

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

## THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT



### Association Newsletter

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#### Editorial

As you all now know Brigadier Mike Doyle took over as President of our Association on the 1st May. He has already attended many of our functions including, the memorial service to Major Jack Cox and a very successful reception for the Mayors of the Freedom towns and boroughs of Guildford, Kingston, Reigate and Banstead, in our Museum at Clandon.

For the march past at Bassingbourn some one hundred and forty members paraded under his command to march past The Colonel of The Queen's Regiment, Major General M. F. Reynolds CB.

For those members who did not attend the Reunion at Bassingbourn I urge you all to try and come along, bring your wives, and above all, phone your mate to arrange to meet him there. For those of us attending, we are always being asked 'why doesn't so and so come', so do try if you are able, to come in 1990. There is no truth in the rumour that there isn't room!

A big Thank You once again to all those readers who have submitted articles for The Newsletter. I still have several in hand and will feature them in future editions. Do keep sending them in particularly short articles or photographs. I hope to continue to see many more of you in 1990 at our various functions including of course, the Church service at Guildford Cathedral.

Finally on your behalf I wish all ranks of 1 Queens, now on their tenth tour in Northern Ireland a successful and casualty free four months.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.  
Les Wilson.



The Colonel of The Queen's Regiment at The Royal Hospital Chelsea with Secretaries of Associations and Pensioners.

#### President's Notes

In my first notes as your new President I would like you to know how honoured and pleased I am to have been invited to succeed Colonel Toby Sewell. I believe also that you would like me to thank him on your behalf for all that he has done in leading the Association for the last five and a half years.

It is good to know that we will continue to get him at our gatherings, for he remains in close touch.

For my part I look forward to meeting members, renewing and making new friendships and trying to ensure that the Regimental comradeship we all value continues, even though we grow older and sometimes for one reason or another, less in touch. I consider one of the main tasks of our Association is to use our funds sensibly to help those members in need.

The work done by Lt Col Les Wilson and his assistant Sheila Roberts in Canterbury in this regard is enormous, and they deserve our thanks.

The extent of this benevolence work, mentioned in the last Newsletter clearly demonstrates that Regimental family links continue.

I send my best wishes for Christmas to all members and hope to meet many of you before long.

Mike Doyle



S.O.M.A. Dinner, Veterans of the First World War, Brig. Stafford, C. Jarman and C. Jenner.



## FORECAST OF REGIMENTAL AND QUEEN'S SURREY ASSOCIATION EVENTS



1989

### Details

20 December BRITISH BATTALION DAY

1990

10 February SOBRAON DAY  
17 February 6 Queen's OCA - Dinner Dance UJ. Club. Details from J. Beckett, Flat 4, 2 Fair St., London SE12XA.  
16 March The Queen's Regiment Dinner Club - Duke of York's Headquarters.  
31 March The Queen's Surreys Regimental Trustees and Association Meeting - Clandon Park. Details from Hon. Sec.  
31 March Annual Reunion Dinner 2/7th Queen's. Details from H. Neale, 63 St Aidans Rd., London SE22 ORW.  
23 April YPRES DAY  
3 May Golf Society spring meeting at Richmond.  
12 May 5 OMA Annual Dinner - Sandsfield Terrace, Guildford. Details from Secretary - D. Mitchell, 3 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guildford, Surrey.  
16 May ALBUHERA DAY  
1 June THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE  
10 June Annual Church Service, Guildford Cathedral. 1100hrs..  
23 June 1 Queen's - Exercise Freedom of Worthing.  
4 July Golf Society v Royal Marines, North Hants Golf Club Fleet (by invitation of the Captain).  
8 July Grand Reunion - Bassingbourn.  
9 September SALERNO DAY  
22 September Queen's Surreys Museum Open Day - Clandon.  
4 October Golf Society. Autumn Meeting. Woking Golf Club.

Salerno veterans gather at Guildford Cathedral for the Annual Association church service.





# THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT

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## The Battalions

Members of the Association may wish to be updated on the present locations of, and future plans for, our Regular Army Battalions.

The 1st Battalion are currently away from their base in Tidworth on a 4 1/2 month emergency tour in Northern Ireland which is due to finish in March 1990. The 2nd Battalion will remain in Minden, West Germany until early 1991 when they move to Canterbury, being replaced in Minden by the 1st Battalion. The 3rd Battalion will meanwhile move from Aldergrove to Cyprus in March 1990. The only change of Commanding Officer notified as we go to press is Lt. Col. Chris Charter, who will hand over command of the 1st Battalion to Lt. Col. Amadee Mieville in April 1990.

## Freedom of Crowborough

On 24th June Maj. Gen. Mike Reynolds CB, Colonel of the Regiment, accepted, on behalf of all Queensmen, the Freedom of Crowborough. This was the 20th Civic Honour to be awarded to the Regiment and the first to be presented by Crowborough on being granted 'Town status'. An immaculate detachment of the 1st Battalion was on parade together with the Quebec Band which, in the evening, Beat Retreat before a large gathering of Crowborough residents, following a display by the Regimental Free Fall Team, The Flying Dragons. Crowborough will recall the occasion in future years by flying the Regimental flag at the Town Hall on the Anniversary of the Freedom as well as on the Regimental Day (16 May) and Vesting Day (31 December).

## 300th Anniversary of Danish Connection

During the weekend 1-4 September the Regiment marked the 300th Anniversary of our first connection with the Danish Royal House. The Albuhera Band and 2nd Battalion Corps of Drums travelled up from Minden to Denmark to participate in the Aarhus festival and Beat Retreat before HM Queen Margrethe. Following the latter ceremony, the Colonel of the Regiment accompanied by the Regimental Secretary, Col. John Francis and the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, Lt. Col. Merrick Willis OBE, were received in Audience by Her Majesty and had lunch with her in Marselisborg Palace. Other events during the weekend included a Regimental Reception in Copenhagen for many Danes, including representatives of the Danish Branch of the Regimental Association and a courtesy visit by the Colonel of the Regiment of the Royal Danish Lifeguards.

## Unique Cricket Successes

The 1st Battalion Cricket Team has had outstanding successes in winning a unique Hat Trick of three competitions this year, the Army Major Units Cup, the Infantry (UK) Cup and the Infantry (Worldwide) competition. These three victories have never before been achieved by any Regiment. Maj. Nigel Russell, the team captain, and all the players who took part deserve our warmest congratulations.

## HMS Chatham

The Regiment is to have another affiliation with the Royal Navy this time with HMS Chatham, a 4,200 ton Frigate. She is to be commissioned at Chatham on 4 May 1990. The Albuhera Band will return from Minden to play at the ceremony and the Flying Dragons will give a display that evening.

## Recruiting

One of the Regiment's main priorities now is to improve recruiting. Much can be done by Freedom Parades, KAPE tours, bands and free-fall displays but one of the most important influences on a young man (and his parents) is the personal recommendation of somebody who knows the Regiment and Army life. All ranks, serving and retired and every member of our Regimental Associations therefore have a personal responsibility to encourage suitable candidates to consider and, if possible, take up a career in The Queen's Regiment. We ask all our readers to play their part in this vital task.

## 1st BATTALION THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT

Since the last News Letter, life has been fragmentary to say the least. After Easter leave, the battalion was committed to a series of Regular Army assistance tasks during the early summer, which made any collective training impossible. Kirke's competition was, however, held. Included were Boxing, Orienteering, Rugby, Soccer, Hockey, Drill and Shooting. Once again C Company under Maj Riley and WO2 Dale took the title by a substantial margin. The Company now holds a silver pascal lamb, which is the Kirke's Award, in addition to the other Trophies.

The Glorious 1st June was held in some style this year at Tidworth. As the battalion was taking yet another turn on Spearhead duty, the celebration took place over the weekend 10/11 June. On the Saturday, the cricket match against the Navy was played on the Infantry ground and was won by the battalion. That evening, a large Ball was attended by 300 people and we were very pleased to welcome the large contingent from Whale Island. On Sunday the battalion fete barbecue and families fun day was held on Mooltan sports pitches. This was a great success held in beautiful weather. It was enjoyed by all; especially the children.

Again because of Spearhead it was not possible to Troop the Colour this year, but during the summer two ceremonial parades required a good deal of time on the square. The first was a street - lining duty in London requiring the whole battalion. In the end this did not take place because of the train strike. The second was the Freedom of Crowborough, Parade. Kirke's Company found a Guard Company, with the Regimental Colour carried by Lieutenant IMR Wright, and the Regimental Band and the Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion. Although held on a baking hot day, the event was very much enjoyed by all on parade. We are most grateful to the council and people of Crowborough for their hospitality, and to the Sussex Police for their assistance.

Since then the battalion has been in training for its forthcoming tour of Northern Ireland. Readers will understand that no details can be given at this stage but a full account of the tour will appear in the next News Letter.

On a personal note, this will be Ovid's last full report from 1 Queen's for the moment, as I am posted to BAOR at Christmas.

## NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

1. Subscriptions for this year's Newsletter are now overdue. The subscription remains at 1.60 per year.
2. No action is required by
  - a) Those who have already paid in advance;
  - b) members of the Officers Club whose Club subscription covers the cost of the Newsletter;
  - c) those who pay by Bankers Order, but please check you are paying the correct amount.
3. If you would like the Newsletter sent to a friend, please send his name and address, and enclose 1.60 for a year's subscription.

IF IN DOUBT - PAY!

KEEP IN TOUCH

## 5th Bn The Queens O.M.A.

Once again the Dinner, held at Sandfield Terrace on 13 May, was a great success. Of the 180 who attended, from far and wide, many were attending for the first time, which bodes well for the future.

We were especially delighted to welcome a contingent of serving members of A Coy 5 Queens, as well as recently retired members of our regular Battalions.

Our Dinner this year was attended by Cllr Bernard Parke, the Mayor of Guildford, so continuing the long association between Borough and the Regiment. We were also able to welcome as our guests Col W. E. McConnell, the Chairman of The Queens Surreys Association and Les Wilson the Secretary. Brig Stafford, Mr Clarie Jarman and Mr C. Jenner, all veterans of the Great War and now in their 90's were also very welcome and we look forward to their company in future years.

Our thanks to Doug Mitchell, Ron May, Geoff Register and all the members of the Committee for organising another excellent evening.

F. H.

## The Queen's (Southwark) Regimental Association

### Visit to Sint Niklaas, Belgium - Sept 1989

On 9th September 1944 1/7th Queens under command of Lt Col W.D. Griffiths DSO MC liberated the ancient town of Sint Niklaas, which lies in North Belgium between Gent and Antwerp. In appreciation of this Lt Col Griffiths was made a Freeman of the City and ever since there has been an association between the Battalion and the town. The Association receives a cordial invitation to attend their remembrance and peace celebrations which are held at the beginning of September each year. This year there were fourteen members of the Association, accompanied by their wives who made their way to St Niklaas to participate, led by Lt Col Griffiths.

On Saturday evening Sept 2 we were all invited to a dinner hosted by the town and graced by the Burgomaster F. Willocky and other members of the Board of Aldermen. Besides ourselves, members of the Belgian Patriotic Associations and Belgian domiciled members of the 1st Polish Armoured Division attended. The Burgomaster made a speech of welcome to which Lt Col Griffiths responded. The splendid dinner ended with loyal toasts to the Belgian and British Monarchs. At this weekend the town hosts a balloon festival and it was a splendid sight on both Saturday and Sunday seeing helium filled and hot air balloons taking off from the square. The square which is the biggest in Belgium can cope with two or three balloons taking off at the same time. On Sunday evening over forty balloons went up.

Sunday was a fine and sunny day. All the delegations assembled in the principal church of the town where mass was said. This was enhanced by the Sint Theresia choir. From the church we marched behind a fine band firstly to the town memorial where wreaths were laid. An honour guard was provided by detachments from the Belgian Army and Navy. Then we went to the Queen's memorial in Romain De Vidts park where Lt Col Griffiths laid the first wreath. Then to the Polish memorial where similar ceremonies took place. At Belsele a very impressive ceremony at the memorial to commemorate those members of the Belgian Resistance who were killed during the occupation. Many floral tributes were laid as the names were read out, followed by a beautiful 'Last Post' played by a member of the band. At each memorial the appropriate national anthem was played and sung.

We then all came back to the Town Hall to attend a reception given by the Burgomaster and Aldermen. Not only were ex-servicemen guests but representatives of twin towns in Europe including Abingdon. The Burgomaster spoke, stressing the peace aspect of the ceremonies and looking forward to greater rapprochement between East and West, pointing out that there had been peace in Europe for forty five years. Lt Col Griffiths was one of those who responded. After the reception all the guests adjourned to a local seminary where we had a magnificent buffet lunch hosted by the Secret Army.. During the afternoon festivities were taking place in the town square, including marching bands, but when we came from lunch it was difficult to see as the square was thronged with twenty thousand local people.

On Sunday evening we took a coach to a hall just outside the town where we had a convivial evening amongst the locals - chatting, dancing and enjoying some refreshment from the bar. We got back to our hotel about midnight having had a memorable day.

Those that stayed on afterwards were taken for a coach trip on Monday to Lier, Brussels, where they were entertained to lunch at the Belgian Officer Cadet establishment, and then on to Waterloo returning to St Niklaas at 9pm, an interesting but tiring day.

We are very grateful to the Burgomaster and the Belgian Patriotic Associations for their generous hospitality and trust that the association will continue. We are particularly grateful to Major J.M.A. Tamplin TD and Commandant R. Van Den Berch of the Patriotic Association for their work in making the arrangements. We hope that we will see our Belgian friends at our re-union dinner next March.

P.C.F.

## 2/7TH BN THE QUEEN'S ROYAL REGIMENT O.C.A.

The 'Ebury Arms'. Pimlico Road, London S.W.1 was once again the venue for the 43rd Annual Reunion Dinner on 1st April 1989 62 former members of the Battalion were 'on parade' slightly down on last year's attendance but 40-odd letters were received from members able, for one reason or another, to be present only in spirit this year.

We were particularly pleased to have with us our Chairman, Maj. 'Sandy' Sanders, and our esteemed Hon. Secretary, Harry Neale, both fully recovered after recent major heart surgery, and Colin Glade who was attending for the first time in 43 years - the trains from Tavistock are always late.

Regrettably the toast to 'Absent Comrades' had an even greater immediate significance this year due to the deaths of no less than nine of our members and it is sobering, at such times, to reflect on the inevitability of the process that will, ultimately, account for us all. But then, seeing still so many well-remembered faces, you know that there is life in the old dog yet and will be until the last of us raises his glass in the final toast, turns out the light and then, like all old soldiers, quietly fades away.

The main achievement during the year has been the reprinting of the Battalion History to coincide with the Fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Battalion. It is selling well with all proceeds going to the Battalion Fund which will, we hope, benefit greatly in the course of time to increase our ability to help former members of the Battalion in times of need. The book, priced at £ 6.50 (incl. p & p) can be obtained by application to Harry Neale, 63 St. Aidan's Road, London SE22 0RW.

The 44th Annual Reunion Dinner has already been arranged for Saturday, 31st March 1990, again at 'The Ebury Arms'. We remain most anxious to contact former members of the Battalion and if you are not already on Harry Neale's list please write to him at the above address.

R.E.B.

## CRANLEIGH VILLAGE HALL September 1939



On the 1st September 1989 a very simple but moving ceremony took place in Cranleigh Village Hall. Surviving members of those men who reported for duty fifty years before, paraded once again to witness the unveiling of a simple memorial plaque by their President, Lady Mullins.

September 1989



## OFFICERS CLUB LUNCHEON

A total of 94 officers and ladies attended the annual luncheon at Clandon on Friday 6th October this year. As it is customary the event commenced with a reception in the salon at mid-day and was then followed by Luncheon at 1.15. In the afternoon the Queen's Surreys Museum was open for private viewing.

The President of the Queen's Surreys Association, Brigadier Mike Doyle, in his address after lunch, paid tribute to our past President, Colonel Toby Sewell, and, on behalf of the Association, presented Colonel Toby with a splendid statuette of a Queen's Regiment Drummer in full dress.

Amongst those present were the Colonel of the Regiment and Mrs Reynolds, Major Generals Fergus Ling, Roly Mans and their wives, Major General Michael Forrester and Brigadier George Goode.

We were delighted to have with us as our guests on this occasion: Mrs Rachel Roupell, Mrs Brenda Hill, Mrs Betty Sykes-Wright, Mrs Joan Kimmerling, Mr and Mrs Chris Allen, the administrator at Clandon, and Mrs Jean Ann Stock who does such an invaluable job in the museum, were also our guests.

The success of the day was largely due to the (once again) sterling hard work done by our Secretary Lt Colonel Les Wilson.

J.B.R.



Colonel Toby Sewell, Mrs Jennifer Davidson, Mrs Louise Clowes and Mrs Anne Doyle at the luncheon.



Those were the Days.....

Major Jock Haswell and In-Pensioner John Kershaw who last met 47 years ago, recall the time spent in Peshawar in 1942 - good days, and some that were not so good. Colonel Mike Lowry, in the background, was there too.

## Annual Reunion Dinner 5 OMA.



Col. W. E. McConnell, Doug Mitchell, Ron May, The Mayor of Guildford, Lt. Col. F. B. Herd, Brig. F. E. Stafford, Lt. Col. H. M. W. Harris and Maj. R. C. H. Saunders.

## Museum Notes

This year the National Trust house at Clandon Park in which the Museum is lodged has received substantially more visitors than last year and this has been reflected in the increased numbers visiting the Museum. However the increase in the Museum attendance is also due to the striking new display in Room 1 depicting regimental life in India from 1825 to 1947, and to various new improvements notably the enhanced World War Two section in Room 3 and to John Woodroff's show case of regimental insignia from 1900 to 1960 in Room 2. At a conservative estimate there have been some seventeen thousand visitors to the Museum during the period mid-April to mid-October when the house is open to the public. Alas, we now have to remain closed until the house opens again on 1st April 1990 in time for the Easter Weekend.

Under the terms of our lease with the National Trust we cannot charge for admission to the Museum. We therefore depend for revenue on donations by visitors, which have increased proportionately, and by shop sales of regimentalalia, but we are not allowed to compete with the excellent National Trust shop down the corridor. Operating the shop has become an additional load on our permanent staff, Richard Ford and Mrs Jean-Ann Stock, and they have responded nobly. The success of the venture depends on the nature of the goods for sale and we have been greatly indebted to Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis for his excellent book, 'Salerno Remembered', and to the Regimental Association Trustees for allocating the income from it to the Museum. A most generous gesture by both.

The Museum is a focal point for Regimental activities and we have been very glad that it has been the venue for various committee meetings and the President's annual Mayoral reception. The Open Day in September was also a success although a bit down on numbers from previous years. It also provides facilities for research and many an enquiry about family forbears has been successfully answered.

We accept all medals with a Regimental connection offered to the Museum and show them initially in a special display cabinet for recent acquisitions. Thereafter we hope to be able to display them permanently and are seeking to achieve more wall space in the Archives Room (Room 4) for that purpose. We also receive documents and photographs of historical interest which are carefully recorded and stored for immediate access. Sometimes there are articles offered which we have regrettably to decline for lack of space. One recently was a plaque in memory of the Cranleigh Territorials of 1/5th Queen's offered by Mr W. Petch. Among others which we have been able to accept have been a set of photographs given by Mr. L.H. Jelley of the graves of four soldiers executed by the Japanese after they had escaped from Tama Khan Prisoner of War camp some 70 miles from Bangkok while building the bridge over the River Kwai. They were Privates Cleaver, Croaker, Dorval and Richardson of 2nd Surreys. It was an event not recorded in the Regimental History, but possibly also known to Lieutenant H.P. Sharland, the East Surrey Officer in that camp who was subsequently awarded the MBE for his outstanding efforts to maintain morale in those dire circumstances.

The Museum depends for its existence in a number of ways on voluntary help. There are those who live fairly locally who are prepared to come and relieve our permanent staff or to augment them in the supervision of visitors. We are most grateful to those who have come forward to help this year, and we are particularly indebted to Captain Alan and Mrs Peggy White, Mr Hewitt and Mrs Ford. There is also the Working Party who come once a week during the winter to help overhaul the display cases and put improvements in hand. One staunch member over many years who has now decided to retire is Lieutenant Colonel Tony Hannaford. The present medals display, which is much admired by our visitors, was set up by him and he has been our medals expert. His contributions to the Newsletter have always been of interest. His fund of Regimental knowledge and charming manner when answering the questions of visitors to the Museum have been an example to all of us. He will be greatly missed.

