

MAY 1995



# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

President  
Brigadier R. W. Aeworth CBE  
Chairman  
Colonel P. R. H. Thompson OBE TD DL  
Honorary Secretary  
Major J. C. Rogerson  
Assistant Secretary and Editor  
Lieutenant Colonel L. M. Wilson MBE

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NUMBER 57

## NEWSLETTER



*Drummer 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment 1926, India*



## Regimental and Association Events



### 1995

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 20th May       | Presentation of New Colours to 2nd Bn PWRR - Canterbury   |
| 26th May       | President's Reception - Freedom Boroughs Mayors - Clandon   |
| 1st June       | THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794)   |
| 1st June       | Laying up of 2 Queen's Colours - Canterbury Cathedral   |
| 3rd June       | 60/70 Association Annual Cricket Match v the Post Office, Warlingham, Surrey.<br>Details from W. Soffe, 19 Gale Close, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3QG  |
| 9th June       | PWRR Officers' Club Cocktail Party, Haberdashers Hall, London.  |
| 11th June      | Association Annual Church Service - Guildford Cathedral - 11 am for service at 11.15 am   |
| 18th June      | North Surrey Royal British Legion, Service of Remembrance, Bonner Hill Cemetery, Kingston-upon-Thames, 3 pm. All welcome, particularly Surreys. |
| 1st July       | WOs and Sgts Past and Present Dinner, Bassingbourn - Details in Newsletter.   |
| 21st July      | Annual Cricket Match, HMS Excellent v PWRR, St Cross Cricket Ground Winchester.   |
| 30th July      | The London Regiment Open Day, Duke of York's HQ, London.  |
| 1st August     | MINDEN DAY (1759)   |
| 15th August    | VJ Day - Religious Services held on 20th August.  |
| 20th August    | End of War Remembrance Service, 11 am All Saints Church, Kingston.  |
| 9th September  | SALERNO DAY (1943)  |
| 16th September | 5 OMA VJ Dinner, Sandfield Terrace, Guildford. Details from D. Mitchell, 3 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3JE.               |
| 6th October    | Officers' Club (Queen's Surreys) Ladies Luncheon - Clandon<br>Details to Members in Newsletter.   |
| 7th October    | East Surreys Annual Reunion - Clapham Junction. Details from F A W. Ramsey MM<br>20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3EE.                  |
| 28th October   | 6 OCA Dinner Dance UJ Club - Details from J.T. Brown, 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED.                                       |
| 3rd November   | Annual Reunion (Queen's Surreys) Union Jack Club, London - Details in Newsletter.   |
| 9th November   | Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey 10.30 am   |
| 12th November  | Remembrance Day.  |
| 24th November  | PWRR Officers' Club Dinner, Haberdashers' Hall, London.   |
| 20th December  | BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941)  |

### Golf Society Fixtures 1995

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 11th May    | Richmond Golf Club - Details from Golf Society Secretary to Members. |
| 24th May    | Royal Marines Match - Fleet Golf Club.                               |
| 4th October | Woking Golf Club.  |

### 1996

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 10th February        | SOBRAON DAY (1846) (150th Anniversary of the Battle).   |
| 9th or 16th February | Regimental Council Meeting (TBC).                       |
| 9th March            | Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees Meeting - Clandon. |
| 30th March           | Association Trustees and Committee Meetings - Clandon.  |

### Details of Events

Various events are published above, it is hoped that as many of our members will attend these functions. A few further details are published below.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 11th June   | Association Church Service, Guildford Cathedral 11 am for the service commencing at 11.15 am Medals should be worn.   |
| 18th June   | North Surrey Royal British Legion Service at Bonner Hill Cemetery, Kingston Upon Thames. Service commences at 3 pm. Our Standard Bearer, F A W Ramsey MM will be on parade. Once again for those living in the Kingston area your support would be welcomed by the Royal British Legion and our Association.  |
| 1st July    | This year the Past and Present Dinner will be held at Bassingbourn on Saturday 1st July 1995. All ex members of the Sergeants Mess are eligible to attend. The dress for the dinner is lounge suits and regimental ties. The cost is £20 a ticket. Limited accommodation is available. There will be a Band Display commencing at 6pm followed by a reception in the Roysia Restaurant at 6.40pm. Dinner will commence at 7pm. Bar closes 4am the following morning and breakfast will be from 8am - 10am 2nd July. Application for tickets should be made to Major M Aylward MBE. RHQ The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1JY. |
| 20th August | End of War Remembrance Service - All Saints Church, Kingston at 11 am. Sunday 20th August. This special service has been arranged by the Vicar of All Saints and will take place in the Chapel of The East Surrey Regiment and the area immediately beside the Chapel. It would assist the seating if you wrote or telephoned the Secretary at Canterbury giving the names of those attending. Drinks only have been arranged at 221 Field Ambulance RAMC, Portsmouth Road. Further details at the service.   |

*Regretfully the opening of Cardwells Keep (Stoughton Barracks) Guildford on 1st July has had to be cancelled.*

## Editorial

This edition marks a number of appointment changes within the Association. Our President, Brigadier Mike Doyle hands over to Brigadier Bob Acworth. Brigadier Mike took over in 1989 and has always taken a great interest in its affairs during his Presidency.

He has taken a particular interest in the area of benevolence, bringing to this his experience in his full time employment with the British Commonwealth Ex-Services League. He also set up the Regimental Council, a small group of senior officers of our Regiment, who act as advisors to the Association generally.

Colonel McConnell after being our Chairman since 1987, has decided that he should hand over and his successor will be Colonel Peter Thompson a distinguished Territorial. Fortunately, we are not losing all the services and experience of Colonel McConnell, he has agreed to continue as a trustee of our charitable funds and to remain as our Association legal advisor. We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to him, as over the years he has successfully managed to negotiate with The Charity Commissioners to reduce our various charities to one major charity, thus making the day to day running and administration of the Association so much easier.

On behalf of you all I thank Brigadier Mike and Colonel Mac for all their hard work and dedication to the Association. We look forward to seeing them at reunions in the future. As Secretary it has been a great privilege to work with them.

I welcome on your behalf Brigadier Bob and Colonel Peter and wish them a happy tenure as President and Chairman and I know we shall see a lot of them at future events. You will read elsewhere that I have now officially retired! However I am honoured to have been asked to continue with various Association affairs, and I will be continuing as Editor, I ask you all to continue to send your articles, photos and reminiscences so that we can continue to produce a good Newsletter.

Major John Rogerson has succeeded me as Secretary. Many Queen's Surreys will remember him as a PTI in the gymnasium in Münster, exhorting all to '*breath through the nose and out of the mouth!*' He transferred to The Army Physical Training Corps and served with distinction with them until being commissioned into The Queen's Regiment where he served with 3 Queen's and later Training Major of 6/7th Queen's. He is therefore no stranger to the regular or territorial in our Association.

Welcome John and remember, the first ten years are the worst. He has also taken over the duties of Curator at The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment museum in Dover Castle. It must be recorded that having assumed the duties of Secretary in January, he promptly disappeared on holiday in March!

I should like to thank the President for his very kind remarks in his Editorial and also the senior officers and their wives who attended the luncheon at Putney Heath. It was a lovely surprise and a great honour for me.

I hope to see a full turnout for the Church Service at Guildford Cathedral on June 11th. It will be the last occasion that Brigadier Mike and Colonel Mac will be attending as your President and Chairman, for the official day for handover is Sunday 11th June. It is not many Regiments that hand over their duties in a Cathedral!

I hope also to see as many of you as possible throughout this 50th Anniversary year of the ending of The Second World War at reunion and commemorative events.

Best wishes to you all.

Les Wilson

## President's Notes

The major event since the last edition of this Newsletter has been the retirement on 17th January 1995 of Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson, MBE, from his post as a Retired Officer at RHQ at Canterbury. Many members have had cause to be grateful to him, for he has played a major role in the affairs of our Association and of The Queen's Regiment as well as lately The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Few people have served any Regiment for so long and so well.

Les Wilson joined The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1947 and served for 22 years before receiving a Quartermaster's commission in 1969. The last 6 years of these 22 were spent as a splendid Regimental Sergeant Major of whom many of our members - including me, had the highest respect.

His career as a Quartermaster was also notable, for he was one of the very few who received promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. He served as an officer from 1969 until 1983 before finally "retiring" after a total of 36 year's uniformed service during which only 4 years were spent other than on purely Regimental duty.

But he had not finished, for he then became a Retired Officer at RHQ where he served a further 11 years mostly looking after all our Association's affairs but also with many other tasks, notably the Regimental Museum at Dover Castle. Now after 47 years of continual service on behalf of our Regiments he has officially retired.

I am particularly glad to record that your Regimental Committee has asked Les to continue his work with our Association on a part time basis, and he has accepted. He is thus still editing this successful Newsletter and will continue to be much involved in our various affairs.

On behalf of all Association members I congratulate and thank Colonel Wilson for all he has done for his Regiments and our Association over so many years, and thank him warmly for agreeing to continue his involvement still further.

These are the last notes I will write as President of the Association for I hand over to Brigadier Bob Acworth on the day of our Association service at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 11th June. It has been a great privilege to have held this appointment for the last six years, but I believe it is time for a change.

With best wishes to you all.

Mike Doyle

## New Member



Readers will be aware that Mrs Penny James is our curator at Clandon and it was therefore decided that she should become an Honorary Member of the Association. Les Wilson on behalf of the President and the Association pins the Association lapel badge on our Penny's jacket.

## Benevolence

Printed below are some of the letters received by the Secretary from SSAFA workers, our old comrades or their dependants. Remember, if you need help, contact the Secretary at Canterbury or the local branch of SSAFA or The Royal British Legion who will investigate and pass the recommendations on to RHQ at Canterbury for action. Remember too, if you know of one of your mates who needs help - let the Secretary or one of the Branch Secretaries know.

**Note: For obvious reasons all names have been deleted from the letters.**

Mrs Helen Keane was most interesting. My Father came from an Army family, and as a Sergeant took my Mother and me to India when I was only 6 months old, but growing up, I remember Rawlpindi and Mowshearer vaguely. Both my parents are now sadly deceased but I'm sure they would have enjoyed reading about her time there, and remembered how much they enjoyed theirs. My Father was commissioned into 1st/5th Queens as Captain and then Major during the last war and served in Europe for most of the time.

Thank you once again for the kindness and consideration we have received.

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I have to advise you that on the 25th November, 1994 my neighbour wrote to you after reading an article in the Regiments Association Newsletter concerning wheel chairs for disabled ex-servicemen. Acting on your advice he then contacted SSAFA and was able to arrange an assessment for me by an occupational therapist. I can now advise you that I have taken delivery of the motorised scooter and I must thank you, sincerely, for your assistance. I am no longer stuck in the home but can now get out and about in the neighbourhood and the surrounding area. The scooter has given me a new lease of life and I am extremely grateful. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation to the Association and let them know of the difference it has made to my circumstances.

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To whom it may concern, in other words my unseen guardian angels, "Thank you" is so inadequate for the generous help you have extended to me. I am pretty ill at the moment and alone, but the news received today has done my old bones a power of good. My dear late husband would be proud of his old Regiment, bless him. God Bless you all. Many Many Thanks.

## Benevolence 1994

During 1994 a total of 242 cases were investigated and 202 Grants in Aid approved.

As in previous years the majority of the grants were for household debts, particularly gas, electricity and rent arrears, holidays and travel to hospital. The Charity has provided grants for the repair of 3 electric wheelchairs and provided 5 more wheelchairs and 4 nebulizers during the year. In addition a number of applications were received from SSAFA for clothing. The Charity continue to administer 37 Army Benevolent Fund Supplementary Allowances.

During the year we have renewed or arranged for 10 Nursing Home fees to be paid for our old soldiers or their dependants. This side of our benevolence and care continues to increase. The Queen's Surreys Charity paid out £40,937 as Grants in Aid. Of the 40 cases NOT receiving a grant, a large number were not in receipt of their full entitlements of state allowances or not receiving rent rebates from local councils. These cases have now been resolved. We continue to have excellent relations with the Queen Alexandra's Hospital Home at Worthing where 6 of our members have received care and treatment during the year, 3 cases are currently being reviewed for full time care. We continue to receive requests for assistance from Combat Stress and St Dunstan's. The Association and Charity Trustees would like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who continue to be so helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA, FHS and The Royal British Legion who investigate the majority of our cases and we remain very grateful to their voluntary workers for all the hours they spend on our benevolent cases.

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Thank you for your letter enclosing the cheque for £195 for the purchase of a cooker and your special grant of £50 for Christmas expenses. I was able to disburse the grant for Christmas expenses prior to Christmas which came as a wonderful surprise for this lonely and totally deserted, by his family, pensioner. He was deeply grateful and asked me to convey his sincere thanks to you and the Committee. I also purchased the cooker and had it installed which meant he was able to have something cooked in his own flat without having to travel to find something to eat over the holiday period. Clearly now he is able to cook for himself he should be able to have a little more money to spare each week, albeit his electricity bill will undoubtedly increase accordingly, nevertheless it should help him slightly. He was also most grateful for the Association Newsletter and has every intention of making contact with his old Regiment, in fact he has been most anxious to contact some old comrades with whom he has lost touch, thus the Newsletter will be a great help in this connection.

— 000 —

Thank you very much for the carpets you bought for my lovely flat, I appreciate very much all that has been done for me. I am now happy and contented. Its nice to have my own home at last where my many friends can visit me. I am sorry for the delay in writing to you and the Association for your kind consideration in making it possible for repairs to my bungalow, the SSAFA lady passed the wonderful news to me as soon as she received it. Please accept my most grateful thanks for your great help and the peace of mind this has allowed.

— 000 —

I wish to thank you for the grant of £250 you sent to SSAFA when I desperately needed help. I can't say how much I appreciate your most generous help, as I honestly didn't expect any, as I was a conscript and not a regular. I also never got near any action and I couldn't really be called an ex-service man.

May God bless you, The Association and your colleagues for the assistance you render to ex service men. Once again sir from the bottom of my heart I thank you for your kindness.

— 000 —

On behalf of my husband, I write to thank you for the financial help we have received from the Regiment. My husband has been very ill and the short period of convalescence we were able to have has helped towards his very slow recovery, I am hoping he continues to get better. However we feel it was very kind to think of him and of course me after all the time that has elapsed since he was serving with the Regiment. We received No.54 of the Newsletter and I feel I must tell you that the article by

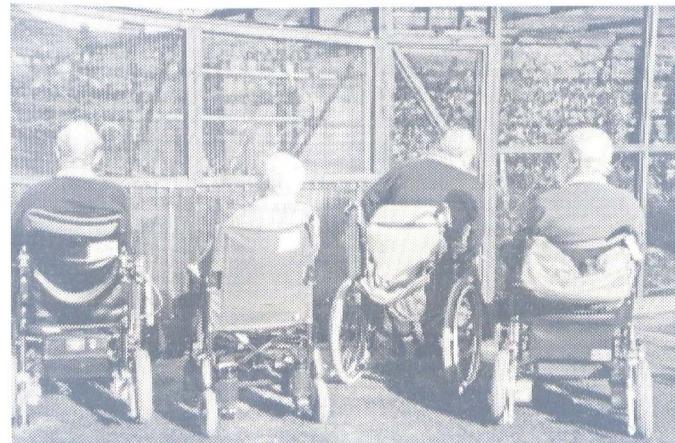
## Mobile Again



Recently the Association, with the help of SSAFA, Dover were able to assist Mr Beney in providing him with a powered wheelchair. The photo shows Mr Beney and Mrs Elizabeth Irvine The SSAFA Divisional Secretary.

## Queen Alexandra Hospital Home

Miss J M Holgate, Chief Executive, The Queen Alexandra Hospital Home has written, I thought you might like to have the enclosed photograph which shows some of our patients enjoying the aviary which we have been able to build and fill with the latest donation your Association kindly gave us.



As you will know the grounds and gardens are a source of great enjoyment to our patients but your latest gift has enabled us to enhance this even more. We had a small aviary but we have now built over an existing border which contained a variety of shrubs. We have added some landscaping with a small stream and pools and have been able to create a lovely natural environment. We have been fortunate to have had expert advice with this and also in selecting some new birds. The aviary includes winter quarters with heat and lighting. This addition to our facilities is one which even the most disabled can enjoy and many happy hours are now spent watching the birds. We are so grateful to you all.

## 23rd - 42/RTR London Regimental Association

We held our annual reunion lunch on St Georges Day at 27, St John's Hill, in the officers mess, by kind permission of the Commanding Officer, The London Regiment. Sixty were present for an excellent buffet - a fine mixture of 23rd London, pre and post war, 42nd Tanks, guests from the Newcastle and Oxford RTR branches and, of course, Surreys. Considering our mixed parentage, we all seem to 'party' extremely well. We remembered in a moment of silence Colonel Jackie Wykes, 42nd RTR and CO of the 48th, and Captain Vincent Blackwell, a staunch supporter of our Association and Honorary Auditor. We will meet again on April 23rd 1996.

DHC



## The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

The Regular battalions will be exchanging barracks at the end of August, with the 1st Battalion returning to Canterbury from Omagh and the 2nd Battalion replacing them in Ulster.

The 2nd Battalion are having a busy time before their move. In addition to their Northern Ireland training and many other duties, on 30th and 31st March respectively they provided contingents to exercise the Regiment's Honorary Freedoms in Southampton and Horley. On 20th May they will receive new Colours in Canterbury from HRH The Princess of Wales, and on 1st June they will Lay Up 2 Queens Colours in Canterbury Cathedral.

Further Freedom Parades are planned in Tonbridge on 10th June by a contingent from the 5th Battalion, and in Brighton on 28th October by the 6th/7th Battalion.

Unfortunately only a small representative party from each of our six affiliated Regimental Associations will be able to attend the Presentation of Colours, as this will be primarily a battalion 'family' event and there is only limited space for spectators around the Howe Barracks square. However, the 1st Battalion will have a corresponding Colours parade on 16th May 1996 and a similar number should be able to attend that occasion.

On 10th February Sobraon Day, a Memorial was dedicated, just inside the main entrance of Howe Barracks, to all who served in The Queen's Regiment from 1966 to 1992, especially the nine who died through terrorist action in Northern Ireland and England. The Memorial incorporates the cartouche of the Royal Arms of King George III which was formerly on the Officers' Mess of the old Cavalry Barracks, Canterbury, until they were demolished some 30 years ago.

*The Queen's Regiment Memorial*



Standing in front of The Memorial four former Colonels of The Queen's Regiment, Brigadier Charles Millman, Major Generals Rowley Mans, Fergus Ling and Mike Reynolds who was the last Colonel of The Queen's Regiment.

HRH The Princess of Wales graciously agreed to be Patron of a 400 mile, 40 day, Regimental expedition on foot through the Sambura region of Northern Kenya, led by Major Ken Hames late last year. This 'Trek' included ten under-privileged young people and was covered by Meridian Television who screened it in several instalments.

The Colonel-in-Chief is also Patron of the Regimental entry in the 10,000 mile, 30 day, London Mexico Rally by Major Nick Sharples and Corporal Mick Istead. They plan to raise £10,000 for the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, of which Her Royal Highness is also the patron.

JJW

## Infantry Soldier (A Celebratory Memoir)

### Introduction

This is a record of the war-time service of Mr Francis Aldridge MM, (former Infantry Platoon Sergeant), the bare skeleton of which reads:-

15th Dec 1939 - 14th Apr 40, The Devonshire Regiment, 15th Apr 1940 - 23rd May 46, The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey); 24th Aug 1944, London Gazette, award of Military Medal.

Why Mr Aldridge? He just happens to be a friendly near neighbour of mine on a hill outside Exeter, and a fellow-member of the Pinhoe Branch of The Royal British Legion; and, he just happens to provide a fine example of the high-quality service given by many conscripted men in and out of action during the 1939-45 War.

Francis Aldridge grew up in the village of Poltimore, member of a large family, as Devonian as can be. It is of note that although he would no doubt have preferred to go to war with his own County Regiment, he gave loyal, distinguished service in another, packed with cockneys!

His own account of events leading up to his conscription, runs something like this:-

*"On the 30th September 1939 I registered for conscript training, as instructed; at end of October, underwent medical examination, passing Al; and then on 15th December, I reported to the Higher Barracks, Exeter, and joined The Devonshire Regiment".*

However, it turned out that in early April 1940, he was required to move to Caterham as a reinforcement to the 2nd/6th Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, due to join the BEF.

### BEF 1940

Disembarked at Le Havre, the battalion was encamped at Abancourt where Aldridge was early startled to find a peacetime layout with no camouflage! On 17th May the Battalion began a series of moves, by train in cattle-trucks, at some times machine-gunned from the air. Marches by night followed for ten days without a hot meal, what a war! Aldridge complains that during all that time, they had been told nothing; *"we were like sheep, follow my leader. I suppose I did learn something because later in my service I used to tell the platoon everything, to put them in the picture"*. It may be imagined with what relief they returned to Southampton from Cherbourg, on one of the last ships leaving France.

### Overseas

In August 1942, 2nd/6th Queens embarked at Liverpool on SS *Franconia* bound, as it turned out, for India. During the intervening two years since its return from France, the Battalion had been shunted about the UK, in a variety of roles, bringing it to a high state of readiness for active service, which had included a tour at a Battle School, Battle Patrol training and on the 14th May 1942, inspection by King George VI during which Aldridge's platoon gave a bren gun demonstration. The battalion, having called at Freetown en route, was allowed ashore at Capetown where the liner stopped for about four days during which our Servicemen were shown splendid hospitality. Mr Aldridge tells me that the *"South African ladies and their families looked after every Serviceman who arrived on their shores, showing them some home life before going to war. They were wonderful"*. Just before the *Franconia* left Capetown (on his 23rd birthday), Aldridge became acting Platoon Commander of No 11 Platoon, the

officer having been taken ill. Quite a step up (and responsibility) for a young man called out of civvy street at the end of 1939.

Landed at Bombay, the battalion was moved as follows; to Deolali, back to Bombay, by ship up the Persian Gulf to Basra, and so by train to Kirkuk from which there was to be much exercising around and about. It was here that, having been out on lengthy reconnaissance with the other two (officer) platoon commanders, Aldridge felt that it was about time that he had a batman to 'do' for him as for them, to which B Company Commander very sensibly agreed!

### The Longest Approach March in History

(As it was bound to become known: 3,313 miles in 31 days! the term "march" may not be strictly applicable, but even so!) this turned out to be the move of 169 Infantry Brigade, including 2nd/6th Queens from Kirkuk to Enfidaville in Tunisia, during March/April 1943.

They entrained for Baghdad, and were there loaded into open 3-ton trucks driven by Indians. These set out westward towards the coast. Each day throughout this journey which lasted a month, they started at first light, having already breakfasted, with a ten-minutes halt every hour, three-quarters of an hour for lunch: sometimes driving 150 miles a day, sometimes as little as 80.

More usually they slept in the open under their mosquito nets, or later, after passing through Egypt, they put up their two-man bivouacs. Driving over the desert, it was not long before every man in a truck was completely covered in sand - and sand will penetrate anywhere, no matter what (as some readers may recall!) Having crossed Iraq, they entered the Jordan Valley from the head of which Mr Aldridge *"saw one of the best sights I saw during the whole time I was in the Army"*. And so on they went, across Transjordan. Encamped for the night on the edge of the Sinai Desert, they then crossed the Suez Canal, entering the fertile Nile delta, and, driven along excellent roads (at last!) they were enabled to stay for six days at Tahag Rest Camp where there was a splendid NAAFI. Here each man had one day off which he could spend in Cairo.

The convoy entrained for Tobruk where Mr Aldridge unhappily experienced his first taste of purified sea-water, "horrible"! Then it was into lorries again, and on to Enfidaville. The opportunity to take part in the final three weeks of the campaign which saw the complete over-throw of the Afrika Korps, proved very beneficial. It was an ideal time for battalions to undergo their baptism of fire, short and sharp enough to give them confidence to face further fighting in Italy.

All the time, since leaving Capetown, it has to be remembered that Mr Aldridge is commanding No 11 Platoon, B Company, 2nd/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, in the rank of Sergeant, just as if he were a subaltern officer!

### Background to Allied Invasion of Italy

On 3rd September 1943, The British 8th Army (General Montgomery) landed, unopposed, on the toe of Italy; and the Italians signed an armistice with the Allies.

On the 9th September in the early hours, the British and American Corps of 5th Army (General Mark Clark), simultaneously stormed the beaches at two points near Salerno, and immediately ran into the heavy opposition. The sandy shores around the Gulf of Salerno, - 30 miles south of Naples, were most suitable for a landing from the sea, as the Germans anticipated! So, as Clark's men went

in, the Germans, established on the heights overlooking the beaches, were waiting for them. With a semi-circle of high ground overlooking the beaches, the battlefield resembled half a saucer with the Germans sitting on the rim. For four days the issue hung in the balance, but by the seventh day the beachhead was secured, thanks to the stubbornness of our Infantry, the continuous Allied air offensives, and the tremendous bombardment by supporting naval forces (of the later Normandy landings).

## 2nd/6th Queens in the Salerno landings

As part of 169 Infantry Brigade, the battalion sailed from Tripoli on the 5th September, 1943, being by now a very fit body of men. Late on the afternoon of 8th September they heard that the Italians were granted an armistice, which simply led to the grim expectation that the Germans would fight all the harder (which they did!). As they approached the Italian coastline, the convoy was subjected to fairly heavy air attacks.

The Brigade Commander now issued a Special Order, as follows:

*"It is right and proper that this Brigade which was one of the last, to leave France three years ago, should have the honour to be one of the first to return to Europe....."*

The convoy stood off the coast of Italy during the night 8th/9th September. The Brigade was to be one of the assaulting formations, and two battalions were to secure an immediate beachhead, advancing inland some 3,000 yards - landing at 3.30am in the morning of the 9th. 2nd/6th Queens (Aldridge), accompanied by two troops of the Greys (tanks), also landed before first light, at about 4.30am. As one officer put it, *"the whole vast bag resembled a Brock's benefit"*. The lead battalions having successfully landed 2nd/6th The Queens was ordered to move with all possible speed to Monte Corvino airfield. It was during this action, under heavy German machine-gun fire, that Mr Aldridge's Officer (Platoon Commander) was instantly killed alongside of him. Mr Aldridge himself was hit in an arm, luckily superficially ("but bags of blood") requiring speedy application of a field dressing by a stretcher bearer. And now, as he put it, *"I was again acting Platoon Commander"*.

On the 11th September, 11 Platoon (Aldridge) was involved in a successful two-company attack on Hill 210 which was consolidated. However, as usual, the Germans forcefully counter-attacked. B Company (incl 11 Platoon) became temporarily disorganised, and Mr Aldridge was ordered to take whatever men he could gather together, and get them back onto the Hill, which he did, and they held fast. It was as the result of his energetic, courageous leadership in this action, that Mr Aldridge was recommended for, and awarded the Military Medal. Hill 210 was a most important feature to be held as it overlooked both the Allied beach-head and the German supply line. Onward toward the Gustav Line.

