



## OUR AMERICAN COUSINS

**Mr. McVicker describes U.S.A. contacts made during his recent tour.**

*Baltimore members of the United Boys' Brigades of America.*

**I**N the previous issue I referred to the differences in background in Canada compared with the United Kingdom. There are even greater differences between U.S.A. and ourselves. We use the same language—more or less!—but in ideas and outlook there is considerable variation. Yet we have much in common and certainly in Brigade circles we can have real friendship with our opposite numbers in U.S.A. It was a great privilege and pleasure to have personal contact with movements which have sprung from the B.B. and with others which resemble it in some respects. Cordial acknowledgement of the pioneer character of the B.B. and respect for, and admiration of, its work were very evident in each case.

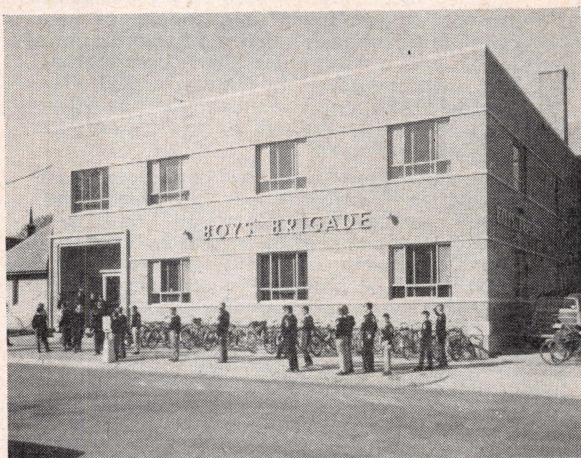
In the eighteen-nineties, the B.B. idea took root in U.S.A. and the United Boys' Brigades of America was formed. Its growth was stimulated by two visits from our Founder and the organisation grew to considerable size. To-day, however, this early blossoming has largely faded away except for two centres which were included in my tour.

### **The Boys' Brigade, Neenah-Menasha**

This organisation started originally in 1900 as a unit of the United Boys' Brigades of America, but soon became an independent movement. Through the friendship of Mr. S. F. Shattuck with Sir William Smith and his sons, it has kept in close touch with the B.B. in Britain. Mr. Shattuck, greatly loved and highly respected, has been the inspiration and guiding force of the B.B. in Neenah since 1901, and is now President of its Board of Directors.

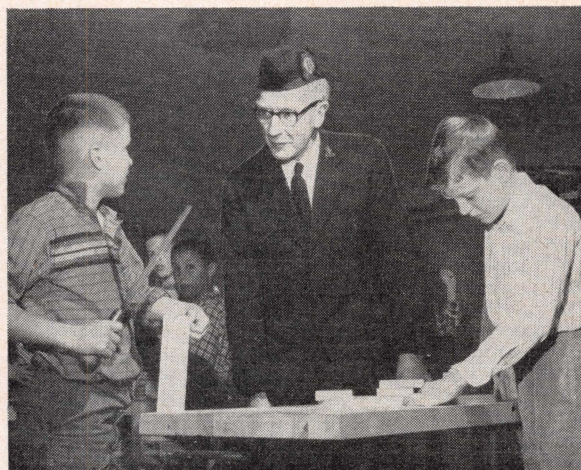
Neenah and Menasha are pleasant small twin towns in rural Wisconsin about 200 miles north of Chicago. The Neenah B.B. Headquarters, right in the centre of the town, is splendidly equipped with large gymnasium, halls, class-rooms, shooting range, recreation rooms, kitchen, etc. Under a Board of Directors of leading citizens, many of whom are former Brigade members, there are some 100 voluntary leaders, whose work is organised by the Captain assisted by a full-time Co-ordinator. Some of these leaders instruct "special interest" classes, e.g. photography, carpentry, rifle club, etc. Others are responsible for the groups of 8 to 12 Boys into which the membership is divided for their progressive programme over five years. Drill, athletics, camps and social functions form part of these activities.

The religious instruction is in the hands of the 21 Churches whose Boys are members. The Brigade seeks



*Neenah B.B. Headquarters*

"to promote a Boy's allegiance to, and regularity at, the Church of his parents' choice" by means of a record of certified attendance, such record being a "significant element for honors award." The present membership is over 500 Boys aged 12 to 18.



*With two Neenah Boys*

The B.B. Object, as we know it, is boldly displayed in the entrance hall as the "Motto" of the organisation. Its association with the B.B. in the United Kingdom is valued highly, and many of our B.B. photographs, badges, etc. are on permanent exhibition.

I was received with the greatest kindness and spoke to a large proportion of the Boys and leaders, showing B.B. films and slides and comparing notes.

I came away feeling that for 60 years an amazing piece of corporate Christian service has been done for the Boys of Neenah and wondering why other U.S.A. towns have not done likewise—probably because they lack the genius of a Shattuck!

