

John Allan

Boots

A lot of men apparently rely on the bone handle of a toothbrush, but I didn't, I heard several older soldiers saying "That's no good. You can try it if you want, some people have a success but the best thing is to get a pad of material and have a tin of boot polish. Use a little spittle on top of the boot polish, rub your cloth round the fore finger, get some on the end of the cloth run it into the leather. You can run it into the toe cap, the heel piece but the whole boot is done. You don't have to brighten the whole boot but you brighten the toe. You shine the toe and the heel and your instep underneath the sole". I said "And who's going to look at that?" He said, "I'll tell you something private, when you're on a guard your examined everywhere. Your foot is lifted up. Not every examiner, not every officer wants to see your bottom of your boot but you'd better have ready in case he did because otherwise you've had it". And I thought "Oh, this is the Army alright". I began to do my boot right away more or less and I used to sit in the sun and do it and you began to see it, begin to take a shine, you know, and the more you buffed it the better it goes. In fact, I've taken civilian shoes, members of the family and people around have said "How do you do that?" And it makes a hell of a difference to things, you know. And when I finally went home I had a beautiful pair of shining toe caps.