The German aim was now to establish a winter line south of Rome, - to run along the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers, through Cassino into the central mountains.

The finest German troops, the geography of Italy, and the full fury of midwinter conspired together in the enemy defence. It was to be Allied advance by attrition against one defensive position after another, the Germans pouring down artillery and mortar fire on their previously held positions.

On 1st October 1943, our armour entered Naples, and on 15th October, the Fifth Army crossed the river Volturno.

Mid-November: the Italian winter (something of a surprise to British Tommies!) Rain in icy, drenching fury; mud, and transport limited.

The Americans (with their eyes on 'D-day'), having dismissed Churchill's favoured thrust for the Balkans, the Germans switched divisions to Italy, so that by now, eleven Allied Divisions faced twenty-five German Divisions. And the 5th Army was made to fight every yard until it reached the main German (Gustav) line, allowing time, meanwhile, for its completion, costing the Allies 16,000 casualties.

## Garigliano

New Year's Eve, 1944 (6 months before that much publicised D-day) found 2nd/6th Queens (Mr Aldridge) up front, facing the River Garigliano in the Valley, to the west of Cassino, which would have to be crossed. The river was fast-flowing, about a hundred yards wide, with the Germans in strong defensive positions on the opposite bank. The Cassino sector, for such it was, had been entrusted by the German High Command to the Fourteenth Panzer Corps, highly experienced, very professional soldiers. Their positions had been carefully constructed and reinforced with steel and concrete to resist heavy artillery bombardment, and little damage could be inflicted by even the heaviest Allied artillery barrages. But the over ruling factor in favour of the German defence was, of course, the Monte Cassino observation dominance. For, although the Germans did not, at this time, enter the Monastery itself, they were all over the 'monte'!

There had been blizzards earlier, but on the night 17th/18th January, 2nd/6th Queens crossed the Garigliano in assault boats on a two-company front, suffering considerable casualties, very much from anti-personnel mines. This operation was a model of careful planning, and the battalion advanced to occupy Monte Damiano from which it was in due course relieved by the 6th Battalion of The Black Watch.

And here we come to one of those unexpectedly pleasant stories which crop up even in the midst of harshest war. As earlier stated in the introduction, Mr Aldridge had grown up in Poltimore village. On the other side, eastern side of the Exeter-Taunton road, is Whimple, the village where the Whiteway family used to make cider. Aldridge and a Whimple lad used to play cricket together. One of them, we know, was serving in B Company, 2nd/6th Queens; the other, as it turned out, was with D Company, 6 Black Watch. These two then met briefly during the inter-battalion relief, and were able to swap yarns about happier days in East Devon, before having to rejoin their battalions. So there was a typical example of the consequence of conscription: one east Devonian in a famous Home Counties Regiment, the other in a well-known Highland Regiment.

## Mr Aldridge

You are reminded, patient reader, that our hero is still the acting platoon commander of No 11 Platoon, B Company, 2nd/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, - and that his long and meritorious service in that command, undoubtedly merits the prefix 'Mr', as would be the case if he were a Subaltern Officer.

## Anzio

After all this hard and successful fighting, 2nd/6th Queens was withdrawn from the Cassino sector, down to Naples. Here they found themselves being reorganised for the landing, by LCIs, at Anzio. Well, due to the hesitancy of

the Allied Commander, this landing was a little disastrous. Surprise was lost, and the Germans bringing up their reserves, brought down upon the battalion, the heaviest shellfire that they had so far experienced. B Company (Mr Aldridge) found itself in hand-to-hand fighting! Something like the 'trench warfare of 1914-18' developed. So the Anzio beachhead proved costly and grim, a hard Infantry operation, with backs to the sea, under incessant rain, in deep mud.

During this time, Mr Aldridge became a platoon sergeant in A Company. *"Here I was wounded, picked up by stretcher-bearers, put on a Bren gun carrier which seemed to discover all the pot-holes, and I was in agony".* At the Advanced Hospital it was found that, amongst other things, his femur had been fractured. Thus he came to the end of his active service.

Back to England in a hospital ship, followed by treatment in a variety of hospitals, Mr Aldridge spent the remainder of his Army service with a Holding Battalion at Gravesend. On the 23rd May 1946 he was called to The Queen's Royal Regiment Depot at Guildford, for demobilisation.

#### Valediction

I do hope that I may have achieved, somewhat belatedly, my aim to mark, during this time of 50th Anniversaries, an example of the standard of valuable service rendered by so very many conscripted service-men. They disappeared into civilian life, and, generally neither their workmates nor neighbours, heard any of their wartime activities: we find this even in the close comradeship of The Royal British Legion.

**Lest we Forget.**

Humphrey Platt.

*Editors Note: Captain Humphrey Platt was for many years employed as a Retired officer at Infantry Records Exeter. One of his duties was looking after the career interests of NCOs. Many of our readers will remember his visits to the battalion in the 60s and 70s.*

#### A Glutton for Punishment

While listing our growing collection of personal documents here in the Museum, Major Bob Johnson came across the following:

George William Sutherland, born in 1876 he enlisted in The East Surrey Regiment in 1892, saying he was 18 years but was, of course, only 16. Served for 12 years. Re-enlisted in 1905, discharged in 1909. Re-enlisted in The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment in 1914 (later transferred to The Royal Engineers). Re-enlisted in The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1939, having altered his birth date on his army document and birth certificate so that his age appeared to be 49 whereas he was actually 59.

Finally demobbed in April 1941.

This alteration of his birth date and the initial untruth about his age in 1892 makes this man appear to have been only 6 years old when he first enlisted!

PJ

#### Letter that shaped the course of history

Whitehall Palace London 2nd July 1661

*My Lady and Wife,*

*Already at my request, the good Count da Ponte has set off for Lisbon; for me, the signing of the marriage has been great happiness, and there is about to be despatched at this time after him, one of my servants, charged with what would appear necessary, whereby may be declared, the inexpressible joy of this felicitous occasion, which when received, will hasten the coming of your Majesty.*

*I am going to make a short progress into some of my provinces; in the meantime, whilst I go from my most sovereign good, yet I do not complain as to whither I go; seeking, in vain, tranquillity in my restlessness; hoping to see the beloved person of your Majesty in these kingdoms, already your own; and that, with the same anxiety, with which after my long banishment, I desired to see myself within them, and my subjects desiring also to behold me amongst them, having manifested their most ardent wishes for my return, well known to the world. The presence of your serenity is only wanting to unite us, under the protection of God, in the health and content I desire. I have recommended to the Queen, our lady and mother, the business of the Count da Ponte, who, I must here avow, has served me, as what I regard the greatest good in this world, which cannot be mine less than it is that of your Majesty; likewise not forgetting the good Richard Russell, who laboured on his part, to the same end.*

*The very faithful husband of your Majesty, whose hands he kisses,*

Charles Rex.

Despite the recipient, Catherine of Braganza, being addressed as "My Lady and Wife" and Charles II referring to himself as her "very faithful husband" this missive, curious to record, was actually a proposal of marriage. Even stranger perhaps, the love letter turned Britain into a nation of tea drinkers... When he wrote it, the Merry Monarch hadn't even met the pretty princess from Portugal - rather he had been bowled over by a portrait of her. Suffice it to say that the Portuguese, oppressed at the time by neighbouring Spain, was 100 per cent behind an alliance with the British and the wedding took place the following year.

As tea drinking had been a popular pastime for some while among Portuguese royalty and aristocracy, a large chest of the stuff not unnaturally formed part of Catherine's dowry. And through her influence, it was not long before the beverage became popular in court circles here. Apparently it was taken green, with no milk or sugar, and served in blue and white bowls of Chinese porcelain. By the 1700s, the nation was sipping it (tea bought by and prepared for the rich was re-brewed by the staff below stairs who then sold on the twice-used leaves to those of limited means).

Tea drinking, in turn, gave rise to elegant tea services from Wedgwood among other famous chinaware manufacturers - and, arguably more important, improved the population's health by fostering the habit of boiling water as well as becoming in many cases a substitute for cheap gin.

## A Commanding Officer Remembers

Lt Col Hugh Harris forwarded this letter from the late Lt Col J R Terry who had commanded 5 Queen's in Guildford in the early fifties.

*"I served under Colonel John Terry when he commanded the 1st Queen's in Burma towards the end of the war with Japan, and I was delighted to serve under him again when he was CO of the 5th Queen's from 1951 to 1954. He wrote me this letter after he retired to farm Galway Steers on Dartmoor. He died in 1988"*

I very much enjoyed my time as CO 5 Queen's and it was particularly pleasant because nearly all my service had been regimental soldiering in The Queen's and the KAR before and during the war. So you can imagine what it felt like to come back to a Bn from a boring staff job, in fact up to 1947 I had never been out of a Battalion and knew what was required at every level, so I much looked forward to finding out exactly how it all worked in peacetime in the TA.

It must have been a very fortunate period when there was so many highly qualified volunteers with plenty of war service to form the solid base, and a steady stream of NS chaps to make up the strength when required. Mostly returning from Korea, they also had the experience of active service which is so valuable in keeping realism in training. It certainly was a first rate operational Bn when required.

You probably remember the idea was to encourage NS men to volunteer when they first reported in but quite understandably most wanted to see what it was all about first, and when they had attended some week ends or an annual camp, a satisfactory percentage joined which said a lot for the original volunteers.

The way it all worked, depending almost entirely on the voluntary attendances of officers, WOs, and NCOs on Drill Nights and weekends, was the more remarkable when you realised that they had already done a full days work with enough travelling, and weekends and camps meant giving up holidays, in most cases, with their families. So you would think that there had to be strong incentives for volunteering, other than the overall wish to be in a Bn and keep in touch with the Army and their friends. But there didn't seem to be many other incentives except for pursuing a hobby like competition shooting - that certainly meant the standard of shooting was high in 5 Queen's, with 'gladiators' like Dick Saunders, Jim Fell and many others. It was a source of pride to all of us, but seemed to be somewhat embarrassing to the powers that be who would have liked the honours shared more often by other units in the division. An attempt by the Div HQ to achieve this, was made by introducing a multiple entry system whereby marking was awarded in a diluted fashion, more on numbers than skill, but even this failed to stop 5 Queen's from winning.

The other uses made of Drill Halls was a surprise, with dance promoters and band leaders applying for bookings, but the financial help it made to the Territorial Association was apparently worthwhile, and the very good caretakers saw to it that there was no inconvenience caused. However there was a peculiar situation at Woking where John Pappin the new Coy Commander found that his predecessor was trying to retain a permanent hold on the Drill Hall for his 'club'. This apparently originated in the system of bar licensing which had been adopted. This took some time to sort out but obviously had to be stopped because the volunteers were given the impression that they had two Coy Comds, one who did the training and the other who would arrive to entertain his friends. However all ended happily for the young and

enthusiastic new Coy Comd when his predecessor found that he had been finally out manoeuvred and gave up his 'club'.

The weekend camps at Pirbright, which were mostly concerned with the annual course on platoon training, were most enjoyable, and serious work was always followed by convivial evenings. One time the barman was selling a very concentrated form of cider in wine glass measures; those of us who had been sampling this new beverage were astonished when the very popular DQ, Jack Stevens, arrived and started drinking it in pints with no adverse effects, so with others following his example we had a hilarious evening. Apart from being an efficient member of Bde HQ he was very keen on racing and would recall the miles he had driven to back a horse on the course - 'Sail Cloth' being one of his best winners.

Meeting so many people in different careers and professions was a continual source of interest as it had been in war time battalions, but in a Territorial Battalion in peacetime they were actually doing it at the same time as soldiering, and it was remarkable how they managed to combine the two - for instance running your own family firm like you did, and filling in two evenings at Dorking plus week ends and annual camps must have been a strain, but after being 'C' Coy Commander in Burma you probably found it quite relaxing!

Those who caught a train to the city every morning must have found evening attendances pretty wearisome unless something really interesting was laid on, and if so the enthusiasm and response was most rewarding. Several would produce their own ideas and suggestions, Pat Spencer-Moore who was in the city all day, a stockbroker he would discuss these things with his friends on the evening train, and very good ideas too.

For myself, visiting companies in the evenings at their Drill Halls was a great pleasure especially when the Coy Commanders had laid on interesting cloth model exercises. The drive to Haslemere was through very pleasant country, unlike a friend of mine in the RSFs who had to row a mile in a small boat to get to one of his companies based on an island, and sometimes forgot the drill hall key.

At Bn HQ we had an excellent Adjutant Mike Stopford and Quartermaster Bill Roadnight who were well liked by all and together with Jack Clarke the 2 i/c we spent much time planning our Annual Camps, with confidence in the knowledge that with very good company commanders, the training, whether platoon, company or battalion, was certain to be successful. So whilst the training went well, Jack Clarke with his long experience of the TA ran the officers mess in an exemplary fashion.



5 Queens, TA Officers Mess. Sadly when this photo was taken Colonel Terry was away from the battalion

In this respect it was pleasing to find that nothing was overdone in mess life, the entertaining and guest nights were

conducted in good order and the 2 i/c's hard work was well rewarded. Different styles in running a mess were to be expected in other areas of the service, although we were surprised at the very lavish hospitality of our Gunner Regiment whose mess was in the other half of the same building at Barnard Castle. It was magnums of champagne all the way and their mess never closed down till the early hours. Most of their officers worked in the city and quite a few at Lloyds, so the wealth was very obvious, and a fortnights camp was evidently a good outlet.

At that same camp we had some good Battalion training, an exercise which involved a night march up Whit Fell and a dawn attack near the top, was particularly useful; we knew we had arrived at the right place at the right time when a voice from an 'enemy' slit trench enquired "*Wot yer all creeping about in the dark for?*"

Dibgate in the first year and Stanford PTA in the last were also good and much enjoyed. At brigade headquarters we had 'our' real professor W H R Frend TD, engagingly humble about his brilliant brain which he loved to act down. As Brigade intelligence officer he had just finished a well received review of the situation, together with a forecast which proved quite correct, when he retired to his lean-to with a large sheaf of papers which turned out to be the proof of his book 'The Donatist Church' which he said his publishers wanted back in 48 hours, and they got it too. There were a number of major 'duties' and functions based from drill halls. The Coronation and our participation was planned so long ahead that everyone knew in good time the part they would play, but those at short notice such as the funeral of HM King George VI were obviously more difficult for TA people, but their response was always magnificent. Adoption ceremonies early on, an All Ranks Ball, opening of the new building at Sandfield, displays of weapons and individual company functions, were occasions for liaison with the local population and were well attended.

RSM Kemp and the PSIs worked tirelessly in their highly responsible jobs and were on very good terms with all ranks. I am very grateful to everyone in 5 Queen's for my happy period of command.

#### A day out at Stoughton Barracks with 'the Great Provider'

'Are you from the press?' the harassed foreman asked, the workmen were still sanding, cementing and sealing, and the grass and plants still being laid. 'Not like this when I was serving here', came the reply. 'We would have got up earlier and had it all spick and span well in time for the Colonel's inspection'. In through the front door, still being painted, past the panicking cleaner of the newly laid (one hour before) carpets. 'What do you think of the layout?' asked the busy receptionist, 'Not good enough, put this dummy on a charge, he hasn't laid out his razor and toothbrush and his pillows and blankets are a shambles!'

Lt Col (Retd) Wilson - 'The Great Provider' was in his element, back in the very barracks where he had enlisted into The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1947. Throughout the week I had been taking over from Colonel Les he had been receiving frantic calls from a Sarah Davis (Marketing) of 'Countryside Residential' about a military display at Stoughton Barracks Guildford. On a previous visit to the Princess of Wales's Royal Regimental Museum, which Colonel Les had set up in Dover Castle, I observed Eric Stenning and Dennis Brooker the attendants, working on a bed inspection layout Circa 1950 and Queen's Royal Regiment officers, soldiers, uniform, medals, drums and picture display.

All this frenzied activity was the culmination of co-ordination and many hours of consultation between 'Countryside', a building development firm, who were tastefully turning Stoughton Barracks into an exclusive residential 'Cardwells Keep' and Colonel Wilson who designed and provided a display from Dover Castle

museum, depicting Regimental life at Stoughton Barracks. Roy Harding, the attendant from the Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Museum, Clandon, who served with Colonel Les in Malaya and lives down the road from Stoughton where he was trained, turned up. Roy had been taking photos of Stoughton at every stage of the refurbishment and will keep an eye on the display which will stay in the show flat throughout the sales period of approximately one year.

By now the press were taking pictures of the 'Countryside' Director receiving a framed 'Pascal Lamb' from Colonel Les. Later I heard him speaking to the press with great enthusiasm and gratitude of what the Regiment and Colonel Les had done in support of the project - 'A wonderful co-operation to bring history to life within the refurbished present to live in'. 'When did the MOD vacate the barracks?' asked the young female American reporter, "The Royal Army Pay Corps records office left in 1983" said Colonel Les. The year Colonel Les started as The Queen's Royal Surrey Association Secretary and The Queen's/PWRR Regimental Museum Curator, I thought, and eleven and a half years of excellent service and outstanding achievement!



'I will return at 1600 hrs to test you on the military historical information that I have given you' - the four young reporters half blushed and half smiled. They were all very impressed when I told them that Colonel Les had been invited by The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment to 'turn the page' in Canterbury Cathedral on Tuesday 17th January; his 65th birthday. The four reporters were still trying to decipher how to compile seven into one Regimental histories, "can we call you if we have a query Colonel?"

Les, thank you for a very comprehensive hand over, we all wish you a happy 'age of living', I hope and know you will keep in touch. You have provided us with so much.

JCR

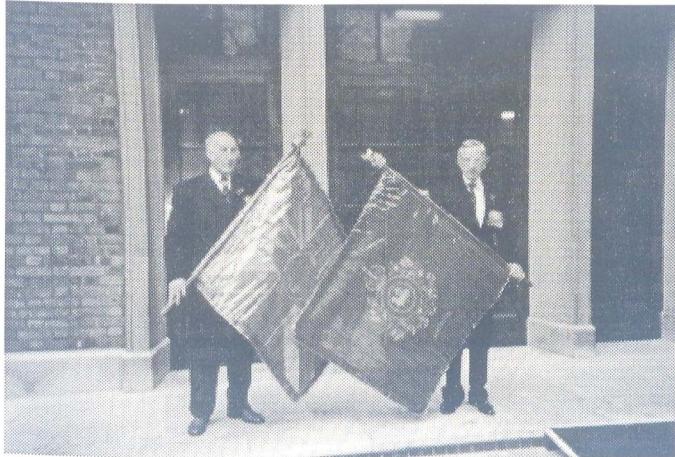
#### Cardwells Keep February 1994



Members of the Regimental Council are shown with Countryside Properties Director.

## The Colours of the 24th London Regiment

On Remembrance Sunday 1994, the Colours of the 24th London Regiment, later 7th (Southwark) Bn., Queen's Royal Regiment, were restored to St. Mary's (Newington) Church, S.E.11. In the picture shown here Jim Burgess (on left) and David Smith hold the Colours outside the Church before the Service. These two pre-War Territorials carried them up the nave where they were accepted by the Rector (the Revd. Father Michael Hart).



The Colours had been received at Windsor Castle in 1910 from King Edward VII. Following the outbreak of the Great War, they were lodged in St. Mary's Church; they were regained by the Regiment after the War. Soon after the outbreak of the second World War, they were lodged this time in Southwark Cathedral; this was just as well as St. Mary's was destroyed in the Blitz. They were regained in January 1945, but relodged in the Cathedral in December 1945. They were regained in February 1951, and following various TA reorganisations were laid up on Remembrance Sunday in November 1961.

At this time in 1961, they were netted and encased in plastic, which in 30 years became discoloured and shabby. Accordingly in 1993-4 they were recased and cleaned, and then restored to St. Mary's as described above. The Queen's (Southwark) Regimental Association is grateful to the Regimental Association at Canterbury for bearing the cost of the recent renovation work on these much travelled Colours.

JMAT

## Queen's (Southwark) O.C.A.

The annual dinner of the above was held as usual on the nearest Saturday to March 6th which is the anniversary of the Battle of Medenine. About 60 members of 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment together with representatives of the Sint Niklaas Patriotic Committee, Royal British Legion (Southwark) and the Secretaries of 1/6th and 2/7th Bns attended the function.

The President, Major A S Playfoot M.C. announced details of the celebrations to be held in May in Hyde Park to commemorate V.E. day, and that he hoped that some tickets would be available. He expressed the thanks of members to the committee and especially to R.B.L.(Southwark) for their assistance on many occasions throughout the year. The members were reminded that as members were dwindling the reunion arrangements might need some revision. However those present were adamant that they were determined to continue the event each year in order to preserve the spirit of comradeship and pride in the battalion and Regiment which remains so strong.

Major Gen D.S. Gordon CB, CBE, DSO who commanded the Bn in the Desert, Italy and Europe then gave an interesting account of a visit that he had recently made to Villers Bocage and of the memorial that he had been privileged to unveil. Mr

Larry Uren then proposed "Absent Friends" which was followed by the toast of the "Regiment" by Major Ken Jessup. Finally the Regimental March "Braganza" brought the convivial evening to a close.

ASP

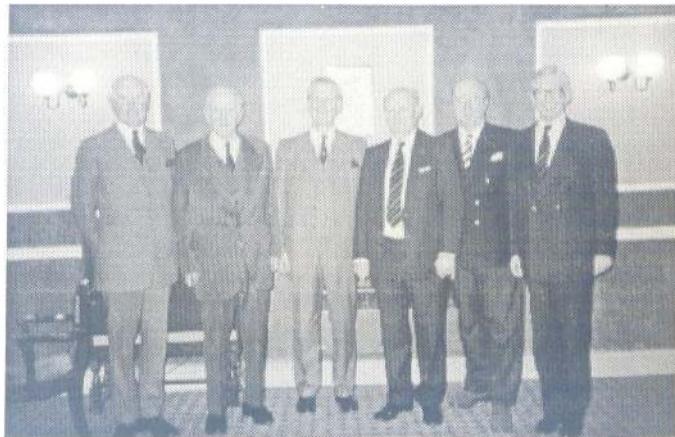
## William Griffiths Straat, St. Niklaas



*Mrs Freda Griffiths with members of the 1/7th Queen's Association at the naming of a road in memory of her late husband Lt Col W D Griffiths DSO, MC.*

## Tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson

To mark the end of Les Wilson's 47 years of service to the Crown and the Regiment the President hosted a special lunch on Friday 3rd February 1995. This took place at The Telegraph Hotel on Putney Heath adjacent to the Regiment's first parade ground. The Chairman organized the occasion and besides him and the President the following attended: Major Generals Ling, Forrester, Mans and Reynolds, Brigadier Acworth as President designate, and Colonel Toby Sewell as President during the first period of Les's time as Secretary. The lunch was also used to mark the imminent retirement as overall Regimental Secretary PWRR of Colonel John Francis. Ladies attended, and apologies and good wishes to Colonel Les were sent by Major Generals Piggott and Lloyd Owen.



*Major Generals Michael Forrester and Fergus Ling, Les Wilson, Major Generals Rowley Mans and Mike Reynolds and Colonel John Francis.*

During lunch the President paid tribute to Les's outstanding service, highlighting his wonderful influence on all who have served with him, the leadership he has given within the Regiment in all its forms, and his continuing instruction of all in the Regiment and those privileged to join it. He said how fortunate we are that Les will continue to serve the Association in his retirement. On conclusion of the lunch the President led a small delegation to the Tercentenary Monument on Putney Heath, and this was found in good order.

JWS

## An unhappy C.O.

Extracts from orders of 3rd Volunteer Bn, The East Surrey Regiment in 1903.

*The Commanding Officer is much surprised and disappointed at the small response that has been received to the notice inviting candidates for the Special Service Section published in the January orders. Exclusive of officers, only 23 names have been received, instead of, as ought to have been the case, those of practically the whole of the Battalion. Apparently the object of the Section is not understood. Men are invited to enter their names to serve, in the case of a national emergency, for not more than one month in a fortress or garrison town in Great Britain, receiving a gratuity of £5 and Army rates of pay, messing, and separation allowances for so doing. If the large majority of the Battalion is not prepared, in the case of a national emergency, to do this, it is difficult to understand what is the use of the Battalion. Officers commanding Detachments will at once take special steps to explain the objects of the Section to their respective commands, and report without delay as to the nature of the special steps taken by them, and their result, to the Commanding Officer.*

*The Commanding Officer regrets to observe that at smoking concerts and other entertainments of a similar character in connection with the various detachments, songs and recitations are introduced which, without being actually indecent contain double meanings and suggestions of a distinctly indecent tendency. These are neither amusing nor edifying, and will not be permitted. It is the duty of the senior officer or non-commissioned officer present, whether acting as chairman or not, immediately to put a stop to anything of the kind, and the acting secretary or other officials by whom the entertainment is arranged will be held personally responsible for any offence against the above order. In justice to the battalion it must be said that the offenders are almost invariably paid performers or visitors, and not members of the battalion.*

## A happy C.O.

Extract from orders of 6th (Bermondsey) Bn, Queen's Royal Regiment in September 1939.

*I wish to congratulate all ranks on their cheerful and soldierly behaviour in Camp under the most adverse weather conditions. The attendance was a record - only seven men out of six hundred and five being prevented from attending. I should like this brought to the notice of your employers to whom I should like you to convey my thanks for making you available for Camp.*

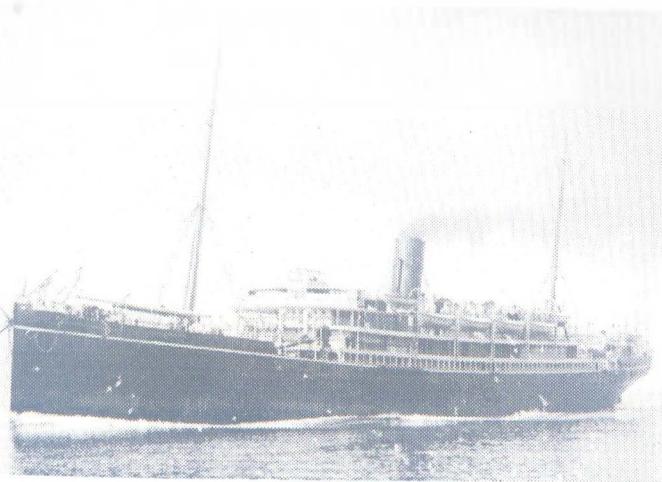
*A further 25 men are wanted to bring the Battalion up to War Establishment, so bring your friends along now and get the Battalion up to its full strength once again; there are a number of vacancies in the M.T. Section for men with a knowledge of driving.*

## Ships that pass

Troopships are a subject which seemingly interest many of our members, a particularly knowledgeable and comprehensive article on the topic having been written by PGEH in the issue of May, 1993.

