluded we marched back across the road to great applause.

In those day's we were so proud, so keen, when we cleaned the barrack room windows we polished the glass with newspapers and the wooden floor with a 'bumper'. The last boy out of the room erased all foot-prints so that the inspecting Officer would find it in absolutely pristine condition. All kit lay-outs were identical, each one a mirror image of the other, stiffened and packed to give the best presentation.

The Gymnasium was within the Barracks and apart from all the usual exercise routines of press-ups, running on the spot etc. we were involved in 'different' activities. One of these was for each of the class to collect and wear 'one' boxing glove then proceed to hit anyone you wished, quite an ordeal for the less robust and one quickly learned to keep your back to the wall if you did'nt you'd become the victim of a rabbit-punch whilst in the act of lunging at your own target, incidentally our PTI's surname was Danahar – brother of the famous National Champion.

Forays into Aldershot town were seldom we were always too busy with 'bull' or swatting homework but I do remember walking along the streets passing tattooist's and military outfitters who sold every Regimental Badge, most boy's wore a belt sporting his County or other favourite. I remember on one occasion a few of us found ourselves within the Town Football Ground where we came into conversation with a young woman who admitted to us that she was a 'Prostitute' and the only other person within the arena. I remember she sat with us and gave us the best talking-to in respect of casual sex and drug effects that anyone could have, because we knew she was talking from experience and believed her. The advice she uttered certainly stuck with me and the encounter is so vivid in my memory.

I remember at one time suffering from pains in my legs resulting in a few days in 'Sick-Bay' within the barracks, it appears these were 'growing pains' as I shot up in height from 4ft. 10½" to 5ft. 10" eventually. But going sick was quite a performance as you had to pack your small-kit in your haversack, report to the Company Office where the necessary paperwork ie. Sick Report was prepared for you to proceed on quite a long walk to the Cambridge Hospital via the Field Stores up Gun Hill past Buller Barracks and the RC Church built of corrugated iron to the hospital entrance….There had to be something wrong with you to inflict that routine on yourself!!!!

After just four months service our Squad was split up and a few of us found ourselves on our first posting, we were now members of 28 Bn.RAOC at COD Elstree which occupied the Film Studio's at Borehamwood. On arrival we were taken to a house located off Allum Lane in a quite up-market estate, I believe our neighbours included Anna Neagle and Richard Tauber we did not remain in this locality for very long and were moved to another house which was just a short walk from the railway station this was to be our billet/school. It was a detached property between the Post Office and the Dufay-Colour premises. It comprised four large rooms on each of the two floors, on the ground floor the two front rooms were classrooms divided by the hall and stairs, one of the rear rooms was our RAEC Instructors room the other was a kitchen/scullery where we used to do all our blanco and laundry work. The bedrooms each contained four folding beds the tops of which were plywood onto which we laid a 'Palliasse' (a linen bag stuffed with straw) to act as a mattress, the more straw you could cram in the greater the comfort! I don't recall us having lockers we had kit boxes instead and coat-hooks on which to hang our uniforms.

Some of the boy's from No.1 Squad were already in residence Les Quick and Hughie Webley are two I remember so we were soon 'shown the ropes'.

The main Camp of the Unit was located in a field which was situated behind the row of shops offices and industrial units that included the house we occupied, the main access for vehicles was via Theobald Street which ran alongside the railway line but there was a short cut using an unmade road which accommodated the Clarendon Club that was run like a NAAFI and a Public house whose name escapes me. We used this route to enter the camp area for our meals, QM Stores etc. The camp buildings were all standard Nissen huts linked by concrete footpaths and lined three sides of the square field, each hut was heated by a slow-combustion stove fuelled by coke or whatever you could find that was combustible.

Our lives were controlled by a weekly schedule dividing our days into periods of Education and Practical experience of Ordnance Procedures and Work. The former was carried out in the house in which we lived and our instructor was George? who watched over us like a Mother Hen and taught us subjects that comprise the Army Certificate of Education !st .Class plus Art and Handicrafts.

Learning skills for our future in the RAOC was much more interesting and in our situation did not involve instruction in the classroom but was 'hands on' in the makeshift 'Depot' crammed into the Aircraft Hanger sized buildings that comprised the film studio, in fact one of them had a full size head –on picture of a single engine fighter plane painted along an internal wall. I think the biggest studio was ex MGM located near the junction of Shenley Road and Elstree Way. Where ever we went as a group we would march and the senior soldier would be in charge, this was easily determined as he would be the boy with the lowest regimental number and we all knew each other by our 'last three'. Marching on roads was quite safe in those days as traffic was at a minimum due to petrol rationing, most people travelling by Bus Train or Shank's Pony.

