

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY.

No. P.S. 473/5

SUBJECT.

Mr. J. Galbraith, M.P.,
- complaint by boy from
H.M.S. Ganges.

rotation and
The enclosed is referred for ~~a draft reply, please.~~

~~If this cannot be provided WITHIN DAYS~~

the Parliamentary Secretary would be glad to be notified in
order that an interim reply can be sent.

The Parliamentary Secretary has given instructions
that this docket is not to be referred to more than one
marking in addition to the original marking without authority
from his Office.

~~D. S. C.~~
~~N.E.W.~~
DXT
P.S. to Mr. Secy.

N.E.W. 509

for a copy to be sent to the C.O., H.A.
Ganges if considered necessary

J. Stuartford
P.S. to Parliamentary Secretary.
22-10-53

Noted. It is suggested that the letter itself
should be sent to C.O. Ganges for information.
D.V.T. has been added to the marking.

A. Hoelle
D.V.C. 23/10

Concur with action proposed by MISC
Letter accordingly.
B.K. Clark for H.A. & N.C.W. 30 10 53

~~M. J. Ganges~~
D.V.T. 26/10

28. 9. 53.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and many others with the same views as myself, who, for naval regulations, have got to stay anonymous. I am a boy, second-class, in Her Majesty's Navy, stationed at H.M.S. GANGES, Shotley, a training school for lads wishing to make the Navy their career. I am only fifteen, and will have to suffer, and suffer is the word, the service till the age of twenty-five, ten years, with another five years to do in the reserve fleet after that. I joined with the view of making a good thing of it, getting on, and be happy in it. All that was squashed in the first six weeks. Now I hate the service like poison and would do anything in my power to get out of it. The place is a prison! the officers are pure tyrants and the food is better not talked about. I've always wanted to join the Navy, so as soon as I could, I did. Till the day I die I shall regret that hateful day I went to the recruiting office and signed my name to that paper enrolling me in the Royal Navy for TEN WHOLE YEARS! Someone should sue the government for false ~~xx~~ advertising, plastering all the magazines with "Make the Royal Navy your Career."

Why can't they have a trial period for lads like us, to see if we like the service. If we don't, let us out, and everyone is still happy. Oh! just one other thing - leave. Do you know that from September 8th till December 18th I won't see the outside of the place, not till I'm a boy, first-class. Well I'll tell you now, sir, if someone doesn't do something about conditions here, we, ourselves, will, and I don't think anyone would like that.

Your humble servant on behalf of the boys
of H.M.S. GANGES.

(This letter was unsigned, but it was later established that the writer was BLAIR, A.K. J.926380, Boy 2nd Class).

28/9/53.

http://www.godfreydykes.info

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and many others with the same views as myself, who, for naval regulations, have got to stay anonymous. I am a boy, second-class, in Her Majesty's Navy, stationed at H.M.S. GANGES, Shotley, a training school for lads wishing to make the navy their career. I am only fifteen, and will have to suffer, and suffer is the word, the service till the age of twenty-five, ten years, with another five years to do in the reserve fleet after that. I joined with the view of making a good thing of it, getting on, and be happy in it.

Ask Admiralty if time
Bays required to sign on
to 10 days - 10 days.

See
P. 457
53

4301

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the first six weeks.

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anyone would like that.

Your humble servant
on behalf of the boys of
H.M.S. CAMBES.



24/10
Commander Gallbraith, M.P.
Under-Secretary of State for
Houses of Parliament Scotland
Westminster
London, S.W.1

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY.

No. P.S.

157/53

SUBJECT.

Commander T.D. Galbraith, M.P.

Conditions of Service for Boys.

The enclosed is referred for a draft reply, please.

If this cannot be provided WITHIN DAYS

the Parliamentary Secretary would be glad to be notified in order that an interim reply can be sent.

The Parliamentary Secretary has given instructions that this docket is not to be referred to more than one marking in addition to the original marking without authority from his Office.

P.S. to Parliamentary Secretary.

45

COPY

P.S. 430/54

9, Kingswick Close,
Sunninghill,
Ascot.

October 6th, 1954.

C. E. Mott-Radclyffe, M.P.

Sir,

I am a widow, and at the moment a perplexed and worried parent. My son who is on H.M.S. GANGES tells me about the existing unhappy conditions among the boys there, and wants to leave. He, previous to going to GANGES was nearly 2 years on the ARETHUSA. His ability average, his conduct very good. Before he went to the GANGES he was quite sincere about his intentions of making his career in the Navy, but is now feeling a bit disillusioned by the feeling of discontent amongst his associates. Where one boy runs away, one regards him as a square peg in a round hole! but when forty boys run away "What is one to think"!

A few weeks later the boys in my son's mess were awakened by a crashing table, after lights out, to find one of their number hanging from the beam. (This incident leaves me void of description).