M.J.A.C.

## GOLF SOCIETY

The Spring Meeting of the Golf Society was held at the Richmond Golf Club, Sudbrook Park, on Thursday 4th May 1989 22 Members played in the Competitions, the result being as follows:-

|               |                        |             |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Challenge Cup | Capt. B. M. Scripps    | (78)        |
| Dodgson Cup   | M. J. Power Esq.       | (68 net)    |
| Heales Trophy | Brigadier M. J. Clarke | (38 points) |
| Veterans Halo | Brigadier M. J. Clarke | (40 points) |

First prize in the Sweep was shared by - Foster Herd and Toby Sewell.

### Annual Match V Royal Marines G.S.

This was played at North Hants Golf Club, Fleet on 5 July 1989. The Match was Halved, the result being in doubt until the final game in which Brian Scripps and Basil Crutchfield finished all Square after being 3 down with 3 to play.



| Queens Surreys  |                                  | A.M. Royal Marines |   |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Maj. Gen. Major | G.A. White<br>W.J. Sutton        | 0                  | Maj. Gen. P. Kay<br>B. Goddard          |
| Brigadier       | M. Power<br>M.J. Clarke          | 1                  | G. Bates<br>Captain D.G. Hunt           |
| Col. Lt. Col.   | J.W. Sewell<br>F.B. Herd         | 0                  | Col. A.S. Harris<br>Col. S.D. Smith     |
| Col. Major      | J.W. Davidson<br>P. Carroll      | 1/2                | Col. R.P. Carter<br>Sgt. P.J. McCormack |
| Major Captain   | B.A. Crutchfield<br>B.M. Scripps | 1                  | J. Francis<br>Captain A.B. Gordon       |
| Major           | F.V. Sheppard                    | 1/2                | Lt. Col. D.W. Tweed                     |
| P.M.            |                                  |                    |   |
| Maj. Gen. Major | G.A. White<br>W.J. Sutton        | 1                  | Maj. Gen. P. Kay<br>Captain D.G. Hunt   |
| Brigadier       | M. Power<br>M.J. Clarke          | 1                  | G. Bates<br>B. Goddard                  |
| Col. Major      | J.W. Davidson<br>P. Carroll      | 0                  | Col. A.S. Harris<br>Col. S.D. Smith     |
| Col. Lt. Col.   | J.W. Sewell<br>F.B. Herd         | 0                  | Col. R.P. Carter<br>Sgt. P.J. McCormack |
| Major Captain   | B.A. Crutchfield<br>B.M. Scripps | 1/2                | J. Francis<br>Captain A.B. Gordon       |
|                 |                                  | 5 1/2              | 5 1/2                                   |

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:-

Major and Mrs B.B.F. White who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 3rd June.

Jack and Edna Homersham who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 19th August.

Major General and Mrs G.A. White who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 22nd September.

Lt Col and Mrs. B.A. Hannaford celebrated their Silver Wedding on 6th June.

Colonel P.A.W.G. Durrant on being appointed an Officer of the British Empire in the New Years Honours.

## Annual Church Service



Lt. Col. Cranham and L. Barnard. C/Sgt. Barnard was the CQMS of 71st Independent Company The Queens and served with Lt. Col. Cranham at Salerno and later in Normandy. They met at the Cathedral after the service for the first time in forty five years.

## 1/5th Queens

Lt. Col. G.L.A. Squire is compiling an album of Commanding Officers of the Queens and the Surreys. During his research he wrote to Lt. Col. N.D. Leslie of the Cameron Highlanders who commanded 1/5th Queens briefly during the war. His reply is printed below.

Dear Colonel Squire,

Thank you for your letter of 13th July. I did indeed have the honour of commanding 1/5th Queen's, and a splendid lot they were.

I think of all the various appointments I had during the war, my period with the Queen's was one of the best and my happiest.

It was an exciting time since we had just been made a motor carrying battalion and our task was to back the armoured brigade up in front of us.

We took "Medinine to Tunis" in our stride. After this we had some rest in Home until I was called back to 51 Div as GSO 1 leaving the battalion with regret.

I fear I could not send you a photograph - I searched for one amongst my collection, I managed however to find one from the "Cameron Historical Records" which I copied and hope it will suffice.

Yours Sincerely,

David Leslie.



Lt. Col. Foster Herd, Col. Peter Thompson, Major Stanley, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. McConnell after the service.



The President, Brig. Mike Doyle with the Colonel of The Queen's Regiment and Maj. Gen. Mike Reynolds, Brig. Bob Acworth, Col. Alan Jones and In Pensioners from The Royal Hospital.



Arthur Scrivens, Dave Boorer and Col. Buchanan enjoy a pint after the service.

## "B - Z"

In the visitors' book in the Regimental Museum in Clandon Park appears the following remark:  
"B-Z to the Queen's from an H.M.S. EXCELLENT officer". Our curator, Mr Richard Ford, who had served in the Communications Branch in the Royal Navy was baffled, but being a resourceful man he telephoned H.M.S. MERCURY, the Naval Communications Centre at Petersfield. The answer was immediate: "B-Z signifie 'Well Done'" So we, in our turn, say "Much appreciated, Whale Island".

P.G.E.H.

## AUVERS - I.E - HAMON

When troops were sent to the Falklands, crowds turned out and flags waved. How different to the departure of the 1st. Bn The East Surrey Regiment, when we went to war in 1939. Early in the morning we marched out of Sobraon Barracks, Colchester - with the Regimental Band to the railway station, and no one seemed to take the slightest notice. The milkmen, postmen on their early rounds hardly looked up! At the station several wives were there to see us off to World War 2, but I suppose the local people had seen it all before in the Great War, and there seemed to be a resigned apathy among the population at large.

Our troop train took us to Aldershot, where for a few days we were stationed in Blenheim Barracks. I often wonder how many now remember those far off days? There the Col. of the Regiment, and Lady Longley wished us 'Bon Voyage' and a safe return. I recall that during the inspection she handed out a few wizened apples to the soldiers.

Near the Barracks, the Queen's Hotel at Farnborough, was a last meeting place for wives and girlfriends. Who were there? 'Wonky' Boxshall, of course the CO Keith Lawton (2i.c.), Peter Hill, Bob Bruce, Alan Hayfield, Charles Lamb, John Brooke Fox, and so many others, some of whom were not to see England again.

From Aldershot a troop train took us to Southampton and in due course we landed at Cherbourg. In those early days of the war Calais and Boulogne were not used by the B.E.F. in case of possible German air attacks. There we entrained in those so very French goods wagons, - all prepared for mobilisation - which had written on the sides 'Hommes 40 - Chevaux en longue 8'. A pleasant journey took us to Sable near Le Mans.

From here we marched to the pretty little village of Auvers - Le - Hamon. I was in A Coy under Finch White with Buchanan as the other platoon commander. In those days there were not enough young officers to command all the platoons, so the third platoon commander was a WO.3. We settled into a nearby farm, the officers very comfortable in the homestead, and the soldiers in the various barns round about. Looking back half a century later, I remember we were not then in battle-dress, and were still in our pre-war service dress. On some recent T.V. programmes soldiers are shown going to war in B.D. but this was not introduced in France until December 1939, and I was given an extra orderly officer, by Bill Himley, for putting on my new B.D. a day before authorised!

Recently a friend and I were talking about Auvers - Le - Hamon, and she kindly deviated her journey, en route to Cherbourg from the south to call in on this little village. The photographs she found seem to have been taken around this time. At the far end is the estaminet where we would meet up with the locals and sing such songs as 'Oh Pres de ma Blonde', and something about 'An Elève Polytechnicien'. - Col. Pec Andrews can still sing it now.

The little village does not seem to have changed very much over the years. Anyway after a week or so we entrained once again and moved to the Belgian frontier where we spent most of the very cold winter of 1939/40. First of all to Merchin, then the coalmining and industrial area around Tourcoign, Roubaix,



and Lille. Few will now recall Auvers - Le - Hamon, but maybe the postcard will bring back a few memories. And Dunkirk was still nine months away.

R.C.T.

## Annual Church Service



Cyril Harman, Len Jelly, Jim Browning, Maj. Howard, John Carpenter and Harry Bull.



Brig. Geoffrey Curtis, author of 'Salerno Remembered' with Col. John Kealy and S. Blay all from 2/6th Queens.

## With the 1st Bn The Queens in the Far East 1945 - 1946

Having always resisted the temptation to indulge in reminiscence, I surprised myself by accepting an invitation to write down what I could remember of my impressions and experiences from the end of the Second World War in the Far East until my return from Bangkok to the UK in December 1946.

I must stress that this is a purely personal memoir. It makes no pretence of being a strictly chronological record of events, still less a regimental history of what was then still the 1st Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment. But if what I have to say gives a flavour of the period concerned, and perhaps stirs a few memories among old friends and comrades, I shall be happy enough.

The war, for me, ended at Shwedaung on the Irrawaddy in June 1945. The battalion had been engaged in the scrappy business of cutting off as many as possible of the retreating Japs as they struggled back over the river and out of Burma for ever. We caught a few Japs at Shwedaung, and my most vivid memory is of the sonorous nightly chorus of millions of frogs in the marshes along the river - enough to make anyone's throat sore. In fact I did contract a sore throat, though not from emulating the mating calls of the frogs. After a week or two of acute discomfort it became plain that I had something more than tonsillitis. I have vague memories of a bumpy jeep ride down the road to Rangoon, recently liberated following the roof-top display of the immortal words: 'Japs gone. Remove digit'. A British military hospital was already installed there, and I became the first British soldier in Burma to be treated for diphtheria with penicillin. They told me later that they had given me what turned out to be four times the requisite dose. I didn't mind being a human pincushion: I was simply thankful that they had saved my life.

It was delightful to find myself lying between clean white sheets and to hear the cheerful voices of English nurses. I heard other cheerful voices, too: Arthur Davies and Hugh Harris called in to see me on their way to catch the boat home. My own subsequent journeyings involved moves by sea and rail from Rangoon to Chittagong, from there to Comilla (where I shared a six-bedded ward with five RAMC doctors, surely the most pertulant patients in the world), and finally to the Officers' Convalescent Depot at Lebong, near Darjeeling. I arrived there, in the cloud-enshrouded Himalayan foothills, on the evening of V J Day, to witness an astonishing spectacle of attempts at celebration. I think we were all too enfeebled by our spells in hospital to be able to do as full justice as we thought we could to the amount of festive liquor available. Most of us, I fancy, awoke next morning feeling considerably worse than when we had arrived at Lebong. In retrospect, the universal rejoicing at the sudden end to a war which had seemed destined to continue for much longer was entirely understandable. None of us at that time could have foreseen the ominous consequences of the means employed to induce the enemy to surrender.

My month's stay at Lebong passed all too slowly. The company of fellow convalescents is not the most congenial. Besides, whereas earlier in the year, on leave in Darjeeling with Tom Raven and Arthur Davies, I had daily enjoyed the sublime sight of Kanchenjunga towering crystal clear forty miles away, now one could see no more than a few yards through the mist that enveloped the depot. I was very anxious to rejoin the battalion and return to real life.

1st Queen's meanwhile had had a tough two or three months in the Sittang River area north east of Rangoon, where the Japanese had fought a stubborn rearguard action to cover the retreat of the remnants of their armies. Had their emperor not surrendered to the Allies in August it would have been the lot of the Queen's, with other units, to march and fight their way over the mountains from Burma into what was then Siam. In the event they were saved from this daunting prospect and instead were sent by air to garrison Bangkok, the capital of Siam, and to assist in rounding up the very large Japanese

forces which had been occupying the country.

I was fortunate enough to return from Lebong to Rangoon just in time to catch up with the Battalion's rearguard, which was about to board a shaky old Dakota at Mingladon aerodrome. Morale had been shattered by the news, just received, that the plane immediately preceding ours had crashed somewhere in the jungle covered mountains on the Burma - Siam border. All the passengers - men of the Queen's - and crew had perished. Our pilot himself showed signs of apprehension, but we took off and after an hour or two we were passing over the lush paddy fields of Siam, dotted with peasants and fat buffaloes, before landing in sunshine at Don Muang airport, fifteen miles north of Bangkok. The Dakota's doors opened and I experienced a kind of double-take: two Jap soldiers ran forward and propelled me and my kit down on to the tarmac. For a split second I thought it was a bad dream. In fact, so completely had the Japanese fulfilled the spirit and letter of the surrender that they were almost overnight transformed from our enemies to our obedient and even obsequious servants. It was a change of role that took some getting used to, at least for us.

The Battalion was accommodated in the buildings of the Chulalongkorn University, an attractive white complex bordering a green campus near the centre of Bangkok. The officers' mess was a couple of miles away, in a solid, timber house in a largely residential area where there had been homes for senior staff of trading companies and legations. The city itself bore little obvious evidence of its previous occupation by the Japanese - an indication of the agility with which its citizens had adapted themselves to the new order. In parts it was an attractive city, and its famous temple complex very beautiful. But mostly it was a warren of streets along which, for good or ill, the whole tide of human activity flowed. In the more affluent districts shops and other premises started to advertise their wares in English for the benefit of the new arrivals. Through a blend of Thai sensuality and Chinese entrepreneurial skills (half of Bangkok's two million inhabitants were Chinese and they owned most of the businesses), new restaurants, nightclubs and other more dubious establishments mushroomed almost overnight. Every conceivable pleasure was available to all and proved the downfall of some.

It was perhaps fortunate that the Queen's had many and various duties to keep them busy for most of the time. Although still part of an Indian Army formation, they were the only British Infantry unit in Thailand (as we had better now call it) and they had substantial responsibilities. No one quite knew how things would go after the Japanese surrender, in respect of either the defeated enemy or the local population. The Queen's carried out security exercises, including a practice defence of Don Muang airport. Corruption of all kinds, endemic in the Far East, was rife in the months after the end of the war. An expanding black market flourished. The Thai police, themselves riddled with graft and corruption, were induced to carry out raids on civilian premises to recover stolen and looted property of all kinds. On a number of these raids detachments of the Queen's accompanied the police, not to protect them but rather to protect the luckless victims from their depredations. Other detachments spent periods of guard duty at the Klongtoi docks on the Menam river at the southern end of the city. This was, as we supposed, in the general interests of security and crime prevention, for the docks were the main seaward gateway to Bangkok and the canals or 'klongs' extending through the city from the river were as great a hive of activity as the network of paved streets. I cannot recall any episode that stands out as having relieved the tedium of duties at Klongtoi.

Other much more interesting work however came our way. Thailand had been the main Japanese base area for their operations in Burma and Assam. Many thousands of troops had been stationed there or had passed through to and from the battle areas. There were still very large numbers all over the country when hostilities came to an end. One division at least had only recently marched south from China and had never confronted the British and Indian forces. Proud and

self-confident, they must have found it hard to come to terms with the fact of surrender. Other troops had been employed as engineers, notably for the infamous Burma - Siam railway, while yet others had been guards over Allied prisoners of war, either on the railway or in the numerous other POW camps scattered throughout the country. All now were to be sorted out and the sheep, as it were, separated from the goats. For many would be required to stand trial on war crimes charges and would not be allowed to slip through the net.

Special welfare agencies had acted quickly to release and repatriate British and Indian POWs. For the Queen's and other units in the Bangkok area the first major event was a formal ceremony having great symbolic significance for both sides: a surrender parade at which senior Japanese officers were required to hand their swords to - was it to our Corps Commander or to Geoffrey Evans, our Divisional Commander? At this interval of time I forgot which. For a Japanese officer thus to part with what in every sense was an emblem of his honour, both personal and national, was the ultimate act of capitulation.

I should mention at this point that on my rejoining the battalion I had found that in my absence Victor Mosnicka had been appointed Adjutant in my place. I was now given a crown and the command of a company. I found myself one of the group of officers responsible for escorting the Japanese generals at the surrender ceremony, which took place on a maidan in the city. My charge was no less a personage than Lieutenant-General Sato, who had held a very senior command. He was unusually tall for a Japanese, aloof and taciturn. With British, Gurkha and Indian soldiers paraded around the perimeter of the maidan, and our General standing at a table in the middle, I followed a pace or two behind Sato as he walked stiffly the fifty yards to the table, bowed low, placed his sword and scabbard in our General's hands, bowed again and returned to his place. All this was done in complete silence. Not a word was exchanged. Sato's face remained impassive throughout, but as he turned, having regained his place, I saw tears trickling down his cheeks. It was weirdly incongruous, yet oddly moving. I realised the completeness of the Allied victory. For years afterwards I kept a small photograph of the pair of us strutting across the grass that day. Not long ago I passed it to a friend in the Imperial War Museum, in whose archives no doubt it records a tiny fragment of history.

There now began in earnest the business of rounding up, identifying and arranging the disposal of thousands of Japanese surrendered personnel. The Queen's rifle companies took turn and turn about in this duty. I for one shall never forget the month or so which my Company and I spent at a large camp and collecting centre at Nakon Nayauk, which if I remember rightly was about seventy miles north east of the capital, at a point where the flat plains and paddy fields met a range of jungle covered hills. There was a railway nearby, along which those Japanese against whom no charges were laid could be sent to the coast for repatriation. The camp itself consisted of lines of bamboo and palm 'bashas' constructed by the Japs for their own use. These were set around several parade areas of hard earth, each about the size of a football pitch. Indeed one of them served just such a purpose for my Company. We had our own 'bashas' and there was even a group of smaller huts which served as Company office, officers' quarters, cookhouse and officers' mess. The whole camp contained at any one time during our tour of duty there as many as seven or eight thousand Japanese - and a hundred and thirty of the Queen's. Despite this huge disparity in numbers, so meticulously did the Japs comply with the terms of surrender that we felt totally secure and were able to sleep peacefully in our bedrolls at night until the last week of our stint, when our slumbers were broken for reasons I shall mention later in this narrative.

The procedure we followed daily during those weeks at Nakon Nayauk was as extraordinary as it was simple. The Japanese had to be identified, searched and sorted into three categories: 'white', which embraced those innocent of any war crimes; 'grey', those under suspicion and not yet cleared; and 'black'

those against whom definite charges had been or were about to be laid. The 'whites' were despatched to the railhead for repatriation, but the 'greys' and 'blacks' were taken under escort to Bangkwang Jail, near Bangkok, whence those 'greys' who were found to have been lauded 'white' by our Intelligence staff departed for their homeland, while the 'blacks' and the 'greys' who turned out after all to be 'black' ended up in Changi Prison, Singapore to stand trial.

The Queen's day began around six o'clock, and by seven I had gone out to one of the largest compounds, to find myself confronting a solid phalanx of Jap soldiery lined up in columns, each man carrying his full kit. At the front of this mass of submissive humanity, which numbered anything up to five or six thousand on a normal day, stood half a dozen generals and colonels, also with their kit. The senior of these would on my appearance utter a word of command, whereupon the whole assembly would bow in silent obeisance. At my word - or was it that of the Company Sergeant-Major, the real business began. Behind me stretched a long row of little bamboo and palm-covered gates, such as might be found in a cattle market or a football ground (except that there were no turnstiles). At each gate stood a group of NCOs and men of the Company, and with them at a side table a member of the Allies' War Crimes Investigation or Intelligence staff who had arrived from wherever they had their own quarters in or near the camp.

Through the gates, at the double and led by their senior officers, came the Japs. They declared their name, rank and unit, had their kitbags and packs emptied and searched for any items considered to be loot, and were briefly interrogated and checked against the investigators' lists. Then, hastily gathering up their possessions (less what had been confiscated) they were sent in whatever direction their designated 'colour' required. The whole operation was conducted with little ceremony and as much speed as possible, for by mid-morning the sun was hot and the searchers and scrutineers soaked in sweat, even though for us bare tops were the order of the day.

The Japanese for their part were totally co-operative and on the whole a fairly fit bunch of men. There were however some who limped and stumbled, a few syphilitics and other invalids from their sick bay, and some who carried around their necks pathetic cardboard notices bearing such words as 'The deaf person' or 'Hearing a little' or perhaps 'No am seeing'. Most were docile, a few were sullen, all were submissive. It was a tribute to the power of the word of the Emperor of a once proud and now vanquished people.

