

NAVY & ARMY CANTEEN BOARD.

At the Morley meeting last year, Steve Dunderdale brought along a newspaper cutting based on his query to the Liverpool Echo in 1979 and the answers he received. He had acquired a cover with perfin N.A./C.B. dated 22-11-17 with cache on the back, "From Navy & Army Canteen Board, Royal Liver Building, Liverpool." At the time this was a new identity and Steve wrote to the Echo's 'Helping Hand' column, to see if, to quote, "Can any of your readers give me any information about the Board, particularly when it was formed and abolished, the type of duty it performed, and whether it was an official Government body."

The answers sent into the paper make fascinating reading and together they tell the following potted history of the Board.

When the First World War had been going for nearly 18 months the Government of the day realised that an official canteen service was much needed, and so on January 1, 1916, the Army Canteen Committee (Edwards A1070.01??) was set up to run canteens for the troops.

It wasn't long before the Royal Navy saw that this was a good idea and asked if they could come in too. So the committee was re-formed, and became the Navy & Army Canteen Board in June 1917. It was a parent body set up by the Government to maintain and supervise supplies to all Regimental H.Q. Canteens. They sold tea and buns; sometimes 'fags' and 'baccy'; soap and razor blades. Any profit was used for the welfare of the Troops and were mostly run by volunteers and were sited all over the country as well as the Western Front. One reader said he could remember one in Southern Ireland when he was stationed there in 1922. Another lady, aged 87, wrote saying she worked for the Board as a costs clerk around the end of the war. They catered for the men coming back from the war and helped fit them out for civilian life again.

The Board lasted for less than four years. With the end of the war, and the Royal Air Force now in existence (previously "Flying Corps"), as well as the need to cater for garrisons all over the world, the Board was itself superseded, and the N.A.A.F.I. was formed on January 1, 1921. (Edwards N0090.01; .02; .02a)

My cover is dated 12-10-20 with a London S.W.3 return address.