These young boys are not delinquents, sent to H.M.S. GANGES for corrective training, but boys of good character and intelligence, and they should be treated as such. I know strict discipline is necessary where a collective body of youths are concerned, but is not this carrying discipline to the nonsensical! - when a Petty Officer makes a division of boys double back and forth through a puddle of water till they are soaking below the knees, with no means afterwards to dry their clothing, or is a drunken Petty Officer, who sways and lurches in the boys' dormitory another part of naval disciplinary training? I do not expect my letter to change the system of Naval training, but I do think the facts stated in my letter merit an enquiry. I ask you, Sir, would you as a parent, be content to leave your son apprenticed to these conditions? That is why I write to you to seek advice on the matter, that concerns not only my son, but many many orphans who find themselves without parental advice and sympathy thrust into the GANGES.

/I write

I write to you in all sincerity that you will know now to air
this matter in the right quarters.

Thanking you,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd) (Mrs) Elizabeth Cooper.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY.

No. P.S. 430/54

PS

SUBJECT.

Mrs. Cooper.

Complaint re conditions in the
gauges

The enclosed is referred for a draft reply, please.

If this cannot be provided WITHIN DAYS
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order that an interim reply can be sent.

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that this docket is not to be referred to more than one
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from his Office.

NEW 509

Secretary to 2 SL

N.L.

PA/25yrs

R. J. Alton

P.S. to Parliamentary Secretary.

12/10/54

Mr Cooper's letters have been returned: see
my letter of 28 Oct, & N.L.'s Semi-official
note of 27 Oct.

Second Lord may wish to see the paper
at this stage

W. H. C. M. S.

P.S. to Lord Lee
28/10/54

Second Sea Lord has noted.

2. In view of the undertaking given by the Parliamentary Secretary in his letter dated 28th October, the Second Sea Lord would like Head of N.C.W., who has been added to the marking of the docket, to initiate consideration of the action necessary, via Commander-in-Chief, The Nore, to achieve this.



Secretary to Second Sea Lord.
5th November, 1954.

7th October, 1953.

Dear Ronayne,

In connection with a letter received by Commander Galbraith about boys' service in the Navy about which he may be writing to Commander Noble later on, I should be grateful if you would let me know whether it is correct that a boy joining the Navy at 15 is required to sign on for ten years.

Yours sincerely,

A. L. Kennie

T.F. Ronayne, Esq.,
Private Secretary,
Admiralty,
Whitehall,
London, S.W.1.

COPY

9, Kingswick Close,
Sunninghill,
Ascot.

October 8th, 1954.

C.W. Mott-Radclyffe, M.P.

Sir,

After posting my letter to you I decided to visit my son on the GANGES as a further letter from him stated "his best friend had run away".

I found that the picture was not as black as painted! I was received with the utmost courtesy by the officers on watch. I was allowed to go over the Establishment. In my estimation there was nothing more to be desired re messes and training equipment such as befits a public school. The only difference, one is Educational, the other Military. A few discreet questions revealed that the training was a toughening up process, some could take it, some could not. Also I believe the Petty Officer mentioned in my last letter may have been censured, as his conduct towards the boys in my son's division is much improved.

Sunday morning I with other visiting parents watched the boys parade on divisions, then inspection by the Captain. After the march past we attended morning service held in the large gymnasium. The service was Harvest Festival preceded by a fanfare, local choir-boys attending. The hymns were led by an orchestra; such a divine service I shall cherish for many years to come.

After church, a chat with one of the Padres convinced me that apart from the rough tough training! the boys were well cared for. Then I showed both sides of the picture to my son telling him to get down to it and take everything in the spirit of the game, if he intends to become anything in the future. It's a great pity that the boys who run away don't know the proverb "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day". I extend my apologies to you if I leaped before I looked! and let the matter rest there. Thanking you,

I am, Yours faithfully,

(Mrs) Elizabeth Cooper.

Office of

9th October, 1953.

P.S. 457/53.

Dear Rennie,

Thank you for your letter of 7th October about Boys' conditions of service.

The position is that they join the Navy between 15 and 16½, signing on for twelve years as from the age of 18. Just before they reach the age of 18, they have the option to change their engagement to one of seven years with the Fleet plus five years on the Reserve - again from the age of 18. The statement that a boy joining ~~from~~ the age of 15 is required to sign on for ten years is, therefore, with some qualification, correct.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) T. F. Ronayne

A.L. Rennie, Esq.



11th October 1954.

Dear Private Secretary,

In the absence of Mr. Mott-Radclyffe, who is abroad with a Parliamentary Delegation, I am enclosing a letter from one of his constituents, Mrs. Cooper of 9 Kingswick Close, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berkshire.

As you will see from her letter, Mrs. Cooper's son is training on H.M.S. Ganges. She is very concerned indeed at the reports she has received of the unsatisfactory conditions in this establishment.

I shall be most grateful if you will have enquiries made into the incidents to which Mrs. Cooper refers in her letter and if you can let me have a reassuring reply to send to her.

Yours sincerely,

Nancy Tooley (Mrs.)