One company operating some of the troopers was the famous P & O shipping line. Established in 1835 as the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company to undertake passenger service between England and Spain, they extended their activities eastward to Egypt and India in 1837 when they took four new ships into their fleet, one of them named *Braganza* and described as being of 650 tons and of 250 horse power. By that time they were attracting the attention of Army officers and their families when travelling on duty and leave. The company title was changed to the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company in 1840 on incorporation by Royal Charter.

During the Boer War the P & O line built three ships specifically for trooping purposes, namely *Sobraon*, *Assaye* and *Plassy*. *Sobraon*, although titled with a famous East Surrey Regiment battle honour, unfortunately had a very short career as on her third (but definitely not lucky) voyage she ran on to a reef in thick fog off the coast of China and was a total loss.



*The P & O ship Sobraon*

*Assaye* served as a transport vessel in both the Boer War and the Boxer Rising. A notable passenger of the times was the Boer General Cronje who she took to St Helena as a prisoner of war. After service as a hospital ship in the First World War she returned to Far East trooping duties, finally going to Norwegian breakers in 1928 after nearly thirty years of honourable service.

*Plassy* had a fire on board in 1901, while fitting out for her first Indian trooping voyage, but survived it. Somewhat charmed, she also survived a collision which seriously damaged her in the Solent in 1906. In 1911 she had the distinguished task of carrying guests of the Admiralty at the Coronation Review. A more sombre task was that of service as a hospital ship in the First World War.

But if *Plassy* carried the famous in her time, she also carried the infamous. Frederick Bywaters, a ship's writer, served in her during the early 1920s. In 1923 he was jointly convicted with his lover Edith Thompson, of the murder of Mrs Thompson's husband Percy. Both were hanged. Edith's body now lies in Brookwood Cemetery, Woking but Frederick's is still within the grounds of Pentonville Prison a less honoured grave than some of those of the former ship's passengers who fell in the service of their country. *Plassy* went to her own grave in an Italian breaker's yard in 1924 after an honourable career of twenty-four years duration.

## The Lefevre Family and The Queen's

The photo of my father Charles George Lefevre was taken about 1913-14 when he was in the old 24th Bn The County of London Regiment (The Queen's), he served from 1913 till 1919.

In the picture of the mounted section they appear to have no saddles, so I think they might have been exercising the horses.



Vincent was captured near Abbeville in 1940 and was a prisoner till the end of the war and came home just after VE day, and got demobbed later that year, he died in 1990 of cancer.

Brother Charles served through the war and finished up in Vienna and was demobbed in 1946 or 47, I can't quite remember which year. He emigrated to Australia in 1958 and died there in 1987 of a heart attack.

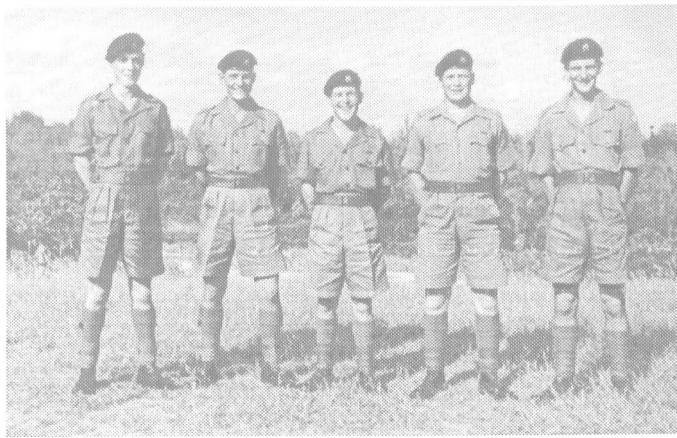
I don't know if all of the POW's in the picture below are Queensmen, Vince is the one immediately under the arrow, I think he said that after the photo was taken the Germans took the overcoats back!.



I joined the army cadets in 1947 when I was 14 years old, Dad only let me join the cadets on the understanding that I joined a Queen's Bn, and I joined the 1st Bn four years later and got demobbed in 1957, so I really wore the Lamb for 10 years, and still proudly wear it to this day on my blazer and beret when on parade with the RBL and at regimental parades. Vincent served in the 2/7th Queen's and Charles in the 1/7th, both at Braganza St., Southwark.

There is also a family story that our grandfather served in the 4th Volunteer Bn, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). I have the cap badge of the Bn and it has always been known as "Grandad's Badge", if he did it must have been in the year 1883 or later. Well so much for the family connections with the Regiment.

The photo of Colonel John Davidson and myself in the last Newsletter was a surprise, especially as I was given the initial A instead of G R Lefevre, the gentleman in the background is my old friend Steve Birchmore who was in the mortar platoon. We got demobbed together, he married into my family and we are still the best of pals after all these years.



Well I won't bore you any longer, so I will close in the hope of seeing you all at Guildford in June.

GRL

## RSM J B Simmons MBE MC



On a recent visit to the 1st Battalion PWRR the Editor was invited into the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess. The Mess Committee have recently reframed a number of prints. Among them are two of RSM Joe Simmons and his medals. The photo at the top left was taken whilst he was the RSM of 1 Queen's who were then stationed in Bangkok. The caricature at top right was drawn by a National Service officer whilst the battalion were stationed in Iserlohn 1949-1951.

His medals were presented to 1 Queen's Surrey Sergeants Mess, by his widow and were formally handed over by the then Colonel of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Major General F J C Piggott CB CBE DSO to the Editor who was then the Regimental Sergeant Major. They remained in 1st Bn The Queen's Sergeants Mess and on the recent amalgamation this very important set of medals was retained for permanent display by 1 PWRR Sergeants Mess. It was a pleasure to see the care that both battalions are taking in looking after the artefacts from the forebear Regiments.

LW

## Double Scotch

Major J Thompson of Edinburgh has forwarded some interesting notes, gleaned from various sources, on the adventures and activities of the 31st and 70th Regiments in Scotland during the 18th and 19th centuries. Neither Regiment was idle. In 1752 "Holme's Regiment", (the 31st), already well known as "The Young Buffs", were prominent North of the Border, being garrisoned in such places as Edinburgh, Leith, Carlisle and Perth. They were reviewed in October by General Churchill. Obviously on the alert, they captured Rob Roy McGregor at a fair in Gartnure in 1753 and conveyed him to Edinburgh where he was imprisoned.

Unfortunately Scottish prisons of the time also received other wrongdoers. John Kay of Holme's Regiment, together with Agnes Evans, "spouse of another soldier of the same Regiment", was jailed for breaking into a barn and stealing cloth.

1757 saw several desertions from Holme's Regiment who were still moving around in the Highlands, as well as the loss of deserters, 100 men were sent to Glasgow in September to form part of drafts for America.

The Regimental strength was dramatically reduced by two in number in 1758 when Sergeant D Edwards murdered a private soldier and was subsequently hanged at Ayr. A more respectful departure from life occurred in 1761 when Captain Peyton Myres of the 31st Regiment was laid to rest in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh. In 1776 and 1777 various companies of the 31st embarked at Greenock for America. During the same period the 70th Regiment, known as "Parslow's" and having been formed from the 2nd Bn of Holme's Regiment, had been equally active, occupying different garrisons and being under canvas at Musselburgh during the summer months of 1759.

More prestigious accommodation was afforded in 1776 when the Regiment was quartered in Edinburgh Castle. Unfortunately, soldierly conduct does not seem to have been in keeping with environment.

Three soldiers were arrested for robbery and desertion. Worse was to follow. In 1777 a sergeant and five soldiers were arrested for breaking into a public house in Glasgow where they beat up the landlord and his family and stole drinks and other property. In a drinking escapade at the castle a soldier fell over a wall and on to rocks below where he was severely injured. Regimental honour was retrieved, however, by good reports of their appearance and evolutions when reviewed at Leith Links by Sir James Adolphus Oughton. Tragedy struck in 1778 when, during embarkation activities at Greenock, a boat capsized and Lieutenant McKay and over twenty men were drowned.

Service companies from the West Indies arrived at Stirling in 1812, thankfully in the warmer months of April - June. Some long marches must have taken place in 1814 when larger drafts of the Regiment left Scotland for Canada via Portsmouth and Gravesend.

In 1816 Edinburgh Castle was designated as Depots for several Regiments of whom the 70th was one, but in 1820 all Depots left the castle and the 70th, with others, went to the Isle of Wight.

Presumably they found in their new home, that the weather was warmer and the route marches shorter.

## The 2nd, Kirks Regiment

1724 Caledonian Mercury Monday June 8th. Kirk's Lambs marched into Stirling on Saturday last and are expected here (Edinburgh) Wednesday next.

Thurs June 11th. Kirk's Regiment is just now marching into town.

Monday Sept 28th. Saturday last Col. Kirk's regiment passed in review before General Wade, His Excellency seemed not so satisfied with their performance as with that of the Scots Greys t'other day at Musselburgh. An arch rogue standing by at the review took thence occasion to say, "*and no great wonder for these are only lambs the others lions*".

Monday Oct 12th. We hear that a drummer and some few centinels deserted t'other night from Kirk's regiment quartered in the canongate.

Friday Oct 30th. On Monday night last two centinels of Kirk's regiment attacked one James McPherson a musician of the same corps with their swords and wounded him so barbarously tis thought he will scarce recover, they would have served some others with same who were in his company but that James Murray one of the constables boldly stepped up and disarmed the rogues, and last night two more of said regiment fell upon one Dougal Downie a Scotsman also of same corps and killed him on the spot, the actors of both tragedies are now in custody. Meantime by order of the Magistrates and Commanding officer of the Battalion, inhabitants are strictly forbidden to entertain any soldiers with liquor after 9 o'clock under penalty of three pounds.

1725 Monday Feb 8th. On Sat Col Kirk's regiment was mustered in the Abbey Close.

Monday April 19th. Col Kirk's regiment had been ordered by Col Graham to be in readiness (if required) to assist in securing the peace if there had been occasion during the scourging of the 3 ringleaders of the mob which attacked the city guard last week.

Thurs April 22nd. One Richard Ellis a centinel of Kirk's regiment quartered in the canongate came yesterday to the surgeons (in presence of two constables) to sell his wife who is 8 months gone with child in order to have her anatomicised. The magistrates having information thereof caused him to be seized but by the advice of their assessors finding the crime not a capital one, they gave him up to the officers of the regiment by whom he is to be severely whipped and drummed out of the regiment.

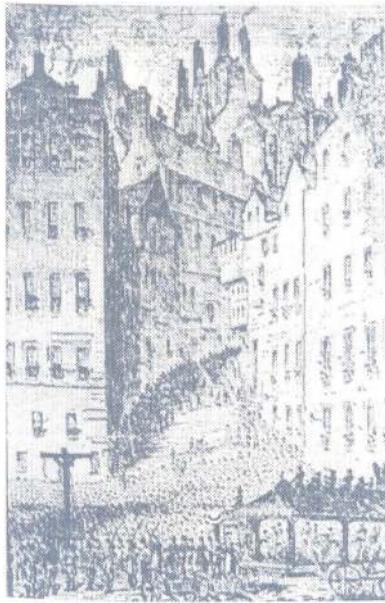
Monday May 3rd. This night, tomorrow and Wednesday Kirk's regiment cross the Firth on their way North.

1727 Monday Jan 23rd Dumbarton. Col Kirk's regiment is marched hence for the West of England.

## Scotland 1724

In the Caledonian Mercury of Thursday Sept 3rd 1724 the following report appeared. "*Yesterday Margaret Dickson suffered in the Grassmarket, pursuant to the sentence emitted against her for the murder of her own child, she was cut down some time after and put into a bier in order to be transported to Musselburgh to be buried with her people. A soldier of Kirk's regiment, observing that the executioner had left a part of the halter upon the gallows after cutting the woman down, jumped upon the ladder seized the rope and fell to unnoosing it with his teeth which his sergeant perceiving, fell upon him with his cane and severely drubbed him for his pains*". The Mercury of 8th Sept printed a follow up as follows. - "*After the execution of the unfortunate Margaret Dickson and having been cut down and put into a cart to be carried to Musselburgh, on the way thither the people who attended the corpse stopping sometime to refresh themselves were alarmed by one in the company who affirmed that he felt some motion in the Kirst, whereupon it was broken open by her friends who then caused a vein to be opened*

and gave her some spirits which had such effect that they hoped the event would soon answer their endeavours. She was carried to Musselburgh and was fair recovered before next day. She is in perfect health and judgement".



The east end of the Grassmarket showing the West Bow, the gallows and the old corn market. A hanging was an event not to be missed, and invariably drew large crowds as in this picture.

resulted in a premature still birth and which was against the concealment of Pregnancy Act of 1690.

One wonders however what the soldier of Kirk's object was in attempting to unravel the hangman's noose?

— 00 —

#### A Nautical Touch

A photograph in Clandon Museum, portraying the Bandmaster and bandsmen of The East Surrey Regiment (believed in the 1950s), raises an interesting point. Close examination of the medals of the sergeant second from the right, shows that he is wearing an Atlantic Star (middle decoration). Can anyone identify the sergeant and explain why he is wearing what is primarily a naval decoration?

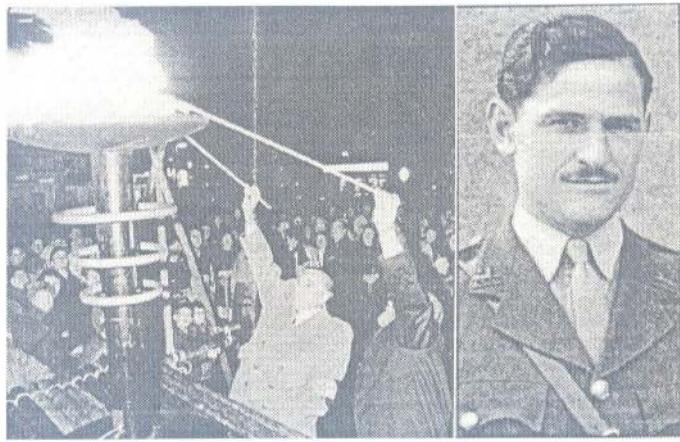


Since this photo was received we have consulted our 'Oracle', Jack Chaffer and he has identified the senior NCOs as follows:- On the left Sgt 'Ginger' Hunter, Bandmaster Bill Snowden, 'Toms' Thompson and 'Perky' Herne or Horne. He and Bill Warren believe the photo was taken in 1957 in Brunswick. Jack recalls that 'Toms' Thompson served as a maritime gunner during the war. Can any of our readers confirm the names?

#### Susteren 50 years on

The Evening Herald Saltash, Devon on January 30th 1995 published the following account of Major John Evans DSO visit to Susteren in 1995.

1995



1945

A Disabled war hero from Saltash has returned in triumph to a Dutch village he helped to liberate 50 years ago. Major John Evans DSO was invited to Susteren for a four-day visit packed with civic engagements including lighting a Liberation bonfire, visiting a special war exhibition and planting two commemorative trees. The gas-fired Liberation flame was more like a mini Olympic torch than the heap of wood in the middle of a field Major Evans had envisaged.

He raised a laugh with his hosts when he joked: "They tried to blow me up 50 years before and now they are trying to finish the job!" But it was no joke in January 1945 when Major Evans and 90 Infantrymen of The Queen's Royal Regiment entered Susteren on a bitter, snowy night. For they woke to find themselves sharing the deserted town with three Nazi Tiger tanks, with Allied armour unable to come to their rescue because of slippery snow and ice. A terrible firefight ensued, with all the officers except Major Evans being killed and just 37 men surviving as the battle raged from house to house. Major Evans refused to surrender, despite having his arm, which was later amputated, mangled by a shell and suffering appalling back and leg injuries. But his men held on and eventually the tanks were knocked out by artillery fire.

The townspeople's opportunity to thank him for their freedom came nearly twenty years later, when he paid a personal visit to Susteren. The locals, who had failed to track him down through Army records, laid on an impromptu civic reception and promised to name a road after him when the town was fully rebuilt. Now, fifty years on, the pledge has been more than kept, with a street and junior school named in his honour and the granting of the freedom of the town in 1979. Major Evans, 79, said one of the highlights of his latest visit had been a concert by local choirs who sang a medley of specially-learnt songs in English.

"It was an enormous compliment and I felt honoured for the people who died in action 50 years ago," he said.

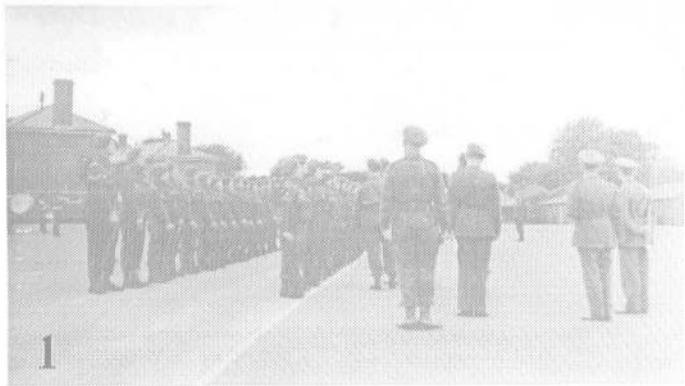
Acknowledgement: The Editor wishes to thank The Evening Herald, Saltash, for permission to print this article and picture.

## Six years with the Colours

19039684 Nolan T served with The East Surrey Regiment for six years. He says that the brain is going and he does not remember as many names as he used to, but for what its worth he includes a few photos of his service with the Surreys in Greece and Mogadishu.

1946 - photo No 1. - is the passing out parade at the 28th Training Battalion at Hollywood Barracks, Belfast. This was the Jan 1946 intake - 6 months training, and at the end an NCO or potential officer. I'm the Lance Corporal in the rear column - 5 men down was Pte Sparks who was commissioned but died in Korea - I cannot remember the unit he joined. I joined The East Surrey Regiment (my uncle was RSM but I never met or served with him!).

I turned down the War Office Selection Board for selection for training as an officer as I wanted to travel, so after a short spell of recruit training at Shornecliffe, I applied for an overseas posting and joined the 2nd Bn East Surrey Regiment in El Ballah, Egypt where they had arrived from Palestine!



1

1947/8 photo No 2. - is the Signals Platoon which I joined - mainly National Servicemen, however Cpl Dave Price sitting extreme left and Sgt Burt sitting 4th from right were regulars - Doug Burt took a commission and we did not keep in touch. Price finished around my time, again lost touch. Incidentally I'm standing (without glasses) 5th from right. The 2nd Bn was amalgamated with the 1st Bn and regulars joined the 1st Bn at Salonika in Greece.



2

Photo No 3. - was Sobraon Barracks at the foot of Mount Khortiatus, North Greece. The Germans used the premises for holding British POW's during the war.

Photo No 4. - is a shot of "The White Tower" in Salonika. Greece (especially the North) was in a bad way after the war - starving children, and packs of wild dogs roaming the countryside. The Government was involved with a communist war and our job was guarding British and American property.



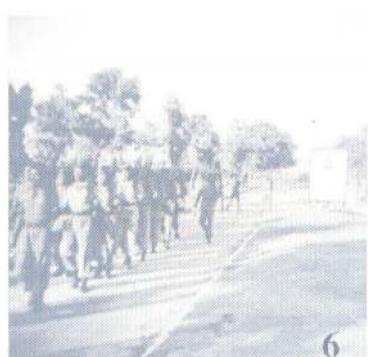
3



4



5



6

Photo No 5 - was one of the children orphanages which the battalion supported. The Bn moved to Athens, South Greece whilst I was on a Signals course at Catterick, UK.

Photo No 6 - a Platoon marching into camp past the slightly faded Surrey sign. The area was called Aliki some 15-20 miles south of Athens.

Photo No 7. - (shown on page 46) shows the battalion drawn up on the Palace entrance (black and white marble) to be inspected by the King. (as usual he said to me "How tall are you Corporal!!!! etc). This shot shows A and B Companies and half the Colours and Drums. I am the right hand man attached to B Company for the parade (rear rank). The civilian running towards me from the right was a "Time & Life" photographer - about half a dozen Greek

police brought him to the ground, jostling me in the process - the camera was smashed.

I remember one officer on parade he was Signals Officer, a good cross country runner Lt G G Strong. The parade represented British troops leaving Greece

*continued on page 46.*

## Museum Notes

It has been an active period in the Museum since the last Newsletter. Thanks to our dedicated and willing group of volunteers we have had a particularly successful cleaning and upgrading work session. Mrs Roupell and Mrs Harding have brought about a transformation in the uniforms on display and we are grateful to all for their considerable efforts. Do come and visit your Museum to see the results for yourselves.

There have been many generous donations to our Collection: eight groups of medals, various items of silver including the "Pink" column purchased and presented by the Association and a fine statuette of a rifleman of the 1st Surrey Rifles given by the executors of the estate of Mrs Mary O'Connor. Brigadier Doyle generously presented the cap of the first Communist Terrorist to be killed during 1 Queen's tour of duty in Malaya in 1954 by a patrol under his command. An appeal in the last issue for attics to be searched was not in vain and resulted in a hundred year old frock (tunic to the uninitiated) of a Sgt Young of 2nd Volunteer Battalion The Queen's.



can collate sufficient new material then it is our intention to publish.

Computerisation is at an advanced stage, all our records have been overhauled and Stage 1 (artefacts, medals, pictures and uniforms) are currently with the expert who is creating the data files. Stage 2 (documents, books, photograph albums and battalion boxes) records are ready to go when he has finished Stage 1. When completed our accounting and information retrieval facilities will be considerably enhanced.

Stored in the attic for the past fifteen years there has been a very large portrait of a Major Jackson who was a distinguished Antarctic explorer and officer of The East Surrey Regiment. The Trustees decided to offer this painting of Major Jackson dressed in Antarctic clothing c. 1894 to the Scott Polar Research Institute. It has now been collected and will go on display once it has been cleaned and restored.

Our current project is to develop facilities for schoolchildren visits, with particular focus on aspects of the National Curriculum in which the Museum has much to offer. We shall be open until 31st October from 1.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. every day except Thursday and Friday, and inside you will find a much needed and generous gift

by Mr Peter Henman of a Clerk's Desk. The Visitors' Book can now be signed in comfort.

Finally, I am grateful as always to my fellow Trustees, members of the Working Group and the permanent staff for all that they do to maintain the Museum. It would not be possible without the generous support of the Association and Lt Colonel Leslie Wilson, whom we are delighted to say has become a Trustee of the Museum in his own right.

Please keep searching those drawers and attics and remember us if you have artefacts requiring a good home.

PAWGD

### A Quest with a happy ending. Mrs Daphne Hill writes:-

I have been able to trace two families from the photographs of War Cemeteries which I took in Normandy last year. The first was of Lieut Paddy Toolan, MM., of the 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment who was killed on 17th June 1944 gallantly leading his platoon during the defence of Briquessard. He is buried in Hottot-les-Bagues cemetery. The Chaplain at Army Headquarters in Belfast put me in touch with his brother and letters were exchanged. The family were happy to know that Paddy had not been forgotten.

Also in the cemetery at Hottot-les-Bagues, I found the grave of Lieut H T P Large, Natal Defence Force, attached to 1/7th Queen's. I was glad to find his grave as Major-General D S Gordon, his then Commanding Officer, on a recent visit to the Museum, had spoken very warmly of him, Colonel Gordon had found him in a reinforcement camp in the Desert and asked him if he would like to join the Queen's with two other South African officers, namely Lieuts J K Wood and H R Reed. When the fighting was over in Africa, the South African officers had to get special dispensation from their Government to leave Africa and to remain with the Battalion.

Soon after 1/7th Queen's had landed in Normandy it was engaged in the battles at Villers Bocage. Captain John Wood recalled that Peter, on the day before he was killed, did not hesitate in putting sticky bombs on enemy tanks and had captured eight Germans.

As my photograph of his grave was so clear, I decided to ask South Africa House if they could help trace his family. On their suggestion I wrote to the South African BBC as I was told they had a 'Where are you now' programme. Within ten minutes of the broadcast, a cousin had phoned in to say that Peter's two brothers, both doctors, were in Australia.

Luckily Peter's eldest brother, Paul, was coming to the United Kingdom in October and arranged to come to the Museum at Clandon with his wife to meet General Gordon. This was a very happy meeting and the General was able to tell Paul what his brother did in the battles of so long ago. He gave Paul a couple of tumblers, inscribed with the Queen's badge, to take home with him. Meanwhile Tony, the brother in Tasmania, sent me copies of the letters written to his parents by members of the Battalion after Peter was killed, including one from Colonel Gordon. Captain A G Rich reported on 12th August 1944 that fighting in a heavy action against enemy infantry, Peter's platoon had had to withdraw as other Battalion positions had been overrun. While counter-attacking, Peter was hit in the chest by a burst of machine-gun fire at close range, and was killed instantly together with two other men. The action took place half a mile west of Villers Bocage. At the time of the action, brother Tony was serving as a Sub-Lieutenant with the Royal Navy in HMS *Holmes* in the Channel. In September 1944 the Navy lent him a car



Doctor Paul Large and his wife with Major General Desmond Gordon on their visit to the museum.

for the afternoon so he could find and visit his brother's grave. Tony wrote to his parents "I found the grave in a peaceful pleasant little place. In the clearing are two other graves of his men two white crosses with names and '1/7th Queen's'. By Peter's head, a steel helmet and someone, possibly from the nearby Convent, had put some wild flowers in a steel cylinder. The countryside seemed in order except for helmets and scattered groups of graves here and there".

There are now two doctors in Australia who can raise a regimental glass to the memory of their brother and the 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.



Lieutenant H T P Large, Natal Defence Force attached to 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

## Thank You:

Major J.L.A. Fowler TD. For once again giving us the materials on which this book is printed.

# Congratulations and Best Wishes



## Congratulations to:-

Brigadier Trevor Hart-Dyke who celebrated his 90th Birthday on the 19th February 1995.

Major Finch White who celebrated his 91st Birthday on 28th December 1994.



Colonel 'Buck' Buchanan, Major Finch White and Major Peter Hill on the occasion of Major Finch White's Birthday.

Arthur Scriven who celebrated his 92nd Birthday recently.

Major General and Mrs Rowley Mans who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 6th January 1995.

Tommy and Rose Atkins who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 3rd March 1995.

Mr and Mrs Bellerby on being admitted as Freeman of Guildford. Bill Bellerby served with The Queen's, and met his wife Doreen at Stoughton. Between them they have a total of 83 years service as Councillors. They retire as Councillors in May. A very happy retirement to you both.

Best wishes from all Association members to Dave Boorer, Peter Spearing, Tony Hannaford and sadly a number of our members who have recently been in hospital for operations. We wish them all a speedy return to good health.

