Memories of Winter 1961/62
By George Tether and Chris Kimpton

1961 - 1963

January1962 by George

It was in January 1962 that I arrived at Brookwood station with a number of other boys. We were of low spirits, after having spent Christmas with our families and facing the prospect of another long period on the drill square, bumpering the floor, polishing this and that or being shouted at by some b…. It had been snowing very heavily and there was a deep carpet of fresh snow covering the ground, so we were not really surprised that our three-tonner wasn't there to take us to the camp. What a welcome reprieve and a chance to spend some of the money we got from home on a cup of coffee, whilst waiting for the truck.

After a while someone had the brilliant idea of phoning the guard-room, in order to find out where the truck was.

The lucky caller was informed that the camp was snowed under and that those waiting could return home for a few days, celebrate the new year and were to call back in a few days, for instructions as to when they should return. All very nice, BUT a few "volunteers" would be required for snow-clearing duties! Needless to say that the caller was volunteer number one! I can't remember whether anyone else was still in the room for one minute longer than it took to pass the good news on to the rest of us, but I for one, have never had a more pleasurable train ride back home.

And here is Chris's contribution to the same event:

I clearly remember the bad winter that you are talking about, but for different reasons!!! If you can recall, a message went out on the BBC Light Program informing people that due to the severe winter conditions being experienced in the Aldershot area, all leave was being extended for a couple of days and that service personnel should contact their units to confirm details. Well, we were due back on the 7th January, which by coincidence is also my birthday, I decided not to follow instructions but to pretend that I couldn't telephone (because we didn't have a phone then) and celebrate my 16th birthday at home with my family. when I finally arrive back at Blackdown, to my horror, all my feeble excuses that I had carefully invented, evaporated like the melting snow!!!!! the six foot snowdrifts that stopped me coming back weren't there. the sun was shining, and there wasn't even a cloud in the sky. All the snow had been cleared. I reported in to the guardroom and was escorted to the A coy office, where I was met by Sgt Pete Bridger, Steevens Pln Sgt who ordered me to wait. After what seemed to be an eternity I was marched in front of the OC, Major (Plod) Macey and given a stern lecture. It was my first term after leaving recruits, my first day in Steevens, and my first taste of A Company discipline. I was given a chance to explain my absence, which was absolutely feeble. Plod gave me a rollicking, which included the part that he was well within his rights to have me shot for desertion he then asked me if I was willing to accept his punishment to which I readily agreed, he then got up and thumped me....I was marched out winded, given a cup of tea by the company clerk (I've forgotten her name) and then ordered to report to the 30 metre range by the trade training wing. Plod then appeared and proceeded to show me his skills with a pistol. I will never ever forget this day. When I think back, on the alternative punishments that could have been awarded, like the dreaded RP or nick even, then I considered myself extremely lucky that plod was my OC.