The day's work was usually finished well before noon. Any delusions of grandeur that the salutation of so many surrendered soldiers and their generals might have engendered in the mind of a twenty-three year old Company commander were quickly dissipated by the heat of the day, the scale and strenuous nature of the proceedings and admiration for the cheerfulness and competence of the men who had really done the job. Morale in the Company was high. There was the sense of freedom that comes from being on detachment, and with it an awareness of responsibility for carrying out an important if bizarre task, a task which it must be admitted was made all the sweeter for being undertaken in respect of our erstwhile enemies.

The rest of the day was given over to rest, recreation and general company duties. I myself and the platoon commanders usually received a group of Japanese commanders during the afternoon, when we were presented with details of the units to be screened the following day. This was a brief, formal but courteous meeting, with no words wasted on either side. The platoons meanwhile played each other at football on the hard earth pitch marked out for the purpose. At the end of the game there occurred something which has remained in my mind as typifying the attitude of the Japanese surrendered personnel. As the final whistle blew and the two teams left the field a shout would go up from a Jap sentry, whereupon every single hut within sight of the pitch would disgorge its occupants who would then stand, row upon row, sometimes hundreds of men, with heads bowed as a couple of dozen Queen's men,

sweat-stained and wearing only shorts and plimsolls, straggled up through the lines to their own quarters. Then and only then did the Japanese relax again.

Living was simple though hardly spartan compared with conditions in the field during hostilities. My predecessor whose company we had replaced had initiated a routine in the officers' quarters, as I soon discovered. At about five in the afternoon I would receive a summons from one of the Japanese orderlies - he was in effect my batman's own batman - to take my bath. At first I had some difficulty in persuading him that I preferred to bathe in rather less than scalding hot water. When I was comfortably ensconced in the longitudinally halved oil-drum there was a polite knock on the bath-house door and Laughing Jimmy, as he came to be known, announced 'Whiskisodah', pronouncing it as one word. As I had not at that time acquired a taste for the life-blood of my ancestors, I declined the proffered tin mug, but despite this he continued to offer it until the end of our stay.

The Glorious First of June fell during the period we spent at Nakon Nayauk. It seemed appropriate to hold a simple Company mess night for the five of us. Our batmen must have conveyed to the Jap cooks an exalted notion of the grandeur of the occasion and the formidable appetite of British officers. Our rations were very plain, but with the addition of rice and other materials the menu amounted to no fewer than seven courses. Some were delicious vegetable dishes - beanshoots, a spinach-like plant and others. However each was substantial in itself, and they increased in size as the meal progressed. We became aware of Japanese eyes watching us intently through the woven palm-leaf screen walls of the mess. Clearly we should suffer a grave loss of face if we failed to live up to their evident expectations. We struggled on through course after course. Just as we were about to give up, the final dish was presented: a large and remarkably good imitation of an English apple pie. We were desperate. It was impossible under so many watching eyes to dispose of our helpings under the table. Excruciatingly slowly and with frequent washing down with beer we cleaned our plates. Half the pie remained on the dish. In a flash of inspiration someone suggested that we explain to the Jap cooks and orderlies that it was customary among British officers to save a portion of the final dish for those who had prepared a particularly excellent meal, in appreciation of their efforts. It worked. The Japanese were manifestly impressed. As for ourselves, national honour was preserved, and we retired for the night with distended bellies.

Gradually the numbers of Japanese personnel passing through the camp decreased, until no more than a rearguard party remained, comparable in number to our own company strength. Most of the long huts were empty. Word of this must have got to local bandits, groups of whom roamed the hinterland of Thailand rather as the dacoits did in Burma. One morning our men awoke in the company lines to discover that everyone's spare battledress, newly laundered for us by the Japanese, had been stolen from beside the sleeping owners, and despite the presence of a sentry. This was worrying, though I consoled myself with the fact that no rifles had been taken. For several nights we posted extra sentries. There was an eerie quiet over the empty huts now that so few Japs remained. Our men were jittery and slept badly. I consulted the remaining Japanese officer, a captain who had been some time in the camp. 'They will return', he said; 'They will come for rifles.' In order to take some of the strain from our own men, I reinforced our sentries with Japanese, fully armed with some of our rifles. We waited. The next night I awoke in my own hut, which was several hundred yards from the men's lines, to the sound of firing and much yelling. By the time I reached the scene the intruders had fled, empty-handed and pursued by combined British and Japanese patrols which presently returned having chased off the bandits. No one on our side had been wounded, nor had we lost any arms or equipment. In the morning we found trails of blood leading from the camp into the long grass beyond. We were not molested again. I asked my new Japanese ally what he and his colleagues had done when similarly visited. 'We went out and burned all the villages within a radius of five miles. That stopped it.' Whether he expected me to follow that

example I fortunately never found out, for a few days later we received orders to return to headquarters in Bangkok, since our task at Nakon Nayauk had been accomplished. I managed to obtain a new set of battledress for each member of the Company without questions being asked.

Shortly after this an even more curious assignment came our way. We were ordered to relieve the company which during our time up country had been stationed at Bangkwang Jail, where 'grey' and 'black' Japs were confined pending either their clearance and release or their trial in Singapore. For the first and only time in my life I found myself a jail commandant. I was of course ultimately responsible to the CO of the Battalion, that lovable man and brave soldier John Terry. Once the Company had entered Bangkwang and we had heard the gates slam behind us we were virtually as isolated from the outside world as the prisoners in our charge. I had in effect total on-the-spot responsibility.

The jail itself consisted of a forbidding group of buildings occupying an area a few hundred yards square, set in a dreary swampland, dotted with palm trees, a dozen miles from the centre of Bangkok. I believe it had been built for the Thai government by the French before the war, to serve as a civil prison. It was surrounded by a high whitewashed wall. At each of the four corners rose a watch-tower from which our sentries could look down upon the roofs and compounds within. The whole place certainly had a Devil's Island atmosphere about it.

The main entrance was through a tall archway barred by heavy iron gates. On each side of the archway were guard rooms and the quarters occupied by the men of my Company. Above it was the Company office, from which one had a view of the main compound, on each side of which were housed the 'grey' prisoners who accounted for about two thirds of the total number. Beyond the compound were the sombre buildings containing the 'black' prisoners who were kept in close confinement. The 'greys' by contrast were paraded under their own officers, drilled, inspected and given various fatigues to carry out. There was no contact between them and ourselves beyond what was necessary to convey and acknowledge orders. Behaviour on both sides was at all times strictly formal and correct. We carried out our own guard and sentry duties meticulously; all parts of the jail, including the small hospital, were under constant surveillance. In retrospect, I do not think we need have had any fears of an attempt by the Japs to break out, either singly or en masse. Their Emperor had ordered all his forces to submit, and even in the grim circumstances in which the Japanese at Bangkwang found themselves, submit they did. There was however another and, for them, more honourable means of escape open, as I was soon to discover.

Meanwhile on the first Sunday afternoon after our arrival I received a formal request through my Japanese interpreter for the 'greys' to be allowed to continue the previously agreed practice of holding contests and displays of the martial arts in the main compound. I gave my permission, and as if by magic a matting square was laid on the ground in the centre of the compound and improvised seating arranged about it. At the appointed time three or four hundred Japanese took their places, some sitting, others standing and yet others standing on the tiers behind. Their senior officers sat in the centre of one side. From my vantage point above the compound I could see that one seat was vacant. A Japanese officer knocked on my door and through the interpreter stiffly invited me to take my place below. I went down with him and on entering the compound I heard a shout and all the assembled audience and contestants rose to their feet as one man, bowed in silence and, when I had taken my seat, resumed their places.

As I recall, there were two principal activities: swordstick fighting and judo. Each bout of the first began with both contestants bowing to me, then to each other in a good deal of ceremonial before, with gutteral shouts and grunts and clashing of wood on wood, they joined battle. Bout succeeded bout. I was largely ignorant of the rules and the obvious finesse underlying the animal energy of the participants. The generals

sitting on either side of me remained silent, and so did I. I could feel the tension and excitement mounting around me, though I do not recall applause, only a murmur of approval or otherwise according to the course of each contest. I watched, fascinated by the spectacle and somewhat awed by the occasion, trying to remain as impassive as those who sat beside me.

Next came the judo, and I quickly realised that I was witnessing something exceptional. After a few opening bouts between opponents of moderate ability, there entered the ring a sergeant, as I later discovered, of the Kempai Tai (the Japanese military police). He was short and slight, as thin as a rake, small-boned and sinewy. He had eyes more deeply set and a nose more aquiline than most of his compatriots. He wore only thin black cotton trousers. After the usual silent bow to me, he proceeded to take on a succession of opponents, some of at least twice his size and weight. It was a contest for real, not merely a display. One by one they came at him, pitting all their strength and skill against this little wiry figure. One by one he threw them, neatly and without apparent effort. He must have dealt with ten or more. At last, showing no obvious signs of exhaustion, he bowed again and modestly left the ring. I had never seen a judo contest before, but I now realised I had witnessed a master in action. It was a spellbinding experience. At the conclusion of the proceedings the same ceremonies as before were enacted and after I had left the arena the gathering dispersed. In a few minutes the compound was empty.

I have mentioned the interpreter assigned to me, his name was Tadashi Kato. He must have been about twenty-five and was a Private First Class. His English was very good; he had been a teacher of the subject in his homeland. In appearance he was the archetypal army misfit and almost a caricature Jap; cropped head, thick spectacles, protruding teeth and ears, and splayed feet. The movements of his legs and arms were unco-ordinated, but he was genuinely anxious to please, and when I had broken through his diffidence and deference of manner I found him to be a person of great charm and intelligence. He was a creature totally at odds with the forces that had propelled him all unwillingly into the war. We had many conversations, the details of which I have forgotten, but he told me of his family and of his hope of resuming his schoolmastering when he was free to go home. It was inconceivable that this gentle creature could have been guilty of any war crime, and indeed just before I myself left Bangkwang Jail he was included in a large draft for repatriation. I do not recall where his home was; I have since prayed that it was neither Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Through Kato I learned to cease hating my former enemies.

I had completed three years at Croydon School of Art before my call-up for the army and had gained a place at the Royal College of Art which was being kept warm for me on my return. I had done a certain amount of desultory drawing during my time in the Far East whenever the military life permitted. My sketches had been mainly of people and landscapes. While I was in hospital the Battalion's rapid transfer by air to Thailand had involved the jettisoning of all superfluous gear and equipment. Among the ammunition boxes full of files in the Orderly Room had been one containing my sketchbooks. Supposing these to be of no importance (save to myself), I regret to record that the staff there threw them out. Now however, despite the strict routine of guard duties and inspections in the jail, I had time to resume my craft. Indeed life in that dismal atmosphere had become boring.

Kato came to my rescue. I arranged for him to provide me with portrait and figure models from among the 'gre' Japanese. I did not select (as the tutors in our art schools were wont to do) but took all comers, from generals to private soldiers. I suspect that the artist in Japan has always enjoyed a somewhat higher prestige than his opposite number in Britain. In any case, the Japanese must have been as bored with the jail routine as I was. So as models they came, considering it partly an honour, no doubt, and partly a relief from the general tedium of life. While on leave earlier in Calcutta I had stocked up with

materials which had somehow escaped the fate of my previous work, and now in addition I got from some source or other a quantity of Japanese paper. I must have made thirty or forty drawings and sketches from life during odd hours of leisure. I was surprised at the variety of form and character to be found in the faces I studied. Moreover, when told to keep still, each man would stand or sit as motionless as a statue until told otherwise.

Very few of those sketches remain in my possession. Most of them I sold at different times after the war, no doubt as much on account of the relative novelty of their subject matter as for any artistic merit they may have had.

My slumbers were broken one night when one of my platoon commanders, serving as Orderly Officer, rushed into my room and in a state of some panic (he was a fairly recent reinforcement in the unit) told me that a Japanese officer had committed suicide in his cell. This, if true, would spell trouble for me. It was a grievous misdemeanour to permit a Japanese accused of war crimes to escape the normal processes of justice by committing *hara kiri* and thus, incidentally, preserving his honour according to the code of Bushido.

I dressed quickly and was taken to the scene. I should explain that the 'black' Japanese prisoners were kept in close confinement in cells holding ten or so, and only left their cells for sanitary and exercise purposes during daylight hours. Our sentries were on guard at the end of each long corridor where at night the only electric bulb burned. They patrolled at intervals during the night watch but it was difficult to see into the darkness and silence of each cell.

What confronted me was the sight of a grey haired man, wearing only his customary G-string, lying in a large pool of blood and with his throat cut. He was emitting a gurgling, snoring sound. Beside him was a crudely written note, in Japanese. The other occupants of the cell, all of them officers, were awake and sat silently around the walls observing their comrade taking his honourable exit. No hand was raised to restrain him.

From his snores it was clear to me that we had arrived before he had achieved his aim. I summoned the Japanese medical officer, an incommunicative but efficient captain named Kubo and with the help of orderlies we got the recumbent victim to the sick bay. I retired to bed again, not very confident of his chances (or of mine for that matter) of survival.

Next morning my first action was to visit the sick bay. There I found an elderly, grizzled colonel (as he turned out to be) lying propped up on one elbow, a thick bandage around his neck, shovelling in rice with chopsticks held in his free hand. The note of the night before had been addressed to me and was to the effect that he wished to apologise for any inconvenience he might have caused but that he wished to take the honourable way out. Now he gave a thin, rather sheepish smile and through the medium of Kato told me he was sorry for having been such a very foolish old man. I made no comment, but took this to be a confession of failure and incompetence on his part. In fact, he had cut his own throat with a broken razor blade, but had missed a vital artery. Nonetheless, had we not discovered him in time, he would have bled slowly to death. Afterwards I looked up his charge sheet. He was accused of a series of atrocities, including the torture and murder of civilians, in Indo-China. Well might he have tried to effect his own solution to his predicament.

All weapons or other implements by means of which prisoners might attempt to make an end of themselves were of course strictly forbidden in the jail. The existence of so much as a piece of razor blade alarmed me. After breakfast I got the whole Company on parade and armed with wicker laundry baskets we descended on the cells in the 'black' block. In the course of an exhausting and distasteful morning we stripped all the Japanese occupants regardless of rank, searched every item of kit and clothing and carried out what I think has now come to be known as a body search. By the end of the morning we had

filled several baskets with all manner of small implements: scissors or parts of scissors, nails and screws, broken knife and razor blades and in short anything by means of which the owner might in honour make his quietus. Every single man had one or more of these objects secreted about him. I was astonished at the haul but at the same time relieved that no one other than the old colonel had so far had recourse to his secret weapon.

Despite their rising gorges and tempers, my men used no force or brutality in their unpleasant task. The Japanese for their part were sullen, silent and unresistant. They had been rumbled, and no further attempts at suicide were made while my Company was at Bangkwang. Years later, when visiting a handmade paper mill in the south of England, I found an incipient strike among the ladies responsible for sorting the rags which were the raw material for the fine watercolour paper made by the firm. They had been accused of the unforgivable sin of allowing small pieces of metal to enter the trays of pulp, which resulted in tiny brown rust spots sullying the finished sheets. I enquired the source of the rags they used. They mostly came from the Far East, I was told. I took a closer look. Some of the cotton fragments seemed familiar. They were Japanese army shirts and tunics. With a knife I slit open the seams of collars, sleeves and pockets. Out fell little rusty pieces of razor blade and similar objects. Peace and harmony were restored, so perhaps that morning's work years ago had been useful in more ways than one.

Towards the end of our tour of duty at Bangkwang those among the 'grey' Japanese who had been cleared of suspicion were formed up ready for their departure by ship for home. The general leading them asked to see me and reported to my office where he handed me a cylindrical brass container from which I drew two rolls, one of paper, the other of silk. Each bore a painting in colour of a Japanese girl in traditional ceremonial dress. That on silk in particular was exquisitely drawn and tinted. Both, as I learned, had been done in the jail by a Japanese artist and were now presented to me as a token of appreciation and, I like to think, perhaps of reconciliation. There is little doubt that many of the Japanese were ashamed of the excesses committed by their fellows and wished in some way to make amends. I accepted their gift in the spirit in which I am sure it was offered. I asked to meet my fellow artist, but the transport had arrived and there was no time to produce him before all were aboard and away. I still have the paintings, and though the delicate tints are a little faded the memory of that occasion remains fresh in my mind.

One day while we were at the jail I received an urgent message from Battalion Headquarters: 'The King is dead'. Supposing this to refer to King George VI, I was greatly shocked and wondered what the consequences might be. However it transpired that the message had referred to King Ananda of Siam, who had been found dead in his palace bedroom in suspicious circumstances. There was a general belief that he had been murdered - to this day I do not know the full story - and I was summoned to Headquarters to meet the Commanding officer and the other company commanders to discuss the possible effects of the king's death upon the local population and the internal security implications there might be for our troops in Thailand. As it turned out, life went on as usual. The dead king was succeeded by his young brother, Phumibol (pronounced, I think, Phumipon) who reigns in Thailand to this day. I recall only one curious memory. While being driven by jeep from Bangkwang to Battalion Headquarters we passed the gates of the royal palace. Outside stood a Thai sentry. He wore a World War I French steel helmet, leaned on a musket of doubtful age and origin, and was shod with one boot and one plimsoll. That seemed to say it all about a happy-go-lucky, corrupt and yet comfortable country.

I had seen the late king only once myself, on an occasion which until now I have preferred to forget. It was a victory parade held in the centre of Bangkok. King Ananda and Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, were to inspect a guard of honour provided by the Queen's and there was to be a march past afterwards. I was privileged to command the guard of honour. We drilled and practised, as it

seems now, for weeks. So carefully prepared was our turn-out on the day that, in order to avoid spoiling our green battledress trouser creases in transit between Headquarters and the parade ground, a special ramp was found so that we could mount the truck without bending our knees, and we travelled standing up, holding on to rails along the inside of the vehicle.

The maidan was lined on three sides by troops of the Brigade including those of the Queen's who were not forming the guard of honour. We were positioned in the centre of the area, facing the fourth side where rows of chairs accommodated many VIP's and their families, British, Indian and Thai. Behind us waited the band of the Royal Marines, then touring the Far East. The king and Mountbatten arrived. Standing some yards in front of the guard of honour, I gave the order 'Present arms'. From the sounds behind me I could tell it had been executed with absolute precision. I felt elated. The king and Lord Louis passed along and between our ranks, and when I judged them to have completed their inspection I gave what should have been the command to order arms, preparatory to standing the guard at ease. Instead, I straight away called 'Stand at ease'. The Royal Marines band was playing and I could not hear the frantic stage whispers of my platoon commanders immediately behind me, but I heard, or felt, the gasp of horror that arose all around the maidan. The guard of honour was for a few seconds reduced to a shambles while some ordered arms first and then stood at ease - these were the old hands - while others adopted their own methods of reaching that position. At that moment, with two or three thousand pairs of eyes upon me, I knew what it was like to wish that the ground would open up and swallow me. No such luck: I had to sweat it out, and sweating is the word. Fortunately neither of the two principal personages can have been fully aware of the episode, for they had gone on to inspect the Royal Marines band. I nevertheless felt disgraced that I had let John Terry and the Battalion down. I must salvage what I could in the march past.

As it turned out, this was a great success. The Queen's guard of honour led the parade down the broad Rajadhamnoern Avenue, saluting as they passed the rostrum in a manner which sufficiently impressed Mountbatten for him to cable afterwards to Queen Mary, then our Colonel-in-Chief, somewhat as follows: 'Comparisons are invidious, but the bearing and smartness of the Queen's guard of honour were so conspicuously good that I feel I must draw them to Your Majesty's attention'. This was a small balm to my wounded pride. Afterwards, poor John Terry was beside himself with fury, as well he might be. I felt if possible more sorry for him than for myself. For some days after, I sensed a certain constraint when I entered the officers' mess, but gradually my gaffe was, I think, forgiven if not forgotten. It was, in a way, a turning point for me. I had had vague notions of staying on in the army when the time should come for my demobilisation. Any such notions were abruptly dispelled that day on the maidan in Bangkok. Lord Wavell once quoted a confidential report on an unnamed individual: 'This officer should go far - the farther the better'. For me, the visual and not the martial arts should be the way forward.

There were other, happier interludes in Bangkok. Soon after we arrived there, John Terry ordained that there should be a mess night in the officers' mess. This was an appropriate recognition of the end of hostilities and a return to the peacetime customs of what was after all the First Battalion of the senior English regiment of the line. It was also a ceremony unknown to almost all the officers then serving with the Battalion, few of whom, apart from John himself, were regulars. In our comfortable teak building, we had acquired a quantity of decent wine and port (after all, French Indo-China was not far away, and anything could be found in Bangkok), and a table laid for thirty officers with passable cutlery and plate, and lit (if my memory serves me aright) with candles, looked very handsome.