## Where does it go?

Several letters recently from members have asked where our Newsletters go around the world. And so for your information we despatch the Newsletter to:- Australia 16, New Zealand 7, Canada 9, France 3, Kenya 1, Belgium 1, Morocco 2, Botswana 1, USA 7, Spain 6, Denmark 1, Norway 1, Holland 1, India 1, Italy 1, N. Ireland 8, Oman 2, West Indies 2, Cyprus 2, Uganda 2, Eire 2. In addition 4 travel through diplomatic bag via London.

## Donations

The Trustees wish to thank the following for donations received during 1994. W Geeves, R Gates. In addition many of our members continue to pay their own subscriptions and include 'a little more to pay for someone's Newsletter'. To you all we send our grateful thanks.



# Book Reviews

## I Remember by Stanley Rayner

"I Remember" is a most apt title for this book. The author does indeed remember with both clarity and perception the events which he narrates. Inevitably one turns first to the early days of the war. The gathering of the 2/6th Surreys on Richmond Hill and the battalions sadly short existence during the spring and early summer of 1940 in France. Then the gradual and stunning realisation of captivity. All these events are vividly told and well written. The five long years in Germany are described as "the Wasted Years". But were they? As a tribute to the resilience and fortitude of the human spirit they count rather as time well and truly spent.

It is a relief and a pleasure to turn back the pages to the entertaining days of boyhood and working life in the shop. Finally, before closing the book, your reviewer read again the story of the short, cold, noisy flight in the belly of the Lancaster bomber and the glimpse of the White Cliffs of Dover - happy for them to be home again.

JMD

## The Devil's Adjutant Jochen Peiper - Panzer Leader by Major General Michael Reynolds CB

The story of one of Himmler's former Adjutants and the battle which brought this senior commander in Hitler's SS Bodyguard to the foreground of history. This book is obtainable at all good bookshops from 30th May for £20 or direct from the warehouse for £16, including post & packaging. Cheques to M F Reynolds, 8 Grassington Road, Eastbourne, Sussex, BN20 7BU.

## From Jitra to the Kwai Some Reading for VJ Day + 50

With the 50th anniversary of VJ Day this year, following close on the heels of VE Day, it seems timely to recall one of the seamier sides of the struggle against the Japanese between November 1941 and 15th August 1945, when Japan capitulated.

## Destination Kwai by Jack Shuttle

Published 1994, by Tucann, Heighington, Lincoln, LN4 1RG, available from the author, 20 Glebe Road, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 1BX. Price £5.

This book gives a very simple but graphic personal account of his misadventures, moving from 2nd Surreys in Jitra, North Malaya in 1941, through the three months of the Malaya Campaign, to his three and a half years of captivity which followed. It is quite remarkable how he has re-captured in a quiet reminiscent way, the quasi-slavery and brutal, physical hardship, deprivation, and appalling sickness and death rate of the prisoner workforce on the

River Kwai railway that the Japanese built to supply their Burma front from Thailand. He relates equally well the tedium of the aftermath, when the railway was completed, years in the down-river camps where conditions were better but not much. Above all, it is a tribute to the British and Australian camp leadership and medics who stood between the working parties and the Japanese engineers and Korean guards. It is also a tribute to the author's own spirit and cheerfulness in the face of debilitating sickness. For those who do not know this story, it is a must: for those who were there, it is an unbiased reminder. To get a wider picture of the whole story, I can recommend three other books which I have just re-read.

## Singapore, The Inexcusable Betrayal by George Chippington

Published 1992, by the Self-Publishing Association Ltd., Hanley Swan, Worcs. Price £14.95.

A subaltern of the Leicesters and later of the British Battalion, is quite a remarkable account of the successive battles fought down the length of Malaya, starting from Jitra, where the Leicesters were alongside the Surreys. I found it quite a gripping personal story, although somehow he manages to omit the Surreys holding the riverline at Alor Star and how the premature blowing of the bridge cost the Surreys their carriers. The great thing about this book is that it brings to life the actuality of close combat. George Chippington seems to have been born a very lucky man, but you will have to read the book to find out why.

## A Fearful Freedom, by Robert Hammond

Published 1984 by Leo Cooper, Secker & Warburg. Price £10.95.

Gives a totally different account of an 18th Division man who, landing in Malaya in the last month of the campaign, was projected with his brigade into the thick of the fighting, cut-off and who thereafter survived the three and half years behind the Japanese lines, evading capture and living with the Chinese resistance.

## The River Kwai Railway by Kinvig

Published 1992 by Brasseyes (UK). Price £18.00

Is an extremely well researched historian's viewpoint of the whole background to the Malayan Campaign and to the building of the Burma Siam railroad. I have read it several times, which surely shows that it is good reading.

Major General Kinvig was Director of Education and Training Services (Army) in M.O.D. when he wrote it in 1992 and he gives a very full bibliography for those who want to take their interest further.

All these books are still in print, particularly Destination Kwai, published recently. You can always ask for them through your public library, and they are well worth reading.

## Black Cat at War

The History of 56 (County of London) Division will be published on the 1st June by the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London, SE16 H2. Price £22.00

EAFH

# PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



**Mr R Webber**, Bredrick Cottage, 6 Church Street, Collingbourne Ducis, Nr Marlborough, Wilts SN8 3EL would like to hear from anyone who knew or served with his father: 14640447, Pte C S G Webber, 2/5th Queens; died in Italy on 13th Sept 1944 and is buried at Gradara War Cemetery. Mr Webber describes himself as an orphan and a war pensioner with mobility problems and has "only just found this information" about his father. He also sent lyrics of a song he had written called "Poppies Kissing Stone" all beautifully illustrated and laminated.

**Alex Larner**, 61474114, of 76, The Avenue, Wembley Park, Middx HA9 9QL, who attended the Surrey reunion for a short while, wondered if there was still anyone around from Richmond Park Camp, 1940?

He was in the MT section of the 10th Battalion and a lot of training was with bren gun carriers in the park. They went off to Devon and Cornwall where Alex became a cook sergeant, went to India and was attached to 19th Air Formation Signals SEAC, being released in 1946. They say the army marches on its stomach, so lets hope his efforts were appreciated! He must be one of the few Surreys to have the Burma Star? Who else?

## The Queen's Royal Regiment 131 and 169 Brigades

In order to acquire material for the production of further booklets similar to "The Queen's in Burma 1943-45" the Regimental Museum is anxious to hear from anybody who served in either of the Queen's Brigades (131 Bde and 169 Bde) or with 71 Independent Company, or indeed with the 2nd Battalion during its tour in the Middle East.

## The East Surrey Regiment

It is thought there are many old Surreys who would like to have a short history, at a low price, covering their service in the Regiment. The Regimental Museum has produced booklets on the 2nd Bn (Malaya 1941-42, price £2.40), the 1st and 1/6th Bns (Algiers to Tunis 1942-43, price £3) and The Surreys in Italy 1943-45 (price £3). All prices include P&P.

The booklet now in course of preparation will record the operations of the 1st, 1/6th and 2/6th Bns in Belgium and France 1940, the 1/6th in Greece 1944-46 and the activities of all battalions in the defence of the United Kingdom. It will also record the post-war activities of the Regular and Territorial battalions until the amalgamation of 1959, including the operations of the 2nd Bn in Palestine 1946-47.

To assist readers we have included two separate proforma's with this Newsletter. Do try and complete them with your stories so that we can record your experiences for future generations. Don't be afraid of writing any anecdote or recollections of your service, particularly if amusing. Add any further pages of sketches, maps or drawings to illustrate your text. Any photos or pictures will be looked after and returned. When completed your proforma should be sent to

Mrs Penny James, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Clandon Park, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7RQ (Tel. 01483 223419). In order to go ahead with preparing the booklet please try and forward them by 31st July 1995.

## The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment

Members who served with The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment from its formation in 1959 - 1966 will be asked for their recollections in the November issue of the Newsletter, do start preparing your stories of Bury St Edmunds - Colchester - Aden - Hong Kong - Münster - Lingfield and Bahrain.

## Berlin 1945



Shown inset is the divisional sign of the Second Army

These girls in khaki were photographed by News Chronicle photographer Leonard McCombe at the ceremony in Berlin when the Union Jack was unfurled.

This is the story he sent with the picture:

*I thought they were the first A.T.S. girls in Berlin. There they were among a crowd of Tommies leaning over the railings at the Grosser Stern. They smiled at me as I came forward. I couldn't see any A.T.S. insignia only a Desert Rat flash on their arms. "which part of England?" I asked. "No speak" they answered and laughed. I tried in French and German without result. Only nodding of heads and laughter.*

Lt C F 'Dick' Dickson came up and I was introduced. But their names were secret, their nationalities also. Lt Dickson found them in a Displaced Persons camp as our armies crossed the Reich. One was a singer another a dancer, and the third played the piano.

So he enrolled them into the 131st Brigade Concert Party, found some army clothes for them, and ever since they have sung, danced and played to the boys of the Desert Rats Division.

Complications have arisen. They have been getting no pay and no one knows what to pay them. But the girls don't mind. They are far too happy. They were the first girls to enter Berlin with the British Troops.

Do any of our readers remember this incident? (or the girls?!) it is believed that there were ten of these girls attached to the Brigade in Berlin in 1945.

## Kohima

In 1949 Lord Mountbatten of Burma said: "The battle of Kohima will probably go down as the greatest battle in history because it was in fact the battle of Burma".

This is part of the story of B Company of the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment at this battle. Our 7th Indian Division had been formed on the North West Frontier of India. By the end of the summer of 1943 we were in action in Arakan, which was some four hundred miles south of Kohima on the Assam front.

The Japanese strategy for its intended "march on Delhi", had been to co-ordinate an offensive in Arakan and force General Bill Slim to draw on the 14th Army's reserves and so enable the Japanese to capture the principle supply depots and railhead at Dimapur in the north, which were the lifelines for Kohima and Imphal and a gateway into India.

Supported by air and artillery bombardments, the Japanese carried out a wide encircling movement in Arakan on 4th February 1944 and surrounded the Division. Fierce battles took place in and around Divisional Headquarters; the famous "Admin Box" became a fortress and was attacked for the next ten nights. The first that I and my company of about ninety men knew that something was not quite as it should be was at about 5 a.m. on the 5th when we heard a thunderous roar of artillery and the searing crack of small arms fire about a thousand yards to our rear, and without doubt our own gunners were firing backwards!

The Supreme Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten sent an order of the day which was to be passed on to every man " Hold on at all costs; large reinforcements are on their way". The seriousness of the situation began to sink in during the day; "B" Company felt rather isolated as we were about half a mile from any friendly troops and the Japanese were barely 200 yards from us. As we witnessed our first airdrop of the confetti-coloured parachutes, my Company Clerk confided to me with typical cockney wit that these were our reinforcements, " they are dehydrated Americans", actually it was ammunition.

During the three weeks or so of this encirclement, the Company was in nightly contact with the enemy, largely through ambushes and patrols; some of the casualties were as a result of bayonets and swords in close quarter fighting. The dense bamboo-type jungle on the smallest of hills, was invariably laced with a fog-like mist which rose during the hours of darkness and so cutting night visibility to barely three feet or even nil. We did have our own chaung or stream running through the Company position, but the water was not all that brilliant as so many people were using it and the water was tidal; this meant that one minute the drinking water was above the washing and the next it was below the soap suds. Being cut off from our supply lines meant that there were inevitable delays in food and mail arriving (we were on half rations for some of the time) and we were unable to evacuate the sick and wounded.

By the end of February, the enemy found that it was itself cut-off and retreated through our ambushes, mortar and artillery fire; they had been very decisively defeated. It was during this phase of operations that our troops witnessed (although not for the first time) the dedicated tenacity of Japanese soldiers determined not to be captured; to avoid this possibility some of them were exploding grenades on their chests. From this it may be appreciated that no quarter was ever given by them or us.

The Japanese threat to India became so serious that our 33rd Indian Infantry Brigade was warned to make preparations to move to the Assam front during April 1944. We were so very fortunate to have battalions of the calibre as the 4th/15th Punjab Regiment and the 4th/1st

Gurkha Rifles brigaded with us; there was tremendous respect and confidence between us.

Within a week we had marched over the Pass and were out of Arakan and clear of the enemy for the first time after four months of continuous operations. We, as with other units of the Division, had finally laid to rest the supposed invincibility of the Japanese in the jungle. Continuing its move northward, the Battalion marched, took a train, then flew out of Chittagong into Assam in what appeared to be the start of the monsoon rains. By mid April we were based near the Dimapur railhead in Assam.

According to reports it was evident that the Japanese 31st Division had infiltrated and was closing in on Kohima, which was being courageously defended by a scratch garrison, and later reinforced. The garrison's perimeter had been squeezed from a square of a thousand yards to half that size. A bloody and gallant action by the Royal West Kents in the Garrison Hill area was to earn their Lance Corporal John Harman a posthumous V.C. Before the end of April, the 2nd British Division (we came under their command) had made some progress and the courageous Kohima garrison, was relieved after a two week siege. In the words of Field Marshal Slim, in his book, "Defeat into victory", "Sieges have been longer but few have been more intense, and in none have the defenders deserved greater honour than the garrison of Kohima".

A superb concert masterminded by Godfrey Shaw (OC D Company) was seen by the Battalion on the evening of 5th May. It had been a brilliantly happy and amusing morale-booster. But, by about 11.30 am the next day, the Battalion had debussed in the pouring rain 42 miles further east amidst the screach and thunder of battle around Kohima, which was a mile away as the bullets flew.

After a tortuous two hour climb in the rain and carrying full scale equipment, rations and blankets and amidst the devastating roar of the battles in front of us, the CO Colonel Duncombe, took his company commanders to a vantage point and gave out his orders for an attack the next morning, 7th May: the objectives were: "Pimple"- C Company; "Jail Hill"- D Company, followed by A Company; B Company in reserve. From this viewpoint just short of GPT ridge, we could see the Japanese positions about a thousand yards away and it was evident that Jail Hill was the largest and central to the Japanese defence as it lay in the middle of the "curve" of the Kohima Ridge. Jail Hill was flanked by D.I.S. and G.P.T. ridge, both of these features were also in enemy hands, and all were at about 5,000 feet.

The sustained noise of belting machine gun fire, the cracks and zips of sniper bullets were punctuated by the shrieks and crumps of artillery and mortar fire. This was the real fog of war as we peered through the rain, the low clouds and the smoke, at what appeared to be a dozen different battles in front of us. We were also looking at a jungle landscape but the fierce exchanges had shaved off all the foliage in the battle areas, leaving a million shattered tree stumps. It was perhaps paradoxical that as we carried out our reconnaissances in the heavy rain we saw that there were some units having air drops of water.

On 7th May after a twenty minute bombardment, C Company attacked at 1130hrs and captured Pimple with little opposition but were subjected to considerable and accurate small arms fire and a 75mm gun firing over open sights from GPT ridge, resulting in a number of casualties which included the Company commander, Major George Rothery. Bandaged and bleeding from his head wound, he continued to command with great gallantry. For his inspiring leadership he was later awarded a Military Cross. Very shortly afterwards, his second in command, Captain John Smyth was killed; he had been a great leader

in Arakan. These two officer casualties were to be followed by a third in C Company on that day, Lieutenant Annett was seriously wounded. As the artillery bombardment lifted off Jail Hill, D Company moved forward and began its assault. Whilst this was going on, Battalion Tactical Headquarters and myself as the commander of the reserve B Company, moved onto Pimple and tucked in behind C Company. When the smoke cleared from the artillery bombardment of Jail Hill, we could see that D Company were getting heavy casualties.

At 1230hrs B Company had to send forward about twenty men to try and get some of D Company's casualties back. During that afternoon Major Shaw reported his situation on the wireless set to the C.O.: his right hand platoon had been held up at the bottom of the hill suffering many casualties, the other two platoons had reached the top but only fourteen of his men were not wounded; A Company, had been pinned by the enemy before it was halfway up the hill. Both Companies were suffering the fiercest cross-fire from GPT and DIS. Further wounded included two officers of D Company, Captain ASC Hobrow and Lieutenant DW Kirby. Tony Hobrow's valiant efforts rescuing the Company's wounded was later to earn him a Military Cross.

The C.O. concluded that Jail Hill could not be held unless DIS and GPT were neutralised, and advised Brigadier Loftus Tottenham that the Battalion should be withdrawn to avoid its annihilation. The Brigadier joined the C.O. on Pimple and agreed. Orders went out to withdraw and that my B Company be fully committed to bringing back casualties. It is relevant to mention, that our Brigadier had earlier done a reconnaissance with the C.O. of the 4th/1st Gurkhas and a brigadier and a C.O. of 2 Div barely thirty yards from the Japanese on GPT ridge, the four were in one slit trench; it was not long before the 2 Div brigadier and the C.O. of the 4th/1st Gurkhas had been killed.

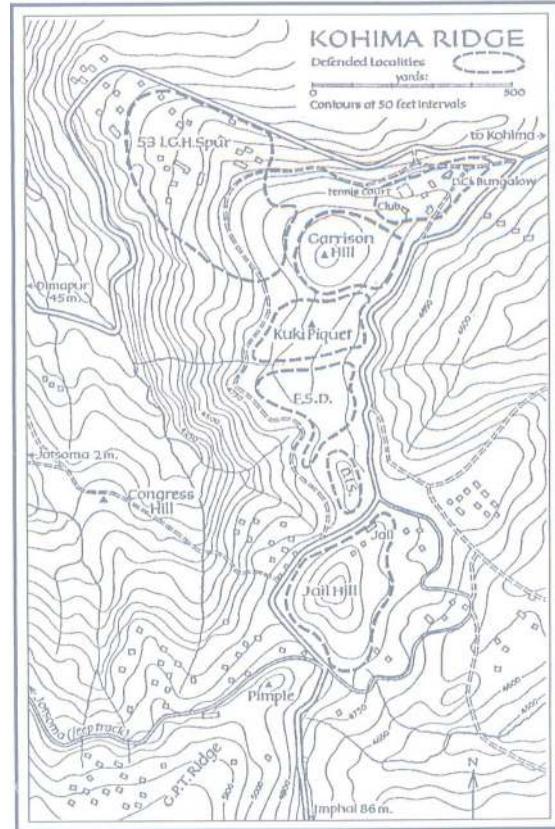
At 1500hrs artillery and mortars covered the withdrawal and screened the flanks with smoke. B Company were now fully employed on recovering the wounded. This was the most ghastly job, which entailed going to the road and the foot of Jail Hill, returning and handing over the casualties to the Regimental Aid Post and Advanced Dressing Station which had moved forward. The Doctor, Captain John Sumner (who had already been awarded a Military Cross in Arakan), the medical orderlies and stretcher bearers did Herculean work. The B Company men were no less magnificent, some of them had done the round journey of some 1000 yards in the rain and the mud four or five times through this fire-swept hell. Battalion HQ itself had suffered a dozen casualties.

The company arrived back at its original harbour area at 1700hrs, all very exhausted but the battle going on above our Company position and the rain did not allow for easy sleeping that night. The next day the C.O. went round all companies and congratulated them on their valiant efforts; the Divisional Commander, General Grover, had said that it was the most gallant and determined effort ever seen by him. Although not in the assault, B Company's courageous work under intense fire whilst evacuating the casualties, had meant that every man of the Battalion had been accounted for.

On the 10th May, the C.O. gave out his orders for the Battalion's second attack on Jail Hill on the 11th. There was to be an important difference this time: the C.O. stressed that our attack was part of a Divisional operation to clear the Kohima Ridge.

The Battalion's intention was to capture and consolidate Jail Hill, with B Company on the left, C Company on the right and with D and A Companies in reserve. H hour was at 0440hrs when the artillery and mortars fired onto Jail Hill for 20 minutes, thereafter by observation; a platoon of the Divisional machine gun Battalion (the Manchesters) worked

to the same timings. By H hour, Battalion HQ would be on Congress Hill. After a reconnaissance I gave out my orders at 1400hrs on some high ground about 2000 yards from our objective, they included: 11 platoon, forward right; myself and tactical headquarters (signaller, runner, batmen) in the centre, with the gunner officer and his party about 20 yards in rear of me; 10 platoon forward left; 12 platoon some 40 yards in rear with the CSM and Company HQ.



DIS : Detail Issue Stores FSD : Field Supply Depot

GPT : General Purposes Transport

Because of the openness of the ground and to cover as much of it as possible, the two forward platoons would advance with two sections up in extended line. 11 platoon must make for the crest and as 10 platoon neared it, it was to swoop down from the high ground on to the Jail spur. Having given out my orders I went over to the Punjabis, who were to capture DIS and liaised with their right-hand company commander, (Major Johnson). After this I was asked back to tea in their mess. Brigadier Loftus Tottenham came in and joined us. All were in remarkably good form and wished me the best of luck as I did them as I left, (Major Johnson was killed during their assault on DIS the next day).

On reaching the Advanced Dressing Station on my way to the Company, I met Captain Tiny Taylor, my second in command; he broke the most dreadful news to me. During my absence the Company had been shelled, 3 men killed and 8 wounded which included 12 platoon commander Ian Frisby, and all the N.C.O.s of his platoon whilst they were having their orders for tomorrow. I visited all the wounded in the A.D.S; Ian was in a very poor way and was being given plasma. Ian had proved an excellent commander of men and had already been wounded in Arakan. The Forward Observation Officer (FOO) from the Gunners and the Engineer parties arrived at about 1730 hrs. I managed a couple of hours rest between then and 1930 hrs when we stood-to and had a late supper on standing down followed by another mug of tea at 2130 hrs preparatory to moving out at 2215 hrs.

This night approach march to the FUP was something I shall never forget; much halting to check where we were.

It had never been possible for anyone to reconnoitre the route in daylight, it was under close enemy observation. B Company led the Battalion which meant that I had to navigate and lead it. Very tricky, no defined tracks, thick undergrowth, down hundreds of feet, round spurs and up hundreds of feet, across re-entrants, hacking, pushing, stumbling, making our way through ruined bashas and so on. I had two major worries: was everyone actually following me? And had the enemy been alerted by this army of some three hundred? We were very quiet but.....

We arrived at the FUP at about 0315 hrs and I laid the Company out into its assaulting formation and then went off to do a reconnaissance to the main road. It was all right, I recognised some tyres on the side of the road which I had seen through my glasses yesterday. An added comfort was that our guns and mortars were harassing the enemy on the three features - DIS, Jail Hill and the lower slopes of GPT. We waited in the dark and then at 0440 hrs the artillery and mortar barrages, anti-tank and machine guns opened up with a tremendous roar and crash, with the slopes to our left, above us and to the right being silhouetted by the explosions. During this twenty minute period we had a few rounds of something land in amongst us but no one was hurt.

Just on 0500hrs we edged forward and as we did so I went over to each platoon and wished them the best of luck, and then the crumps ceased, only the machine guns firing on the flanks and smoke shells bursting around the feature. As we moved up the spur to the road the inky blackness was giving way to a grey haze; then across the road scrambling up the banks on to the enemy-held feature itself. Our speed and formation I thought were first class and the men appeared to be in grand form; the enemy had put nothing down to stop us until about a quarter way up the hill and then it all began: we began firing from the hip as the enemy opened fire both from above us and from both flanks.

Before we reached the crest, the Japanese fled from one of their bunkers and ran down the hill to the Jail area and were caught by 10 platoon as they neared the crest; the left hand leading section of theirs caught about eight or ten Japs and gave them everything. Private Day just stood his ground and sprayed them with his Bren gun; this proved a marvellous fillip to morale, the sections surging forward. But this platoon was now itself receiving a number of casualties; they were being heavily fired on from bunkers down on the reverse slope and from their left. 11 platoon on the right were now up against immense difficulties and were in the crossfire from many directions. We had been on the crest of Jail Hill for some time but it must have been nearly 0600hrs before 11 platoon had taken one bunker and driven the Japs out of another, by which time its platoon commander and sergeant and three other N.C.Os had been wounded, the platoon was now left with a junior lance corporal. Seeing their predicament, I told them to remain where they were and to hold and contain the enemy; if they could they should improve their positions by crawling forward a few yards.

I now called up 12 platoon, which, because of yesterday's shelling tragedy was being commanded by my second in command, Tiny Taylor. Before committing 12 platoon to a task I had another go with 11 platoon under cover of grenades and a Bren gun, I took about six men forward, so that we were only about ten yards from two of the Japanese bunkers. This move was gratifying as none of us got hurt, we were in a much better position and well forward of the crest of the hill and we looked down on the Japanese. Around this section I built up the rest of 11 platoon. The task I gave 12 platoon was to put them round to the left of 11 platoon and circle round to their right and so to bring fire to bear on the two Japanese bunkers in front of 11 platoon.

Tiny's platoon did not get very far before they became embroiled in a firefight and grenade exchanges. They tried

worming their way forward and got onto and into one of the enemy bunkers inflicting a number of casualties. As a result of this attack Tiny Taylor was wounded in the legs and arms by a grenade, the N.C.O I had lent the platoon was also wounded and another, Corporal Goodswen, was one of those 12 platoon N.C.Os who was wounded in yesterday's shelling, but he refused to be evacuated; he was killed later in the battle. I gave the order to the men in this bunker to get out of this death trap and take up a position overlooking a Jap position some fifteen yards away.

The general situation on Jail Hill at 0830 hrs in the B Company area was: 10 platoon on the left were still down the hill in the Jail area; I had no news of them except that their 2-inch mortar and one section were left on the top covering them down and were in turn flank protection to us. The other two platoons had one N.C.O between them and about fifty percent casualties each. I thought it would be prudent to hold what ground we had with 11 and 12 platoons and reorganised them into one platoon. The ground we held was much in our favour; we overlooked the Japs.

By this time other horrors had become evident. Our position on Jail Hill was made worse by the fact that the enemy still held positions on the lower slopes of GPT Ridge across the road on our right and on DIS on our left; cross-fire from these long-range machine guns and snipers were taking a heavy toll. Movement anywhere on this hill, even to our rear was dangerous and costly. There were occasions when we needed to evacuate casualties and to receive more ammunition. I went back to Company HQ and got on the wireless to put the C.O. in the picture. I then saw Godfrey Shaw whose D Company was in rear of mine, most of his men were covering the main road below us. His one remaining platoon came under my command.

I also got in touch with Pen Ingham who was commanding the left hand platoon of C Company and was on the immediate right of 11 platoon. We arranged to try and knock out the enemy post that lay between us some twenty five yards away, however, before these movements took place, I had smoke put down on the flanks of the hill to screen us from the snipers on our flanks. This had to be done through Battalion H.Q. as my F.O.O. was no longer in action, his runner and signal operator having been killed and his wireless set knocked out.

