

Bill's back in mufti after 40 years

By Janine Wookey

Retirement to Bill Sinclair means civilian clothes.

After a lifetime in uniforms - the Coldstream Guards, the Royal Marines, and the Sheffield Fire Brigade - Bill is back in mufti.

Last night, Bill, aged 55, of Manor Park Rise, Manor Park, Sheffield, took off the uniform of a fire brigade station officer for the last time.

His 40 years in uniforms started when he was a lad of 16 - longing for some real life adventures.

Brought up on old soldiers tales from his dad and exciting stories of India from his mother who was born there, he had an overwhelming desire to get where it was all happening.



Bill Sinclair — in his present uniform . . .

Coal buckets

Being a tall lad, he lied about his age and joined a crack regiment - the Coldstream Guards.

They gave him adventure all right - and they also gave him discipline.

To this day Bill has an aversion to coal buckets after spending so many hours on cleaning parade burnishing them till they shone like silver.

But there were compensations - like standing on parade outside St James Palace or even Buckingham Palace.

At 18 Bill decided to see the world, so he joined the Royal Marines and found himself in the Far East patrolling the South China Seas.

The outbreak of war found him chasing German ships around Japan, involved in the Norwegian campaign, sailing around the Atlantic protecting the merchant fleet, and generally making himself useful at Dunkirk.

Dunkirk saw him promoted to corporal and after a spell of teaching recruits how to behave like marines, Bill took to the seas again, this time patrolling round Africa, and South America -where he took time off to meet Bing Crosby - before ending up back in the Far East where he had his first contact with the Japanese suicide pilots.

After the war Bill changed uniforms again - this time to join the fire brigade. In 1947 he returned to his home

Six years ago he was promoted to station officer at Intake and now he is sadly retiring.

He may be the grandfather of two 'lovable tearaways" but Bill Sinclair is still as fit as ever and proves it by going dancing every week.

Cha, cha, cha,

A gold medallist in rumba and cha, cha, cha, he says: "If you think young, you stay young. dance to anything, whatever the music, but for choice I'll take Gershwin's' Begin the Beguine."

Bill may be compulsorily retired but he doesn't - intend to stop working.

"You never know I might even find myself back in a uniform again."