Our march to work was about a mile, conveniently situated about half-way was a bakers shop called the 'Dutch Oven' , our squad would halt outside the premises and we would fall-out to make our purchases. Usually the assistants who served us were young ladies who were about our own age, the drill was that as we entered the shop with its mouth-watering aroma we would pick up a new white paper bag each walk along past the shelves of fresh fancies in a queue placing your selection into your bag and when you arrived at the till you told the assistant what you'd picked up showing the cheapest at the top of your bag hiding the more

expensive beneath, paid then rejoined the squad forming on the road outside having paid about half the price of the produce you'd selected. Then complete our march to 'work'.

We were allocated jobs from the Control Office where sometimes we would help with paper work or our services would be used in other departments doing stocktaking, inspecting returned stores or equipment from units moving to operational areas, I remember one occasion when lots of leather personal items such as belts, cross straps with cartridge pouches, bayonet frogs etc came back from a regiment that had been issued with webbing equivalents. As the leather items were destined for disposal I think we all went back to our billet wearing well polished belts under our tunics at the end of that work session!

Our billet was in the main street through the village and a short distance along the road was a row of shops selling clothes, shoes and a hairdressers at the farthest end was a small car/motor cycle shop that had a petrol pump at the roadside, to the rear of this building was a room converted into a café, this establishment was one of our favourites as they sold thick sliced toast with a liberal coating of dripping which included some of the rich tasty jelly from the bottom of the basin…. my mouth still 'waters' at the thought of it!

At intervals the conscript soldiers attended Cadre courses that gave them practice in the art of field craft, we accompanied them when they went on week long exercises to practice their skills. On leaving the Camp wearing battle order and carrying weapons ie. Rifle, Sten, LMG(Bren) or Boy's Anti tank Rifle we would march in sections along the route, each section being on opposite sides of the road and a sensible distance apart to minimise casualties in the event of ambush, on one occasion we had a fighter plane simulate a strafing attack along an exposed section of road causing us to dive into the undergrowth, we presumed the plane had come from the DeHavilland airstrip at Radlett all we knew was that he was too close for comfort and one hoped that your Tin-Hat was covering your whole body when you almost felt you sensed the planes exhaust. Another situation catered for was a Gas attack, when we had to don our gas-masks unroll and cover ourselves with flimsy gas capes which were carried rolled with quick-release knots on our haversacks. Some parts of our route took us across country but we always ended up at the same place on each exercise, in a meadow opposite the 'Leather Bottle' Pub in the village of Leverstock Green near Hemel Hempstead.

An 'Advance Party' had come ahead of us and had set up the field kitchen, store tent and latrines so that soon after our arrival a piping hot meal was ready for us we used our mess-tins for all meals, one for food the other for drink and washing up facilities consisted of a Dixie half full of hot water. Toilet facilities consisted of a trench dug in the corner of the field surrounded by a hessian screen.

Food was cooked along one side of the field near a hedgerow with overhanging branches to protect the 'Field Kitchen' from inclement weather, the cooker was constructed on a pair of low-level walls about two feet apart and one foot high that supported a metal grid and a 45-gallon gallon drum with one end removed, placed across the grid serving as an oven.

Food was stored in a Bell-tent, I remember one night a pair of us were on prowler patrol and feeling the pangs of hunger we raided the tent hollowed a loaf and filled each half with pineapple chunks from a tin (catering size) opened with a bayonet (18 inch variety). The weapon issued to foot patrol's.

Patrolling the site was a tricky affair as all ranks slept where ever they wanted each wrapped in their ground-sheet after creating a hollow for the hip bone to fit into and all praying it didn't rain.

Daily fieldcraft and tactical exercises were carried out in the neighbouring countryside using blank ammunition and thunder-flashes, including a thunder flash mortar where one was used to propel another from a tube. Certain senior NCO instructors were permitted to throw No. 69 Grenades – these were made from Bakelite and had Always Fuzes. We had one fatality using these who happened to be one of the Instructors.

Marching back to our Camp in Borehamwood on one occasion another Boy and myself were told 'as you are boys you can carry the Boy's Anti-tank Rifle(a ½" calibre beast). The gun was heavy, the day was hot and we were lagging someway behind the main body when suddenly an open touring car with an old farmer type at the wheel came trundling along, he stopped and said that he was passing our camp and 'Would we like a lift?' Would we! We couldn't get into that old Jalopy quick enough. Trouble was as sped past our marching comrades we made the mistake of waving to them, resulting in a spell of Jankers for not keeping our heads down in the car.