Pen and I took half a dozen men from each of our Companies and under covering fire from others and a shower of grenades from us we ran forward. But the ground was so littered with shell-holes, trenches and tree stumps lying at all angles, that this movement was itself an obstacle course. As we tried to negotiate this, we caught the full blast of light machine guns and rifle fire and of course Japanese grenades; we were now pinned about ten or fifteen yards from the enemy trenches and bunkers. We took up positions in this broken ground and took on any Japs that showed themselves. A yard to my right was C.S.M. Buchanan of C Company, as I was staring in front of me I saw a Jap aim his rifle and fire and as he did so I fired and got him, I turned my head towards the C.S.M. and saw that he had just rolled over, shot through the forehead. What a man he was, always full of good humour and fun.

And then things really happened, it was the nearest approach to a snowball fight that could be imagined. The air became thick with grenades, both theirs and ours, and we scurried about trying to avoid them as they burst. We saw two of the enemy creep out of their bunker and make a run for it, they both had their head and arms bandaged. Poor Pen Ingham misjudged a grenade and was mortally wounded under the heart. I put Private Easton in charge of these men in this area; he had a Bren gun with which to keep the enemy's heads down. During the remaining six hours of daylight this man and those around him came under mortar and light machine gun fire. Pte Easton was

awarded an immediate Military Medal for his determined personal vigil and complete disregard for his own safety.

By about 1000 hrs the D Company platoon were in the Jail Hill area and 10 platoon took up its new position on the left of our Company perimeter. During all this time the stretcher-bearers and C.S.M. Thatcher had been working nonstop taking care of our casualties. No praise can be too great for these men, they were constantly in the thick of any battle. Corporal French was untiring the whole day and somehow avoided being hit, (this gallant man was killed later in the Kohima battle). Tiny Taylor managed to hobble away helped by a C Company stretcher-bearer; even on the drill square Tiny's dress just got by, it was not his fault that on this occasion he did rather over do it, wearing a broad grin, a cardigan, a watch and his unlaced boots he said "good-bye sahib" and saluted. (It was two years later in England that he had a final successful operation). He had been a marvellous second-in-command to me for a year or so, we were very different but it worked very well.

The latter half of the morning brought rain, low sweeping clouds and a mist; we welcomed these conditions as it meant we could move around a little without being sniped at from behind and it was an opportunity to get some of the casualties back. When the sun did appear we had some more men wounded and Captain John Scott was killed by a sniper's bullet from the direction of DIS; he became the third C Company commander casualty in our few days in Kohima; he had already been wounded twice and had refused to have his wounds attended to but sadly his outstanding gallantry on Jail Hill had now to come to an end. We spent much of the rest of the day digging like beavers, using everything we could find: entrenching tools, mugs, plates and bayonets. We were trying to burrow and tunnel ourselves forward. I had reorganised the Company as one platoon, as by about midday our strength was thirty odd. As circumstances permitted we salvaged what arms and ammunition and water bottles we could from casualties. By the evening nearly half the company had an automatic weapon.

At about 1730hrs two platoons of the 4th/1st Gurkhas arrived to fill in the gap between my B and C company on my right, and then their Commander was killed within two minutes of his arrival. Another Gurkha officer, Major McCann, came up to command them and came under my command sharing our HQ. Colonel Duncombe got on the wireless set to me at about this time to congratulate the Company on a magnificent show. I passed the message round to all the men. In spite of everything their morale was still quite excellent. At dusk a carrying party from D Company resupplied us with ammunition, and particularly with a large quantity of grenades, our stock of these was very low and as three of the Jap bunkers were only ten or fifteen yards away, grenades were going to be invaluable to see us through the night.

Our total strength on Jail Hill at stand-to at 1845hrs was two officers (Jim Cato and me) and 28 other ranks; of this latter total, I had the CSM, 1 sergeant, 1 corporal and 1 lance corporal. Sleep this evening was impossible. It poured with rain throughout the night and it was one of the noisiest nights imaginable. Enemy machine guns and our own light machine guns were punctuated by the bursting of grenades and mortar bombs. The grenade was a little unpleasant, as the range was so close they could not help but fall in around us. We were fortunate to have only three men wounded in the night; the Gurkhas had a few casualties from grenades and two men killed by automatics. We heard this evening that Major Mervyn Mansel (O.C.A Company) had been mortally wounded on Jail Hill. He was a born leader of great charm and had been Adjutant for two years on the NW Frontier.

Somehow this very cold, wet and noisy night passed. We stood-to at 0530 hrs on 12th May and were thankful for the daylight when we passed the rum round. Sniping from DIS continued to be a great worry this morning, and it was quite apparent that the enemy had certainly two very active bunkers about fifteen yards from us. Just before 0600 hrs, I sent a situation report to the Adjutant, Captain Dick Kensington, and suggested that a tank might help solve our problem. Later one of the Gurkha platoons on the Hill tried to force the enemy from one of the strong points but had no luck. I was called into Battalion Tactical HQ to talk over the situation. The tanks could not operate yesterday because of the road blocks, which were cleared by the Engineers during the night. On my return, I sent Jim Cato down to liaise with the tank troop commander, he was to point out the targets to the latter. Welcome dixies of tea and sandwiches were brought up to us by a platoon of D Company.

At 1500 hrs the tanks and the 4th/15th Punjabis attacked DIS. This bunker was shot to pieces, some Japanese appeared to be blown up into the air and others streamed away. Our Company HQ had a grandstand view of all this, the Gurkha Subedar of Major McCann's Company spotted for C.S.M. Thatcher and myself as we took our turn to snipe at the enemy from above, they were only 400 yards away. This success meant that for the first time Jail Hill was free from Jap firing from DIS.

Then came the turn for the tanks and Chris Nixon's Company of Gurkhas to tackle the bunkers which were between us and the tanks; this was an amazing sensation as the tanks had to fire towards us as we lay flat on our stomachs to avoid the debris, the shells and the "overs", as the positions they pounded were literally only fifteen yards away, but we had no casualties. Two bunkers were dealt with successfully, the Japanese that did get away were caught by the Manchester's machine guns, but a third, fifty yards down the slope, held out, this appeared to have four automatics, the Gurkhas surrounded this one and dug in within ten yards of it.

A welcome draft of ten men arrived at the Company this evening; they were mostly old B Company men who had been sick or wounded. A lovely brew of tea and a marvellous stew arrived at about 1800 hrs. It was noticeable that enemy fire onto Jail Hill today, although considerable was not as heavy as yesterday; we only had one man killed and two wounded. The intense heat of battle had given way to the extent that we could send a few men at a time down to refill their water bottles; and during the day the Battalion signallers reeled out telephone cable from Battalion Headquarters.

At 1900 hrs the Japs fired three or four 75mm guns at a rapid rate for fifteen minutes from a high ridge beyond GPT (we could see their flashes), it felt as if the shells were just clearing our hill and fell on the road and DIS. I sent out a four man patrol at 1945 hrs under L/Cpl Edmunds to worry and do some damage to the nearest leg of the Japanese bunker. They fired bursts of Tommy-gun and threw grenades, there was no answering fire. By about 0200 hrs all firing by the enemy on the feature seemed to have ceased. Before daylight on May 13th, I sent out another patrol, they reported that the bunker to our front was empty. I got a telephone message at 0600 hrs, asking me to report to Battalion HQ. This was to discuss how to deal with the last remaining bunker about fifty yards down the hill. They were pleased to see me and gave me and my batman a good breakfast of a real soya link and as it was soon to become evident, this was quite the best soya link I had ever had, as looking back towards Jail Hill, about 800 yards away, we saw something we had all been praying for: there were our men and the Gurkhas walking all over the Hill! It was confirmed by telephone that our patrols and those of the Gurkhas had found the bunkers empty.

On my arrival back at the Company I found the men searching the bunkers. The main enemy position in front of us and the Gurkhas had four legs coming out from a central position, it could have held forty or fifty Japanese. The central bunker had steel shutters on the inside, which could have been effectively closed up against our grenades and small arms fire and the bunker was so deep that no bomb or shell would have touched it. We counted ten dead Japs and vast quantities of kit, which included rifles, very rusty machine guns, a battered Bren gun, stacks of Japanese grenades and some of our 36 grenades and other assorted ammunition; five Japanese diaries were handed over to me and a number of men acquired Jap flags. We soon had a visit from Colonel Duncombe and Dick Kensington, the Adjutant, they were given a welcome *seu de joie* by Japanese snipers firing two shots and a burst of automatic fire; they jumped into the nearest hole, which turned out to be an old Japanese latrine whose mire had been swollen by the monsoon rains. Roars of laughter from all ranks as they both departed, their stench collecting its share of our flies.

Although we were not fired on again that day, we did take a large part in mopping up when at least fifty Japanese streamed away from FSD ridge. Small arms, mortar and artillery fire being directed on them from the Company. Now that there were no enemy on this very barren Jail Hill, we could take in the utter devastation: not a leaf, just tree stumps and littered with battle kit of all sorts, bomb and shell holes, the whole place smelt to high heaven. It was difficult to see when and where corpses or may be part of a limb lay under a layer of flies or whether the flies were supping the mud-blood hill itself. During the morning we buried all our dead below the road in a Battalion site 300 yards north-west along it from the forty seventh milestone. In the weeks to come the Battalion Pioneers constructed a fine memorial.

We learnt to-day that the whole of the central ridge of Kohima had been captured, except for the area of the D.C.'s bungalow and the tennis court a thousand yards to the north of us. And so, on 14th May we left Jail Hill and returned to the area we left on the 10th to be greeted by Colour-Sergeant Fraser and his men, the best meal ever, a change of clothes and blankets. This was the end of the big battle for us but the rest of the month of May would have seen the Company and the Battalion fighting on the northern flank of Kohima in Naga village and Church Knoll, from where after a successful action against the Japanese on the 1st June the Battalion was withdrawn to Dimapur for a well earned rest.



Naga Village, Kohima

General Slim, the 14th Army Commander, wrote that "The gains made in these few days since 10th May changed the whole picture around Kohima". Brigadier Sir John Smyth V.C. has written..... "the capture of Jail Hill was the decisive action of the battle of Kohima and one of the most gallant episodes of the whole campaign". According to Field Marshal the Earl Wavell, "When the history of this war comes to be written, the fight here will be put down as one of the turning points of the war". It is appropriate to finish this period of Regimental history by quoting the words of our Brigadier Loftus Tottenham when speaking to Brigadier Sir John Smyth about us, he emphasised that the Queen's captured the first Japanese prisoners in any theatre of war and that they were part of the Brigade which forced

on the Japs their first and disastrous retreat. He said of the Battalion: "They were completely unflappable and whether in attack or defence 100 per cent reliable".

#### Acknowledgements.

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MAL

#### The 70th Colours 1831 to 1845

A pair of 70th Regiment Colours of unusual design are displayed in All Saints Church, Kingston upon Thames, hung near The East Surrey Regimental Chapel. They are of the large size and were presented to the 70th in Dublin in 1831 by the daughter of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Thomas Evans, CB. When the Regiment went to India in 1848 the Colours were deposited in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin, where they were found in 1922 and given by General MacReady to the successors of The 70th, 2nd Battalion East Surrey. They are in fine condition today and of special interest as, contrary to the Regulations, the numerals on the Regimental Colour (Black facing) were Arabic, whereas those on the King's Colour were Roman and correct.

2nd Surreys laid up these Colours at All Saints on 25th September, 1924. The "Surrey Comet" of 27th September reported the morning of the 25th as "dull and cheerless, quite out of harmony with the spirit of the ceremony, rain pelted down relentlessly from the leaden sky". Apparently few spectators "witnessed the arrival of the Venerable Colours, brought up from Aldershot by an escort of fifty Officers and Other Ranks".

"With fixed bayonets dripping with rain," said the Comet, the combined escorts marched to Kingston to the music of the Band, alternating with fanfares by the buglers in front. The khaki-clad troops were mainly composed of young soldiers, but in the ranks were also a number of war-stained veterans, their breasts agleam with medals".

At the Market Place the escorts formed a long line two deep, and the main approach to the church was lined by another Company of East Surreys. As the escorts presented arms the onlookers bared heads, the Band played the National Anthem and The Colours, "drooping in graceful folds, were proudly held aloft by their bearers, Brevet Major Captain Schomberg, DSO, and Lieut. Ellis, before being carried to their resting places in the Church". A large congregation witnessed the ceremony conducted by the Vicar and Rural Dean, the Reverend A.R. Hyslop, who met The Colours and preceded them to the Chancel. Drums were piled in the choir and after the hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past" Colonel Orpen-Palmer asked the Vicar to accept custody of The Colours and the Vicar then placed them in position near to The East Surrey Memorial Chapel.

The Vicar then made a rousing speech, touching briefly on the history of The Regiment, saying how glad the church was to accept the Old Colours. After the benediction the troops marched to Kingston Barracks where dinner was served, and later the Second Battalion returned to Aldershot. Among past and present officers at the Ceremony were Colonel Hugh Lawrence, CMG, Colonel H.P. Treeby, DSO, Major Dowler (Later Colonel of The Regiment), Captain Bayliss, DSO, MC, Lieutenant Brown, MC, and from The Depot Major Percy, MC, DCM, Captain Caulfield MC., and Captain Boxshall.

DJ





### **Ghuznee and Khelat, 1839**

The first Afghan War was an ill-judged campaign to forcibly impose an unpopular ruler on an unwilling people. Many of our most experienced Indian statesmen together with the Duke of Wellington heatedly expressed themselves on the folly of the exercise.

After unsuccessful negotiations with Runjeet Singh, the ruler of the Punjab, for permission to march our army through the Punjab the force was mobilised at Ferozepore. Bengal troops were compelled to march down the left bank of the Sutlej river, through Bhawulpore, to cross the Indus at Bukkur, traversing the Scinde desert, ascending the Bolar Pass to enter Afghanistan at Kandahar.

27,000 European and Indian troops were formed into three brigades under Sir John Keane. Keane, the Commander-in-Chief from Bombay, assumed command when troops from Bombay joined forces with the Bengali army at Quettah. The 2nd Queen's, the 17th and the 13th Somerset LI, were part of this force.

The army pushed on to Kandahar suffering very much from marauding Baluchis and losing vast amounts of baggage and animals en route.

The troops also suffered greatly from the heat. They were dressed in red coats with leather stocks and bell topped shakos.

In June the army reached Kandahar. Leaving a strong garrison there and detaching a force to the Helmund river, Keane advanced to the north reaching the area of Ghuznee on July 21st, where the first serious opposition was encountered. The Commander in Chief, against the advice of his artillery officers, had left his siege train behind. There was nothing left to do but carry Ghuznee by storm. At Ghuznee the Kabul road was blocked by an immense fortress with walls twenty two metres high and surrounded by a moat. In the hills on either side of the road were 5,000 Ghilzai cavalry, waiting to attack any weakness of the advancing army. On the 20th July skirmishers drove in the native outposts in front of the fort. The walls were immensely strong and the siege guns had been left behind. A spy suggested that the fortress might be taken by an attack on the Kabul gate, the only one not sealed by brickwork. Under cover of darkness a party of sappers blew the gate up and the storming party rushed forward into the breach. After fierce hand-to-hand fighting through the streets the place was finally taken on 23rd July. The 2nd Queen's, lost 4 killed and 33 wounded, including 6 officers.

On 8th August the army reached Kabul and the puppet ruler was installed. Ghuznee was the first battle honour awarded in Queen Victoria's reign.

### **Khelat, November 13th, 1839**

After the capture of Ghuznee it was wrongly anticipated that the people of the country were willing to accept their new puppet ruler. The Commander-in-Chief, misled by his political officers, decided to send back a large portion of his army to India. One column via the Khyber Pass the other by the Bolan in the south. This column comprised the 2nd Queen's, the 17th, a company of Bombay Artillery and some 400 native infantry. All were much under strength, the Queen's with only 13 officers and 331 other ranks.

The Baluchi tribes had shown themselves hostile during the whole course of the campaign. They constantly attacked our troops and camp followers with impunity and with the full approval of their leaders.

General Willsher was in command and on the return march of the Bombay column was instructed to inflict punishment on the Khans of Khelat. On approaching Khelat the General found the Baluchis were massed on the hills surrounding the city. The General immediately deployed three columns of infantry, each of four, under-strength, companies, to push up the three principal spurs whilst the artillery shelled the hills.

The remainder of the force remained in reserve. The artillery not only silenced the Baluchi guns which were posted in the hills, but compelled the tribesmen to shelter behind the walls of the fortress.

The General, seeing the enemy retreating towards the walls, tried to forestall them and there was a race to see who would reach the open gate first. The British were beaten by a short head but were so close behind the Baluchis that they were unable to make any kind of stand. The gates were blown in and the British and Bengalis stormed in to secure the city.

The Queen's lost one officer and two other ranks killed, five officers and 42 other ranks wounded.

### **Sobraon, 10th February, 1846**

The British army had suffered considerable losses against the Sikhs in 1845 but the success gained by Sir Harry Smith at the Battle of Aliwal, in January, had infused fresh spirit into our troops. They were ready for a final bout with the Sikhs.

On 7th February a siege train arrived at Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander-in-Chief's camp, and on the following day Sir Harry Smith rejoined headquarters.

The Sikhs had drawn back from their defeat at Aliwal to the banks of the Sutlej river. They had not been idle and had thrown up formidable entrenchments at Sobraon, on the banks of the river, covering the ford to Lahore. To attack this was no easy task as Gough had to guard against counter attack by the Sikhs who, in numbers at any rate, were by far our superiors. To avoid this problem the fords in front of Ferozepore and those midway between there and Sobraon were defended by battalions of sepoys and native cavalry. Brigadier General Wheler held the banks of the river near Ludhiana.

The cavalry, the 16th Lancers and three regiments of native cavalry, was to threaten the Sikhs left above Sobraon. Next came the division led by Sir Harry Smith, consisting of the 31st, the 50th and four sepoy battalions. The centre was composed of Sir Walter Gilbert's division of the 29th, the 1st Bengal Europeans and four sepoy battalions. On the left was another division commanded by Sir Robert Dick, with the 10th, 53rd, 80th and three battalions of sepoys. In Dick's second line were the 9th, 62nd, and one sepoy battalion. Sixty guns of the artillery were deployed throughout the front.

The intended dawn attack had to be delayed because of fog. At nine o'clock three batteries of Dick's division opened a concentrated fire on the Sikh position. Under cover of the barrage a brigade, which included the 10th and 53rd, moved forward but they came under a heavy fire from a battery which caused heavy casualties to the 53rd. Leading his men, Dick stormed the first line of trenches with a charge receiving a fatal wound in the attempt. On the right Smith's attack had been no less successful and Gilbert's advance had been checked by the breastworks to the front being about 9 feet high. The men had to climb on each others shoulders before they could force an entrance.

The initial assault was repulsed with many casualties. The battle was of a scale and ferocity that had not been seen since Waterloo. Both officers carrying the colours of the 31st, were lost and at the crucial moment of defeat Sergeant McCabe of the 31st took up the Regimental Colour and, under intense fire, climbed to the highest point of the enemy earthworks and planted the Colour for all to see. This instilled new life into the 31st and the other regiments which then fought desperately, hand-to-hand, to take their objectives. By midday the battle was won.

The losses on both sides were severe. 10,000 Sikhs and some 2,400 British killed or wounded, the 31st lost 35 other ranks killed, 7 officers and 112 other ranks wounded.

The Staff suffered severely with three generals, three brigadier- generals being killed and eight brigadier-generals wounded in this short campaign.

#### Caption to the Ghuznee and Khelat colour plate

The précis of events described above describe little of the misery endured by the troops in Afghanistan. The intense heat and disease, constant discomfort caused by the red cloth coatees and heavy shakos together with the leather stock around their necks must have contributed as many casualties as the marauding enemy.

**Top;** In the centre an officer's crossbelt plate together with the gilt label worn below it on the belt. Other ranks had a brass label. An officer's sword and sash and a sergeant's sword and sash. **Top Left;** An officer of the Battalion Company in full dress as worn at home. **Top Right;** Company officer in shell jacket and forage cap. **Bottom Left;** Sergeant of the Battalion Company. **Bottom Right;** Corporal of the Light Infantry Company. **Centre;** Private of the Grenadier Company in marching order as worn at home. A Private of the Battalion Company.

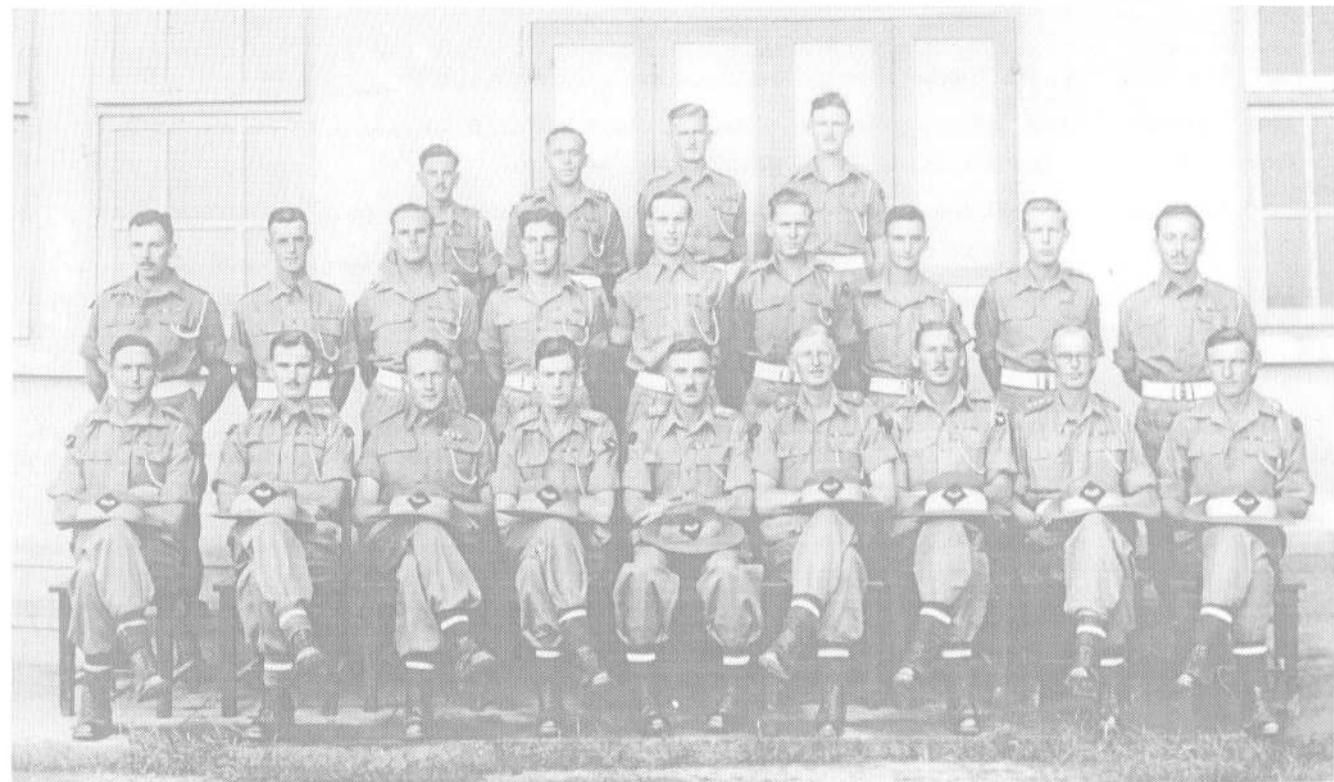
These uniforms are based on the contemporary engravings after sketches by Lt J Wingate of the Queen's who was in Afghanistan with the Regiment. In fact he showed both white and black shako covers - the only concession to the heat.

#### Caption to the Sobraon colour plate

Just a few years after Ghuznee and some concessions to the heat were allowed. Our illustrations are based on the Ackermann's plate of the 31st at Sobraon showing the men and officers in shell jackets and with added peaks and covers to the men's forage caps.

**Top;** In the centre the other rank's shako plate, a field officer's sword with brass scabbard and an adjutant's sword with steel scabbard. An officer's sash and a sergeant's sash now without the three facing coloured stripes. Two epaulettes for the frock coat with, on the left that of a company officer and the other for a field officer. Below is a cord epaulette from an officer's shell jacket. **Top Left;** Private of the Grenadier Company. **Top Right;** Private of the Battalion Company. **Bottom Left;** Sergeant of the Light Infantry Company. **Bottom Right;** Regimental Sergeant Major with silver lace distinctions and epaulettes. **Centre;** A Company officer in shell jacket and a Company officer in frock coat and forage cap as worn at home. **Bottom Centre;** A skirt ornament from the tails of an officer's full dress coatee.

Officers' Mess. 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, Bangkok, Thailand. January 1946.



Back row: Capt F A Mellows RAMC, Capt J W Whalen (Ex.Aus), Capt N R Ford (Ex.Aus), Lt A J Parkes, Capt R Deacon, Lt (QM) W C Willans, Lt K W Brooks, Lt R Wilkinson, Lt P D Clarke, Lt E A King, Lt K W Larcombe, Lt A R Irving, Capt G C D Wheeler.

Front row: Capt D W Kirby, Maj R A Strand, Maj R D Bawden (Ex.Aus), Capt (Adjt) V J Mosnicka, Lt Col J R Terry, Maj B Grainger MC, Maj K S Biven (Ex.Aus), Capt H O Annett, Capt (the Rev) W Whatley RACD.

Photo sent in by J R Puddephatt.

## Rupert and Mickey Mouse fall out

Ian Beattie and I stood on the platform waving at the disappearing train. The Battalion had just left Colchester on their way to Aden. Afterwards we went back to a very quiet and deserted Hyderabad Barracks. Even his traditional Tio Pepe did little to restore Ian's good spirits. It had been a good year with Ian as Company Commander and it was sad to see it coming to an end. He inspired great loyalty from those who served under him and always made life fun. He must have been the only Company Commander who welcomed his officers to an 'O' Group with mugs of Napoleon brandy. At that time the British Army must have had about 17 trucks in total. So when going off on exercises it was always a challenge to find some space on any sort of vehicle for those extra goodies that might just come in handy. Whilst the Colour Sgt's back was turned I lifted up the canopy on the Company Commanders 1/4 ton trailer. Nothing to be seen but bottle tops. Ian would be looking after his lads - and himself. A beautiful man who is much missed.

I was off to Netheravon to give my ear drums a battering whilst learning all about anti-tank guns. We also had to become proficient at recognising the outline of every known tank. To this end the instructors had made ingenious slot machine devices where you put your money in, made your selection at identifying the tank shown, and getting your money back if the guess was right; if not the money went to charity. The Small Arms School Corps Drinking Club, most likely. My chum and I found a nifty way of altering the machine. We would then wait around for some passing know-all, Rifle Brigade were particularly suitable, and then we would challenge him to put his money where his conviction lay. Exit baffled and poorer stooge.