I was appointed Mess President for the evening, and a subaltern, whose name has, I regret to say, escaped me in the intervening years, was Vice-President. Our meal was a good one, for we had a splendid mess sergeant, Sergeant Stone (a

portrait drawing of whom I still have, if he ever wants to claim it) and he had assembled a competent team of cooks, British and Chinese or Thai, I think. We were all fairly mellow when it fell to me to initiate the toasts, for there were two: to the King, and to Queen Mary, our Colonel-in-Chief. There was a sense of expectation down the long table, not least on the part of the four or five Australian officers who, frustrated by the ending of hostilities in New Guinea, had sought secondment to the Queen's for more fighting, only to arrive in time for the general termination of the war. They were certainly ignorant of our strange Pommy conduct on mess nights.

I found that a large decanter of port had been placed at my right hand. This I was in due course to pass clockwise round the table. But what nonplussed me was an equally large silver serving spoon which lay alongside the decanter. Sergeant Stone meanwhile had retired discreetly into the background, near the sideboard. For the life of me, I could not understand the significance of the spoon. Faces regarded me from down each side of the table. Just as well my fellow officers were as innocent as I was. Then I bethought me of some long forgotten legend of officers having been poisoned by means of a noxious potion introduced into their post-prandial port. I therefore seized the spoon and, under the eyes of the assembled company, poured into it a little port which I accordingly sipped. Then, smacking my lips to proclaim its freedom from pollution, I passed the decanter round the table. When it had once more reached me, I uttered the words: 'Mr Vice, The King', whereupon the subaltern at the far end of the table rose to his feet and said: 'Gentlemen, the King'. Then we all drank the Loyal Toast. Having resumed our seats, after a short interval the process was repeated for Queen Mary. All this clearly impressed my brother officers, and the dinner was pronounced a success. Afterwards I accosted Sergeant Stone who during all the ceremony had kept a low profile. 'What', I asked him, 'was the spoon for?' He regarded me with amusement. 'Why, sir, it was to bang on the table to get silence.' I was deflated. My imagination had got the better of me. I should have liked to cherish the notion that I had instituted a precedent, and that the ceremony with the spoon has been passed down as a tradition. I have no evidence, alas, that it has.

There were other diversions, too. In Bangkok there was a splendid sports stadium where, for twenty minutes each way and in about ninety degrees of heat, we played rugby matches. These were mostly as a divisional team against various Thai sides. It might have been supposed that we, coming from the home of rugby football and being several stones heavier than our opponents, would have overrun the Thais. We did indeed win several matches, but against the Tha Prachan we could not prevail. Their coach, as we discovered, had been at Cambridge, where he had played at scrum-half for his college. Inspired by his tuition, Tha Prachan overran us; they were like terriers, much smaller than we were, but fast and elusive and, of course, much more accustomed to the heat in which our matches were played. It was all great fun, especially when, after the game was over, we lined up - players, referee and touch-judges - to receive from pretty Thai girls large garlands of fragrant, albeit prickly flowers around our sweating necks. I recollect an added pleasure in those rugby games: two old school contemporaries, Michael Clarke, then in a Punjabi regiment but later a Lt. Col. in the Queen's Surrey's and Peter Reeve, a Major in a Gurkha battalion, with myself made up the back row of the divisional scrum.

Meanwhile, there were still the Japanese. After the end of my Company's tour of duty at Bangkwang Jail, we had the task of escorting a shipload of 'black' Japs from Klongtoi Docks to Changi Prison, Singapore to stand trial for alleged war crimes. I recall one voyage in a former United States Liberty ship, in which the company had charge of some three hundred Japanese of all ranks, including several generals and an admiral. We packed our prisoners into the cargo hold where they gave little trouble since most were seasick for the three days of the voyage. The Japanese, it seemed, were not on the whole good sailors. The men of my company stood guard, and indeed we posted a sentry on the bridge of the ship, for at the point of departure I had discovered that we were blessed with

a Japanese captain and crew who for all I knew of navigation could have sailed us straight off to Yokohama. However all went well, and the high spot of our voyage occurred one bright morning about eight o'clock when, coming on to the bridge, I saw a huge Royal Navy aircraft carrier overtaking us on a parallel course. We ourselves were flying the red ensign. I ordered the sentry on the bridge to present arms and I myself saluted. The carrier was by this time level with us, about three hundred yards away. Suddenly it dipped its white ensign in returned salute and flung out a string of signal flags whose significance we could not at that moment understand. Through binoculars I could see officers saluting us from the carrier's deck. It was a case of 'dignity and impudence', perhaps, but also an example of the courtesy of the seas, and for us a memorable experience. The carrier sailed past us and out of sight.

Arriving at Singapore, we discharged our longsuffering cargo and escorted them to Changi. For them, the tables were turned, for they were returning to the place where at least some of them had had custody of British prisoners of war. At least the Japanese were not treated there as harshly as they had treated their own captives. It was at Singapore that I gained a curious insight into the conduct of the Japanese officers towards their own men. A Jap soldier, laden with full kit, stumbled and fell on the quayside as he alighted from our ship. I was standing close by and saw a Japanese officer come up to him and kick him repeatedly until he struggled to his feet. When all our charges were lined up to march to the waiting trucks they were inspected by their officers. One of the latter, before my very eyes, seeing a man with, apparently, a button missing or undone, struck him twice across the face. It was a revolting spectacle.

Among the prisoners who had come from Bangkwang were some fifteen Koreans, who had served the Japanese as prison guards. They were big men, taller than the Japanese, who in fact regarded them as especially cold and ruthless. I recall one of their number, a huge man named Chin Fook Goi, whom everyone seemed to treat with a mixture of respect and loathing. He and his fellows were all charged with crimes against Allied prisoners and would shortly be called to account.

The Company had some time to wait in Singapore before returning to Bangkok. We were accommodated in Nec Soon Transit Camp meanwhile, and there was time for some relaxation. While we were there it happened that Peter Woodrow of 1 Queen's arrived to catch his boat home. He and I and Ted King, my second-in-command, had a night on the town. I forget how many bars we visited, but I do recall that at some unearthly hour on the following morning I was with some difficulty awakened by Peter, as fresh as a daisy, bidding me goodbye as he departed for the docks. I wished him well and fell asleep again. Few of us possessed a stamina equal to Peter's.

While in Singapore I was able to take my sketchbook and make drawings at the trials of my erstwhile charges. If I had expected dramatic proceedings I was soon disabused. There was the tedious business of translating everything out of English into Japanese and thence into Dutch or French and back again. Questions arose in one's mind: in all the beastliness of war and the revolting crimes with which many Japanese were charged, who was to blame - those who had given the orders, or those who had obediently carried them out? Moral questions such as this troubled others besides myself, as I discovered in conversation with officers of the Judge Advocate General's department at the time. Be that as it may, many Japanese were executed. I was in fact invited to attend a hanging at Changi Prison. I had never seen myself in the role of such artists as Goya or Gustave Dore, and fortunately my dilemma was resolved when I was ordered to return to Bangkok. The processes of justice however rolled on.

My own time in the Far East was coming to an end. After a prolonged and cordial farewell celebration I was given, as my

final duty, the command of an assorted party who were to travel by train from Bangkok to Singapore, most of them for the last time. There were some thirty of the Queen's, like me homeward bound; there was an equal number of Japanese prisoners for Changi; and there were some Indian soldiers also. We entrained amid scenes of emotion and hilarity and departed southwards behind a locomotive whose source of power was derived from the contents of its two tenders - logs of wood. The journey down the narrow peninsular towards the Malay frontier was slow, over rickety wooden bridges and through jungle, and it was insufferably hot. This was by reason of the fact that we were obliged to ride in American-type steel freight wagons which, even when the train was in motion and we had the sliding doors open, were like ovens. It was with great relief that we reached the border, though not without first rejecting the overtures of Chinese traders who tried to persuade us to take sacks of rice, containing heaven knows what in the way of opium or heroin, to Singapore.

At the first station inside Malaya all was transformed. We changed trains, and found ourselves boarding the Straits Mail, which was such a contrast from what we had hitherto endured that we could hardly believe our luck. I got our travel weary Queen's men into a long, open saloon coach and they were able to relax. There was a little delay before the train left, and I saw strutting down the platform two Britons clad in white shirts, white shorts and white stockings and wearing the type of pith helmet we had abandoned in India years before. They carried canes and had a proprietorial air about them. Drawing level with our coach, they boarded it, looked around and demanded, 'Who's in charge of these men?' I explained that I was. 'Then what the devil are you doing, allowing other ranks to sit in a first class carriage?' I was momentarily lost for words. I had not even noticed the classification of our coach, but next to me was sitting CSM Simmons, late of the Royal Sussex and a splendid regular soldier. Rising to his feet he reminded the intruders who we were, gave them a terse account of how the war had been won and by whom, and made it clear that he did not welcome the presence of a couple of planters - for such they clearly were - who thought that they could put the clock back five years. They retreated down the platform vowing to report us, and that was the last we saw or heard of them. The episode, comic in retrospect, seemed to me to explain a good deal about British colonial attitudes in that part of the world.

Once arrived in Singapore and having seen our groups go their separate ways, there was little for me to do but wait for the boat home. I did not have to wait long, and three or four weeks later the Queen of Bermuda docked at Liverpool. In a day or two I was a civilian once more. A chapter of my life had closed and, in the harshest winter that Britain had known for years, I resumed my interrupted art studies, obtained a modest government grant and took up residence in a bed-sitter in South Kensington. My memories of good friends and comrades, of strange places and events, have remained dormant until now, when they have emerged with unexpected clarity, like a photograph rediscovered in a long locked drawer.

*CSM Simmons had been awarded an MC for gallantry in Burma, later RSM J.B. Simmons MBE, MC. After leaving the Army in 1946, he rejoined the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Berlin. He finally left the Army when the 1st Battalion was serving in Malaya.*  
R.A.S.

## SINGAPORE 1942

While doing my research on the "Selarang Incident - September 1942, Singapore", I think it seems possible that the Japanese 25th Army of General Yamashita was unprepared for the large numbers of POWs as the Japanese Samurai doctrine forbade surrender and were somewhat embarrassed by them. The Japanese regarded the POWs as captives and not POWs. In August 1942, all POW camps in Singapore were placed under a Japanese fanatic overlord in Major General Shimpei Fukuei. Four POWs who escaped from the Bukit Timah POW work camp were caught after rowing some 200 miles in a small boat. As a consequence, since the arrogant Japanese did not believe that the POWs had the right to

escape, all POWs were asked to sign a statement not to escape. All POWs refused to sign. The next step the sadistic Major General Fukuei ordered all British and Australian POWs, about 17,000 in Changi to concentrate in the congested Selarang Barracks.

On September 2nd 1942, a move to break the stalemate was taken by the Japanese by ordering the senior commanders to witness the execution of the four men who escaped. They were Cpl. Breavington AIF; Pte. V.L. Gale AIF; Pte. Harold Waters of 2nd East Surrey Regt and Pte. Eric Fletcher RAOC. The four men were lined up on the Changi Beach with their backs to the sea. A firing squad of four Indian Sikhs from the Kapurthala State Force faced them some fifty yards away. At the execution ground, Cpl. Breavington made an appeal to Col. Makimura and Lt. Okazaki to spare the other three. This was refused. As the Sikh firing party knelt before the condemned men, the British and Australian officers saluted and the gallant men returned the salute. All the men refused to have handkerchiefs tied over their eyes. Cpl. Breavington walked to the others and shook hands with them. It was a very gallant act and thereupon the order was given by the Japanese to fire. These four brave men's graves are located in the Kranji War Cemetery.

After the war, Major General Fukuei was brought to justice for the crime and on 27th April 1946 he was taken to the same spot and executed by a British firing squad.

Today, the Changi Beach near the Selarang Barracks where the four gallant men were executed has been lost in the expansion of the Singapore International Airport, but we hope visitors flying into Singapore in years to come will spare a thought as they fly over the site where five men died violent deaths.

Chye Kooi Loong



Col Nick Nice and his wife with the Mayor and Mayoress of Merton after being presented with the Cyril Black Prize. Colonel Nick has recently relinquished the position of Deputy Lieutenant for Greater London, a post he had held since 1967.

## St. Vincents, Retirement and Convalescent Home

The Secretary has details of this retirement and convalescent home run by The Forces Help Society and Lord Roberts Workshops at Ryde, Isle of Wight.

Within the grounds of the Home are twelve bungalows for disabled ex-servicemen and their families.

It is also possible to provide a short holiday for someone needing rest after an illness or an operation.

## THE QUEENS' ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT AND ITS FORBEARS 1762 - 1846

The 2nd ( Queen's Royal ) Regiment was in Ireland in 1768 and was still carrying a third colour. From 1768 until 1775 it formed part of the garrison of Gibraltar. In 1768 an important Royal Warrant was published to regulate, in detail, the uniform clothing of the Army. For the infantry it included details of the lace for Officers' hats, bearskin caps for grenadiers, gorgets, crimson silk waist sashes, espontoons, and laid down that Officers' coats could be laced with gold or silver at the Colonels' discretion. Grenadier Officers were to have an epaulette on each shoulder and Officers of other companies a single epaulette on the right shoulder. Sergeants were prescribed silver laced hats, white braid buttonhole loops and crimson waist sashes with stripes in the facing colour. Although not laid down in the Warrant, inspection Reports indicate that Sergeants of some regiments had small silver shoulder knots. Corporals had silk epaulette on the right shoulder and they and the private soldiers had regimental lace with diverse coloured stripes or worms.

The Warrant specifies blue facings, silver lace for officers and a blue stripe in the regimental lace for the 2nd; buff facings, silver lace for officers and a blue and yellow worm and a red stripe in the regimental lace for the 31st. The 70th had black facings, gold lace for officers and a black stripe in the regimental lace. Drummers of Royal Regiments wore red coats faced and lapelled with blue and Royal lace, Drummers of the 31st and 70th wore coats of the facing colour with red facings and the 31st had red waistcoats and breeches. Drummers wore black bearskin caps. Sergeants and all the Grenadier Company had swords, the other companies did not. The Drummers had short swords with scimitar blades.

A Private of the Grenadier Company, 70th Regiment of Foot, South Carolinas, 1778.



Officer's Shako 31st Regiment, 1826  
Officer's sword, c1822 pattern  
Sergeant's sword, c1830  
Officer's skirt ornament, 2nd Regiment, 1839

In 1765 the 31st had gone to newly acquired Florida and went on to St. Vincent in the West Indies in 1772 where it took part in the Carib War. Returning home in 1774 it was sent out to Canada in 1776 where the flank companies were detached and sent south to take part in the American Revolution. They were interned at Saratoga in 1777. The regiment was given the title "Huntingdonshire" in 1782. In 1764 the 70th had been sent to the West Indies where it remained until 1774. In 1778 it was sent to Halifax Nova Scotia receiving the title "Surrey" in 1782. The flank companies were detached and sent south to fight around South Carolina during the American Revolution.

During the French wars in Canada British regiments had formed Light Infantry companies trained in sharpshooting and skirmishing skills to fight in the wilderness. They proved a great success and by 1770 regiments were ordered officially to increase their establishments by one Light company. These troops were picked for intelligence, agility and marksmanship skills and wore short jackets, leather caps without brims, red waistcoats, short gaiters and were armed with the fusil which was lighter than the flintlock musket. By 1770 the infantry cocked hat had altered shape and by the 1780s was markedly different, all but losing the front "cock". By the late 1790s the hats were practically bicorne, the lace trimming had been largely abandoned and feathers, which had already been taken into use by officers and men of some regiments, became official and were white for the grenadier company, white over red for the battalion companies and green for the light infantry company.

In 1793 a composite battalion & detached companies of the 2nd Queen's Royals were detailed to serve as Marines With the Channel Fleet commanded by Earl Howe. In this role they took part in the famous "Glorious First of June" action off Ushant in 1794. Among the regiment's dead was Lt. Neville and his death was the subject of a fine painting by M. Brown which was later engraved by popular demand. Some companies of the 31st were detached and with the 70th went to the West Indies in 1794 returning home to permit the full strength 31st to proceed to the Low Countries and the 70th to go to Gibraltar where it remained until 1800.



A Company Officer of the 2nd Regiment of Foot, on board ship,  
The Glorious First of June, 1794.

In 1796 the 31st went back to the West Indies. It returned decimated by the dreadful yellow fever, in that year they lost 867 officers and men and the survivors were then sent to the equally unhealthy Low Countries to take part in the Helder campaign. The flank companies of the 2nd Queen's Royals and Militia Volunteers were presently formed into a second battalion which went out to the Caribbean where it similarly suffered from fever and came home depleted to only 70 officers and men. As a result it was disbanded and the survivors returned to their original companies. The regiment served with the 31st in the Helder Campaign and after a sojourn on an island off Brittany went south to the Peninsula serving at Ferrol and Cadiz before moving on to Minorca, Malta and Rhodes.

Infantry coats were now closer fitting. In 1784 facing colour shoulder straps were prescribed. Two years later the collars were altered and became standing rather than folded down. The coats then became closed to the waist but retained the lapels. A year later the lapels were entirely removed and the NCOs and men then had single breasted coats with a single row of buttons and laced buttonholes on the fronts. Officers' coats remained double breasted and lapelled but were generally worn buttoned over or with just the top three buttons undone and the fronts folded back to reveal triangles of the facings. They were only completely buttoned back to reveal the full lapels in Review order or for social functions. In 1792 Sergeants received 9ft. crossbar pikes to replace the halberds. Light infantry companies sergeants had fusils. In 1800 the 31st Regiment landed briefly at Ferrol and then returned to Minorca. The 70th returned from a further tour in the Caribbean to garrison Gibraltar in 1795. However, four of its companies were diverted to Spain and from there went to the Channel Islands where the detachment remained until the other six companies came home and the regiment came back to Shorncliffe for further training and refitting. The 2nd Queen's Royals went to Egypt with Abercrombie in 1801 and fought with distinction at Alexandria and Rosetta. The Regiment returned to Gibraltar after the French capitulated and then came home.

The 31st had returned to Jersey in the Channel Islands in 1803 when a soldier, Private Pentenney, saved the town from certain major damage by removing smouldering slow matches which had been carelessly left in a large magazine. For his heroism he was awarded a pension by Lloyds Patriotic Fund and directed by the Governor to thereafter wear a ring of silver lace around his sleeve as a special distinction.

Phillipe de Bosset's uniform charts, published in 1803, give the 2nd blue facings, silver lace for officers and square ended loops at equal distances for the men. For the 31st he gives buff facings, silver lace and similar square ended loops and the 70th are shown with black facings, gold lace for officers and square ended loops at equal distances for the men. The coloured stripes and worms are the same as shown in the 1768 Warrant for all three regiments. About 1800, the NCO's and men were provided with shakos to replace the cocked hats. Until 1806 these cylindrical caps were heavy and japanned with large brass plates and frontal feathers in the same company colours as worn on the last cocked hats. In 1806 these shakos were replaced by lighter weight felt shakos of the same design. Officers continued to wear the cocked hats which were now very large, distinctively bicorne and folded flat when not in use.

In 1804, the 70th returned once again to the West Indies and fought with distinction in the taking of the Dutch Islands and in the assault on and taking of Guadalupe in 1810. The 2nd Queen's Royals was at home in 1806 but later went to Portugal. The regiment fought at Vimiero and took part in the retreat to Corunna. Detachments were at Talavera and the remaining companies went to Walcheren but by 1811 the entire regiment was back in the Peninsula to fight with valour at Salamanca, Vittoria, the Pyrenees, Nivelle and Tolouse. It was in Ireland during the Waterloo campaign. The 31st had raised a second battalion in 1804 and four years later it went out to Portugal only to take part in the Corunna debacle. However this battalion went on to glory in the subsequent Peninsula campaigns fighting at Talavera and Albuhera, where it gained

A Sergeant of the 31st Regiment of Foot, at Sobraon, 1846.





