

# Stories

The suggestion that the British Guides should save so help could be sent aboard after the war came from a twelve year old guide.

Guiding looked to its own skills to see how they could be of help after the war in Europe.

The first team left Britain in 1944 and the last members didn't return until 1952

## A Canadian Soldier In Garrison as war ends

The war was over and from fighting forces, the Allied armies were changed into occupation forces. Garrisons came to being and the routine changed. The Scouts in the British and Canadian Armies, now in garrison, formed Rover Crews, one of which Jay joined. Working in the Displaced Persons' (DP) Camps, Jay also came across the Guide International Service, founded and run by the British Girl Guides, and the Scout International Relief Service, run by the British Scouts Association and doing relief work in the camps. It was soon found that among these DPs there were Scoutmasters and Scouts who founded Scout troops to keep the kids busy and out of mischief during their miserable camp life. Of course assistance was given, as it was to the German Scout groups that, though not officially permitted, were founded again for the first time since 1933. This was not easy, so much had happened that even the Scouts amongst the Allied military, in particular those who had had to suffer the German occupation, had to overcome a barrier, but in the end No. 4 of the Old Scout Law (A Scout is a brother to every other Scout, no matter what country, class or creed to which he belongs) helped them to solve the problem.

A particularly calm and resourceful Guider, was in charge of a hostel for women and girl refugees. One evening two Greek sailors came and asked if a certain woman was staying there.

"Yes, I think she is. Why do you want her?" asked the Guider.

"We've had a quarrel with her, and so now we have come to murder her." one said calmly.

The Guider hesitated a split second. Then she said:

"This is rest hour for the English ladies who run this place. You will not wish to disturb them. Come back in an hour's time."

Politely, the sailors agreed.

In an hour's time British Military Police had been summoned. The sailors learned that Guides do not hold with murder as a means of settling a slight difference of opinion!

*The Big Test*

## Pocket Money

The G.I.S. members went as unpaid volunteers. It was because voluntary workers were seen as more friendly. The army provided board, transport and uniform. They wore the khaki uniform with the G.I.S. badge on the left sleeve. They were given pocket money which started at 10 shillings a week and grew to 30 shillings as personal expenses in war-torn countries increased.

## From some Girl Scouts of USA

"Also we met Guiders who had volunteered with the Guide International Service and worked with refugees in various European countries. Their gear was the epitome of efficient lightweight camping. Moving around Europe in poor conditions they had to be mobile and flexible to work with the people who needed their skills."

## From an Estonian Scout's page

In the drab existence the Scouting Spirit revived. The kids were suffering most and had to be entertained so that there would be a ray of sun shines in their daily lives. Scout and Guide leaders and older scouts and guides collected the boys and girls, formed groups and activities began. This did not go undetected as in the armies of the Western Allies many scouts and guides were serving. In the British occupation zone the Guide International Service and the Scout International Relief Service were active and in some of the camps they were in charge. Their task was not to revive scouting or guiding but, as the scouts and guides amongst the army officers and the other ranks, they were attracted by the activities of the DP Scouts and Guides. They reported their findings to their NHQs and the International Bureaux and soon the DP scouts and guides received assistance.

As early as May 13th, 1945, five days after World War 2 had officially ended in Europe, the first Estonian groups was founded in a refugee camp. Practically all Estonian kids in all the camps joined the scout and guide groups, whether before they had been members or not or had perhaps belonged to one of the other associations which were not revived in the camps. Thus they were kept occupied and were protected from the deteriorating effects of the poverty and sadness of the empty camp life.

## 1943 An Australian town

There was intimation that Steeton Hall was to be a centre of the Guide International Service

In 1948 Alison Duke gave part of the New year greeting address on the BBC World Service to Greece; as a part of this she said:

"I remember the day we went up on mules to a little village, high in the mountains taking with us all too scanty supplies of clothing for distribution. The village was entirely destroyed. The men and women were in rags, the children looked old and wizened and more than half starved but nevertheless this village gave us a friendly and enthusiastic welcome. Later when we were drinking health in Retsina, they told us about the day their village was burnt. How the soldiers of occupation had been searching for a British Major who had befriended and helped this and many villages. No one was found to betray him, so the village had been burnt. That night out of the dark came the Major, and they told him he was a good man and their friend and they could not have betrayed him. This is the story of countless villages in Greece and to us it was a privilege and joy to work among them."

### Pax Lodge

On the ground floor there is a mailbox. This is an important piece of furniture for the staff as it brings greetings and news from family and friends. The mailbox was a gift from Australian Girl Guides in Tasmania. It commemorates Tasmanians who were a part of the Guide International Service after World War II.