I arrived at Khormaksar airport Aden and stood for a moment in the doorway of the aircraft transfixed by the incredible blast of heat and the wild assortment of spicy and not so select smells. It was certainly different to Colchester. I looked around for the Welcoming Committee, the Band or the Guard of Honour. It must have been their day off so I made do with a Taxi. As I humped my kit up the steps of the Officer's Mess, the Battalion 2i/c Major Oscar Palmer, looked up over the top of his newspaper. "Haven't seen you for a day or two, where've you been, up country?" "No Sir, I've just arrived from England." "Humph, thought I hadn't seen you for a day or two." It was good to be back and know how much everyone had missed my cheerful presence during the last four months.

Soon life settled into the routine of duties and trying to find my anti-tank platoon. The latter was made more difficult since they had developed an almost fool proof system of disappearing without trace. They left the Anti tank stores with a huge locked padlock on the outside, which proved that there could not be anyone left inside. Wrong, the little sweeties had made the notice on the door into a hinged flap, so that from the inside they could reach out and lock the padlock. They were beginning to try my patience and I was beginning to doubt Sgt Carr's assurances about them all being really good lads at heart.

Relief came in the form of little mini exercises and patrols. The first was a short camp out in the desert with the sand on one side and the Red Sea on the other. Our evenings were spent with organised Hermit Crab racing and trying to ensure that the local desert dwellers did not make off with our valuables. I had heard that the previous patrol had lost theirloo seats during the dead of night. I was not so green that I would be caught out that way. I erected a

continuous perimeter fence of lethal barbed wire around our small encampment to keep the nomads out. In the morning we woke to find that about thirty yards of barbed wire had gone missing. Ah well!

But then salvation came in a peculiar disguise. Major Geoffrey Mason quite rightly blew his top when he found that I had tried to buck against the system. He was very keen that his officers inspected everything and then signed a black book to that effect. I had spent a very trying day doing my very best to locate the anti-tank platoon who were obviously perfecting a new disappearing act. I mean, you feel so awfully silly chasing about the camp saying things like "Excuse me, but I don't suppose you have seen any blokes wandering around with an anti-tank gun have you?" The CSM had to remind me that I had not signed the inspection book. In my annoyance and haste I made a monumental error. Later I was summoned to the Company Commander's office. It looked very ominous, caps were being worn and Donald Abbott the Company Second in Command was standing behind the OC looking pleased which was definitely a dangerous sign. Apparently some wretched piece of wiring somewhere was hanging by its entrails and I had signed to say that all was in order. I apologised deeply and profusely. Some said afterwards that I tended towards being obsequious. I hoped that would be an end to the matter. But no, the wretched book was produced and there for all to see was the offending signature "M Mouse Flight Lieutenant." No wonder Abbott was grinning.

After brief but increasingly serious interludes with the Adjutant Mike Pereira and then the Commanding Officer I was banished to the Company stationed at Mukeiras, close to the Yemen border. And what a wonderful place it was. My Company Commanders were the best. First Bill Ambrose and then Geoffrey Curtis. Bill radiated good humour and impeccable manners, he made life seem very good and there to be enjoyed. "Oh, Officer of the very best sort - Good Morning to you!" Geoffrey Curtis in his turn was equally good to work for and I am proud to have served in his company.

For much of my time in Mukeiras I shared a tent with Paul Gray. I greatly admired his enthusiasm for soldiering and his intense interest in the history of the regiment. He was also a very enthusiastic and able mortar officer. One day my anti-tank lads were out in the hills enjoying a break from the rigours of discussing the result of the latest donkey polo when in the distance could be seen columns of dust coming our way. It was Paul and his mortars coming full bore and obviously they were going to show us how things should be done. They screamed to a halt about three hundred yards away and leapt into action. Before you could breathe in and out four mortar bombs had gone whistling on their way. We watched with lazy interest to see where they would land. Absolutely nothing. It was uncanny, we looked at our watches, we looked into the distance - nothing, not a sound, not a sight of the expected explosions. I looked at my map and made some calculations. Here was a chance to improve the standing of the anti-tanks. After I had driven over to Paul's position I gently enquired whether there was any slight, teensy weensy, possibility that the bombs had perchance gone over the edge of the escarpment to land some 7,000ft lower down. Paul suggested that I should do something that I thought was anatomically impossible with an anti-tank gun.

We got used to receiving a number of visitors in Mukeiras. Some were a delight, like Charlie Chester and the ENSA show, others we looked on with something less than enthusiasm. We received an excited signal to say that we

had been specially chosen to be host to some visiting politician/minister on a 'fact finding mission.' A dull ache was felt by most at the prospect of receiving such an important personage into our midst. But strangely the soldiers were all very enthusiastic and for days before the visit there was an atmosphere of feverish activity. When 'the great man' arrived he was duly shown around the camp and the local village. Everywhere he stopped the little Arab children would march up to him, shake him by the hand and say "Queen Victoria, Bloody Fine Bloke!" Wonderful thing education.

But all too soon the idyll days in Mukeiras ended and it was once more the round of Aden duties. But the great thing about life in the services is that you never know what is lurking around the next bend. "The Adjutant wants to see you now. At the double." I certainly had not signed any fictitious signatures lately and as far as I knew my slate was clean. "There is a land rover waiting to take you immediately to a briefing at Force Headquarters. Go now." I arrived at the meeting which was already under way. I was told that I would be leaving in three hours and that I should take over the docks and that I had a small party of 4. "Any questions?" "Excuse me, I missed the first part. Where am I going and why." "Iraq has threatened to invade Kuwait and you are going to the docks in Kuwait." "Oh, thank you." What I know about docks could be summed up in one word - nothing.

I zoomed around the camp getting kit. For this adventure I was fully armed. I was issued with a .38 revolver but unfortunately the stores had no .38 ammunition. The friendly storeman suggested that I took six rounds of 9mm. "It's just the same only it doesn't extract. So after firing you will have to poke the empty cases out." I did not have time to discuss the finer points so legged it to the mess to finish my packing. As I came down, my good friend Paul Gray, had organised those who were in the mess into two lines and I passed between the lines as they sang 'There'll always be an England.' It was then that I had to rush upstairs again to get a pencil. I thought that this would be the best device for poking out those empty cases.

We arrived in Kuwait and found that the steps were not high enough to reach the aircraft so had to leave via the emergency chute. I then set about getting some wheels. We needed transport and there was none. Twenty minutes later I and my small team were the proud owners of a slightly beat up Humber Super Snipe. It is like riding a bicycle. Once you have learnt to hot wire a car you never forget. At the entrance to the Airport I stopped and waited for sight of another vehicle. "What are you waiting for." "Well lads my briefing did not tell me small things - like which side of the road they drive on."

Finding the docks was a small challenge since we had not been given any maps. We simply stopped in the middle of the town and drew pictures in the dust of ships, cranes etc. The residents were very keen to see us and soon we had a convoy of about half a mile in length full of cheering, hooting Kuwaitis. They could tell that everything was now in safe hands and that the conflict would soon be over. Our first ship arrived with about 150 Land Rovers which were to be driven off to a nearby football pitch. This arrival coincided with a dock strike and the disappearance of all able bodied men. I do not think that this had anything to do with our presence. Of the twenty servicemen around, only six could drive. So I introduced the 2 minute driving lesson followed by the Kangaroo drive to the football field. Very entertaining it all was.

Soon I and my team were transferred to the grounds of the University where we had two jobs. One was to run the

admin side of the camp and secondly we were to 'obtain' vehicles for Col Hard the Commander of the Joint Admin HQ. He had been most impressed by my latest car - a drop head Chevrolet Impala. The local traders were most kind. Each day representatives of Cleaners, Coca Cola, Freezers, Air Conditioners etc., would call and ask to be appointed as main contractors. Our response was always that we wished to obtain the very best quality and to that end we were prepared to evaluate their services. Our living conditions and hygiene improved beyond measure.

Soon Kuwait began to wind down. The Iraqis did not want to play invasion games if there was going to be some serious opposition. I am also reliably informed that their Intelligence chiefs had got wind of the .38 and its patented extraction device. Enough to have shaken the stoutest of souls. So we all decamped to the airfield and set up a grotty refugee camp of those trying to get out of the place. The RAF were in charge and had devised a cunning plan of evacuation. If you were RAF you got out, if you were not - you did not get out. After a week of dossing in an unfinished airfield office I thought that it was time I made my own travel plans. A VIP group was approaching across the tarmac, it was Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Elworthy. I marched up, halted, saluted. "Excuse me Sir, any chance of a lift to Aden." The aides around the great man sucked in their breath with a unanimous hiss of disapproval after the initial shocked silence. "I don't see why not, I am sure there are a couple of empty seats."

As I got into the C in C's VIP Andover I paused in the doorway, turned and saluted the RAF Movements Officer. He was not a happy bunny.

Rupert

### H.M. Queen Mary

Queen Mary, Colonel-in-Chief of The Queen's Royal Regiment until her death on 25th March, 1953, resided at Badminton House, the home of the Duke of Beaufort, in Gloucestershire during the Second World War. Travelling quite widely around the local countryside in her chauffeur driven Daimler car, she would often give lifts to hitchhiking Servicemen. On parting from them she would give them a small inscribed silver disc as a memento. The father of a friend of mine actually received one and it would be interesting to know if any of our members were ever similarly favoured.

In the early part of the war I was serving in the Chipping Sodbury Rural District Fire Brigade which was responsible for the coverage of Badminton House. Secretly we rather hoped for a fire there, being under the mistaken impression that an attendance at same would entitle us to the Royal Warrant and display of the armorial crest with the words "By appointment to H.M. Queen Mary" on the side of our fire engine. But our hopes never materialised which, on reflection, may have been just as well for Her Majesty.

Typical of the spirit of the times, we were issued with a Boer War rifle and three rounds of ammunition with which to defend the same beloved engine if enemy hordes should ever descend upon us - which was probably why they never did. Meanwhile Queen Mary, who once inspected the brigade in front of Badminton House, could take comfort from the knowledge of the various forms of "fire support" available to her. Or she may have preferred the protection of her own Regiment.

RF

## Stay Sprightly in Whiteley

In July 1944 the Trustees wrote to the Colonels, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment informing them that priority for accommodation within Whiteley Village would be given to widows or 'gallant men Wounded' of the two regiments. An extract from the Village records in 1946 shows that the Band of The East Surrey Regiment beat retreat on 22nd June. A few years later, on 4th June 1953, it was the 4th/5th Cadet Bugle Band of The East Surrey Regiment which beat retreat. Throughout the Trustees' records there are references to the regiments of Surrey.



Whiteley Village

The connection between Whiteley Village and The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment goes back a number of years. Currently Sgt-Major Dennis Harding, MVO, (East Surrey, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, Chief Yeoman Warden Tower of London) resides in the Village. Alice Sanger, the widow of Christopher Sanger, who died recently, lives in the Village, and the current Warden (Chief Executive) of the Village, Colonel Tony Ward, OBE, was the first officer to be commissioned into The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Whiteley Village, close to Walton-on-Thames in Surrey, is a 230-acre site housing a very special community, founded early in this century after a one million pounds bequest by the department store magnate, William Whiteley, to provide lands and building homes for "the aged poor person". Today the Village provides homes, comfort and peace of mind to around 400 elderly residents.

The Village consists of 209 single cottages and 51 double cottages. It has its own shop, post office, greengrocer, fishmonger, hairdresser, library and bus service. There is an Anglican church, Non-Conformist Chapel and Roman Catholic community, a Village Hall, workshop, guest house, Club with bar and snooker room, and all this set in the most glorious surroundings, within easy reach of all residents.

Perhaps in today's age one of the most important aspects is the security. The Village is well fenced, and employs its own Security Guard. The atmosphere is one of a peaceful village, the only difference being that the Village community is beyond retirement age.

Applicants wishing to live in Whiteley Village should be of at least retirement age, and not over 75.

They must give full details of financial means and pass a medical examination. Colonel Ward states "This is not a medical for prospective storm-troopers, but its importance lies in the fact that all residents initially live

independently in cottages, and must be capable of looking after themselves, albeit with the daily support of the resident Village Sister and a home-help if necessary, later on. What we are looking for are residents who can live independently for at least five years, and hopefully much longer, before they need further care."

As residents become frailer, more help can be given to them in their cottages, but the Village also has two residential homes, housing 70 people. In addition, there is a large nursing home for 38 residents. All of these are under the control of the Village Matron. The Village always has a long waiting list for cottages, although accommodation in the residential homes and nursing home can always be arranged.

Whilst the terms of the Will state that priority should be given to agricultural workers and retailers, it is suspected that members of our former regiments will, perhaps, receive special treatment whilst the current Warden is in post.

There is a whole variety of clubs and classes, tap-dancing, croquet, bowls, cricket, putting, historical society, bridge, whist, drama, allotments, keep-fit, yoga, dressmaking to name but a few. The majority of residents are thankful that the cottages are relatively small, since they are never in them, such is the pace of activity within Whiteley Village! People seem to live longer in Whiteley.



A familiar face to many, Dennis Harding relaxing with his wife.

Sgt-Major Dennis Harding helps behind the bar one day a week, and spends the rest of the week the other side of it! Janet, his wife, who used to work in the Village before their marriage, looks after the flowers in the Nursing Home and gives much other assistance to the older and frailer residents. It was good to note recently, when Christopher Sanger was ill, the Regimental Association was so quick to provide support.

Anyone wishing to apply for accommodation in Whiteley Village should write to: Colonel AC Ward OBE Warden, The Whiteley Homes Trust, Whiteley Village, Walton On Thames, Surrey, KT12 4EH

ACW

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### Page Breaks:

We regret that for various reasons we have had to break into the article on page 16 and carry it over to page 46. This is not our usual policy but we had no alternative, and hope this does not spoil your enjoyment of the story.

## Queen's Camp

*The following article was written by the late Colonel Geoffrey Bevington and arrived the day before he died on the 31st October last year.*

In the May 1992 issue of the Newsletter, D.H.V. enquired for any information concerning QUEEN'S CAMP, Guildford and it's occupancy by the A.T.S. A reply was drafted and set aside for various reasons until, reading that the Regiment's old home at Stoughton Barracks was to be put on the market, led me to think that a few words concerning it's last days might be of interest to some of our older members.

It so happened that, following nine months in Hospital and three months sick leave, I was ordered to report to Stoughton. On arrival I was informed that I was to take over a Company of the I.T.C. from Captain Hunting, the C.O. being Colonel "Dickie" Dickinson and Keith Illingworth the other Company Commanders. It was something of a shock to be plunged into what was virtually peace time soldiering in the best Queen's tradition, after ten years in the TA concluded by some months as 2 i/c of 1/6th Queen's and a brief action in France and Belgium. The Officers were quartered in the Stoughton Officers mess, presided over by Major "Phil" Philpot who appeared to be in charge of what was left of the Depot, handling drafts in transit, officers returning from leave or awaiting posting. We were looked after by Mr Stafford who will be remembered by many of our older members. The other individual I recall was the mysterious Mr Moule who had an office tucked away in a corner and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the whereabouts of any member of the Regiment.

I was fortunate in having C.S.M. Hinds to guide my faltering footsteps and two good subalterns, Tom Rowney of pencil fame and Hobrow. The daily routine began immediately after breakfast with the walk down the long path alongside the boundary fence to the corner of the playing field and through the gate leading into Queen's Camp. Straight ahead was the parade ground and canteen, turning to the left were the company offices and below the parade ground, the men's huts, dining halls and so on. The sergeants mess was still functioning in the barracks. The day's routine started with a CO's Parade carried out in true Queen's style with all the detail of a mini trooping, after which the companies dispersed to hold their own camp any orders and training. This mainly took place on the area of common lying immediately to the north of the camp, on the fields beyond the Wooden Bridge and Dennis's Fire Engine Works or for the longer periods, as far afield as the Hog's Back. Apart from field and weapon training, the course ended with a ten mile march through Merrow, over Newlands Corner and the A25 to Westcott where we stayed for a couple of days firing rifle and bren gun on the ranges. For recreation the officers could use the tennis court outside the mess or there was golf at Worplesdon. In addition to training, each company was allotted an area as part of the defence of Guildford. Our beat was in the Merrow area and entailed a tactful approach to a number of Householders whose immaculate front lawns had to be dug up for weapon pits. To break the monotony, as the only Field Officer available, I was called upon on more than one occasion to preside over Field General Courts Martial which took place in a house on the Worplesdon Road, possibly some sort of Area H.Q. This was a completely closed book to me and necessitated a search for a copy of the Manual of Military Law. However, helped by two equally ignorant members and some advice from a member of the J.A.G's Department, I succeeded in getting all my verdicts confirmed. On one occasion I recall taking great delight in noting "this case should have been

dealt with by the C.O." question being the theft of half a gallon of petrol by an M.T. driver from his truck, to fill his motorcycle, in order to visit his girl friend.

Luckily I had been able to persuade the C.O. to let me keep my car, an elderly Hudson Terraplane, outside the mess which did make it possible to get out at the weekend for a meal at the Hogs Back or to visit friends at Epsom. In August word came round that the I.T.C. was to be moved to Maidstone. A celebratory Mess Night was held and I was unwisely persuaded by "Phil" to drive the senior Officers up to London for an evening, in the West End. On arrival we parked the car in the Duke Street garage which was well known to me and the evening began with supper at one of the dinner dance establishments in Piccadilly. Memory of the rest of the evening is fortunately somewhat hazy but in due course my charges assembled for the drive home in the early hours. Nemesis was to overtake us. As dawn broke we drove under the archway past the Keep to see the C.O. emerge from the side door of the Mess, dressed in shorts and running shoes for his early morning work out. Fortunately retribution was forgotten in the activities of closing down a few days later. Shortly before the move I was offered the choice of staying with the I.T.C. and moving to Maidstone, or remaining at Stoughton as one of the small party of Army Assistance to the A.T.S. who were moving into Queen's Camp. Despite the dubious advantage of being stationed eight miles from my home, the thought of continuing in what I was finding to be a very boring existence and having persuaded the MO to upgrade me to A1. The hope of getting back to my own battalion which was then stationed in Kent, decided me that any change was better than none and to try my luck with the A.T.S.



The A.T.S. Staff duly arrived on the 15th of August. Lieut C. Eason of The Royal West Kents had been appointed to command our small party, consisting of myself and Eddie Vine of the Queen's to command the two companies, each with a C.S.M. and according to a contemporary photograph, three Sergeants and three Corporals. The A.T.S. Staff appears to have consisted of a Company Commander, three Subalterns, two warrant officers and a number of other ranks. Our task was to instruct them in how to organise and run a Company Office, discipline and the general running of a Training Unit. A week later, the first intake arrived. The girls, bussed up from the station were in all shapes and sizes and to put it bluntly, straight off the street! Mainly in their teens or early twenties from all walks of life and with accents from Geordie to Park Lane. Fortunately the inspection and admission did not come within the orbit of the Army Assistance. With new arrivals taking place every few weeks it was inevitable for a certain amount of inter company rivalry to take place. Regrettably the first feature was the betting on the number of "clean heads" to be found at medical inspection. The A.T.S. Officers and staff were entirely self contained with their own quarters and officers and sergeant messes in the

Camp. However it was not long before "Phil" invited the Queen Bee to the Aces and fraternisation at all levels soon followed. The ensuing weeks followed a regular pattern of Instruction in parade formation, drill, route marching and communication drill. It was gratifying to see how quickly the companies developed into efficient and integrated unity encouraged by friendly rivalry and a sense of company pride.

Only one disastrous occurrence took place during my stay, another "first" for me, when I was called from the mess one night to view one of the recruits not of my own company, found lying on the path between the huts at the foot of one of the pylons which carried the high tension cables across the Camp. Although this was strictly an A.T.S. affair it fell to my lot to conduct the Court of enquiry. There was some suggestion that the girl had been a keen climber but fortunately for the good name of the Camp, her parents moved in high places and no publicity followed. Inevitably as the Christmas season approached, the order came round for each company to submit a programme as a contribution to the Christmas Concert. Failing to find any talent amongst my staff, I found myself stuck with the job of stage manager, producer, librettist, sketch and song writer to fill our allotted share of the evening's entertainment which took place on the 9th of December, the night before the departure of one of the intakes. It was now considered that we had done our job and that Queen's Camp could be left to run unaided. After a short Christmas break followed by 7 days leave, I made my farewells with happy memories and some sense of achievement, departed with Eddie Vine and a number of Sergeants to Chichester on January 16th 1942 to join the newly formed No 45 Primary Training Centre, housed in The Royal Sussex Barracks but that is another story.

JGB

#### 1994 East Surrey Reunion

The 1994 East Surrey Reunion held at St Johns Drill Hall Clapham on 15th October continued the highly successful revival in attendance of 1993, 250 attended. Of course, not everyone can be there every year, but there always seems to be a sprinkling of new faces to replace the regulars who cannot make it. It was particularly encouraging to see a strong group of young men wearing Queens Regiment Ties, and nice to know that they can identify themselves with a forebear regiment. Perhaps we can adapt an old saying, "if you think you are a Surrey then you are a Surrey!"

The catering and bar arrangements, which creaked a bit under pressure of numbers last year, were fully up to the occasion this year. The buffet was excellent in variety and quantity and we congratulate Mrs Daniels, the caretaker's wife, who obviously put a tremendous amount of work into its preparation. Mrs Kathy Bedford and her family organised the successful raffle where the chances of a win, though not guaranteed, were better than the National Lottery! Mrs Daphne Hill's sale of Museum Shop items was as popular as ever.

It is always difficult to get a bit of hush at such a lively gathering, but our secretary, Tony Ramsey, achieved it when he proposed the toast "The Regiment," and a recording of the Regimental Marches was played. All backs were straight and there was many a moist eye.

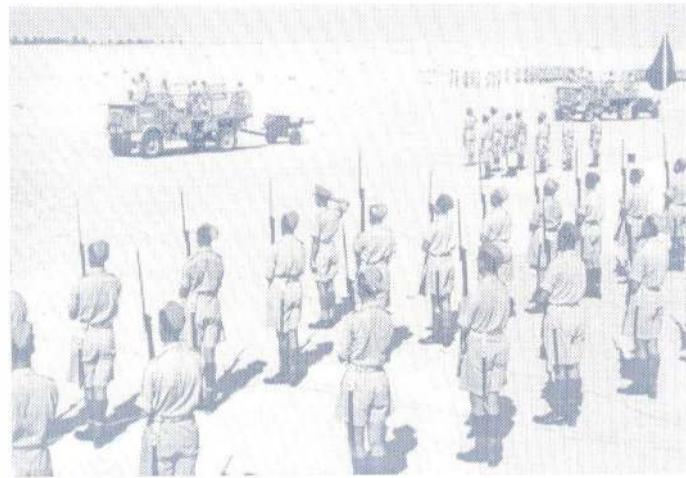
Bouquets were presented to Mrs Brenda Bishop, our President's wife, and to Mrs Kathy Bedford. Kathy continues to give tremendous support to the Committee, particularly in the distribution of Reunion application forms and tickets.

The Committee (Secretary Tony Ramsey, Chairman Olly Hyman, Treasurer Fred Jenkins) were delighted at the

excellent attendance and Tony wishes to thank all those who turned up at the Reunion, it made a great success of the evening and also made the work of the Committee and their helpers thoroughly worth while. We look forward to seeing you again at the next Reunion at Clapham on Saturday 14th October 1995.

DRB

#### The Medenine Gun



*Presentation Parade in the desert*

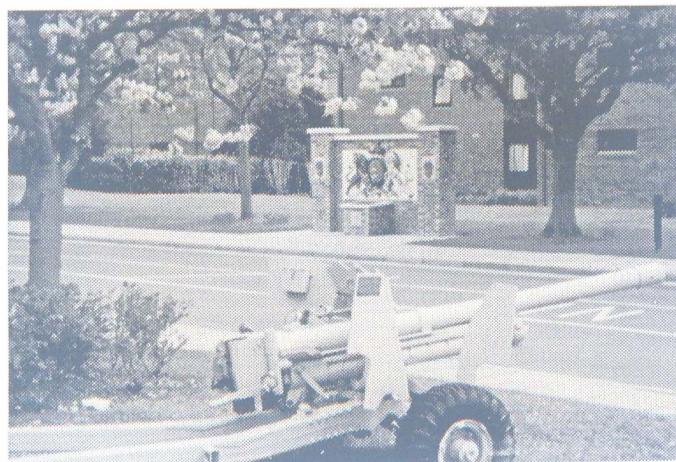
*In Desert sand mid shot and shell,  
Neath blazing sun in man made hell,  
A memorable day saw glory won  
By the Queen's men crew of the Medenine Gun.*

*Facing the enemy's martial might,  
And flinching not at the menacing sight,  
They shattered the tanks of the charging Hun  
With deadly fire from the Medenine Gun.*

*None should forget the gallant band  
of men who made heroic stand,  
Determined that duty should be done,  
As they bravely manned the Medenine Gun.*

Richard Ford

Medenine, in the North African Campaign of 1943, became a Battle Honour of The Queen's Royal Regiment. The Gun was brought back to England and after adorning various locations was eventually sited at the main gate of Howe Barracks, Canterbury. It was credited with having destroyed more enemy tanks than any other anti-tank gun in the North African campaign. Its commander, Sgt Andrews, won the Distinguished Conduct Medal.



*The Medenine Gun at the entrance to Howe Barracks, with The Queen's Regiment Memorial in the background.*

## Remembrance Sunday 1994



Major Derek Conran TD, Honorary Secretary of the 23rd London / 42nd Royal Tank Regiment Association, outside the Drill Hall at St Johns Hill, Clapham Junction on Remembrance Sunday.

He had earlier laid a wreath at the war memorial in St Mary's Battersea where over 1200 men of the 23rd are commemorated from the Great War and 64 from the 42nd RTR from the Second World War. The old colours of the 23rd London Regiment were laid up at St Mary's on 19th January 1964.

Derek Conran joined the 42nd Royal Tank Regiment at Clapham Junction in 1954 as a Troop Leader. At that time there were two Armoured TA Regiments in London, the 42nd and the Westminster Dragoons. On the whole those who had been RTR, like Derek, joined the 42nd whilst those who had been cavalry or yeomanry joined the Westminsters. He was lucky to be in time to take part in 'Exercise London Pride', the last full scale TA armoured territorial camp.

When the 42nd lost their tanks and reverted to their pre war role as 23rd London, Derek soldiered on, becoming a Company Commander. After amalgamation with the East Surreys to form the 4th Queen's Surreys, he was later detachment commander at Clapham (A and B Companies) when HQ was at Kingston.

He then moved to Kingston as 2i/c and at the next amalgamation of 3rd and 4th Surreys, was HQ Coy commander at Kingston. He retired in 1968. He has lived in Oxford since 1972. He keeps a close contact with his University OTC where he was a cadet in 1944, and which is one of the most flourishing in the country.