**Headress** Top left the 1770's style of the three cornered hat. Top right, by 1790 the front point had virtually disappeared. This example has the plume of the 2nd Regiment of foot centre left, the first shako of 1800 was of 'laquered' or 'japanned' material and was changed, in 1806, to felt. The bearskin Grenadier cap remained unchanged from 1768 to 1802 when the plate changed pattern to brass. Centre right, the short lived 1812 pattern shako. Bottom Left, the wide topped shako introduced in 1815. During subsequent years it became more elegant in shape and was popularly called the 'bell topped' shako. This is the final version of 1842. Bottom right, the 'Albert' shako of 1844. The last is an officer's shako all the others are other rank's versions.



**Cross belt plates and shako plate** Top row from left to right. An officer's silver crossbelt plate of the 2nd Regiment, 1802. An officer's silver crossbelt plate of the 31st Regiment, 1797. An officer's gilt and silver crossbelt plate of the 70th Regiment, 1800. Centre. An officer's shako plate of the 2nd Regiment, 1840 in silver, gilt and enamels.

Bottom row from left to right. An other rank's brass cross belt plate of the 2nd Regiment c1840 An officer's gilt and silver crossbelt plate of the 31st Regiment, c1835. An officer's gilt crossbelt plate of the 70th Regiment, c1820. (so dated by Parkyn although at this time the 70th were titled the Glasgow Lowland' Regiment).



**Arms and Knapsacks** Weapons from left to right, the 'India' Pattern musket, 1780. The New Land Service Pattern musket, 1802. A percussion conversion of the 1835 Land Regular and Light Infantry musket, 1839. The first percussion musket of 1842, the first to be fitted with a rear sight. In the centre, top to bottom. The infantry knapsack of 1797, 1815 and 1844. All are made of painted canvas that of 1815 is boxed with a wooden frame and the 1844 version is also re-inforced with leather at the corners.

its finest laurels fighting with the Buffs and the 57th. Wellington later wrote to the War Office how "...after the other parts of the brigade were swept off by cavalry, this little battalion ( commanded by Major L'Estrange ) alone held its ground against all the massed French columns...". Depleted but later reinforced the battalion fought at actions in the Pyrenees, Vittoria into France Nive, Nivelle, Orthes, Bayonne and finally marched with the triumphant army into France. The 2nd battalion was disbanded in 1814.

In 1812, the cylindrical so-called "stovepipe" shakos were replaced with the pattern which has come to be called the "Waterloo" pattern. It had a low back and a high front part with a smaller but decorative plate, a tasselled garland looped across the front with a cockade and feather ( in the same company colours as before ) on the left side. Officers also took this shako into use they also largely replaced their long skirted coats with shorter skirted more serviceable jackets for active service. After Walcheren the old breeches and gaiters began to be replaced by trousers. In the Peninsula grey or white trousers were worn and by 1815 they had become the universal nether garment for the infantry although officers retained pantaloons and knee boots for review order. Charles Hamilton's uniform chart for 1812 confirms the facings, Officers' lace and regimental lace as given by the 1768 Warrant and De Bosset.

The 2nd Queen's Royals began a tour of the West Indies in 1816 and the regiment returned to the UK before going out to India in 1827. The 31st was in Sicily in 1806, in Egypt in 1807 and returned to Malta before going back to Sicily in 1808. It remained in the Mediterranean theatre and was in Italy under Lord Bentinck in 1813 later serving on Corsica, in Naples and at Genoa. In 1816 it went back to Malta and from there proceeded home. The 70th was sent home after its success at Guadeloupe and in 1812 was re-styled "Glasgow Lowland".

It went to Canada to serve in the 1813-1814 War with the States and remained on that station until 1827. In 1825 it was re-titled "The Surrey Regiment". Between 1834 and 1843 it saw service on Gibraltar, Malta and in the West Indies and Canada.

The 2nd Queen's Royals served in the Afghan War of 1838-9 taking part in the capture of Ghuznee and Khelat. It then moved into India fighting Mahrattas before embarking for the Cape to take part in the Kaffir Wars. The 31st went to Calcutta in 1825 but was switched to Bengal. The right wing of the regiment and the HQ were on the East Indiaman "Kent" which caught fire and exploded in the Bay of Biscay. On arrival in India the regiment could not foresee it would stay for 22 years during which period it was to take a leading part in the first Afghan war of 1842-45, the Sikh Wars of 1845-46 fighting with honour at Moodkee Ferozeshah, Buddiwal, Aliwal and particularly at Sobraon. In that battle Sergeant Bernard McCabe picked up the fallen Regimental Colour and under severe fire rushed forward to plant it firmly on the ramparts of the Sikh entrenchments.

Sobraon Day is still celebrated each year. Part of the colour carried by Sgt McCabe was enclosed in the lid of a salt cellar called the 31st Huntingdonshire salt which every newly joined Officer is invited to "Take salt with the Regiment". He then signs the Salt Book. The Regimental Colour is handed over by the Commanding Officer to a Sergeant selected for the honour. The Colour Party, preceded by the Band and Corps of Drums then Marches the Colour through the ranks of the battalion, which lines the route from the Officers' Mess to the Sergeants' Mess. The Colour remains in the Sgts Mess with the Queen's Colour and the Colonels Colour until midnight.

During the long European peace which followed Waterloo uniforms became more elaborate. The modest 1812 pattern shako was replaced by a bell topped shako copied from the French in August 1815. In 1829 the style was refined and there

were several modifications. In 1844 there was another change and the top heavy bell topped shako was replaced by the "Albert" pattern. In 1822 the first Officers' Dress Regulations were published. Officers' collars were fashioned higher and tighter and the lapels of their swallow tailed coatees were designed in a curved "plastron" style. Short skirted jackets were dispensed with but reserved for the Light Infantry until 1826.

In 1829 the coatees were further modified, cuffs were fashioned with laced and buttoned slashes and there were similar lace and buttons on the collars and slashed skirt pockets. Epaulettes were made larger with heavy bullions and larger and more elaborate wings were worn by the Grenadiers and Light Infantry companies. The NCO's and men's shakos followed the same style as the Officers', albeit simpler in detail and the coats had similar changes in style. Collars were made tighter and framed with lace with a bar of lace on each side, the cuffs and skirts had slashed ornaments after 1829 and the extremities of the shoulder straps had large white wool crescents or wings, Grenadier and Light Infantry wings were also larger with similar woollen rolls.

By 1830 Officers, NCOs and men had shell jackets which were worn for undress and on active service in hot weather stations. At the same time the old sleeved white fatigue jackets were abolished. In 1834 Officers' forage caps were altered and the brims made smaller and less stiff. NCOs and men took into use the knitted "Kilmarnock" or "porkpie" type of forage cap. On hot stations white covers were worn over these caps and some regiments had peaks fitted. In 1836 the distinctive regimental lace was abolished in favour of plain white and in 1836 Sergeants were given double breasted coatees in the Officers' style but with collars, cuffs and shoulder ornaments as worn by the men. In 1830 the Sergeants' crossbar pikes were finally abolished and all other ranks were then armed with muskets with the appropriate equipment.

#### Short Glossary

**Coat** During the period under review the style of military coat became divorced from the contemporary civilian mode. In the 1750's the long skirts of the coat were buttoned back. By the 1760's the tails were cut back into a neater fashion with false turn backs. At the turn of the century the coat became a purely military garment with little in common with the civilian style. The term coat, coatee and jacket are terms for these military styles although these are sometimes confused with each other.

**Cocked hat** Originally had three sides turned up forming a three cornered shape (the term tri-corne is a modern phrase). The hat was placed on the head with one point over the left eye. Gradually the front point was pushed up until, by 1800, it had all but disappeared.

**Cross-bar pike** This became the official name of the spontoon earlier carried by officers and latterly by sergeants.

**Epaulette** A shoulder strap with a fringed end at the point of the shoulder. Those worn by officers during the Victorian period became extremely ornate and heavily fringed with gold or silver bullion.

**Lace** Officers' lace was made of gold or silver thread and was used to edge various parts of the uniform coat and to re-inforce the buttonholes. Other Ranks' lace was used for the same purpose but was made of white worsted tape which had integral coloured stripes and other patterns (worms) which were regimentally diverse.

**Plastron front** A distinctive shape widening across the breast and becoming more narrow towards the waist.

**Shako** A type of headdress. The early styles were tall and cylindrical. The top gradually widened until it was top heavy and uncomfortable before it once again became cylindrical in shape.

**Shoulder knot** A long loop of lace worn on the shoulder with the ends hanging free.

**Slashed cuffs and pockets** The term refers to the three pointed flaps on cuffs and hip pockets. Usually piped white.

**Wings** Crescent shaped pieces of cloth worn at the top of the sleeves on the shoulder. Initially to make the grenadiers look broader and fierce. Later worn by flank companies as a distinction with a fringed edge. (In modern times worn by bandsmen and drummers).

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

The first World War saw many instances of brothers or members of the same family being killed in action, but few can have been more tragic than that of the deaths of the brothers Sgt, Richard Henry Hunt and Sgt. Herbert William Hunt, both of Chertsey, Surrey, both in the 1st Bn. The East Surrey Regiment and both killed in action on the same day, 9th September, 1914 in the battle of the Marne.

The loss to the Regiment was a grievous one as the brothers were much respected N.C.O.'s with distinguished records to their names. Described in the East Surrey's History as "most gallant soldiers", they had represented the Regiment at the Royal Naval and Military Tournament at Olympia as the bayonet fighting champions of the Irish Command, a distinction they held for three years.

Richard Hunt had been a corporal at Kingston Barracks for several years and had also seen active service in the South African War. Herbert, stated to be one of the finest shots in

the Regiment, had been the regimental goalkeeper as well as being a hockey player.

They were reported to have been "prominent in the firing line" at the Front and both had been mentioned in Sir John French's despatches. Herbert's gallantry had won him the French Medaille Militaire which was sent to his mother at Chertsey. A photograph of her with the medal appeared in the local press, together with those of her two sons. Both men left widows in Dublin.

Mrs Herbert Hunt's brother, Larry Cummins, also won the Military Medal for gallantry in carrying his wounded Colonel from the battlefield when serving with the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in France. A renowned athlete, he ran for Great Britain in the Olympic Games in Belgium in 1924. He was the father of Mrs Mary Ford, wife of Richard Ford, the present Curator of the Regimental Museum at Clandon.



## FROM THE EDITORS POSTBAG

### Telegram from Australia on The Glorious First.

To all Ranks on this Glorious First of June. Best Wishes.  
6087294 - Ted Josling.

### Captain E Gray writes:-

I was interested and amused to read in the last Association Newsletter the item entitled 'Of grave concern', an extract from a letter written in 1866 by John Lowe an old soldier of the 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment of Foot, one of the two ancestor regiments of the East Surrey Regiment.

According to John Lowe, in Holland in 1799, Robert Hullock of the 31st Foot was shot through the jaw, mistaken for dead and buried in a shallow grave from which he later crawled out; he subsequently recovered. But I wonder whether Lowe's memory was at fault when he wrote his letter over 60 years later because, while the 31st were in Walcheren in 1795, Hullock did not enlist until 1799, and I suspect that Lowe may have confused Hullock with some other man.

John Lowe was mistaken in saying that Hullock was pensioned in 1814. He was, in fact, finally discharged on 15th June 1816 as the enclosed photocopy of his discharge document evidences. It also reveals that he enlisted in 1799, was born at Hawkshead, now in Cumbria, and that he served a total of 17 years and one month. He was aged 50 at the time of his regimental discharge in Malta on the ground that he was 'Worn Out', a common expression of those times.

The photocopy comes from old War Office records (WO 97/498) at the Public Record Office.

### Roy Bullen writes:-

It was quite a good turnout for the Museum open-day, and it was good to see you again. I was pleased, too, to meet up with George (Graham) Wenn: I joined the T.A. with him in 1939 in 1/5th but I left that Battalion in 1941 and hadn't seen him since - 48 years, no less. Hopefully we'll be getting together a bit more often now.

### George Dibley Writes:-

Had it not been for a recent visit to the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum at Clandon Park I would not be writing this letter. Having spent considerable time there and some of that time in conversation with the museum staff, I came to the conclusion that I should apply to rejoin the Association, having once belonged to the Queen's OCA during the time of Buzzy Waspe. So, having made the decision, I telephoned Regimental Headquarters for the necessary forms and at the same time asked for back and current copies of the Association Newsletter.

I joined the Queen's Royal Regiment on the 23rd of March 1936, at Stoughton Barracks. We, that is Ladysmith Platoon, finished training towards the end of that year and were posted to the 2nd Battalion, at Albany Barracks, Parkhurst, I. o W. On the 30th November 1937 I embarked, with a few others, at Southampton for India, to join the 1st Battalion in Allahabad. I stayed with the 1st Battalion until 1943 when I was transferred to Royal Signals.

Having received the newsletters I note with regret and sadness the deaths of Jim Kemp and Doug Fraser, both of whom I served with in the 1st Bn, The Queen's Royal Regiment. We last met in Aden in 1961 when I was on the Staff at Middle East Command, Steamer Point. Jim came out on the advance party in 1961, when 1st Bn, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, under the command of Col Mike Lowry, was posted to Aden. We had quarters at Khormaksar, quite close to the barracks to be occupied by the Queen's Surreys and obviously we invited Jim round for a drink, his favourite tipple at the time being pink gin. As we sat discussing the past and the future I noticed that our guest was looking at his drink with some doubt, almost disbelief. As I was drinking pink gin as well I thought I had better try mine. It was, I thought, a little weak, so perhaps I hadn't put sufficient gin in the glasses. I took the glasses and their contents back to the kitchen, removed the gin bottle from the 'fridge' in order to top up the glasses and found that the bottle contained iced water. I had given our guest water, pink and water. He forgave me and we remained friends.

Doug Fraser (I'm sure we used to call him Ben) came out to Aden with the main body of the Battalion, and it was great to renew an old friendship. My wife and I also had the pleasure of meeting his wife and family. My wife and I were also invited by the Regiment to attend the Tercentenary parade and other functions, which we did as guests of Doug and Jim. Colonel Mike Lowry went home from Aden to get married, and I am sorry to see that his wife has also died.

I am pleased to see that Darky Duncan is still around, I last saw him in India. I'm not sure of the year but it would be 41/42, he was quite a popular character especially when cooking a hot meal on a cold day in the field.

### N.J. Dyer Writes,

I am writing to thank you for newsletter no. 45 which I found to be of particular interest on page 20, as it referred to our old Company Commander Capt. A.R. Trench.

I was in training, at the time of Dunkirk, at the Royal Fusiliers Barracks at Hounslow, Middlesex, when the Queens 1/6th. Regiment returned to England. In order to make up the Queen's numbers we had to interrupt our training to join the 1/6th. Queens at Oxford I had heard that Capt. Trench escaped from the Germans but never knew the full story until now, forty nine years later! An extraordinary coincidence! Capt. Trench remained in charge of our Company until I left the Queen's in May, 1941, when I joined the Palestine Police. By another strange coincidence I met our old Platoon Commander, Lt. Smith in Jerusalem a few months later!

#### FRANK BEVILLE writes:

I have just received my copy No.45 of the Association Newsletter. May I be permitted to congratulate you on once again producing such an excellent publication. With the colour prints you have really excelled yourself this time. I spent the whole afternoon and part of the evening reading it from cover to cover!

Mr. Blackborow's letter on page 11 interested me, particularly the last para. in which he refers to 56 (London) Division travelling from Basra to Ensideville by road. I think the passing years may have dulled his memory, which happens to us all, for if I remember correctly the 2/6th Bn landed at Margil docks on the Shatt-al-Arab and then moved to Shaiba for a few days before entraining for Kirkuk in N. Iraq. They were there for sometime before making the longest approach march in history to Ensideville.

As a matter of fact I did ship's RQMS travelling from Bombay to Iraq although only a C/Sgt at the time. One thing I remember about that trip was talking to a very young ship's officer when drawing blankets and finding he had done his training at the Pangbourne Nautical College near my home-town Reading. 'Tis a small world'. Just before we docked I was instructed to make two lists of any deficiencies or damage, hand one to the Captain and one to the QM, when we landed. I found the Captain alright, but when I came to look for the QM he was nowhere to be found, apparently having moved off with the rest of the Bn into the desert! I spent 3 or 4 nights sleeping on the dockside at Margil with the baggage party.

Another very strange incident happened during the war when in the U.K. In 1941, when a Lance-Serjeant, I was posted from the 2/6th Bn. to 1st (London) Inf. Div. Weapon Cadre at Colchester, for 'Q' Pay and 'Discipline'. Later it was changed to 56th (London) Division and I had the job of closing the Weapon Cadre and opening the Divisional Battle School, first at Needham Market and finally at Woodbridge in Suffolk. Whilst at Needham Market the Admin. Officer, Lieut. Davidson of either the 2/5th or 2/7th Bn., I forget which now, had a heart attack playing football with some of the staff and I with his own M.I. Sjt. had to rush him to Ipswich Hospital. It could not have happened at a worse time for we were in the process of moving to the Duke of Rutland's place, Little Haddon Hall at Woodbridge. I well remember Captain Field having to attend the inquest at Ipswich Town Hall and myself having to meet Mrs Davidson off the train from Edinburgh, a job I did not particularly relish at the time.

We closed the Battle School in August 1942 and I went to Div HQ to clear up the 'A' side of things before going on my embarkation leave. The second week I stayed in the grounds of the General's house and dined in the kitchen, there being no Scrjeants' Mess there. However, doing the General's cooking was a CSM from the ACC who had been responsible for getting the kitchens going at the Battle School. I don't think I ever dined better in the Army than I did that second week! The CSM was standing in for the General's Cpl Cook who had gone on his embarkation leave.

One night returning to Reading from London very late in the blackout, there being no transport about I had a fairly long walk home. Suddenly at the bottom of Castle Hill a voice from the other side of the road called out in the black-out 'Can I get a bus to Newbury?'. Despite my having been away from the battalion some nine months or more I instantly recognised the voice as belonging to one of our battalion signallers, Pte Bailey! I crossed the road to join him and pointed out he would not get a bus at that time, but we would walk along together and if he could not get a lift he could stay at my place for the night and travel on to Newbury next morning. I asked him what he was doing home as I understood the battalion had had all their embarkation leave. He replied he was taking a quick 48 hrs! He then went on to tell me that he was sure that morning he had seen on Battalion Part I Orders that I had been posted from 'A' Coy to HQ Coy and promoted to C/Sgt. I said I doubted that, having been away from the battalion so long they

had probably forgotten I existed. Anyway, having no desire to rejoin the battalion at the end of my leave improperly dressed, I did purchase a crown. It turned out that Bailey was quite correct, but in the meantime I had been posted yet again to 'R' Company and it was with that Company I went abroad.

'R.B's' letter on page 23 of his journey by rail brought back many memories. I recall as we neared Kirkuk, leaning out of the window my Wolseley helmet fell off. Fortunately we stopped just after that so I was able to run back down the track and retrieve it! I wonder how many men who were at Kirkuk can recall the amount of thieving that went on. I understood the General told the local village head that if he lost another thing from the Division he would raze the village to the ground. I don't think we lost anything after that!

Whilst at Kirkuk I was posted away to join the British Section of 15 Reinforcement Camp at Shaiba, S.Iraq. Unfortunately the battalion made an error and posted me to Mussaib! I remember the job I had to find a carriage on the train at Kirkuk, but the kindly Indian R.T.O. finally put me in with two Royal Signal couriers taking documents to GHQ at Baghdad, and bade me to keep 'mum' about it. I remember the couriers sleeping with their pouches under their heads and their revolvers. I was held up at Mussaib for two or three weeks due to the camp moving to Latifa and due to heavy rains. I finally reached Shaiba just before Christmas 1942.

Whilst at 15 Rft Camp I was eventually promoted to CSM and in April 1944 we of the British Section moved to Mafraq in Jordan to open a Leave Transit Camp. Whilst there I took the only leave I had abroad, 15 days at Haifa. Eventually, when Gen. Sir Arthur Smith visited the camp one day I asked him for a posting and within a few days of his reaching Baghdad a posting order came through for me. I in due course went as CSM of No.2 Coy GHQ Camp, Baghdad, and whilst there had the task of amalgamating the three Companies, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, to save manpower. Finally, in 1945 I returned yet again to Shaiba, this time as RSM at GHQ 2nd Echelon, PAIC. I sometimes think I could write a book about my experiences in both the U.K., Iraq, Jordan and Palestine!

#### V. G. SLATER writes:-

I intended to be at the Cathedral for the service but my wife and I, being members of the Association for Retired Persons found ourselves involved in the "Retirex" Exhibition at Brighton. It was a successful venture with over 13,500 visitors.