After spending eight months at Elstree another Boy soldier Bill Allen Muncey and myself were posted to 6 Battalion RAOC a Vehicle Depot situated south of Nottingham. We were the only Boy's on the site and looked out of place in our Service Dress and were promptly told to replace it with 'Battle Dress'. The next question we were asked was 'did we have a Driving Licence?' our negative answer resulted in us being sent immediately to the Driving School in Nottingham which was located in a large school that had been taken over for Wartime Activities, the instructors were all London Passenger Transport drivers conscripted for their skills. Bill and I were billeted in a private house 55 Gedling Grove…I think it's still standing! The carpets had been removed so our hobnail boots played havoc with the softwood floors and we slept on low level bunk beds. I can't remember what the messing arrangements were but the regimental office was in Arboretum Street (that's where we were paid).

^We started our course riding motor cycles in what was the School playground doing all the essentials, starting (by kickstart) then moving, stopping and as we gained confidence turning left and right leaning our bodies in the appropriate direction and it wasn't long before we were out of the gates and riding 'follow the leader' on the public highway. The leader being the instructor who communicated to us by hand signals indicating which gear we should be in by the number of fingers raised on his right glove. As it was wartime traffic was at a minimum and we enjoyed ourselves on our Matchless 350cc (or were they Ariel 'Red Hunters?) machines and conquered the art of riding with no mishaps.

Our introduction to four wheels was quite a pantomime, commencing with the Ford 15cwt.with canvas cab and tilt. Our problem was mastering the fierce clutch but like all the other students we blamed the 'Kangaroo' petrol until we mastered the necessary clutch and throttle control technique for smooth gear changes. We graduated to the Three Ton Bedford and found that this was quite docile and had a luxurious 'Cab', our training area was quite large extending to Buxton in Derbyshire and the routes chosen had some very challenging gradients for going up and down. Driving in the City was just as hazardous as many of the streets had wood-block surfaces, when damp weather prevailed brakes were useless so one used the gearbox to slow down especially when approaching traffic lights or you'd slide right through them!

The final vehicle to challenge our skills was the Guy Quad, this was designed to tow a 25 Pdr. Gun/Howitzer with its ammunition tender and Gun Crew, we were only concerned with the towing part! This was like starting all over again as the gear box was of the 'crash' type no luxury of synchromesh, these gears could play the most awful tunes until we mastered the knack of double- declutching, I can remember going up steep hills changing down a gear and counting up to six before engaging the lower gear, as the cab was large enough to accommodate a gun-crew we could all share the success of good driving and learned from each others mistakes. As the instructor was seated next to you any glaring mistakes resulted in a straight right punch on the shoulder muscle, an effective deterrent! Our course lasted only a few weeks and was quite intensive but we enjoyed it and passed on all vehicles on 26 May 1944

Our social life wasn't very exciting we did see hordes of American Service men on the occasions we did venture downtown, Pubs especially 'The Trip to Jerusalem' were well patronised and when walking after dusk across parkland horizontal bodies were a tripping hazard especially in 'The Forest'. I remembered the unofficial lecture we had in Aldershot Football ground!

Back in Chilwell Depot we were issued with our Driving Licences, which were endorsed to allow us to drive on MT holidays (days when vehicle movements were kept to a minimum to conserve fuel) authorised by Brigadier McGillop's signature and Driver IC badges which we wore with pride. We enjoyed life in the Camp the food was good and sometimes our tea meal was augmented with delicacies cooked by ATS Girls being taught how to cook by the Head Chef in their spare time.

We joined a Pool of drivers and our duties were what ever job came along, from collection of broken down vehicles using the Scammell Recovery (not an easy job for boys as it had a 'Gate' change gear box and a very heavy clutch) to internal movements……and this was where the art of reversing an articulated lorry was learned, the term 'reverse-lock' became apparent and I'm glad there were no spectators around when I was confronted with this challenge. One interesting little job was fixing small brass plates to the front of AFV's inscribed with the words 'This tank was purchased by the kind donations of the people of …….Town/City during their War Weapons

Week'.As the Forces were preparing for D Day so the activity at Chilwell escalated and we were given a crash course within the Depot to drive Tracked vehicles….Valentines, Matilda's to start with then the big boy's Churchill's and Sherman's the latter we saw being fitted with inflatable skirts for launching from LCT's these had been designed for such use and sported a propeller at the rear but I don't recall seeing a rudder!!

Loading tanks on trains was an experience never to be forgotten. The train could consist of twenty plus wagons of the 'well' variety ie. The load sat in a lowered section between the bogies at each end of the truck presumably to lower the centre of gravity. With the Guards Van removed the train would be shunted up to a dead end where the truck top and the loading bay were the same level thus allowing the vehicles to be driven straight on and along the entire length of the train, sounds easy but for each wagon there were two points of balance… one going down and the other going up! The latter was the 'scary' bit because as the tank ascended the limited vision through the rectangular visor moved from the grounds surface skywards, concentration on keeping the track levers in the straight ahead position was vital and what a relief when one crossed the point of balance and the nose of the tank sank earthwards and the 'engine end' was in view again.