Private Secretary to Mr.
C.E. Mott-Radclyffe, M.P.

Private Secretary to Allan Noble Esq., D.S.O., R.N.,
M.P.,

The Admiralty,
S.W.1.

PS 430/54.

new 509



12th October 1954.

Dear Private Secretary,

Further to my letter of yesterday, I am enclosing another letter I have had from Mr. Mott-Radclyffe's constituent, Mrs. Cooper.

You will see that she has now paid a personal visit to H.M.S. Ganges and, as a result, she has been very largely reassured.

Nevertheless you may like to have enquiries made into her statements about the number of boys who run away from this establishment, and her suggestion that the discipline is too severe.

Yours sincerely,

Nancy Toog (M.C.)

Private Secretary to Mr.
C.E. Mott-Radclyffe, M.P.

Private Secretary to Allan Noble Esq., D.S.O., R.N., M.P.

12th October, 1954.

P.S.430/54.

Dear Private Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 11th October, enclosing a letter Mr. Mott-Radcliffe received from Mrs. E. Cooper of 9 Kingswick Close, Summinghill, Ascot, about conditions at H.M.S. GANGES.

Commander Noble will write to Mr. Mott-Radcliffe about this as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) T. F. Renayne

Private Secretary.

The Private Secretary to
C.E. Mott-Radcliffe, Esq., M.P.

13th October, 1954.

P.S. 430/54.

Dear Private Secretary,

Thank you very much for your letter of 12th October, sending me a further letter Mr. Mott-Radclyffe had received from Mrs. E. Cooper, about conditions at H.M.S. GANGES.

Commander Noble will write to Mr. Mott-Radclyffe about the two points mentioned in your last paragraph.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) T. E. Ronayne

Private Secretary.

The Private Secretary to
C.E. Mott-Radclyffe, Esq., M.P.

N.L/P.S.430/54

15th October, 1954.

Commander-in-Chief,
The Nore.

Copy to:- Commanding Officer,
H.M.S. GANGES

I am to inform you that a Parliamentary enquiry has been received about the number of boys who run away from H.M.S. GANGES. It is requested that a report may be furnished as soon as possible, showing the number of boys who have run away, in relation to the numbers borne. The report should cover the present year, and if the information is readily available figures for 1953 should also be given.

BY COMMAND OF THEIR LORDSHIPS

W. R. LEWIN



Scottish Office,
Fielden House,
10, Great College Street,
London, S.W. 1.

20th Oct. 1953.

Dear Alan,

Herewith a letter which
speaks for itself. It's probably from
a useless young blighter, but on the
other hand there may be something
that should be looked into.

Hope I am not being a
boresome but I thought you should
at any rate see the letter.

Yours ever,
Tom. Galloway

21st October, 1953.

P.S. 473/53.

Thank you for your letter of 20th October forwarding a letter of complaint from a boy at H.M.S. GANGES.

I will bring this to the notice of those concerned here. The writer of the letter is certainly discursive.

(Sgd.) Allen Noble

Rt. Hon.
Commander T.D. Galbraith, M.P.

Office of

28th October, 1954.

P.S. 430/54.

Dear Private Secretary,

You sent me recently two letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper of 9, Kingswick Close, Sunninghill, Ascot, suggesting that we might look into the conditions at the Training Establishment, H.M.S. GANGES.

We are going to do this, but it will mean keeping an eye on things over a period of time. Therefore, and as I imagine Mr. Mott-Radclyffe will not be writing to Mrs. Cooper again, I am returning her letters now, with renewed thanks for bringing this matter to notice.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) T. F. Ronayne

Private Secretary.

The Private Secretary to
C.E. Mott-Radclyffe, Esq., M.P.

CONFIDENTIAL

NCW/P.S.473/53

2nd November,

3

Commanding Officer, H.M.S. GANGES.

I am to forward for your information and return a letter from a Boy 2nd Class serving in H.M.S. GANGES to Commander Rt. Hon T.D. Galbraith, M.P., which has been forwarded to the Parliamentary Secretary of the Admiralty.

2. I am to state that should the writer be known or identified, no disciplinary action is to be taken in connection with the writing of the letter.

BY COMMAND OF THEIR LORDSHIPS,

CONFIDENTIAL

P. P. S. 473/53.

NCN

509



H.M.S. GANGES,
Ipswich,
Suffolk.

16th November, 1953.

No. 238/14

SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

LETTER TO M.P. FOR GLASGOW (POLLOCK)

Reference: - Admiralty Letter NCW/P.S.
473/53.

Be pleased to inform Their Lordships that the writer of the enclosed letter to Cmdr. Rt. Hon. T.D. Galbraith M.P. has been traced. He has been informed of the correct procedure for Service representations and complaints.

2. He is BLAIR A.K. J 926380, Boy Second Class.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Cairns'.

(CAIRNS)
CAPTAIN.

Enclosure:

Letter to Cmdr. Rt. Hon T.D. Galbraith M.P.