I'm still busy with music. About 15 months ago I was asked to help form and train the Band of the local A.T.C. Squadron. The youngsters work hard and have quite a good standard. I'm their unofficial Band Tutor, being too old to be an official civilian instructor!!

#### R. HILL writes:-

Many thanks for the lapel badge (cheque encloscd) I must say it is a very smart one compared to the old one I've got. Also many thanks for the "Newsletter".

I met a young man the other day who told me he had been in the "2nd Bn Queen's", he told me he was glad to see one of the old boys (meaning me) wearing the "Regimental Badge" on my blazer, I told him I was pleased to meet him but not so much of the old, we both had a good laugh and chat about things to do with the "Regiment".

#### H. G. MEATYARD writes:-

Please find my cheque for my subs to the Newsletter for this year, a bargain as always.

This edition contained something of great interest to me, namely the article on the 11th Bn The Queen's at Flers, as my late father Arthur Robert Meatyard served with this Bn at the time.

Many thanks as always for the Newsletter.

#### A. JOSLIN writes:

I noted with sadness the death of Frank Wilkins, in the 45th edition of the Newsletter. I can remember when he joined the 1/7th Queen's, when we were stationed at Lydd in 1940. There was Frank, Sougi Arnold, Ted Cotterell, and George Crick from Peckham, the former three came from Earls Barton, Northants, and we were great pals at the time, but lost touch after the war.

I happened to be one of the intake from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry that joined the 1/7th at Milbourne Fort, in 1939, they were a grand bunch of fellows. I was with them in France and Belgium in 1940 with the BEF

I was detailed with a couple more NCO's to join the Infantry Training Centre, which was just starting up at Chichester Barracks, and was employed in training drafts of recruits, for about nine months, so I missed going with the 1/7th, but as the ITC shut down, I went on a draft to the 1st Bn in Burma.

#### D. PAPWORTH writes from Shillong, India:-

Just to thank you for sending the May 89 Newsletter - they really are so good and interesting. I am thinking of doing some shopping via the Regimental Shop and the golf umbrella takes my fancy but, I suppose, perambulating round Shillong with The Regimental Colours flying (so to speak) would make me an even more subversive character than I already look.

The Shillong of 1st Queen's days is no more, not surprising after 40 odd years! But the old camp at Happy Valley is still the same and is 58 (or 5th and 8th Gurkha Rifles) Gurkha Training Centre - the same old huts and the parade ground on the top. The officers' mess is still there but, I think, now used as an officers' married quarters. The old small arms ranges are still in use and banging away all day long. The Shillong Club burnt down years ago and has been replaced but is not the same, the Kelvin Cinema of ill repute but good films also burnt down a couple of months ago, and the last remaining relics of better days are the Golf Club and the Governors House - both are wooden buildings so are now living on borrowed time.

I'm afraid this may not be of much interest if you have not been here, but in case somebody pops in.

#### W. E. PRICE writes:

Because of the usual troubles that go with age I cannot travel any distance and for this reason enjoy reading the Newsletter very much, although there are few names left that I can remember nowadays: Colonel L. C. East is one and Gary Lockwood (ex RSM) is another.

I was 'Drums' storeman when Colonel East was adjutant of the 2nd Bn Queen's Royal Regiment.

During the late war I transferred to the Corps of Military Police and later to the Palestine Constabulary. That's enough of my uninteresting career.

#### H. ALCOCK writes:

Thank you for the No 45 Newsletter which I received this morning. I always enjoy it, as it brings many memories back.

I wonder how many old comrades remember what happened on 'Good Friday' 13th of April 1927? That was the day we embarked on H.M.T. Nevasa bound for Hong Kong. I am always very sorry that I cannot attend reunions. Has Bill told you of my disability? I had an operation on my ears which left me with scarcely any hearing and no balance. The Doctor said that it would be very embarrassing for me but I was to try to keep on my feet.

Singing Braganza to myself always helps me along to the bus. I am sending a little extra for the Newsletter for those who can

afford it. Please give my kind regards to any that you think will remember me.

#### J. (Ace) SHEPPARD MM writes from Spain:-

May I say thank you, to you and your staff and helpers, for continuing to make possible, the Regimental News Letter. Many, many people, agree with me that it brings so much pleasure and a sense of belonging still to the Regiment and comrades, scattered around the world. Through your Postbag articles, we are still able to make new contacts and keep in touch with brothers in arms.

In a Newsletter of 1988 I think it must have been, no date on the piece I have left, you published an article, based on a letter, sent to you from Cpl. Henry Scott, of Florida, meeting an old buddy, Harry Drayton. In the photograph they were looking at a copy of SEAC. Both had served in the 1st Battalion The Queen's in India and Burma.

Through reading this article, I contacted Cpl. Scott on a visit to Florida, in March this year. It was a great re-union, after last seeing him in a slit trench, in the Arakan. During our chat I was able to give him the address of D. F. E. Papworth, also of the 1st Bn who now lives in Shillong, India. This place will ring a bell with a lot of readers.

I hope this proves the point, of my opening paragraph, how much the Newsletter joins so many hands at home and across the sea.

Photographs of Cpl Scott and myself enclosed, taken in his home and the local beach in Florida. Please keep up the good work. Makes us all feel years younger.



#### J. R. Kay Writes:

Thank you for sending me copies of the latest Newsletters. No, I am not a member of your Association - wasn't aware of it and in any case I only ever reached the rank of corporal in my rather brief army life. I joined in 1941 and was seriously wounded in October 1944 and given my "ticket" while still in hospital. I was only about 19 years old when I joined up and had every intention of an army career as my father was an officer in the Gordon Highlanders all through WW1, and my wife's father was a Brigadier in the Sappers. He was mostly concerned with the Burma area during the war.

I was deeply interested in the "Corps" (OTC) at Cranbrook school where we paraded in uniform - peaked caps and puttees twice a week learning such things as drill, field craft and weapon training, so I wasn't too dumb when I presented myself at Nelson Barracks, Norwich on October 1, 1941!

Real soldiering came when I was transferred from the 9th Buffs a strange mixture of old and young - to the 1/7th Queens, who had recently returned from the desert and Italy, as part of that units re-fit. We were stationed near Hunstanton, Norfolk and I felt honoured and pleased to have been chosen to join the Queens, and of course to also be a part of the famous 7th Armoured Div with its "Jerboa" emblem. However, it all came to an abrupt end on October 22, 1944 when we were attacking a town in Holland called S'Hertogenbush. A shell splinter hit me on the head, went through my "tin" hat and dented my skull, so I was "out" for some two weeks or so in hospital in Brussels. I was flown home to Cardiff and later to Bath. I had to have further operations two years later when the dent in my head was filled by bone taken from the hip at Roehampton Hospital.

Naturally I am on a disability pension. My life style was changed, of course, by all this and my hopes of an army career were dashed. I am now retired after having taken advantage of the Government's Job Release Scheme where I was able to retire at 60. I enjoyed my short time in the army and put much effort in trying to do well and to be smart. As a youngster, I learned to play the trumpet and took it with me when I joined up. I was soon in demand playing for dance band work mainly when pay was 10/- for a four hour hop! I remember playing in an eight piece band from 9pm to 3am at an officers' mess and for that we got 15/- per head.

My trumpet came with me to France when I landed soon after D-day but was mainly used to play hymns for make-shift services and for burials. I still have it here. My injury at such an early age was most unfortunate, but at least I am still living and able to look back on those days of fighting in the Bocage country in Normandy, riding into battle on the backs of Cromwell tanks, and trusting the next shell would not come too close. An experience I would never want to repeat but for all that, I am glad I was there to take part in such a historic time. Having been in the front line so much, I was lucky to have survived almost five months, when others were mown down within minutes. The first few days of fighting was very upsetting, but you get used to it, the smells, the shelling, the "moaning minnies", the Spandas (wicked MGs) the Tiger tanks with their 88m guns and those haunting German helmets - all remain in my mind to this day. All a remarkable experience for a young lad!

Anyway having come through places like Caen, Villers Bocage, Tilly, Falaise, Lisieux and a host of villages, I was glad one day to be in charge of a section which ambushed a German motor cycle along a road one evening. The pillion passenger was a high ranking German officer, so we captured him and his driver. He was an SS officer.

Any member who remembers J. R. Kay is asked to contact him at 3 Harebell Close, Weavering, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5SN.

#### B. JOHNSON, writes from Clwyd

I joined the Queen's Royal Regt in 1938, and I think I may have the 'doubtful honour to have been the last or perhaps the only recruit to be sworn in on the Isle of Wight on 28th December of that year, I had spent Christmas amongst the rear details of the 2nd Battalion under the wing of L/cpl Feeney. I was sworn in, and remember it well by a local Notary Public in a Shoemakers shop, I standing outside the cash desk, with L/cpl Feeney, sworn in, and presented with a silver shilling. I left for Guildford, where, whilst waiting for the full complement of a Platoon, slept in the Cadre Block at the rear of the Gym. I started training, in Tangier Platoon, but after a medical mishap, which stopped me training, after hospitalisation I completed my training in Corunna Platoon. N.C.O.'s I remember Sgts Groves, Dizzey Nye, Cpl Gill, Cpl Tanner,

RSM. Osbourne, and many more, whose names come and go as the days go by.

War was imminent, we moved to Lydd, where after digging down to Australia (which we never reached) the siren sounded, and we were at War. From here to Grand Shaft Barracks Dover, where 'Eurka' I received my first stripe, under CSM. Tom Manners, Charlie Inkpen, and many more... there was much coming and going, intakes of civilians who walked out as Officers.

Through the 'extingencies of the Service', I moved on from the Queen's to other Regiments and branches of the armed forces, through the Desert Campaign and Sicily, wounded and downgraded. On to the R.M.P. and then seconded to Palestine Police, and later when the war ended I served with various Colonial Police Forces, and eventually retired.

A few years ago, when I came to Wales, I ran into a young man called Feeney, who turned out to be the son of our old comrade Feeney...his father had died only a few weeks before, so I was unable to link up with him personally, however the coincidence was confirmed, when Sean Feeney, spoke of his late father, who spoke of 'Jocky Henderson'. I have two frequent visitors ex. Drummer Fred Keeling and Vic Wood, and gradually we are meeting with others who have at some time or other served with the Queens.

My typing is ruddy awful, and the machine like myself is growing older, but the spirit is very willing

Please accept my kind regards and best wishes to all Queensmen.

#### CAN YOU HELP?

A. Rymes who served with the M.T. Platoon of 1 Surreys from Algiers to Austria is trying to contact some of his old mates. If anybody knows the whereabouts of Sgt. Tom Smith, Privates George Huckle, Len Russell, John Pankhurst or Harold Reynolds please write to A Rymes, 23 Christopher Way, Shepton Mallett, Somerset BA4 5SH.

Mr. P. O'Grady at St. Albans has written in saying that he has thirty photographs featuring soldiers of The Queens, believed to have been taken in Germany during 1945-46. If you recognise any soldier in the group please contact Mr. O'Grady, 3 Manor Road, London Colney, St. Albans, Herts AL2 1PN. Mr. O'Grady would like to return the photos to their original owner if possible.



#### BASSINGBOURN RE-UNION

Ron Hadley, 2 Queens and Fred Webb, 1 Queens write to thank the organisers for a most enjoyable day at The Queens Regiment Re-union, both served in Burma during the war. Both would like to meet more of their contemporaries at next year's reunion.

## OPERATIONS IN MALAYA

### Preamble

In moving down from China to Malaya, the battalion was jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

In China, 2 Surreys, together with the Seaforths, were the sole British military strength in 1940 to defend all the British interests and nationals in China, outside the Crown Colony of Hong Kong. In Malaya, the battalion now joined the 3.5 divisions stationed in Malaya, to defend an area approximately the size of England, over 400 miles from North to South, and entirely vulnerable to sea invasion.

The defences of Malaya had been slowly expanded from two British battalions and one Indian battalion in 1939. 11 Indian Division under Major-General Murray-Lyon started arriving from India in early 1940. This was the division the battalion joined in February 1941, as part of 6 Indian Infantry Brigade. When the Japanese invaded, on 8 December 1941, the Japanese could and did choose three main invasion routes, two through Thailand, and one on the East coast of Malaya all landings had been expected, but the Japanese were able to establish almost complete air and naval superiority in the first few days. The sinking of the battleships Prince of Wales and Repulse on 9 December off the east coast of Malaya dramatically changed the naval situation. Thereafter the Japanese had command of the sea approaches, and convoys to Singapore were endangered.

Malaya, both up-country and on Singapore Island itself was largely either jungle, with high ridges, or mangrove swamp, or flat paddy fields, with areas of rubber plantations. It had few main roads North, to South, and lateral feeder roads, and few rail routes. Movement off the road, particularly during the monsoon was difficult or impossible for wheeled or even tracked vehicles. The British had to hold and defend these few roads and railways, as their only means for re-supply of vital ammunition and other supplies, but their defence lines or boxes were easily turned by an enemy making full use of sea, rivers, paths and air. The enemy became adept at turning flanks, cutting and blocking these supply routes. There were never enough reserve formations to set up and hold a strong defence line without exposing some other part of this vast country. This is the story of how, over the four hundred and more miles, from the Thai border to Singapore, 2 Surreys, and later the British Battalion organised by joining 2 Surreys and 1 Leicesters, stood, fought, & withdrew, again & again & again..

### The Jitra Line

11 Indian Division was responsible for defending the West invasion routes. The original plan had been to hold a forward defence line in Thailand, but the U.K. Government forbade crossing the border before aggression, so the Japanese were able to forestall. Two brigades, 8th and 15th therefore occupied a partially prepared defence line at Jitra, while the reserve 28 Brigade provided outpost positions. The first few days were occupied in digging, wiring and mining. The battalion's positions were in monsoon water-logged paddy fields. Each battalion had only one 19 radio set link to its brigade headquarters. All other communications were by line or runner. The Japanese crossed the frontier on 10 December. The 1/14 Punjab and 2/1 Gurkha battalion outposts were badly mauled. On 11 December, they started attacking the right flank, held by 1 Leicesters and 2/9 Jats. In the next two days of confused fighting, the Japanese forced a gap through 2/9 Jats, despite counter attacks by 2/16 Punjab, the 15 Brigade reserve. A night withdrawal to a reserve line was ordered on the 12th. This caused chaos. The Japanese had now blocked the main road bridges South, and the night withdrawal across country forced many units to abandon and destroy their wheeled transport and Bren carriers. During these five days, 2 Surreys had little contact with the enemy. They were ordered to withdraw and establish a reserve position at Alor Star, but they too did not escape scatheless, & the bridge at Alor Star was blown on the orders of the Divisional Commander, before the Surreys carriers were across and Lieutenant Richard Bradley could find no other crossing. It was also at this time that Lt-Colonel Swinton broke his leg in a motor cycle accident, and Major Dowling assumed Command. 2 Surrey's now began to play a major part in the divisional plan, leap frogging back, holding intermediate positions, to Gurun 30 miles South to the next established divisional defense line.

### The Gurun Line

6 Infantry Brigade held the left sector, resting on the flank of a great jungle covered massif, Kedah Peak, with on the left 1/8 Punjab plus D Company, 2 Surreys (Captain Cater). 2 Surreys were on the right of the main North-South road, with B Company (Captain Vickers) on the right of the road, and C company (Captain Clive Wallis) on the right flank. Battalion HQ was some 1.5 miles down the road, covered by A Company (Captain Kerrich) astride the road. 28 Brigade was holding the right hand sector. 15 Brigade, at about one battalion strength was in reserve, reforming. By 14 December, the Japanese were probing down the road with tanks and infantry and encircling to the East across the Surrey's front. This encircling movement developed so strongly that Brigadier Lay formed up two successive counter-attacks, leading one in person, there was a great shortage of Boys anti-tank rifles, and Lieutenant Richard Colls, 2 Surreys, was wounded using Molotov Cocktails in an effort to stabilise the situation. Overnight, Major Dowling laid on a counter attack, to recapture the key cross roads of the main and lateral roads which the Japanese now held, but the situation was overtaken by events. The 1/8 Punjab Company astride the road was overrun. The lines were cut. No warning could be sent. The Japanese overran A Company, 2 Surreys, then Battalion Headquarters, and 6 Brigade headquarters, and pressed on down the road. Major Pat Dowling, the M.O., the Chaplain and most of Battalion HQ, and Captain Kerrich and most of A Company were killed. The Commander of 1/8 Punjab being totally out of communication, and having lost control of the road withdrew Westward round the flank of the Kedah Peak, taking D Company, 2 Surreys with him. Fortunately B and C Companies held firm in their positions until midday, and then withdrew through the rubber estates to the east of the road, in conjunction with 28 Brigade who were now the only cohesive fighting formation of 11 Division. Thus after two main engagements, and outflanked on every occasion, the only two British battalions of 11 Division had suffered heavily. 2 Surreys had lost their C.O., battalion headquarters and two Companies at Gurun, and could only muster 10 officers and 260 men. The 1 Leicesters had been equally hardly hit at Jitra onwards, & could only muster 12 officers and 130 men. The two brigades, were withdrawn to form a new 6/15 Infantry Brigade. The two battalions were withdrawn to Ipoh, to be reformed, on 20 December as the British Battalion under Lt. Col Morrison, Leicesters, as C.O., Major Clive Wallis, 2 Surreys, as Adjutant, two Leicester companies, A (Captain Thompson) and B (Major Ian Kennedy) and two Surrey companies, C (Captain Peter Bruckmann) and D (Captain Bill Vickers). Captain Gingell and Lieutenant Greasley were the Quartermasters of the new unit. Under the leadership of Colonel Morrison, it was to be welded into a great fighting unit. Within ten days, the fight at Kampar was to be the new battalion's baptism of fire.

### The Battle Of Kampar

Kampar was considered the strongest natural defensive line on the mainland, for one or more full divisions, but it too could be turned, on the west by coastal landings, and on the east by a loop road to be held by 28 Brigade. 6/15 Brigade covered the main road in depth down the road, with the British Battalion as the forward battalion. The battalion began its reconnaissance on 23 December, and occupied the position on full alert from the 27th. Apart from outposts, Christmas Day was spent in the kampar school with a real Xmas dinner. The Japanese closed up in the next two days. On 29 December, 2 A & SH (Argyll Sutherland Highlanders), and 2/2 Gurkhas withdrew from their covering positions, and the Japanese began shelling, mortaring and probing the battalion foremost localities. The battalion had A Company on the forward right flank position on a ridge called Thompsons Ridge, and immediately behind, B Company on Green Ridge. On the left, C Company covered the road, with D Company behind, in reserve. On the right flank of the battalion was a jungle-covered hill, Bujong four miles and providing the usual opportunity for infiltration. It was through this hill and defile that the enemy pressed their main attacks, after their frontal assaults had been thrown back. On 10 December, D Company was withdrawn from a covering position on the road, and the Japanese began to pound the battalion positions, shelling, mortaring, bombing and small arms fire. At the same time there was a build-up against 28 Brigade, a feint which was never pressed home. The

shelling continued on 31 December, and at dawn on 1 January, the Japanese began a series of frontal attacks on A Company on Thompsons Ridge. Their tanks were halted by anti-tank gun support, and although one platoon was overrun, the situation was stabilised. D Company under Captain Vickers counter-attacked at 9 am, with heavy losses, but driving out the Japanese at bayonet point.