Things moved at quite a pace in those days and one could be posted almost at the drop of a hat and we found ourselves out on detachment to the village of Breedon on the Hill where we were billeted in a Church all I can remember was that it was very damp, as one dragged a steel boot heel along the wooden floor there would be a small puddle at the end! From here we would be taken as a group to Mulliner's factory where Radio Transmitting vehicles were being made and drive them to a reception area in a temporary Depot in the country, I can't remember where. One period when we were off duty we found ourselves in Ashby de la Zouch a very quiet town I recall going to the cinema the shape of which once inside was similar to a slice of cake wide at the back and narrow at the screen end.

Our next camp was a Nissen Hutted variety within the grounds of Donnington Park where vehicles were stored on the open grassland. One job I remember doing here was driving a 15cwt. Morris Commercial water bowser round the site filling Fire Buckets. One day Bill and I found ourselves detailed to report to Company Office with others plus full kit, rumour was we would join a pool of drivers somewhere in the South of England who once the bridgehead had been established in Normandy would ferry new vehicles to a forward Field Park then return for another consignment. Imagine our excitement at being on 'Active' service that thought was short lived as an ATS clerk checking our camp documents 'in' i.e. cigarette and sweet ration cards noticed the rank shown as 'Boy', after consulting an officer seated behind her, we were quickly removed from the list and returned to our billet our hopes of getting into action dashed!!! Shortly after this on 2nd August 1944 we found ourselves posted again but this time it was back to the Boys Training Unit at Leicester where we were reunited with old friends and met the rookies that had followed us in later intakes. By now I was an 'old sweat' of seventeen months service!!

We were billeted in a large house on London Road (I think it was 275) which had many floors, needless to say as we were the last to arrive we went to the highest level about the fourth floor not quite the attic! I remember we had a Dormer window in our room and the room was shared by at least four of us using bunk beds. The ground floor reception rooms were used as Class-rooms for Education and Trade Training and utility room for Laundry (hand washing of clothes, ironing etc.) A large garden contained fruit trees, needless to say the produce was eaten long before it ever got a chance to ripen.

The dining hall was a few streets away and we always marched to and from taking about ten minutes each way and I think we shared this facility with other military personnel as I remember there was an exhibition case containing a array of hand combat weapons of the type issued to Commando's which was fascinating to us young soldiers. Another longer march was the weekly visit to the Public Bath-house when we all formed up in three ranks and marched through the streets again with our washing kit and clean clothes rolled up and carried under the arm. The number of baths was limited so depending where you were in the squad when you initially formed up determined how hot the bathwater was as the boiler struggled to keep up with demand.

Our curriculum included Physical Training, one event that I'll never forget was a ten mile walking race, which none of us was familiar with, most of us were very competitive and put every thing we had into these activities and walking at speed required a special technique with vigorous arm action as well as legs after crossing the finishing line near our Billet I didn't know how to stop my legs, they just wanted to keep going and I had great difficulty standing still, I haven't walked competitively since.

A part of our military training which we thoroughly enjoyed was attending the RAOC Battle School situated North of Leicester in Bradgate Park and was about a week in duration. Here we were taught the art of camouflage and shown how to deal with situations encountered on the battlefield including the effectiveness of items such as Trapwire a very cheap and effective way of bringing cross country movements to a standstill. It had been carefully laid across bracken and was almost impossible to see, we simply ran into it all falling over and could have been mown down whilst struggling to disentangle ourselves if it had been for real, especially when things were happening to make you panic They also had a taut wire spanning a lake, by climbing a tall tree on one side of the water feature one could access the hand grips of a wheeled trolley supported by the wire, after grabbing the handles each of us was launched into space knowing full well that the wire was just slack enough to leave the passenger dangling over the water fortunately the weather was kind and we quickly dried off.

One Saturday during the course we were given some time off and a group of us walked to the village of Anstey and decided that we'd go to the cinema which was showing a film of interest, we had a quick check on our collective finances only to find that we didn't have enough money for all the tickets, but Sam Sly one of our more senior members took what money we had and went to discuss the situation with the youth in the ticket office and returned wearing a huge grin bearing tickets for all….he'd made up the deficiency with packets of Durex!!! (Free issue from the PAC)

As our Boy Service days came to an end we must have been interviewed with regard to our future career's as on 7th.October 1944 I now a mature 17½ year old with others found ourselves at The School of Ammunition within CAD Bramley (No.1 Battalion RAOC) joining the 89th Course for Ammunition Examiners. But that's another story……