The 23rd/42nd RTR Association has about 90 members - though scattered throughout the country and, like others, ageing. However it manages a very good turn out for its annual St Georges Day lunch (April 23rd), the only official get together. This is held in the Officers Mess at St John's Hill and there is an excellent buffet.

The London Regiment, whose HQ (Anzio) Company is at St John's Hill, have made The Association most welcome - it could not have more delightful hosts.

## Remembrance Day, Shoreham



*The Standard Bearer is Frank Bell (2/5th Queen's) and Doug Moody (2/6th Queen's) taken at The Royal British Legion's Shoreham Branch.*

### Passing it on

I had the honour and privilege of being invited in early December 1994 to talk to potential young NCOs about to step on the first rung of the promotion ladder, on how we went about the same traumas way back in 1938 onwards.

The value of the talk is best left to those who had to sit through it, listening to some old codger from way back, and perhaps after a long hard day of grafting, they might well have been looking forward to a good cuppa instead. I could not have been better looked after, from the time the driver arrived at my home to the time he arrived back at my home, as if I had been the Colonel-in-Chief herself. I was met by the Regimental Sergeant Major, his PMC, and the Cadre Instructional Team, and was accorded every possible courtesy.

Before the talk I was invited into the Sergeants Mess, where I was introduced to members, and after the talk was invited back to the Mess for dinner, a glass of beer, and further reminiscences of days gone by.

Indeed so engrossed was I with the excellent atmosphere of that foundation (The Sergeants Mess) that time went by so quickly, and before I new it, the car had arrived to take me home, but not before one last very kind gesture. The Regimental Sergeant Major presented me with a beautifully framed picture of a PRIVATE MOYSE who served with The Buffs in China in or around 1860, and who was killed by the Chinese Mandarin because he would not bow to their demands. The poem called The Private of The Buffs immortalises his action. I hope I didn't take the wind out of the RSM's sails, when I told him I knew the poem almost by heart, and there and then recited the first verse almost exactly. The picture now hangs on the wall over the head of my bed, and stands sentinel over me whilst I sleep in peace.

Finally, through these lines, I would like to say to all those old warriors of the old and bold brigade, sad as it is that we have lost the famous names of our Regiments, The Queen's Royal, The Buffs, The East Surreys, The Royal Sussex, The Queen's Own Royal West Kents, The Royal Hampshire and The Middlesex Regiments, what I saw and experienced in that short time in the Sergeants Mess of 2nd Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, you can feel very proud and rest assured that all those traditions that you held so dear are being maintained in the highest traditions of all those Regiments that you and I served in those many years ago.

Tommy Atkins

## So There We Were

**1665** The Tangiers Regiment were having a bad time in their title territory. Frequently attacked by tribesmen, short of food and in arrears of pay, they were attempting to construct a harbour mole under atrocious weather conditions, ironically, a ship bearing relative bad news from Tangiers to Portsmouth was named the *Happy Return*.

**1685** The Queen's were one of several regiments reviewed by King James in Hyde Park. Mistrustful of the militia after the Monmouth Rebellion, the King wished to increase the strength of the Regular Army but Parliament, jealous of its powers, reduced his requested budget from £1,200,000 to £700,000.

**1715** The Queen's were dispersed by companies in various parts of Great Britain, including such places as Carlisle, Tynemouth, Bridgenorth and Ludlow. The Regiment, was now temporarily titled "Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales's Own Regiment of Foot" and remained so until the Princess of Wales became Queen when its original title was resumed.

The 31st Regiment were in Ireland where their Colonel, Sir Harry Goring, who was suspected of Jacobite sympathies, was eventually forced on political grounds to sell his commission. He was succeeded by Lord John Kerr son of the 1st Marquis of Lothian.

**1765** The 70th Regiment were in the West Indies where service was unpopular with the Army due to severe health problems. So distant were these foreign stations that the home-staying headquarters staff often had difficulties in spelling the names of the places where their overseas counterparts were garrisoned. Grenada apparently caused such difficulty that it was placed under the general heading of "CHARIBEE ISLANDS". The Queen's, serving in Ireland, were later transferred to the Isle of Man, arriving there on 26th June and having initially to encamp in fields while awaiting completion of regular barracks.

**1785** The Queen's at Gibraltar were somewhat disgraced by the conduct of one of their officers, Lieutenant Greene, who seriously assaulted a civilian and in consequence was severely punished by Court Martial. The 70th at Exeter, were described as being low in strength and were later moved to Plymouth Dock.

**1815** The 70th Regiment were in Canada where they were commanded by Lieutenant General The Hon Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, KB, who had seen service in the West Indian campaign. On home service the Queen's were inspected at Haslar Barracks by Major General Sir K A Howard, KCB, who, although favourably impressed, was nevertheless concerned about poor recruiting progress and the frequency of Court Martials for drunkenness. One sentence was alleged to have been "700 lashes" which must have had a sobering effect.

**1835** In India the 31st were at Kurnal where Major Bolton, a survivor of the Peninsular War, rejoined from England and was promoted Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment. Also in India, The Queen's at Bombay were seemingly short of Captains, so much so that it was ordered that those on staff duty were to be returned to the Regiment.

**1875** The Queen's, again at Bombay, provided half a battalion for employment as guards of honour to the Prince of Wales at Government House during his visit to the territory. The 70th at Peshawar received a fresh draft of sixty young soldiers from the Depot. Enlisted for six years

with the colours and six in the Army reserve, they were viewed with disfavour by long-service men who, as ever, disliked innovations. They were nevertheless described as being of good physique and making good soldiers.

**1895** The East Surreys arrived in Malta in March and remained there until October when they returned to England to be stationed at Dover. The Queen's were involved in numerous route marches in India, proceeding to and from such places as Nowshera, Fort Attack, Umballa, Ferozepore, Solon and Dagshai. (The last two places were to gain notoriety in later years through their associations with the mutiny of the Connaught Rangers in 1920).

**1925** The Queen's in Aldershot Command, took into use their new cap badge and buttons as recommended by the Regimental Committee. The badge was described as "consisting of an older and more historically correct lamb bearing a square flag and standing on a flat scroll with no motto or device".

**1945** With the second World War over both Regiments in various stations were re-organising. Experienced veterans (many of them sadly missed) departed homewards and to civvy street, being replaced by young volunteers and National Service men who were to be trained in, and embody, the fine traditions of their predecessors.

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## Prisoners of War Reunion

The Surrey branch of British Red Cross is planning to hold a reunion of all POWs from World War II and subsequent wars to coincide with the 125th Anniversary of the formation of the British Red Cross.

The planned date for the reunion and location is still to be confirmed but it is likely to be early August in the Guildford/Godalming area.

Any of our members (or widows) who wish to receive an invitation to attend this function is asked to write to The Secretary at Howe Barracks, Canterbury. Please mark on front of envelope 'Prisoners of War Reunion' in bottom left hand corner.

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## Lisieux Commemorative Medal

The Town Council of Lisieux has decided to commemorate the liberation of the town in August 1944 by striking a commemorative medal. According to the regimental history and records held in Lisieux all members of 131 Brigade will be eligible for the award of this medal. Further clarification is being sought from the Town Council as to the final criteria for the award, but we have been asked to supply a medal roll to the town. Any members who consider they will be eligible, having taken part in the liberation of the town, should write to the Secretary giving the following details, or as much as he can.

Number, Rank, Full Name, Regiment, Battalion, (Platoon/Coy). Please mark on the front of envelope 'Lisieux Commemorative Medal' in bottom left hand corner.

# LETTERS



## Colonel H F Bott MC writes:-

I was interested to read Colonel Toby Sewell's letter in the November Newsletter about the Glorious First of June cricket match and celebrations at Varmigliano in 1945. He and your other readers may be interested in those of the enclosed photographs, taken on that day, which you may wish to publish.

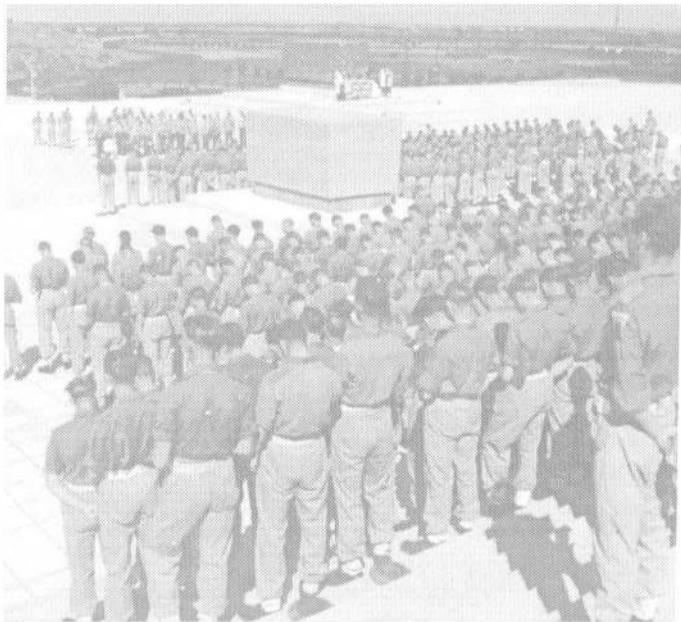


*Glorious First of June Cricket Match, Varmigliano 1st June 1945. Field Marshal Alexander, General Sir John Harding, Major General J Y Whitfield, Brigadier W H Stratton and senior Royal Navy officers watching.*

The cricket match preceded by a 169th (Queen's) Infantry Brigade Memorial Service at the site of an Italian Memorial at Redipuglia after which, those present, marched past the Commander, 56th (London) Infantry Division, Major General J Y Whitfield CB DSO OBE.

The Royal Navy subsequently entertained members of the brigade on various warships anchored off Tricote including *HMS Ajax* of the Battle of the River Plate fame.

*Pictured top right: Royal Navy v Queen's cricket match, Varmigliano 1st June 1945. Flag officer Royal Navy meeting Field Marshal Alexander, Major General J Y Whitfield and Brigadier W H Stratton Comd. 169 (Queen's Infantry Brigade).*



*169 (Queen's Brigade) Memorial Service Redipuglia, 1st June 1945.*

## Dr Merton Seigleman writes:-

I refer to the article by Katherine Gibson on Queen Catherine of Braganza in the May 1994 edition of the Newsletter No.55 - also the letter by RTWM in the November issue No.56. No mention has been made of the fact that Queen Catherine's great claim to fame is that she made the drinking of TEA popular in Britain.

Tea was first developed as a drink in China, where it was called Ch'a from where we developed our word char. It was not introduced to Britain until about 1650 - but it did not catch on as a drink.

Only when Charles II married Portuguese Catherine in 1661, did things begin to change. She arrived with her dowry of Bombay and Tangier - and her tea chests. The King neglected her and so she found solace in drinking tea. The court ladies imitated her and the taste for tea spread to bourgeois housewives like Mrs Pepys. However, because of the high price of tea, the drinking did not spread far beyond the court.

Tea drinking and brewing became a high status ceremonial, which only the richest and most refined

ladies, understood. However during the 18th Century the cost of tea fell and the taste for it, spread.

I thought the above information might be of interest to your readers, since it deals with our "National Drink".

*Source Material:- 1)Open university social science foundation course. 2)Commodities-Rowling. H.-London free association books.*

**Mrs J Brooks writes from Nelson, New Zealand:-**

My Father and I had a most pleasant trip to England and Italy and thank you so much for your friendliness and assistance.

Dad's fitness and vigour increased remarkably while we were on holiday and going to Italy to see the war-time fighting areas has helped him come to terms with old mental wounds. He especially enjoyed the various reunions we attended in England and was very proud to wear his medals for the first time at Guildford. This trip has been good for me too, as until now, I knew little of Dads war-time years. We met many good and helpful people, in particular, Fred Blackborow of Dagenham and Stan Blay of Guildford. Thank you for making our trip so memorable.

*Editors Note:* Mrs Brooks is the daughter of John Sears who served with 2/6th Queen's.

**Correction, Major "Nib" Penn writes:-**

What an excellent account in your Newsletter No.56 of the events that took place at Cassino Italy in 1944. I was 2i/c of 'A' Coy (1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment) and acting as Beachmaster to that company in the final assault (11th May 1944) when we crossed the Rapido river. A correction in the account therefore please.

Major Peter Plastow was company commander during that action and was awarded the Military Cross for his valiant efforts; not Major Joe Smart as reported. He was invalided out of our Battalion in March that year. He never did like the cold and was well known for his comments on it.

**J A Neal writes:-**

It is always interesting to be reminded in the Queen's Newsletter of colleagues one served with 50 years ago.

In the May and November issues I have read with interest LWG's memories of Anzio and S G Madge's tributes to LWG, Orderly Room Sergeant of 2/5th Queen's and FAH Ling, his then Commanding Officer.

I served with LWG in the Battalion Orderly Room before becoming a Platoon Sergeant in 'D' Company of 2/5th Queen's and later, Battalion Intelligence Sergeant. I have warm memories of my days spent with both of your correspondents and I have little doubt that Captain S G Madge, as Adjutant, would have had an excellent relationship with his C.O. in the early days in Italy, John Whitfield, who clearly shared Captain Madge's religious convictions. Faith in God was an essential requirement in those demanding days.

Congratulations on another first-class Newsletter. Keep it up !

**Jack Sheppard writes from Alicante, Spain:-**

I have the November Newsletter to hand. Many thanks, for this was a particularly interesting issue, and so full of memories for ex Queensmen.

Only a person who served in the forces, shared the hardship and savagery of battles can really understand comradeship so sadly lacking in our modern society of civilians today.

Young people today are inclined to ignore advice given by their elders and the results are too obvious, Crime soars in our cities, drugs take over the minds of too many. The 'I'm alright Jack' attitude is all too apparent. Could we not reverse these trends by bringing back 'National Service'. It seems that a spell in the Services would give young men a new approach to life. The friendship and close ties that are demonstrated in the Newsletter some fifty five years on, are proof of that 'something' that ex and serving servicemen can understand and enjoy. My six years with the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in India and Burma gave me so many lessons of life and experiences that are unforgettable. I went into war as a boy and returned as a man.

The front page of No.56 showing the drawing of the Stoughton Barracks brought back some very strong memories of drilling in 1939 in my civilian clothes, as there were no uniforms available. Cigarettes and condoms being delivered to ones bed each morning. You never refused them because the other guys might think you a 'cissy'.

I would like to make a request, that the Regiment should send a letter of appreciation to Don Papworth in Shillong, India, for all the work he does in connection with the Kohima and other Memorials, honouring our dead in Burma.

**Captain C E Smith writes from Dorking:-**

I have recently been loaned a copy of the Association Newsletter, by Roger Sawtell who served with the 1/7th Bn and also lives in Newdigate. Congratulations to all concerned on the excellence of this publication which brought memories to me of the years I served with the Regiment from 1932 to 1945.

I attempted to renew contact with the Association a few years ago and had the pleasure of meeting you at one of the 1/5th Annual Dinners at Sandfield Terrace, and at the Annual Service at Guildford Cathedral.

My initial enquiries were delayed as nearly three years ago my wife sustained "brain damage" as the result of a fall, and is now a patient in a local Nursing Home. You will appreciate that my full attention has been directed to her care. I am told that recovery is unlikely.

To re-cap my Service details:- I joined the Regiment in 1932 and was posted from the Depot to the 2nd Bn in Aldershot and became an NCO Instructor with the Signals and served in that capacity throughout my seven years service.

I was recalled from the reserves to assist in training the militia until shortly before the outbreak of World War 2. I was recalled again and posted to the permanent Staff at the Regimental Depot and Queens Camp. Then on to the Royal West Kent Depot at Maidstone, from there I was granted an Emergency Commission and posted to the 13th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment serving at Plymouth, Lancaster and Folkestone, and attained the rank of Captain. My next posting was to the 1/5th Bn The Queen's and I remained with them until my release in November 1945. You may like to know that I was in command of the 1/5th Queen's Guard of Honour on the Victory Parade on the 21st July 1945. I still have the programme showing the Order of March and Units taking part. I am also a 'Life Member' of The Queen's Royal Regiment OCA and still have my original Membership Card.

I am now 83 years of age and am fit and active.

**S A Wheeler writes from Sunbury-on-Thames:-**

I am very pleased to have received the Regiment's Newsletter. It is such a well edited magazine. When I was demobbed I seemed to have lost contact, having moved from my former address. Reading through previous Newsletters, I wondered if there was ever a mention of the

young soldiers 70th Battalion Queen's Royal Regiment which was formed in 1940 when I myself enlisted and others were sent to Salesian College (Battersea) for training for Guard Duties at Croydon Aerodrome, all of us were 18 years old, too young to go on active service. If ever you come across any mention of The 70th Battalion I would love to have news of old comrades.

#### H Jones writes from New South Wales, Australia:-

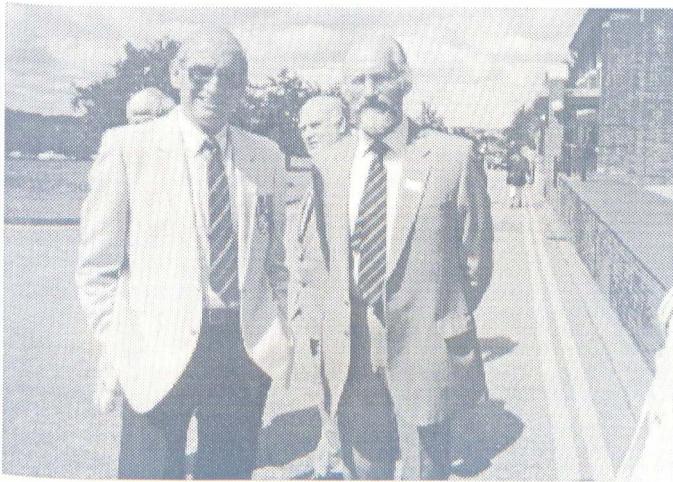
In response to your request as to the identity of those involved in the photos on page 34 Newsletter 56, I believe it is elements of support platoon A Coy 3rd Bn Queen's Surreys.

Cpl H Jones, myself on far left. I was part of the mortar section, my No 2 beside me. At rear, fourth left is Pte Selwyn Johns who went on to join the 1st Bn and saw service in Northern Ireland. Sixth left, Sgt Cyril Corcoran, the section commander (now deceased).

One matter of general interest, myself and another Cpl from A Coy provided the sentries for the Old Colours on the colour presentation parade when I was with 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

I was discharged when emigrating to Australia in 1964. I rejoined 17 Bn Royal New South Wales Regiment and after many postings finished my army reserve career as RSM of 8 Signal Regiment at age 55.

I would like to say how much I enjoy the Newsletter. On a visit to England last year I attended the service at Guildford in June with another member and long time friend Frank Chatfield from Reigate, who made the rank of Sgt before discharge. I am the one on the left in the light jacket.



#### W Oliver writes from Crawley:-

Thank you for the Newsletter, I look forward to each copy, it's a very nice way of keeping in touch and knowing what is going on around the regiment, you see I was born into the regiment and later became myself part of it, and joined the 17th Queen's until they were disbanded in Holland 1944, I was then posted to the 1st Bn Queen's in Berlin, they joined the Berlin garrison during the blockade, the Norfolks and Queen's were together in Spandau, Berlin 1948-1949. In the last Newsletter I read about the old depot Stoughton Barracks, it is such a shame to see the destruction, part of our regimental history, we once lived in married quarters 1938/1941, as my father was a regular soldier Sgt T Oliver, I knew every inch of Stoughton Barracks and many faces, and don't forget the new Queen's Camp built behind the Barracks later to become the home of the A.T.S. Sir forgive me I could go on and on, I have so many memories of the regiment before and during the war, so I will end my letter.  
God bless all comrades.

#### R Kalinski writes from Stanmore:-

To answer F Watson of Walthamstow regarding the whereabouts of Captain "Holy Joe" Mullins he was my officer in charge of the M.T. until taken over by Mr Hopkins who was unfortunately killed by shell fire the day before we were relieved in the Queen's box at the battle of the Arakan. He was a real gentleman.

Going back to Capt Mullins I met him in Baker St, London during the 1950s he was a priest in the local church. At that time I was working in a barbers shop in Baker Street and Capt Mullins became a customer until after a while he came to tell me he was taking me to lunch because he was going back to India to work, I think in a missionary school. I have not seen or heard from him since.

I was also sorry to hear of the death of Capt Hamilton, I was also one of the draft that went to India on the 20th January 1940. He must have been one of the tallest officers in the British Army. I came home with him on the *Orion* in Nov 1944, the other officer on the draft was Lt De Saulles. I would also like to mention a few words regarding the death of Johnny Luxford, we all used to attend the reunion every year in the Union Jack Club with some of the boys. Sgt Sid Pilch, Tom Major, Dick Lucas and myself attended his funeral in Weybridge. Heartfelt sympathy to his dear wife Elizabeth. He will be sadly missed.

All the very best to all my old comrades in the Queen's.

#### W R Hewitt writes:-

Thank you for my last Newsletter. As always very good reading. I was in 13th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Shorncliffe, then Maidstone and on to Yorkshire, Helmsley with the 1st/6th Queen's, went out to India to join the 2nd Bn in Poona, but bad luck, had to have my arm in plaster, which stopped me going to Poona. I ended up in the 7th Bn King's Own Royal Regiment from Kalyan, at Bangalore. Then I went to the 2nd KORR at Cawnpore where the mutiny took place. From there I went to Lucknow, Calcutta, Chowringhee, on the way home for demob the 2nd KORR were getting off at Port Tewfik, which left the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers on the *HMT Georgic*, so I ended up with them before demob at Wrexham.

But I still say the Queen's is My Regiment I had the Queen's badge tattooed on my left arm out in India because the best time I had in the army was in the Queen's with all its spit and polish and saluting at all times. Once again thank you for Newsletter. Best wishes to yourself and all old comrades.

#### A W E Hitchcock writes from Rickmansworth:-

I was a member of the 1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment from before it was transferred to the 4th British Division in 1940 until de-mob in 1946.

I cannot recall the 4th Division sign, as mentioned in No.55 May 94, ever having been a single fourth quadrant of a circle. However two changes were made to divisional markings. When we first received the 4th Division sign it was a red circle with the FIRST (looking at it clockwise) quadrant offset but later this was changed to the FOURTH quadrant. This sign obviously generated the name of the 4th Division canteen in Athens, "The Dutch Cheese".

The other change which took place, I believe in 1942, was that it was realized that in the Order of Battle The East Surrey Regiment (31st of Foot) had precedence over The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (32nd of Foot) so all the vehicle divisional numbers were changed from 57 to 56, and vice versa.

Please find attached my subscription for this year's Newsletter. They are very interesting, quite often explaining things we didn't really know fully about at the time they happened!

**C Smith writes:-**

Am writing this letter to thank you for the last Newsletter which I was pleased to receive. It brought back memories especially regarding Monte Camino in the Italian Campaign where my late regiment the 2/5th Queens took over from a Scots Guards Battalion on the 29th Dec 1942. I was in the MT section and so we had the task of portering supplies to our two companies on the top. Have enclosed some photographs of Monte Camino which may be useful for later issues of the Newsletters. There is also a photograph taken at the end of the war in Venice of the MT Platoon with myself marked in same.

**A R Cook writes from London:-**

On a recent visit to Clandon I established that Lt Roupel VC East Surrey Regiment was a brother of Brig Roupel who was the Commander of Fixed Defences (CFD) at Portsmouth in 1940 and have often wondered how this relationship affected my future promotions in the RA.

As I enlisted in the 6th Bn East Surreys TA in 1936 age 14, I was under age by a few months, to accompany the Bn (then the 2/6th) to France in early 1940 even though I had reached the rank of acting unpaid L/Sgt.

During the evacuation of France in 1940 I was transferred, under protest, to a Heavy Regiment Coast Artillery RA, and was allowed to retain my acting rank of L/Sgt pending my new CO's discretion. Having no knowledge of gunnery I with other immatures, as we were termed, from the Surreys, mounted guard at Southsea Castle which was the HQ of the CFD until such time as we were retrained as Gunners.

On one particular occasion I was Guard Commander when the CFD entered the Castle and of course the Guard was "turned out". The CFD congratulated me on the smartness of the guard and remarked that he wasn't used to such a high standard of smartness and how come? I pointed out that we had recently been transferred from the Surreys - he said that obviously accounted for it as his brother had been in the Surreys, he must have conveyed his feelings to my CO for I was immediately made paid Sgt followed by getting my 'GUN' (full Sgt) in the next few months. I was eventually posted to East Africa and saw service in Abyssinia, Italian and British Somalilands.

**Pat Cummins writes:-**

Thank you so much for sending me a copy of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association's Newsletter. It is a splendid publication which I thoroughly enjoyed reading.

Further to the short story - 'Kohima- A Gunner's Tale' which produced the letter from Antony Mett, the brother-in-law of Brigadier R H M Hill CBE (then Lt/Col).

Brigadier Hill commanded 24th Indian Mountain Regiment, Indian Artillery at Kohima and, in my view, by the strategic deployment of his guns, played a significant and decisive role in preventing the Japanese from occupying Kohima thereby halting their intended move to their primary objective - Dimapur - virtually unopposed. Brigadier Hill's account of the Battle for Kohima is in the form of part of his lecture to the Royal Artillery Historical Society at Woolwich in 1969 and is included in the book "Tales of the Mountain Gunners" edited by Lt Col C H T McFetridge & Major J P Warren (William Blackwood).

I am sure you would find it interesting reading. With my best wishes for the continued success of your excellent Newsletter.

**Mrs M E Rowe writes:-**

Thank you very much indeed for the last Newsletter. Thank you for the calendar. We keep them in a pristine condition they are too precious and beautiful to hang on the wall.

I wore dad's medals on Remembrance Sunday very proudly, and my sister and I marched with the band and procession for a little way. I love all the 'pomp and circumstance' on these great occasions one of the few occasions we feel proud to be English.

Daily in the "Telegraph" we read in the "In Memoriam" column names of service men 19-20 years of age in the first and second wars still lovingly remembered. I hope one day to visit the museum. My dad took us to all the London Museums regularly we had to walk most of the way but what a lovely way to install in us a love of beautiful things that didn't appear in our mundane lives. We have so much to thank him for.

We have so much to thank you for too, your great kindness to Dad, I don't think you will ever know how much it meant to him. It was like he hadn't been forgotten no, I can't put it into words. Will close now so 'Goodnight' and 'God bless'.

**G Dibley writes:-**

Thank you for my copy of the Newsletter. Once again you have produced an excellent publication which is interesting, informative without being overly nostalgic and a great memory reviver, for instance the article and photographs on page nine concerning Stoughton Barracks. I went through those gates on the 23rd March 1936.

