

OUR "CHANGE" PARADE

"All out for Change Parade, and make it snappy," bawled our Corporal. We grabbed our motely rags and marched over to the C. & N. Store, Headquarters of the notorious Q.M. Sergeant. The first man up proffered a pair of socks. The Sergeant glowered over the counter, snatched the offending sock from the Driver and roared, "These been washed?" "Um—er—yes, sir," the timid owner replied. "Don't seem like it, to me," says the Sergeant as he lifts them to his nose, "What's wrong with 'em, don't you ever mend your clothes, should take more care of your things.

Next man. "What in tarnation do you want me to do with this," the irascible Sergeant shouts, as he takes up Cap P.S.

"A change that's all," returns the owner.

"No show, got hair oil on it," snarls the Q.M. bloke as he flips it back.

Number three jauntily tosses a Battledress upon the counter and states that he wants a good fit and tunic and trousers of a matching colour. The Sergeant froths a bit and croaks in his rage, "No show, haven't got your size, not a match in the place. Why in the name of so and so you fellers drag your battle-dresses along here I don't know. Take it back, we won't be having any in for months, orders from Wellington." (Shelves loaded to capacity).

We are not making much progress but the fourth Driver walks boldly to the counter and dangles a pair of boots. The sight of these throws the irritable one into a fresh paroxysm of rage.

"These 'ave bin burnt," he shrieks, "and you've deliberately rubbed mud over the hole."

"Oh no sir," coyly rejoined the owner.

"You DID," said the Sergeant in a voice pregnant with ill-temper, "what am I gonna do with 'em?"

He pounded the boots upon the counter muttering something about an enquiry, that boots cost money, that it was a wilful attempt to deceive. He gradually subsided, almost immediately turned purple, snorted through his reddened proboscis and thumped his fist upon the boards. The Driver was suggesting a change of greatcoat. The dear old fellow behind the counter however, had spotted the almost complete wardrobe being worn under the coat, and guessed that the swollen chest measurement was an effort to obtain a new double-breaster. The man was summarily dismissed amid much grinding of teeth, blowing of froth, and stamping of feet.

"What's all this," the demon enquires as he flips my tattered rags through his horny hands.

"To be changed, Sergeant," I politely reply.

"That's what you think," he aptly returns. He examines all articles with microscopic thoroughness, snorts a few times, wipes a bead or two of sweat from his overhanging brow and asks me how long I have had the clothing. By way of reply and evidence I give him my card wherein all issues are dated. He works through the list, blows his nose, hums and ha's, wastes a great deal of time with disparaging remarks. In the end, I am 7 per cent. successful, I sign my card, feel very bright and escape from the store. —FRETE.

FIRST NEW ZEALANDER IN ACTION

The Libyan frontier on the night of August 22, 1940. A battalion of a famous English regiment receive orders to get urgently, information regarding the Italian enemy. A prisoner must be taken. The area is just North of Fort Capuzzo, on the road to Bardia. A New Zealand officer is attached to the regiment. He persuades the battalion commander to allow him to accompany the raiding party. Thus, in a characteristic spirit of adventure, Lieut-Colonel T. C. Wallace became the first of our countrymen to participate in an action against the enemy.

The fighting patrol of one officer and fourteen others wore sandshoes and steel helmets, and carried two rifles, two machine-guns and an anti-tank rifle. In a parade an inspection was carried out to see that no clue as to their identity was carried. Trucks bore the men to a point near which it was known there were Italians. The journey was silently completed on foot. In the black Egyptian night, a barbed-wire entanglement was cut and the little party crept through to the bitumen road. Here, it was hoped, a motor cyclist could be snared so a wire was stretched across the road. An hour passed and no cyclist had eventuated so it was decided to go on. Voices and occasional bumping could be heard. At a road junction a hangar loomed up. They silently surrounded it—but it was empty. The moon came out brilliantly, their steel bayonets glittered. The enemy could possibly see them. Enemy trucks could now be seen, and about a hundred and fifty men. Stealthily, silently, the raiders crept closer until they were a matter of yards from the nearest of the foe. The signal was given. Every man rushed forward in a bayonet charge. Yells of surprise and fear.

Then the signal was given for the party to retire. There were seven prisoners, one of whom cried out to give the Italians a direction in which to send a hail of machine-gun fire. They fired mostly high, and a sergeant who covered the retreat returned some deadly fire from his machine-gun. Base Camp was then made without further incident.

*Captain T. C. Wallace of the
New Zealand Divisional Cavalry
while attached to the 32nd Buffs
Coldstream Guards accompanied
a Fighting Patrol into enemy
territory in the area just North
of Fort Capuzzo on the night of
the 22/23 Aug. 40. The enemy
were engaged with the bayonet
10 were killed and 7 taken prisoner.
25th August 40. J. MacLagan, Colonel.*

A letter from the
Coldstream Guards.