2 January was a repetition. D Company had again to counter-attack Thompson Ridge at 8.30 am, led through Japanese infiltrators by Pte. Graves, a company runner. Captain Vickers was awarded an immediate MC., CSM Craggs a DCM. and Pte. Graves, the MM The Japanese continued to infiltrate, and by 11 a.m. B Company on Green Ridge, behind A Company, was also being overrun. A counter- attack by A Company 2/9 Jats was only partially successful, and the situation was not stabilised until a Third counter-attack was mounted by C Company of 1/8 Punjab. Captain Graham and Lt. Lamb, the two British officers were both killed in this gallant attack. There was a lull on 3 January, but events were overtaking the battalions determined defences. The Japanese had taken Telok Anson, from the coast, and threatened to cut off the forward brigades of 11 Division. Orders were received to withdraw at 21.00 hrs. For the battalion, it was a question of disengagement. The companies had to fight their way back through many small fire fights. Private Pardoc of C Company earned an immediate M.M.; 2/Lt. Newland of A Company, an MC., and Sgt MacDonald a DCM. The battalion was successfully extricated, and withdrew by a succession of layback positions to Batang Berjuntai on the next main defence line, the Selangor river, by 6 January. Here, the line of the river to the coast was held by an FMSVF (Federated Malay States Volunteer Force) brigade, and 6/15 Brigade on the right. Between 6 and 9 January the battalion continued to hold its position, but the position gradually deteriorated. On 9 January, 1/14 Punjab on the battalion's right were overrun, the units on their left hand brigade had already been withdrawn, and at 1400 hrs the battalion was ordered to start withdrawing, moving over the next two days to south of the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur, the CO being responsible for bridge demolitions on the main road as the battalion withdrew. In the twelve days of withdrawals from Kampar on 2 January to Kluang in North Johore the moves were frequently made in the battalions own transport, making its way south through the enormous traffic jam of the general withdrawal from central to southern Malaya. the next main defence line Muar-Segamat was being organised by the 8th AIF (Australian) and 9 Indian Infantry division. 11 Division was at last in Corps reserve, But the Japanese, with an estimated six divisions (each of twelve battalions) already committed, and command of the sea, had already started to turn this line by landings at Batu Pahat, well to the south. A Brigade group was formed up under Brigadier Challen, including the British Battalion, and two battalions, 1 Cambridgeshires and 5 Norfolks from the newly arriving 18 British Infantry Division. These units were trained for the Middle East, and had no time for jungle warfare training before being committed to active operations, the battalion occupied Batu Pahat on the 16 January, and were relieved by the Cambns on the 17th for two days in reserve, and returned on 19 January. The Japanese were located in strength inland, south of Batu Pahat, and a sweep was organised for 21 January, but the enemy covered the tracks to the south with heavy MG fire, and the jungle was too thick for a flanking movement. During the next few days, the battalion and 5 Norfolks from Ayer Hitam to the east, kept this vital road link open, and the road to the south of Batu Pahat, despite clashes with the Japanese, on both roads. But the Batu Pahat force was in danger of being cut off. By 23 January, both roads were cut, although 5 Norfolks in MT were able to join the force from Ayer Hitam. On the evening of 23 January, the force began to evacuate Batu Pahat, and although the order was temporarily rescinded, they were ordered to Benut, some twenty or more miles south for evacuation by the Royal Navy on 27 January. The whole mainland of Malaya was to be evacuated by 31 January! But the Japanese had other ideas. The road South was now blocked. 11 Division sent a column North to try and help clear the block, but this column was ambushed. One remarkable Bren gun carrier passed all six Japanese road blocks and reached the Batu Pahat group. The rest of the relief column was destroyed. Unable to achieve the evacuation timetable, the order was given to destroy guns and

vehicles, and the withdrawal was begun on foot, off the road through the mangrove swamps to the coast, eventually on three different unit routes to keep the weary columns as short as possible. The battalion, kept together by Majors Kennedy (2IC) and Clive Wallis, eventually reached the sea, and moved south to Ponggor, a small village with a good beach. The C.O. of 5 Norfolks made his way south with some 1,200 men, and was ferried to the rendezvous at Benut, where the divisional commander waited for news of the missing brigade. At Ponggor, the waiting men had to lie low less than 1,000 yards from the passing Japanese. At last contact was made, and Royal Navy coastal gunboats picked up the men on the nights of 29, 30 and 31 January, and ferried them to Singapore.

#### Fortress Singapore

The only link between Singapore and the mainland, the causeway, was blown on 31 January. An island about the size of the Isle of Wight, Singapore was a fortress in name only, there were no defences on the north side. The likely enemy thrust was on the North-West, where the straits were only some 600-2,000 yards wide, and the island was still mangrove swamp and inlets almost impossible to defend at the waters edge. This vital North Western area came under the AIF commander, Major-General Gordon Bennett, with the 8th AIF Division plus 44 Indian Infantry Brigade.

The British Battalion was first sent to the North-East coast as part of 11 Indian Division. The enemy never landed in this area, but on 8 February crossed and seized a bridgehead in the Australian sector, penetrating quickly to threaten Tengah airfield in the centre of the AIF sector. On 9 February, 6/15th Brigade was put under the AIF Commander, and moved into the layback Jurong switch line now being set up to halt the Japanese penetration, on the left flank, between 22 Brigade AIF and 44 Indian Infantry Brigade. On 10 February there was a general adjustment of the Jurong defence line with orders for a divisional counter-attack at first light on 11 February, but the Japanese anticipated this by a right thrust on the left flank of 6/15 Brigade, leaving the British Battalion left flank exposed. The counter-attack was cancelled and a withdrawal ordered. This order failed to reach the Jats (2/9 and 4/9 Jats) who counter-attacked alone.

The new battalion position was further south-east on the Bukit Timah road, in an area the Surreys had got to know during their first six months in Malaya which they spent on the island. The Perimeter was now drawing closer to the town, docks and installations of Singapore. The Japanese again attacked and threatened the battalion with encirclement, the whole brigade position was under threat, and the decision was taken to withdraw across country. The battalion guided by Major Clive Wallis, reached their left flank 44 Brigade, and remained with this brigade.

12 February was another day of confused fighting. The battalion had been reorganised into two companies, one Leicester, one Surreys, and the brigade again withdrew overnight to the very outskirts of the city, to what was to be its final position. During the day, the Q.M. Major Gingell and 25 Surreys plus a similar number from the Leicesters, were ordered away on an official escape party, and left in the same HMS Dragonfly that had evacuated the battalion from Ponggor. Their escape is another story.

The Position was now critical. The naval & air forces were now based on Java. No air support had been possible. All possible European civilians and nurses had been evacuated, but the local population and refugees remained. The reservoir sources of water supply were in enemy hands. Only two days reserve of food remained in British hands. The Army had no more space for manoeuvre and no reserves to throw into the battle. The battalion now occupied its final battle positions, shelled and mortared throughout the last two days. A last counter-attack under Capt. Peter Bruckmann was ordered for the afternoon of the 15th, but cancelled, and fighting ceased at 4.30 p.m.

The British Battalion had stood, fought and survived as a unit during the most critical days of the Malaya campaign. It started at Ipoh on 20 December with 786 all ranks. At Mount Echo on 15 February it mustered 265. Lt-Col. Morrison was awarded the DSO, for his outstanding leadership. Major Harvey (2IC) also received the DSC., and Major Clive Wallis the MC. Now, and in the uncertain future, the name of British Battalion was to be its own accolade for the men who fought in it.

## "SO THERE WE WERE....."

**1689** The Queen's Regiment were in Ireland fighting for King William III against the former King James II (for whom they had, ironically, fought at the battle of Sedgemoor). At the relief of the besieged town of Londonderry members of the regiment were aboard ships which breached the boom to mount an attack on the town from the river. It was reported that the soldiers "responded well under the hail of shot".

**1699** The Queen's moved from Norfolk to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Not for the first or last time, Parliament was considering cuts in the Army and the Queen's establishment was fixed at 445 to be in the form of "One regiment of Foot under the command of our trusty and well beloved William Selwyn Esq...."

**1709** Villier's Marines, who by now had become Churchill's Marines, were in the Mediterranean engaged in the war against Spain. Port Mahon furnished a secure base for operations. The Queen's Regimental Headquarters were at Berwick and drafts were being sent from there for foreign service. In the same year officers and men who had been held in captivity in France and Spain began arriving home and it was ordered that they be re-instated in their regiment, thus displacing officers who had been seconded from other regiments as temporary substitutes.

**1769** Stationed at Gibraltar, the Queen's were obviously having manpower problems as orders were given for extra officers to be appointed to recruiting duties and it was stated that, "The utmost diligence was to be used in the service".

The 70th Regiment were in Grenada on a West Indies tour of service and it was during this time that the facings of their uniforms were changed to grey from black by Royal Warrant. So far from home were they that the compiler of the Army List had originally written down the name of their station as "Grenadoes" (rhyming with "Barbadoes") but someone apparently became aware of the error as for the rest of their tour the station was described as "Charibee Islands".

**1789** The 31st Regiment were on Home Service which they doubtless enjoyed as they had returned only two years previously from long service in America. Their enjoyment was to be short lived, however, as in July 1790, on threat of war with Spain, they were embarked at Spithead for service at sea as Marines.

**1779** The 70th were engaged in the American War of Independence and on 10th June were encamped near the rebel Fort Lafayette which surrendered to them shortly afterwards. According to a letter from Captain Irving, heat was a great problem and marches were generally made at night. The Queen's, back in England, were encamped mainly in Sussex coastal areas during the summer. In August they were reviewed at Warley by the Honourable Lt. General Parker who was in command. An entry in the review state commented that their clothing was in good order and that they were "fit for immediate service".

**1799** Covered by the fire of "100 guns of the Fleet", the Queen's landed on the coast of Holland and made a successful attack on French troops who were forced to withdraw from Helder. A treaty was signed with the French later in the year and, in an appreciation of the gallantry and discipline of the Queen's, Major General Sir Eyre Coote said that they had "upheld the honour of their country, and by the skill and attention of their officers advanced the glory of England against the best organised troops in Europe". The 31st Regiment also took part in the landings and distinguished themselves in the attack on Bergen.

**1809** The Queen's were in Spain, under Sir John Moore, fighting the French. On Moore being killed at the battle of Corunna, Sir John Hope, the Queen's Divisional Commander, took his place and conducted the ensuing withdrawal with great skill. The regiment was subsequently awarded the battle honour "Corunna". The 31st Regiment were also heavily

involved in the Peninsular War and suffered severe casualties in bloody fighting at Talavera whose name they eventually added to their battle colours. Their conduct was highly commended by Sir Arthur Wellesley who, after the battle became Viscount Wellington.

**1819** The 31st Regiment were in Manchester and in company with the 15th Hussars and the 88th Regiment were on the 16th August "acting in aid of the civil power" to disperse a crowd of 40,000 - 60,000 people gathered at St Peter's Field to hear a famous orator, William Hunt. Regular troops were largely held in reserve but an ill timed charge by local Yeomanry resulted in 10 people being killed and a considerable number being injured. The affair became known as the Peterloo Massacre and it was this disastrous clash between military and civilians which set in motion plans to form professional civil police forces, the first of which, the Metropolitan, was founded ten years later in 1829.

The Queen's were in the Caribbean where, over a five year period, their ranks and those of accompanying women and children were disastrously thinned by Yellow Fever.

**1829** In March/April the 1st Queen's were in transit from Hong Kong to Malta in the Troopship SOMERSETSHIRE which was apparently in a bad state of repair. After several incidents she rammed and sank a large bottle laden dhow just after leaving Port Said. In Malta, on 1st June, the officers were entertained on board the battleship QUEEN ELIZABETH and each presented with a cap ribbon of H.M.S. EXCELLENT.

The 70th were in Ireland where, often broken up into small detachments, they maintained order. They were well reported on for discipline and conduct.

**1839** Saw the storming of the fort of Ghuznee in Afghanistan by Light companies of the Queen's and three other units under the command of Brigadier Sale. The attack took place just before dawn and Lt. Holdsworth of the Regiment wrote that ".....The whole scene was the grandest, and at the same time the most awful, I have ever witnessed....."

The 31st were in India where casualties by death had reduced their strength to 632 rank and file, but in April of that year they were augmented to an establishment of 10 companies with 50 officers and 1052 sergeants and rank and file.

**1879** The 1st Queen's returned to England after service in the heat of India and Aden. Undismayed by their sweltering experiences they sent, in May of that year, a volunteer draft of two sergeants, one corporal and sixty-six men to reinforce regiments fighting in the Zulu war.

The 70th were in Afghanistan fighting dissident Ghazis (as well as Cholera and other diseases) with a determination that soon caused the battle honour "Afghanistan 1878-79" to be emblazoned on the colours of The East Surrey Regiment.

**1859** On Mediterranean service, the 2nd Bn. The Queen's went first to Malta and then to Corfu where, on the anniversary of the Glorious First of June a "brilliant and impressive" parade was held on the Esplanade in front of the Citadel and the battalion received its first colours from Lady Buller, wife of Sir George Buller, commanding H.M. Forces in the Ionian Islands. The 31st Regiment were on Indian service, having landed at Bombay early in the year and later moving by rail to Poona. During the same year the regiment was supplied with khaki (dust coloured) uniform and wicker helmets which were worn on all parades and duties in hot weather. Red serge tunics were worn in cold weather.

**1899** The 2nd East Surreys were at Aldershot when they received orders to mobilise for South Africa where they served with Major General Hildyard's Brigade. They saw some hard fighting during the notorious "Black Week", particularly in the Ladysmith and Colenso areas. Regular troops were supported by reservists and volunteers, eventually resulting in the regiment's 2nd Volunteer Battalion gaining the distinction "South Africa 1900-02". It was in the South African War that the regiment gained its first Victoria Cross when Pte. (later Sgt. A.E. Curtis) carried the wounded Colonel Harris from the

battlefield under fire. The 2nd Bn. The Queen's were also in South Africa and, supported by the East Surreys, they fought a heavy engagement at Colenso during the "Black Week" and lost over 100 men.

**1919** Between August and October The 1st Bn. East Surreys helped to cover the evacuation of the expedition to Russia, chiefly operating along the Murmansk Railway. At home Lt. Col. L.M. Crofts of The Queen's was able to welcome returning World War I troops at Guildford and on July 18th he was one of the representatives of the regiment in the Victory Parade in London. Later he commanded the 2nd Bn. in India where they fought some troublesome engagements on the North West Frontier.

**1929** The 1st Queen's were at Dover. For training purposes they amalgamated with the 5th Royal Cinque Ports Bn., The Royal Sussex Regiment to their mutual advantage. In December they provided a guard of honour and pall bearers for the Funeral in Westminster Abbey of General Sir Charles Monro, Bart., G.C.B. C.C.S.I. C.C.M.G., Colonel of the Regiment. The thanks of the Adjutant-General's branch of the War Office were received for the way these duties were performed.

The 1st East Surreys were in India and in the hot weather "pith helmets, spine pads, mosquito nets and thirst" were the order of the day.

#### THE CHELSEA PENSIONER ON HOLIDAY

This summer I decided to take advantage of the opportunity given to all In - Pensioners of the Royal Hospital and have a holiday at Lowestoft, at the Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre for Ex - Service Men and Women.

For those who might not know of this centre and who are interested, a word of explanation.

It was founded by a local clergyman in the early days of the Great War 1914-1918, and was almost ready for opening when news of the tragic death of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener hit the headlines. So it was decided by the trust to open it as a memorial to Lord Kitchener. It opened as the Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre for ex - Service Men. "Women" was added later. It is a terraced building of five storeys on the sea front. A busy road separates one from the pier and beach, but if one obeys the "little green man" there is no difficulty in crossing over. There is an automatic lift to all floors, two lounges with TV, a games room with full size snooker table, and facility for darts, cards dominoes etc.

There is a large assortment of books on the shelves. Food is full board and both quality and quantity are good. There is no bar but several pubs are close by.

Lowestoft is a nice clean town with a pedestrian shopping centre and all the usual major stores are in evidence. Being one of our chief fishing ports as well as a holiday resort, traffic can be held up at times when the bridge at the harbour is raised to allow trawlers to enter or leave. On the resort side, there are wide sandy beaches, a lengthy promenade, and ample public seating. The terms for a holiday, I understand are very reasonable.

We met several pairs of husbands and wives there, and of course both partners must have served in one branch or other of the services. Single persons are expected to share a room and in fact, rooms are set for four persons, each with his own bed, chair, and fitted wardrobe. There is also a wash basin and shaver point in each room. Toilets and bath rooms are on the same floor only a step away. The idea of four persons to a room may not appeal to everyone and that is probably why charges are much lower than they would be at the usual board residence. But we met men who come every year and look forward to it as a reunion. There were only three of us from Chelsea at the time, so the fourth bed in our room was kept vacant.

But now about the events leading up to it. All was going well until the day before departure, from the Royal Hospital. We were then ordered to take our scarlets. Now for those not in the know, and also as information for any who may at a later date become resident of the Royal Hospital, the pensioners familiar uniform coat is never called "red" it is always referred to as 'scarlet'. When a pensioner leaves the Royal Hospital in uniform whether it be to attend an official function or just walking out, he is said to be "in scarlet". So to be told that we had to take our scarlet meant not only the famous coat, but uniform trousers with the scarlet strip on the outside of the legs, but regulation blue woollen socks, black shoes & medals. We protested of course. Why scarlet? we were going on holiday, surely a pair of light summer trousers, a blazer or jacket, civilian shoes plus several changes of everything else would be all that is required for a two week break by the sea? But authority felt different about it.

"The people there will love to see the uniform", we were told, "it will give them so much joy and pleasure". We protested again, no use authority stood firm and we took our scarlet. The usual thing is to travel in the second uniform of blue with all our things packed in a suitcase. This is what we did with our scarlet coats draped over the arm. As there were only three of us going, a mini - bus even was considered to be too large, so we were sent off next morning for the four hour journey in a London taxi. I dread to think what the bill was going to be, but we didn't have to pay it. What's more on arrival at our destination the driver refused a tip. As it turned out it wasn't a bad idea at all to take our scarlet, for we found on arrival that the band of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment were to give a programme of music in the Marina Theatre the following Sunday evening on behalf of the centre. We three attended in our scarlet. We were introduced to the audience by name together with the titles of our former regiments. There was added pleasure as I was invited to take over the baton and conduct the band in one of the pieces in the programme. All went well and we had a most enjoyable evening. In the morning of that same Sunday after breakfast, I decided to go for a walk along the sea front, so I went dressed in scarlet. After all, we'd been told before we left Chelsea how pleased the folk at Lowestoft would be to see the uniform. The beaches and the promenade were crowded with holiday makers augmented by an influx of week-enders and day trippers. Nobody took the slightest notice of me. There were no welcoming smiles, no eyebrows were raised in astonishment, and no heads were turned in my direction, not even a tiny sidelong glance. Well of course, if the streets of say, Congleton, Cardiff, Barnstaple or Dumfries are thronged with Chelsea Pensioners, one can hardly expect the populace of Lowestoft to go in raptures when one lone pensioner arrives in their midst. There were certainly no excited cries such as, "oo look Fred, there's one of them there Chelsea Pensioners like wot we seen on telev at the Albert 'All, wish I 'ad me camera".

As a matter of fact, quite a number of people carried cameras, but not one of them stopped me to ask if I would pose for a photograph, strange when you come to think about it, for as every In-Pensioner can testify, he cannot walk very far anywhere in London before someone somewhere pops up with a camera and asks the privilege. So feeling more and more like the chap who took his harp to a party where nobody asked him to play, I plodded on manfully. A young family were seated on one of those benches that are thoughtfully placed at intervals for those visitors who only wish to sit and gaze at the sea. The little girl cast a crumpled paper bag together with a small tub which I suspect had earlier contained ice cream, to the ground. As I drew nearer, I heard her mother reproach her. "Pick it up", she ordered, "bcfore that man in the red coat sees it, he's the beach inspector".

S.D.

## Regimental Deaths

**Bishop** -On 8th June 1989, Lieutenant Colonel S.C.A.N. Bishop OBE, The East Surrey Regiment and The Parachute Regiment.

**Chambers** -On 1st September 1989, Corporal "Syd" Chambers, aged 55 years, The East Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

**Cockroft** -On 1st July 1989, Private W.G. Cockroft aged 70 years, 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

**Fenner** -On 10th June 1989, Private Freddie Fenner, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Fogg** -On 1st April 1989, Major W.R. Fogg, aged 75 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

**Gieve** -On 21st August 1989, Major Rodney Watson Gieve aged 88 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Major Gieve was a popular and well loved officer of the 'old school' who served in North Africa and Italy. He was a member of the tailoring firm Gieves Ltd., now Gieves and Hawkes and derived much pleasure in the appointment of his firm as regimental tailors to the Regiment. An avid reader of the Newsletter he and his family took great pleasure in helping old Queensmen in the Guildford area.

**Hawkins** -On 30th May 1989, Sergeant Ronald Herbert Charles Hawkins, aged 73 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

**Horstead** -In June 1989, Private A. Horstead, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Humphries** -On 13th August 1989, Sergeant John Humphries, aged 68 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Sergeant Humphries was a Territorial who served with 1/5th Queen's during the Second World War. After the war he continued in the Army. In 1950 he was one of the draft which served in Korea with 1st Bn The Middlesex Regiment. He later served with 5 Queens at Woking as a PSI before returning to 1 Queens in Malaya.

