

SOME OF OUR FRIENDS

Sketches In The Street

(Drawn for "The Listener" by D. K. TURNER)



THESE sketches by a young New Zealand artist, D. K. Turner, show some of the types of American servicemen likely to be encountered in many of our city streets these days, but what we show here is, of course, by no means a complete gallery. Indeed, the ordinary New Zealand townsman who up till now has had no difficulty in recognising the Tank Corps by its beret and the Wren by her characteristically school uniform, may well feel a little out of his depth when confronted by the wealth and variety of uniforms displayed by our visitors. He who would earn the proud soubriquet of Man About Town would do well to familiarise himself with the uniforms habitually worn by members of the United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

Thanks to gob hat and unlaundryable collar, the American sailor is easily recognised. And the naval officer is remarkable on wet days for the little oiled-silk cover which protects the top of his white cap. Those who call themselves authorities on uniforms, tell us that the U.S. Navy blouse is said to be copied, like that of the British sailor, from the riding habit of the Duchess of Cumberland, that U.S. black ties are worn in mourning for Lord Nelson, and that the three stripes on the American sailor's collar commemorate three great British naval victories. Perhaps it is true.



The question of U.S. uniforms is complicated by the fact that three distinct uniforms are allotted to each serviceman, first the "field" or "working" uniform, worn in actual fighting or on manoeuvres. Then the "service" uniform, worn in town or around the post, or on ship board when doing administrative work. Finally, there is "dress" uniform, worn at formal functions, reviews, and dances.

Fortunately, not all these uniforms need concern the man in the street, who will be called upon in most cases to identify merely the "service" uniform.

The uniform of the American soldier has changed steadily since the Revolution, when the few soldiers who owned uniforms wore elaborate affairs modelled on the French. A Prussian influence (spiked helmets and tubular tunics), was noticeable after 1870, but the Spanish-American War proved the usefulness of khaki. Since the first World War, the uniform has continued to change, and the uncomfortable upright collars and breeches with heavy puttees have been replaced by rolled collars and canvas leggings worn over olive drab trousers.

For colour in uniform both army and navy must yield place to the Marine Corps, though the fully glory of Marine dress uniform must be familiar to New Zealanders only from cigarette advertisements and such films as *To the Shores of Tripoli*.

Since 1800, the Marines have worn dress uniforms consisting of navy coat with red trimmings, sky blue trousers with scarlet stripe. By 1898 they had caps instead of shakos. To-day, the uniform is modernised, but the colour scheme remains the same. When serving overseas, the Marine Corps leaves dress uniform at home, and is content to enliven the streets by a flashing smile.