

Hamish

252 Aircraft Apprentice Ian Bruce Arthur Hamish McCrackers joined the Royal Air Force in December, 1953. His documents show that he was mustered as "Agricultural Assistant u/t Ceremonial Mascot" for duty with No. 1 (Apprentice) Wing of No. 1 Radio School. For short he answers to the name of Apprentice Hamish McCrackers.

Christened simply "Crackers" his full Christian names record that he was selected for No. 1 Radio School jointly by Sir Ian Orr-Ewing (M. P. for Weston-super-Mare) and Mr. Arthur Wilmot, one time M. F. H. and a well-known judge at Harringay and elsewhere. Also immortalised in his Christian names is the fact that at the time of his entry to the R. A. F. the Radio Apprentice Wing at Locking was commanded by Wing Commander James Morgan, D. S. O., (Sassenachs may need to be reminded that Hamish is Gaelic for James). Finally it so happened that at the time there were three "Macs" serving at Locking: Wg. Cdr. J. S. McLean, O. B. E., D. F. C. (O. C. Admin. Wing), Wg. Cdr. D. A. McLaren, O. B. E. (Training Officer), and Sqn. Ldr. McDonald (S. Ad. O.)—hence the prefix "Mc" Modesty prevents any explanation of the remaining Christian name.



Hamish and his first attendant A/A Wise

When "enlisted" the following details were included in the particulars notified to the Record

Office and Headquarters, Technical Training Command: -

- (a) Age: 20 months
- (b) Sex: Male
- (c) Colour: Skewbald
- (d) Height: 38 inches
- (e) Place of Birth: Scotland
- (f) Intelligence: Above average: very quick to learn
- (g) Discipline: (i) No entries on his Form 120, but twice admonished for inflicting minor abrasions on the leg of the Wing Warrant Officer: 355581 W. O. H. Parkes, M. B. E.
(ii) Shows a tendency, like many apprentices, to break bounds, having escaped from his Paddock four times in a week.
- (h) Bearing: Stomach protrudes due to extreme youth. Needs a haircut (again, a common Apprentice failing)—but permitted to retain long hair during the winter due to his spartan way of life.
- (j) Other Characteristics: Looks down upon Goats.
- (k) Career: Signed on for 30 years. Should qualify as Junior Technician after three years Apprenticeship. To be retained at No. 1 Radio School throughout his man's service.



App. Hamish McCrackers. Induction Parade by Sir Ian Orr-Ewing, M. P., on 13th March, 1954

Further details were supplied on request from Headquarters, Technical Training Command, as follows:-

- (l) Marital Status: Single
- (m) Area of Choice: Station Commander's garden

After a short period of initial training during which time he was fully kitted-out, through the generosity of Mr. Thomas Hansford, of Weston-Super-Mare, who presented his ceremonial coat, Hamish took part in his first ceremonial parade when the Wing paraded for his Christening and Inspection. These ceremonies were performed by Sir Ian Orr-Ewing, M.P., as the picture shows, on the 13th March, 1954.

Since that date Apprentice Hamish McCrackers has progressed by leaps and bounds, On the first Passing-Out Parade, with the 68th Entry at Easter, 1954, he acquitted himself well (after a poor performance at the dress rehearsal—but we know the answer to this one now!), except that, as Air Marshal Sir Charles Guest, K.B.E., C.B., the Reviewing Officer commented in his address to the Entry after the parade, he failed to give an "Eyes Right." With the 69th Entry in July, when the Passing Out was a "Wet Weather" one, indoors, Hamish was less at home, no doubt considering that it was quite unnecessary to come indoors just because it was raining.

Between the two Passing-Out Days, Hamish had many other ceremonial appearances. In June he led the Apprentices' Pipe and Trumpet Bands when they appeared for the first time at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court. Here he was quartered with the Household Cavalry, and it must be recorded that he appeared a trifle swollen-headed on his return to Locking after this giddy time in higher society circles. During Battle of Britain Week he looked his best and drew the crowds as he marched and countermarched with the Band on the Beach Lawns at Weston-super-

Mare. Probably he enjoyed most of all appearing with the Band at the Cheddar Horse Show, where he clearly thought he was the best in his class.

There have, it is true, been occasions when Apprentice H. McCrackers has got into trouble, and caused anxiety to many, from Pony Boy A.A. Wise up to the Station Commander. In his early days his main offences were biting, kicking and rearing up on his hind legs when on parade. These minor failings soon gave way to a more serious offence: breaking out of camp. His most successful "break" was a night sortie to the Vicar of Locking's garden. A personal call on the Vicar by his Wing Commander and a working party of apprentices soon restored the damage and the strained relationships, but certain letters on his personal file remain as testimonies to this regrettable incident in an otherwise unblemished record. It should perhaps be added that Hamish makes amends for this and other trivial misdemeanours by going to Church regularly, and marching past thereafter, on the first Sunday of each month.

At the time of going to press it is understood that McCrackers is considering submitting an application to inquire into his position on the roster to Leading Apprentice. Though he has shown undoubted promise during his first year of service, it is thought that his sole claim to promotion to L.A.A.—that he leads the Wing on parade—is scarcely sufficient at this stage to justify his appointment to N.C.O. Apprentice rank.

NOTE:

Hamish has authorised us to deny categorically that he has ever had any dealings with a certain quadruped, popular at that other place in Buckinghamshire, nor does he ever intend to send "it" a Valentine (para (j) above refers).

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