**Lett** -On 4th October 1989, Major E.G.A. Lett DSO, The East Surrey Regiment and Indian Army. He also served with the SOE.

**Lindfield** -On 1st July 1989, Private Frederick Sidney Lindfield aged 73 years, 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment. He served in India, Sudan, China and Singapore. He was a POW for Three and a half years.

**Lockwood** -On 1st October 1989, RSM W.G. Lockwood DCM, aged 86 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Mann** -On 28th May 1989, Sergeant Harry Mann MBE, aged 98 years, 2/4th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Sergeant Harry Mann enlisted as a Territorial in 1908 at Mitcham Road Barracks, Croydon. He and his brother both served in 2/4th Bn The Queen's. He served throughout the First World War with that Battalion. In 1925 as a police officer he compiled a list of members of 2/4th Queens and became Secretary of their Association, a post he occupied until his death. In 1926 he created a Queen's Shrine in Croydon Parish Church to honour those comrades who died in the war. He was awarded the MBE for his services to the Association in 1976. During The Queen's Shrine service on November 19th 1989 at 3pm, there will be a Memorial Service to his memory.

**Shields** -On 13th June 1989, Sergeant George Shields, aged 74 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

**Tod** -On 7th September 1989, Major C.A.L. Tod (Colin), The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**White** -On 11th April 1989, WOII Harry A. (Moko) White, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served from 1921 - 1946 and was

with the 2nd Bn in Allahabad. He served in D Coy and later the Machine Gun Company. He was an Instructor at 163 OCTU - later 70th Queens and RWAFF. He was also in possession of the Atlantic Star for service as a AA machine gunner at sea.

**Wilson** -On 14th July 1989, Captain (QM) Fred Wilson, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Fred Wilson started his service with 2nd Bn The Queens in Malta and served with them in Hong-Kong in 1927. He also served with The Shanghai Defence Force, later he served with the 1st Battalion. He was appointed Drum Major in 1939. Commissioned during the war and finished his service in Palestine. A very popular figure, he represented his Regiment at many sports.

## Regimental Families

**Bannister** -On 12th May 1989, Mrs Daisy Bannister aged 100 years, widow of WOII W.L. Bannister, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Goode** -On 30th July 1989, Mrs Theodora Goode beloved wife of Brigadier G.H.W. Goode CBE DSO.

**Harris** -On 19th May 1989, Mrs Jean Elizabeth Harris beloved wife of Lieutenant Colonel H.M.W. Harris, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Palmer** -On 18th October 1989, Mrs Kay Palmer beloved wife of Lieutenant Colonel J.B.C. Palmer MC, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

## Obituaries

### W. G. LOCKWOOD DCM

Regimental Sergeant Major W.G. (Gary) Lockwood, DCM, died at the Queen Alexandra Home at Worthing on 1st October, 1989, at the age of 86. He joined The Queen's Royal Regiment at Guildford in 1922, and after recruit training was posted to the 2nd Battalion with whom he served for most of the time until shortly before the outbreak of World War 2. He was singled out as an outstanding NCO early in his service and when conscription was introduced in 1938, he was one of a specially hand-picked group of instructors posted to the Depot at Stoughton to train militiamen. A good all-rounder at sport, he distinguished himself at boxing and in his day was the Battalion's welter-weight champion.

On the outbreak of War in 1939, he was posted to 15th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment and in the spring of 1941 went to the 2/7th Battalion as Regimental Sergeant Major on the initiative of its new Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Allen Block. Both in training and in battle, he was an exceptional performance and he was in action at the battles of Enfidaville, Salerno, Monte Camino and latterly at Anzio. For outstanding services in Italy, he was deservedly awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

He returned to the United Kingdom in 1944 but in October 1945 was back with 2/7th Queen's at Trieste where he remained until their disbandment in 1946. He retired from the Army in the same year and was appointed RSM to the Combined Cadet Force at the Royal Grammar School at Guildford where he was also closely involved with the sports side of the School. It was a happy period for Gary and the boys alike and many tributes have been paid to the way in which he helped to form the characters of those in his charge.

Whilst at Guildford, he maintained close contact with the Regiment, especially with Stoughton Barracks, with 5th Queen's and with 2/7th Queen's Old Comrades Association and with the Grammar School. It was a pleasure to see him surrounded by groups of his friends and to hear his voice with its soft trace of his native Norfolk, and these occasions were a source of great enjoyment for all concerned. In later years, he became increasingly immobile but true to character he faced his disabilities with customary cheerfulness. Following the death of his wife, he entered the Home at Worthing where he died.

Gary Lockwood will be remembered by all who knew him with an abundance of respect and affection. He was a man with a warm and generous disposition and a firm disciplinarian who achieved the loyalty and support of all ranks by his fine leadership and personal example. He will be sorely missed and his funeral on 10th October was attended by many Old Comrades who owed him so much for the part which he played in their lives. Our sympathies go out to his Family, especially to his son, Eric, whom many will recall was Drum Major of the 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment.

M.E.M.M.

#### Major T. P. O'Connell

Many readers will learn with great regret of the death of Terry O'Connell in March 1989 after a long illness. Few officers who served with the Battalion in Italy can have been so markedly efficient and so universally popular.

He had an interesting Army career. He went through Sandhurst and was commissioned into the King's Liverpool Regiment whereupon his Battalion was converted into an AA role. Later on, the need was for Infantry Officers and Terry found himself in a reverse situation - transferring back to his original field. In fact, this happened in the Mediterranean theatre while he himself was away on a long course and on return he found to his dismay that his unit had 'disappeared'. Unlike most men who would have accepted this as a particularly unkind twist of fate, Terry set about finding where his comrades were and after badgering several senior Officers, he succeeded in joining some of them by getting himself accepted by the late Alec Renshaw for 2/6 Queen's. He was among the very best of the ex RA Officers who served with distinction in the Queen's - but he had the priceless advantage of a real Infantry background. This he brought into play quickly and after only a short period as Platoon Commander he was promoted to Company Second in Command, being frequently selected to go up and take command of a Company in the line; he was that sort of man; mature, fussless, determined to achieve objectives but equally determined to prevent his men being exposed to unnecessary danger.

After the Lake Comacchio landings, the quick advance and the Po crossing, 2/6 Battalion was poised in villages near Padua, waiting - and wondering what was going to happen. There was a great atmosphere of expectancy; the enemy had not been seen for two days and maybe the end of the war in Italy was at hand. One evening the Adjutant approached Terry. Would he like to get his Company on the road, march all night and the next morning, be the very first unit into Venice. Think of the honour. Would he do it? Terry looked him straight in the eye. 'No thanks' he said. 'My chaps have marched themselves out of their boots in the last three weeks. No. We'll go to bed and ride to Venice in the transport tomorrow morning'.

That episode sums up the man precisely. He always put first things first; his brother Officers knew it; his men knew it. He always created a marvellous air of security - even in the heat of battle. It was such a shock to learn that he was one of the youngest Battalion Officers. He always seemed one of the elders.

To his widow, Kim, and to their four children, we send great sympathy.

F.S.

#### THE EAST SURREY REGIMENTAL CHAPEL

A new frontal altar furnishing for The Surreys Regimental Chapel in Kingston was dedicated during Evensong service in All Saints Church on Sunday 21st May 1989. The Vicar, the Reverend Canon John Martin, officiated, and an impressive number of ex Surreys and their wives attended.

The altar frontal has been beautifully designed and made by Mrs. Mary Gardner, who explained the significance of her design - which displayed the spirit of the Regiment - after the Service. Mrs. Gardner has now kindly offered to undertake the task of making a new top cover for the altar.

Amongst those present were Lieutenant Colonels A.L.S. Squire and J.F. Sherrard (ex Commanding Officers of 6 Surreys and 4 Queens Surreys respectively). Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. J.B. Ray, and approximately fifty members and their wives including Fred Jenkins and Mr. Harrison the Senior Surrey on Parade! A number of those past members of the Regiment at the Service later expressed their appreciation and pleasure at seeing the efforts made, not only to enhance the appearance of the Chapel, but also to preserve its ancient and historic association with The East Surrey Regiment.

J.B.R.

#### Major J C Cox MBE

Extract from a letter from the sons of Major Jack Cox:-

Thank you again for all the work arranging the Service last week. It was very nice for us to meet you and so many of our father's old friends, and may I take this chance, through you, to thank all the Members of the Officers and the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association who attended the service as we are aware that many went to considerable trouble to do so, and also to thank everyone for the donations received.

Best Wishes to you all.

John & David Cox

#### Dedication Of Memorial Plaque To The Memory Of Major (QM) J C Cox MBE.

John Reed in his obituary stressed that Jack Cox was a devoted Regimental officer. This is not unusual, but Jack had this to a marked degree; otherwise some sixty or seventy friends, relations, and old comrades, would not have attended his Memorial Service.

Jack would never have claimed that he was other than an 'ordinary' QM. Be this as it may; and at the service I was able to tell his sons that he was also a very good carpenter, they already of course knew all about his love of rugger.

In South Barracks, Khartoum, as a very young officer there was the weekly chore of being Orderly Officer: and as the barracks covered a large area the orderly officer went about his duties on a bicycle - this was not easy because in those days one had to wear a sword, and this kept getting caught in the spokes. The dreary routine of inspecting latrines, cookhouses, etc., was, for me always enlightened by the 'inspection' of the Pioneers shop. I say 'inspection', but who was I to dare inspect such a hallowed place! Sgt. Cox and his pioneers were always doing a real job - all the necessary running repairs required to maintain the barracks. Being interested in painting, woodwork, etc., it was, for me the one part of the rather routine duties that made the so-called inspection a real pleasure.

For the price of 10/- (50p nowadays) he made me a beautiful box for my uniform. All correctly dovetailed, painted, and my name, and Khartoum, carefully written on it. Now over 50 years later it is still one of my prized possessions.

After Dunkirk he ran the Regimental rugger team - Bill Caffyn, Jack Millard, George Everett, Pte Fleete - and a reluctant Doug Foster shivering on the wing. Jack could never quite understand why the Pay Corps kept beating us!

Our paths crossed in Brunswick in 1955, and our joint memories kept going back to 'the good old days'. The loss of his wife, and poor eyesight, never diminished his enthusiasm. Together we closed down The East Surrey Depot at Kingston, and the old Regiment ceased to be. But as I mentioned earlier, he was a Surrey through and through.

Why did so many make the effort to attend his Memorial Service? There was something about Jack Cox - he was not just an 'ordinary' Quartermaster.

R.C.T.

## Major E. G. A Lett DSO

Major Lett was born in Papua in 1910, educated at Clayesmore he was commissioned in The East Surrey Regiment. He served in India with the 1st Battalion and had several mountain expeditions in the Himalayas. He was taken prisoner near Tobruk in 1942 and was a P.O.W. in Italy.

When the Italian Armistice was declared in 1943 Major Lett escaped to the hills where he founded a force of international partisans and became a liaison officer with No.1 Special Force S.O.E.

Towards the end of the final offensive in Italy he found himself in command of the naval base at La Spezia with a handful of his men until the International Battalion arrived.

At the end of the war he was seconded to the Foreign Office in Italy and was in Tripoli in 1950-52.

He was a founder member of the Reserve Officers Association, now the Reserve Force Association and worked tirelessly in initiating the exchanges between T.A. soldiers and the U.S.A. and the National Guard. He was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

### Enfidaville War Cemetery.

In April you were kind enough to answer a letter of mine to send certain information to me concerning my Father, Private L. C. Green, 5444983 2/5th Queens. We decided to visit his grave.

We stayed in Hamamet, approx 100 kilometers South of Tunisia and 35 North of the war graves in Enfidaville. The people were very nice, there are, of course, the more barrow boy types to be found in the larger medinas or tourist market areas, but the ordinary Tunisians are nice people, we had mint tea invitations three times and the best invitation was for arabic coffee and date cake.

Having observed the traffic and made a closer inspection of the actual roads it was with some trepidation that we set off in our hire car. The reason everyone drives in the middle of the road is soon understood, the lack of suitable hardcore means the road edges break up and provide a really rough saw edge, ripping the tyres beyond repair. By carefully following their tyre tracks and giving way to all traffic we had a pleasant journey, incident free, driving through Enfidaville and were at the entrance gates of the war graves.

I do not know how I felt just then, the wardens or caretakers opened the gates, everyone speaks French, there is little English used, they ask if there is a particular grave to be visited, at this time there is not emotion, first impressions filled my mind, the pleasure of it being so well kept, the genuine concern of the two wardens, an even greater pleasure that someone, everyone cares about my Dad, confusion. Having stood at the grave for a few minutes it seemed as if I was there with him. The caretakers brought me a posy of silk poppies to put on the grave, real flowers wither so quickly in the heat, the graves have planted flowers. Don, my husband, walked off looking around the hundreds of gravestones. I cried, from sadness, happiness, frustration, I do not know, it was an emotional experience, it is an emotional memory. I am so glad I went.

Leaving the cemetery we drove on to the Olive Groves and tried to locate areas referred to in Chapter XVI from the Regimental history.



Mrs Maureen Reynolds placing a wreath on the grave of her Father.



General view of the cemetery.

### Gifford House, Worthing.

The late Gary Lockwood DCM talking to H.M. The Queen Mother at The Royal Alexandra Hospital Home where Gary spent the last few months of his life.



## War Graves - Singapore

Lt Col Robert Lyle recently visited Changi and the War Cemetery at Kranji, on his way back from Australia.

He sent several photos of Surrey graves in Kranji and writes that the Kranji War Cemetery is a credit to all concerned and it is most beautifully maintained. He would have liked to spend longer at Kranji but the coach driver would not wait for him.



Some of the 24,000 graves at Kranji, please note the grave of 6142621 L/Cpl D A Mitchell of the East Surreys killed on Sobraon Day 1942, aged 20.



The President with the Mayor of Guildford and Maj. Gen. Reynolds at the reception held in the Regimental Museum.



Maj. Charles Rodgers, Maj. Gen. Michael Forrester and Col. Nick Nice.



Col. John Kealy talking to Tom Bramble with Jack Homersham in the background.



Four signallers of 2/7th enjoy their reunion, Sid Messenger, Jock Cutherford, Sandy Hudson and Bill Webb.

## 5 O.M.A. - Dunkirk Fifty Years on.

It is considered that the above anniversary should not be allowed to pass without some recognition, and it is proposed to incorporate the 50th Anniversary of Dunkirk with our Annual Reunion Dinner to be held at Sandfield Terrace, Guildford on Saturday May 12th 1990, and to arrange a buffet lunch for members of the Association and their wives at Sandfield Terrace after the Annual Church Service at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday June 3rd 1990.

This does not in anyway preclude at either function the attendance of any member who was not at Dunkirk, we would like as many as possible to attend, most especially at Guildford Cathedral. It is hoped to arrange transport from Guildford (Main) Railway Station to Guildford Cathedral and then after to Sandfield Terrace.

It is appreciated that these arrangements may clash with the get together in the Refectory after the Cathedral Service but very much hope that as many members and their wives will try to come along to Sandfield Terrace after the service.

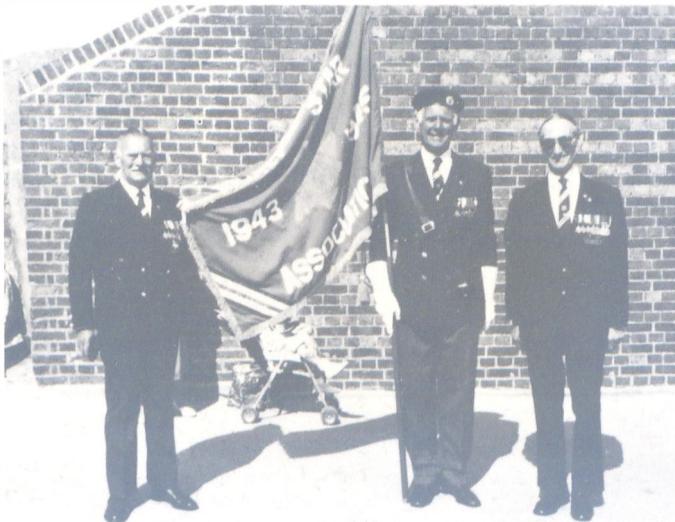
This function will be discussed at the Association Committee meeting on March 31st and so any enquiries or suggestions would be welcome to Doug Mitchell, 3 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3JE (0483 - 232043).

## BENEVOLENCE



Mr and Mrs Edward Corpes pictured with Mrs Edith Hall of SSAFA after taking delivery of an electric wheelchair. Mrs Julia Herbert of SSAFA who alerted the Association when Mr Corpes required assistance in obtaining an electric wheelchair was sadly unable to be present. Mr Corpes served as a Sergeant in the Surreys at the Depot in Kingston before the war. Both Mr and Mrs Corpes had brothers who were killed whilst serving with the Surreys.

The Association would like to take this opportunity to thank SSAFA for all their help and assistance with all our cases, and in particular Mrs Herbert and Mrs Hall.

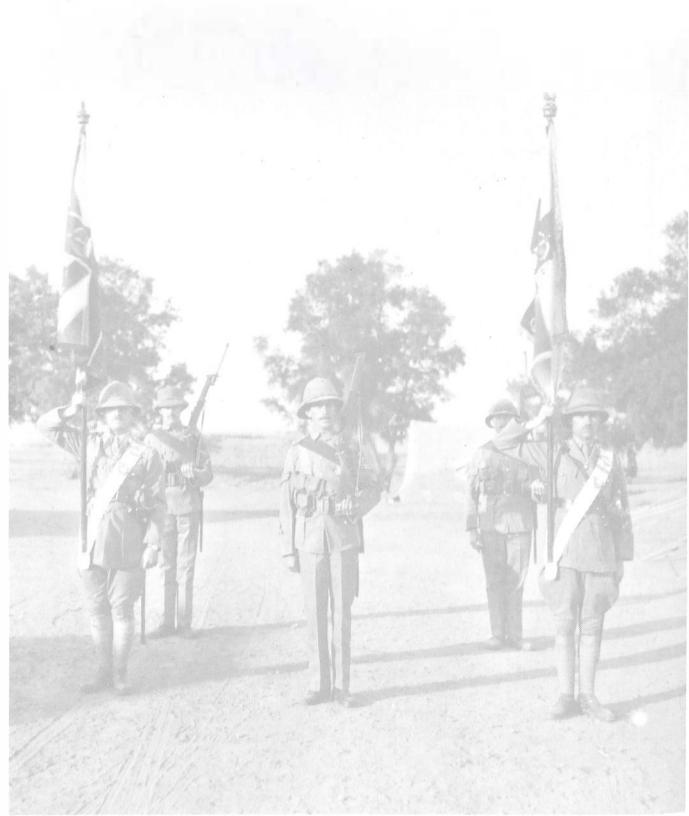


A Moody and F Bell, Eastbourne, 3rd September, at a Thanksgiving Service organised by the Monte Cassino Veterans.

## THANK YOU

Once again we are indebted to Major J.L.A. Fowler TD. for giving us the materials on which our newsletter is printed.

## FROM THE PAST



A Colour Party, believed to be from the 1/5th Bn The East Surrey Regiment, Mesopotamia or India - first World War period.

### TANGIER - Court Martial.

A somewhat humourous sentence of a court-martial was passed at Tangiers, at that time garrisoned by The Queen's. On a charge of inciting to mutiny, the culprit was found guilty and sentenced to be gagged and to receive fifty lashes, ten at each of five different spots, thence to be sent out of the garrison by the first ship, and to be whipped from the prison to the water side. The gagging is understandable when it is explained that the culprit was a woman.

### EX - SERVICE FELLOWSHIP CENTRES

The Ex-Service Fellowship Centres own two residential care homes for ex-servicemen (or women), and their widows. New Belvedere House in Stepney, east London, can take 30 residents, Hollenden House in Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex can take 50. Residents, who must normally be of pensionable age, have their own rooms in comfortable buildings and may bring some of their own furniture if they wish. They are not nursing homes and residents on admission must be capable of looking after themselves though help (for example with bathing) can be given. Fees are maintained within the limits which DSS will pay for those without more than the laid-down level of capital resources. Those interested should apply to:

The Administrator  
Ex-Service Fellowship Centres  
8 Lower Grosvenor Place  
London SW1W OEP

### THE LAST WORD.

*Nature has formed all things well here below,  
And has not permitted whiskers  
on a woman's face to grow  
For no man could shave her, what ere his skill  
For her tongue wouldn't let her chin keep still.*