

### "Rations"

WHEN it's dark enough to do it, there's a duty to be done,  
It's called "going out for rations", and we sneak out one by one;

When the night is wet or foggy there is nothing much to fear;  
But there's just a spice of danger when it's moonlighty and clear.  
With six paces fair between us we hop out in single file,  
(The blessed exercise alone soon makes the job worth while.)  
And we're told to think that to the Huns we look like silhouettes,  
And the order comes "no talking" and "put out the cigarettes!"  
There are trenches that communicate and twist and turn for miles,

But a self-respecting ration party looks at them and smiles;  
There are duck-walks to protect your little tootsies from the slime,

But they're inches under water for three-quarters of the time.  
So we make a bee-line overland—the shortest cut for us—  
We know it's not in orders—we're the goats if there's a fuss!  
But it's safe if we remember we're not strolling down the Strand,  
And taking mild precautions doesn't mean you've got no sand.  
We're to reckon they've machine-guns trained upon us all the way,

And when they shoot a star-shell up, they spot us clear as day;  
Tho' no one minds the noises—the plock, verrump and zip!  
Yet to halt beneath a sizzling flare is quite a useful tip  
The transport dumps the grub down at some muddy spot behind,  
Which is either near or far away, just as they feel inclined;  
And when it's raining cats and dogs they're certain to be late;  
And the ground's too wet to sit on, so we stamp, and smoke, and wait!

Then the way they divvy up the load's a regimental joke;  
One parcel is ten pounds of tea, one half a ton of coke.  
And Tom will swear he's fixed to lump just twice as much as Tim;  
And Dick declares the biscuit-tins are always shoved on him!  
It takes about an hour or so to straighten out the packs,  
Just so as the allotment's fair upon the fellows backs;  
But two men never grouse a word; they're happy and they're dumb;

The man that gets the mail-bag, and, the guy that gets the Rum!  
Then it's "Home, my noble sportsmen." And we hit the trail again.

(D'you remember Hyde Park Corner and the journey down Mud Lane?)

Oh, sixty pound is nothing on a hard and level road,  
But sliding, skidding, wading with it makes it feel "some" load!  
Soon it's "Pass on, Ration Party" — and we haven't lost a pound,  
And in reply to yours — the S.R.D. is safe and sound.  
But I really think the fellows that go out and get it in  
Should draw an extra mouthful when they're holding out their tin!

— R.M.E.