### The United Boys' Brigades of America

The main strength of the U.B.B.A. at present lies in the Maryland Regiment with its 9 companies in Baltimore. In other parts of U.S.A. there are only a few isolated units. At Baltimore, it was good to meet again—as also in the case of Neenah—Officers and Boys who had been at the Caribbean International Camp in Jamaica in 1958. After being warmly received by General Koerber, the U.B.B.A. Commandant, I spoke at the Maryland Regiment's "Annual Fall Church Parade" and afterwards gave an illustrated talk on the B.B. round the world to the 200 boys present. While promotions, awards, etc., are somewhat on the usual B.B. lines, the Companies have not quite as close an integration with their Churches as we seek to have.

During my stay an Officers' Dinner with 27 attending was followed by lively discussion and viewing of B.B. films. The keen nucleus of Officers in Baltimore, led by their Regimental Commander, Col. Frank Butt, have a real desire for closer liaison with the B.B. They can be assured of our co-operation in their efforts to strengthen and extend the U.B.B.A.

### Other Movements

My visit provided the opportunity of conveying greetings to two American Boys' organisations which have grown up without any knowledge of the B.B.

**The Christian Service Brigade**, a uniformed organisation started in 1937, has a well-equipped headquarters in Chicago, serving branches in some 600 Churches mainly in U.S.A., but some in Canada, and has a membership of 25,000 Boys. While the organisation uses some methods similar to B.B., its individual "achievement programme" is more like that of the Scouts. I was welcomed with much kindness by the Headquarters staff, who wish to keep in friendly touch with B.B.

In New York a visit was paid to a unit of **The Centurion Cadet Corps**, formed four years ago "to mould young troublemakers into Christians" by the use of "rugged military training modelled on that of the Marine Corps." Its founder, the Rev. Ben Moring, a young negro Presbyterian minister, in his boyhood had been a street gang leader. Many of its members have been juvenile delinquents. The extreme toughness of the training and the harshness of the discipline, combined with Bible teaching in the Boys' own language ("Jacob sure was a slick guy!"), appeared to be surprisingly effective.

I was also welcomed by the officials of the Youth Department of the National Council of Churches of U.S.A. They were interested in B.B. principles, especially in their ability to attract to the Church the Boy outside, as much of their present youth work is directed mainly to those already linked with the Churches.

## CAMPING IN 1960

It would be splendid achievement if we could ensure that in 1960 we would have a record advance in the total number of Boys attending Camp.

There is something in the atmosphere of Camp—a spirit that presents an unrivalled opportunity to Officers in their task of moulding the character of their Boys. Many an Old Boy today looks back gratefully to Boyhood days in camp where he first became aware of his duty to God, and it is sad to think that so many of our Boys are missing the wonderful chance that Camp offers.

But Camp means real camping. Even if there is a barn or shed for messing, we should live under canvas. Companies that sleep in a hall in some seaside town and have their meals in some nearby café are depriving their Boys of the joys of real camping.

It is to be hoped therefore, that the Officers of Companies that haven't camped in recent years will decide now to have a real camp this coming summer and if they feel unequal to running it on their own they should join in with some other Company and so ensure that their Boys will enjoy one of the greatest benefits the B.B. has brought to Boyhood.

Here's "Good Camping to you in 1960."

R.G.

## TRAINING CALENDAR

### ENGLAND AND WALES

#### Local Courses

|                 |       |   |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| 1960            |       |   |
| February        | 5/6   | N. of England Dist.—Parts 1 & 2.  |
| February        | 6/7   | Mansfield and Dist. Batt.—Part 3.   |
| February 20 and | 27    | Chislehurst and District, South London, South East London, East Surrey and West Kent Battalions—Part 2 and Leadership Conference. |
| March           | 19/20 | Birmingham Battalion—Parts 2 and 3.   |
| April           | 2/3   | North of England District—Part 3.   |

#### Brigade Specialised Courses at Felden Lodge

|          |       |                                 |
|----------|-------|---------------------------------|
| February | 6/7   | Bugle Bands (Repeat Course).    |
| February | 20/21 | Brigade Training Scheme—Part 2. |
| March    | 5/6   | Brass Bands.                    |
| April    | 2/3   | The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.  |
| April    | 23/24 | Physical Recreation.            |

#### Brigade School at Felden Lodge

|      |       |                                |
|------|-------|--------------------------------|
| July | 23-30 | Officers and Warrant Officers. |
|------|-------|--------------------------------|

#### King George VI Leadership Training Courses

|        |       |                       |
|--------|-------|-----------------------|
| August | 6-13  | New Entrants.         |
| August | 20-27 | Second Year Students. |

### SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

#### Local Courses

|          |       |   |
|----------|-------|---|
| February | 6/7   | Glasgow Battalion—Part 1.                         |
| February | 13/14 | Glasgow Battalion—Part 2.                         |
| February | 20/21 | West of Scotland District (at Carronvale)—Part 3. |

#### National Courses at Carronvale

|          |       |                      |
|----------|-------|----------------------|
| February | 27/28 | Running the Company. |
| March    | 19/20 | Camping.             |
| April    | 2/3   | Staff-Sergeants.     |

#### King George VI Leadership Training Courses

|      |     |                       |
|------|-----|-----------------------|
| July | 2-9 | New Entrants.         |
| July | 30- | Second Year Students. |

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