I joined Ladysmith Platoon the following day and met the individuals who were to influence my life for the next six months. Platoon Sergeant, Sgt Sam Sharp; Platoon Corporal, Cpl Wilshaw; PTI, Cpl Cole; Education instructor, Sgt Batt AEC. Capt R M Burton was OC Training Coy.

The article about 'Barrack Life' on page 15, reminded me of 'shining hour' at Stoughton Barracks which was held I believe between six and seven o'clock most evenings of the week. One of the rituals was to sit on your bed cleaning your boots, which were rarely up to standard, facing the platoon sergeant who stood with his backside to the fire, asking questions about regimental history and the battle honours shown above the beds.

**F R Lewell writes from Stanmore:-**

It is always sad to read of the obituaries of old colleagues. One that really made me feel sad was that of Ex Colonel Wreford Brown - what a character?

Between the wars and in the thirties I had the good fortune to serve with the 2nd Bn. We had a particularly good football team of which Mr Wreford Brown was quite an important member. One occasion I will always remember was when we played the H.L.I. who were then stationed at Dover.

All of a sudden Mr Wreford Brown said "excuse me referee", who was a trifle non plussed, without waiting for an explanation, Wreford beckoned on to the field his batman, who staggered thereon with a huge wireless set - and both teams plus the officials gathered round to listen to the Grand National!

I don't think the CO was much amused Mr Wreford Brown certainly seemed to be doing more of his share of Orderly officers for a while, still that was the then Mr Wreford Brown, what a character?

### A daughter of the Regiment writes:-

I received the November issue of the Newsletter with delight, at last. But would there be a further instalment of the story I was so eagerly awaiting? Was the May '94 issue a one-off? No! It was here - page 23 - "Rupert gets the Pip" - another tale from his humorous store of memories, an hilarious sequel to "Rupert goes to Guildford". I was soon laughing aloud at his exploits. The man is a tonic. What the Army wanted to know about Rupert 'on fahsands of forms', I should like to read in 'fahsands of episodes'.

Or on second thoughts, perhaps if Rupert would kindly publish his autobiography now, it would save me having to wait six months for the next chapter. I'll be first in the queue for a signed copy!

### Reg Dickinson writes from Victoria, Australia:-

Thank you for the November Newsletter which arrived early this year, Captain Cook could have done better!! Thank you too for publishing our Golden Wedding Anniversary, my wife Gladys was very impressed.

The November issue brought the memories flooding back. The article on Stoughton Barracks, this brought a feeling of nostalgia to me.

Eighty-one years ago this March, Dad, Charles William Dickinson was a regular soldier with The Queens Royal (West Surrey's), living with my Mother and my three brothers in married quarters at Stoughton Barracks. In mid April that year Mother went to the Louise Margaret Hospital at Aldershot to bring me into the world. Soon after World War One broke out, we were evacuated to the country for fear of German Zeppelins raiding the Barracks. We finished up at Aldington in Kent, where I started school at the age of four years. In 1920 we returned to Stoughton Barracks. The school, next door through the gate was nice and handy where we boys attended.

After 29 years service Dad decided to get back into Civvy Street. We didn't move far, just half way down Barrack Road, No.25. This remained my Home address until our marriage which as you know was in 1944. Incidentally Dad's exit was in 1927. Sadly we lost Mum in 1938, Dad in 1948. Yours truly is the sole survivor of the family. Thirteen years later I returned to Stoughton having been called up on Thursday 13th June 1940 at 12 noon, to be given a number and a uniform. Ironical I should be called into Dad's old Regiment, but I have NO regrets about that. I was demobbed from Stoughton on the 12th March 1946, fit and well and with many comrades as friends for life. "A Fond Memory" What a striking piece of poetry. Congratulations to PVM whoever that may be. I look forward to seeing more articles on Cardwells Keep. Maybe pay a visit if we can muster up a few extra dollars. Well Sir I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I have writing same. Thanks again for all the good work you do for the Association. Best Wishes.

*Editors Note: The letters PVM are not initials but the first letters of one of our regimental mottoes.*

Pristinae Virtutis Memor

### V G Cleaver writes from Evesham, Worcs:-

*Extracts are printed below of a letter received by Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis from V G Cleaver who served in the 2/6th Queen's with Brigadier Curtis, then a youthful Lieutenant.*

Just a few lines to thank you for your letter It came as a lovely surprise to hear from you after all these years. I remember you as a young Lieutenant in D Coy.

I was very sorry to hear that Capt Hooper has passed on. I would have loved to have met him again. I well remember being on HQ guard when Capt Hooper came

down and saw the Sgt of the guard and arranged for a replacement to take over from me so that I could play football for the Coy. I have never forgotten the occasion and I never will. Always treated well by him.

I well remember our camp at Kirkuk. The hole in the ground with the tent over the top of it with the Fly sheet over the top of that. How we would take it in turn to go out to the back of the camp at night to meet the natives who would bring their baskets of eggs and trade them for our cigarettes. Then we would take them back to the tent and have a good old fry up on the primus stove. Where did all those primus stoves come from. Every tent had at least one. There must have been thousands. Where did they all go to after we left.

I remember Capt Hooper giving us the afternoon off from other duties. Quite an amount of money was being placed on us to win, we were told that the MO was ready to shoot us if we didn't win. He had backed us quite heavily, we won 3-1.

The 2/5th and their supporters arrived in their 3 ton trucks and parked them all down one side of the pitch. I think it was probably the biggest match that was played during the time we were stationed there. Visitors came also from the Ox and Bucks and the London Irish who were also down the road from us. The reason I remember that match so visibly was because it was the last match I was ever going to play in. I had been told I was in line to play for the Battalion side.

Our movement of the Division across to North Africa put paid to that. Football meant a lot to me in those days. I had played regularly for my local team from leaving school and up till the time I was wounded. In the close season I played cricket. Shortly before call up to the Forces I had been placed on the Worcestershire CCC books for my Trials for the County. That also was put a stop to. While we were at Kirkuk I volunteered for a signals course which I passed and was in that capacity with another chap as signallers to D Coy when I got wounded just outside Enfidaville Easter 1943.

Just prior to being blown up by the shell that had my name on it we had been mortared out of a wadi. We were forced to retreat down the wadi about half mile and were told we would have to reform. I had the wireless/set on my back and my mate carried the heavy battery. We took up our position with Coy Headquarters for the next advance and took the opportunity to test the units as they had taken quite a bit of shaking about during the retreat.

During the brief check my mate discovered two valves were shattered so the set was taken off my back and my mate said if I stayed where I was he would take it back to BHQ and get another set. I sat down under the bank of the wadi and waited and waited for what seemed ages. So I made up my mind to make my own way back to BHQ after reporting to the Sergeant in charge explaining what had happened and receiving orders to report back to Coy HQ position as soon as possible. I finally found BHQ after I had asked directions from some Gurkhas who were with us.

I was directed to Signals HQ where I found my fellow signaller and was told to grab a mug of tea while a set was made serviceable for us. About half an hour later the two of us with our Trans/Rec set out to rejoin D Coy. We were going along a track lined with large cactus when a jeep caught up with us and stopped. The officer driving asked us if we were going to join D Coy. We replied "Yes Sir", so he said "jump on", he was just going up to see them off as he was the Commanding officer. I believe his name was Wilson.

We got back to D Coy HQ and were told to take up our position as they were about to advance to a ridge about 500 yds in front of us. The artillery was going to give us covering fire. I remember the 25s opening up and the order to move forward. I had gone forward about 200 yds when there was a terrific flash and I was dumped on the ground. I remember the stretcher bearers attending to me and carrying me and placing me on the stretcher across the back of the jeep which had brought us up to D Coy. I remember being lifted off the jeep and being placed on the ground next to some more casualties. The next thing I remember was coming round in bed inside a tent. A soldier was sat at my side holding my arm. He said he was there to stop me from making a move with my arm as I was receiving a blood transfusion. I was in a New Zealand casualty clearing station and I was due to go into the operating theatre.

At the time I was in no pain and I asked him what had happened to me, but all he said was he would let me know after I came back out of the operation. When I came round after the operation I was told that my right leg had to be amputated at mid thigh, but my left leg should be alright. Apparently a shell had exploded directly in front of me with the shrapnel cutting through my legs. If I had been slightly forward I would have been blown up with the shell and if I had been slightly farther back I would have received the shrapnel in my chest and head. So I consider myself very lucky.

Eight years later I was forced to go into hospital and have a large piece of shrapnel removed from my back. It was situated a half inch from my spine. There were five channels of poison down my back and breaking out as deep abcesses. It was only after going into hospital about five times to have these abcesses lanced that they decided to investigate and found this shrapnel which they removed. I have still got it. I keep it in a match box. After the operation they asked me what had caused the V shape scar in my back. I could not tell them. The surgeon and doctors finally came to the conclusion that it had occurred from the result of the shrapnel entering my back. It could have only happened other than the shell which caused my main injuries as all scars and burns to the flesh was consistent to the shell having exploded in front of the body.

That left only one other explanation and that was that it was the same piece of shrapnel that had passed through the Trans/Rec which I had on my back when the valves got shattered. The surgeon said that when the shrapnel entered the body it numbed the immediate area and the wound had sealed itself and as it had happened only a short period before receiving the main injuries I wouldn't have realised anything had happened.

Since that period of time I have enjoyed very good health. I did have my gall bladder removed about eight years ago and had Keyhole surgery on my good knee twelve months ago.

For thirty years up till I retired January 1986 I was employed at Smiths Industries Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, working on assembly of aircraft instruments. Well I am going to close this letter now, with best wishes to all.

#### **J H Smith writes from Portsmouth:-**

At a chance meeting with Ron May it came about that my friend Ernie Hibbert, who I thought had died years ago, was alive and well, and as we got called up together and served in the Middle East then in Burma with the Chindits (2 Queen's). We had some lovely times together and to see Ernie and his wife sitting there it was wonderful, having just lost another great friend Tom Best. May we all live long to be with them all again at Clandon and Guildford.

Should you see Ron May please convey my great thanks and we hope to all be together again soon. Best wishes to all.

#### **Henry Lewis writes:-**

With further reference to my letter of January 5 1995, when I advised you, that I had been in touch with Capt Ron MacLean, who commanded HQ Coy 1/5th Queen's and was a "CanLoan" officer, I am glad to report, that two weeks ago Ron and his wife Marguerite visited me in Prescott. We had a wonderful time, looking at old memorabilia and photographs and badges, and yesterday I visited them at their lovely home on Howe Island which is about 40 miles west of Prescott, and Ron gave me copies of a lot of photographs, which he had taken while serving with the 1/5th Queen's in 1944 and 1945.

I am also still in regular contact with Bernard Gershon and his wife Joyce, who live in Tetbury in Gloucestershire. "Gersh" was my signals sergeant, when I served with the 1/5th Queen's in Europe.

#### **J E Sears writes:-**

Thank you for sending the copy of the Enfidaville History. I remembered it just as if it was yesterday. I did enjoy the visit to England and Italy last year, and especially the visit to you at Howe barracks. Thank you for making us so welcome. It would have been nice to have taken up your offer to visit the museum in Dover, but time didn't permit.



On 10th September '94 we attended the reunion of the 2/6th Queens at the Union Jack Club. It was most exciting to meet some old comrades to whom I could chat about wartime experiences. I am pleased that so many have been in touch with interesting letters and photos.

In mid September we had ten days in Italy. We stayed in Rome for four days and visited the Anzio Landing Museum and the Anzio War Cemetery. After this we went to Salerno for two days and visited the War Cemetery there. The next day was Sunday and we joined the throngs on the promenade. Everyone was in their Sunday best, some people fishing, some boating, a real carnival atmosphere of happy people. It gave me a different perspective of Salerno, to that which I remembered from 50 years ago. We next moved on to Bologna from where we did a day trip to Savignano, (a small town near Rimini) which is where I was made a prisoner of war in 1944.

On our return to England we visited my family on the Isle of Wight. While there we happened upon a 50th anniversary "From War to Peace" exhibition. Included in it were some old newspaper articles about myself, copies of which I enclose. Our next place to visit was Clandon Museum which was most interesting and very comprehensive. I was re-acquainted with comrades I met at the reunion.



The last event on our agenda before returning to New Zealand was to attend the march-past of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment in Guildford. This was also the first proud occasion I'd had to wear my medals and I also had the honour of shaking hands with the Mayor of Guildford. At the luncheon afterwards I again had the pleasure of meeting other old comrades and swapping wartime tales. I have enclosed an account of my army service and a copy of the forged pass to Rome. You have both Brigadier G B Curtis and my permission to use it.

*Editors Note: This may be used in a later issue of the Newsletter*

#### **G R Lefevre writes:**

Please find enclosed subscription to the Association and a bit to help out. I consider it a small price to pay for such an excellent Newsletter and privilege to have known such men as I served with in The Queen's Royal Regiment. My "mucker" Steve Birchmore of the mortar platoon and I hope to visit Clandon in the spring, and we are really looking forward to it. The guide is a real eye opener to what is on show.

If there is any way I can help the Association please let me know won't you.

The article on the old 4th Vol Bn reminds me of the excellent book by J M A Tamplin entitled The Lambeth and Southwark Volunteers of which I have a copy. It might be possible to see if you can reprint the potted history of William Roupell who was the first CO of the Bn, it makes very interesting reading!!.

Well I will close now.

#### **"Cleggy" writes:**

I don't know who "Rupert" is, and I very much doubt if you would tell me, maybe you could find room in the Newsletter to pass my thanks on, for the amusing and excellent articles on his military career.

What an enterprising young officer he proved to be! For to be able to get the 'King's' agreement on wearing two famous County Regimental Badges, (I think it must have taken Monty about thirty years to achieve this feat).

I also remember the opening address, to the Officer Cadets at Mons, by Regimental Sergeant Major Desmond Lynch MBE DCM Irish Guards. The six foot table mentioned by "Rupert" used to sag in the middle with the weight of that giant frame. I used to pray that one day it would give way, and POMP would meet Circumstance on its way down, for he had called my Regiment a 'Fish and Chip' one in the mess one evening. I had to draw myself up to my full 5 foot 5 inches and try and look into those piercing blue Irish eyes at 6 foot 4 inches, and remind him that the Star of the East and Lamb of the West, were more than equal to any Foot or Line Regiment. (We had just amalgamated). I hope that we shall have at least one more chapter from "Rupert".

*The 'King' was a nickname for the then Lt Col G A White MBE commanding 1 Queen's Surreys, later Maj Gen G A White MBE.*

I hear on the 'Grapevine' that you are due for retirement soon. May I add my thanks, to the many that you have received in the past, for the wonderfully balanced Newsletters you have produced over the years. (I am somewhat surprised, I always thought that your job was occupational therapy recommended by the RMO). May Health, and Happiness, be your companions in the years ahead. Good Luck Old Soldier.

**Cleggy**

#### **Bob Edwards writes from Swansea:-**

I must congratulate the team responsible for the very high standard attained and maintained in producing, what is a very interesting magazine. I look forward to receiving it about a month before it is due. When it arrives I immediately spend a few minutes quickly scanning it to see if there are any articles covering my time with The Queen's Royal Regiment, (1953 to 1956) or references to my Uncle Bill, Willian Doncaster, who served with the same Regiment between 1927 to 39 and of course being recalled for the big bash 1939 - 45. He saw service in India and was involved in the Queen's rescue at the scene of the Quetta earthquake. I believe he was quite well known for his boxing ability. He was demobbed in 1945 with the rank of CSM having seen service in the Western Desert and Italy with the 8th Army.

After the initial scan I spend hours reading and re-reading the various articles. After reading I then store the magazine for future reference or when I feel like an interesting read. I enclose a cutting from the Daily Mail 11th Aug 1994. You can imagine my surprise to see my old RSM staring out of



a daily newspaper. The photo, of RSM Joe Simmons MBE MC was used to advertise an employment article published in the paper of that day. I have the same photo of RSM Simmons taken in Nov/Dec 1953 when the 1st Bn returned from Iserlohn after service with 2nd Infantry Division, hence the Crossed Keys arm flash seen clearly in the photo, and before the Battalion sailed out of Southampton on the MV *Georgic* for three and a half years service in Malaya. The occasion being the Regiment exercising its right having been granted the Freedom of the City of Guildford, to march through the city with flags flying, bands playing and bayonets fixed. Keep up the good work with the Newsletter.

#### **Stan Blay writes:-**

At the 2/6th Bn Queen's reunion held at the Union Jack club in September I met John Sears and his daughter who came over from New Zealand for the annual get together. Whilst here they were able to join us at Guildford for the freedom march, and also to visit Clandon Park on the Regimental Open Day, during which the enclosed photo was taken. It shows Doug Mitchell, Ron May, Howard Carter, Stan Blay and John Sears enjoying a welcome pot of tea at the Regimental Museum. During early January Ron Velvick and myself visited the Keep at Stoughton Barracks and were so pleased to see the regimental items displayed including the Tommy Atkins kit layout.

We had the opportunity to inspect the site later. Sadly, all the buildings of the old Barracks except the five buildings being retained have now been demolished as have the hutments and other war-time additions.

**Captain Ken Brooks writes from Ashurst:-**

Thank you for passing my letter to Dr G Court. We recently met and had a really enjoyable day together. It was as though July 1945 was but yesterday, and not almost fifty years ago. Our ladies were very supportive which augurs well for future reunions. I enclose a photograph if it is of interest. I look forward to seeing you all at Guildford in June. In the meantime many thanks for the superb Newsletter you continue to produce. Long may it continue!



*Captain Ken Brooks and Dr G Court who met again recently after fifty years. Many readers will remember Ken Brooks as the Editor of this Newsletter.*

**Mr P Moren writes:**

On a recent visit to Dover Castle I visited The PWRR and Queen's Regiment Museum. Mr Stenning the museum attendant suggested that I let you have details of an old comrade who is 98 years old.

My father Albert William Moren volunteered as a private in the Queen's (Royal West Surreys) in August 1914 and was in France by October 1914. His initial training was at Stoumont Barracks and the rifle ranges at Ash (Surrey). Most of his time was then spent in the trenches as a company runner. He was eventually wounded at Croisilles near Arras on April 2nd 1917 by a shell which killed some of his comrades. After 12 months convalescence at Fairburn House, Muir of Ord, Invernesshire he was down graded medically and spent a few months in The Royal Flying Corps. (Fairburn House is the childhood home of Angus Stirling - The Director General of the National Trust).

A few years ago he participated in a BBC2 documentary about the Christmas Truce in 1914. This programme was repeated on Christmas Day 1994. His powers of recall were excellent then, but he is now declining slowly. He spent all of his life driving, without any accident, but gave up his car before his 90th birthday. I know he was in the 7th Division, 2nd Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surreys) and I have been able to give him full details of the action in which he was wounded from the Public Record Office, Kew. As he was unconscious in the early morning, I was able to tell him 70 years later that his regiment was relieved by the Royal Welch Fusiliers at night.

His brother-in-law (my uncle) Wilfrid Dickens was also in the Queen's and was killed in action on May 9th 1915 at the age of 17 years 9 months, in France. I have a

photograph of Wilfrid in his uniform with rifle, and on the wall is marked 24th Battalion. Apart from his home address:- 59, Selkirk Road, Tooting, London S.W.17, I have been unable to find out anything else about him.

I hope you find this information about an 'Old Contemptible' from the 'Mutton Lancers' of interest. An army tradition is being maintained as his grandson (my sister's boy) is in a responsible position in the Army Air Corps at Wilton, Salisbury.  
With very best wishes.

**J F Livermore writes from Fareham:**

I am writing to ask you if it would be possible for me to obtain a regular copy of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Associations Newsletter. It was not until recently that I knew the Newsletter existed, it was when my brother in America sent me copies of numbers 53 and 54, how he obtained them I just do not know, obviously I would be willing to cover any cost involved.

Reading through the Newsletters, memories and names of the past came flooding back. I can remember RSM Gingell and RSM Worsfold, going to India on the *Nevassa* and coming home on the *Neuralia*.

My father was CSM later RSM Fred Livermore. I was born in Gibraltar and my sister was born in India, if it had not been for the war we would have gone to Malaya. My father ended up as a Japanese prisoner, he died a few years ago at St Dunstans, so as you can see I was reared in the East Surreys. In my possession I have many photos, a dance card from a Regimental Ball, a list of prisoners of war in Japan, and other items.

May I close by wishing the new Regiment all the very best, and best wishes to the Association.

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**Youthful Courage - The Taku Forts**

The account of the assaults on the Taku Forts in the November issue of the Newsletter makes interesting reading especially regarding the four V.C's won by The Hampshire Regiment. A fifth V.C., with Hampshire connections, was won by Hospital Apprentice Andrew Fitzgibbon, Indian Medical Establishment, attd. 2nd Bn. The Hampshire Regiment, who attended wounded under fire and was wounded himself. He survived the battle, eventually becoming an Apothecary and dying in Delhi in 1883.

He is acknowledged to be one of the two youngest winners of the Victoria Cross (aged 15 years, 3 months) the other being Drummer T. Flinn VC, also aged 15 years, 3 months.

RF

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**Buttoned Up**

Another interesting piece of information has been unearthed by our diligent researcher J. Thompson in a book entitled "Nothing to Lose" by Colin John, published in 1955. It is an account by the author who was an ex officer in the Royal Artillery and who after the war found himself down on his luck while in France and decided in 1948 to enlist in the French Foreign Legion. He mentions that while at the Legion depot at Marseilles, having given up his civilian clothes such as they were he was issued with a stop gap uniform of various items viz a pair of American Army trousers and a 1914 pattern British Army tunic complete with the buttons of The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. One wonders how this tunic came to be at the Foreign Legion depot. Possibly it was obtained among surplus material. The author on arriving in North Africa was issued with actual Legion uniform.

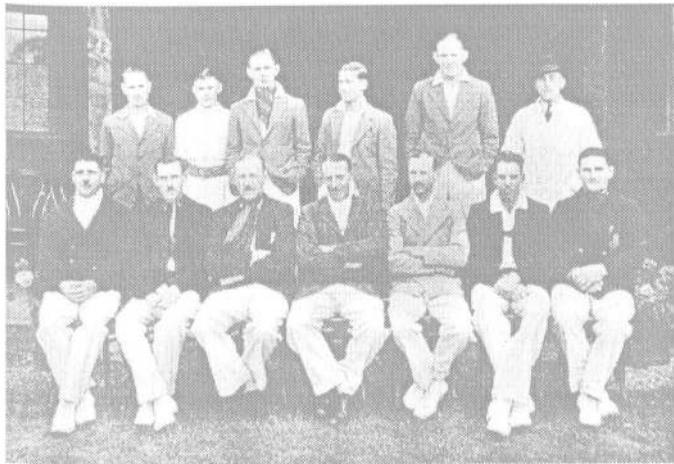
## From the Past

Don Billows has sent in the photo below from his collection. This photo was taken in the Wincheap, Canterbury c1916.



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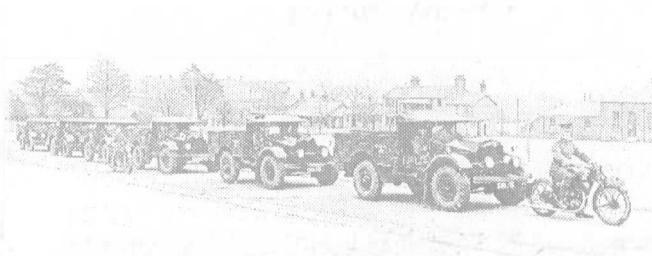
## The Depot



Cricket team, 1936.

Back row:- L. Sergt W Langridge, Pte R Hole, L. Cpl T Hand, Pte G Barnes, L. Cpl A Hicks, Pte F White.  
Front row:- Sergt A Batt AFC, Mr C Wakeford, Lieut J F Metcalfe, Major R K Ross, DSO, MC, Captain T H Dyke, Sergt S Sharp, Sergt-Instr G Moore, APTS.

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2 Queen's transport, Albany Barracks, Isle of Wight.



2 Queen's MT platoon, Isle of Wight

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## An Old Soldier Sings

(inspired by the efforts of the NAAFI Choral Society every Thursday night)

*Gather round me' muckers and close the Canteen Door,  
And I'll sing you Songs of India that you've never  
heard before,  
Do you know of Reilly's daughter and the end that her  
befell,  
Or the awful fate of the Verger who failed to pull the  
bell?*

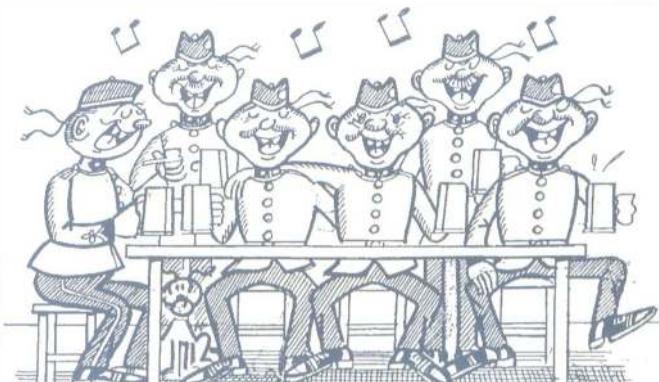
*I'll tell of Prussian Heroes who came across the Rhine  
And performed some daring deeds, as well as drinking  
wine.*

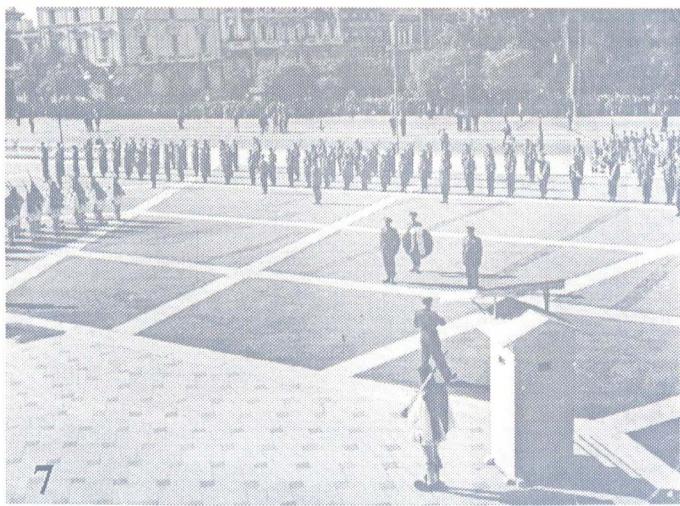
*We'll have that little ditty of Nellie by the Mill,  
Then follow with a story of doings in old Mobile.*

*For the North British Sakai from over Hadrian's Wall  
We'll sing some fifty verses of Kirriemuir's famous  
Ball,*

*There's the tale of Footman Thomas who met a  
peculiar fate,  
And the poor old deadbeat Lancer who had an unusual  
Mate.*

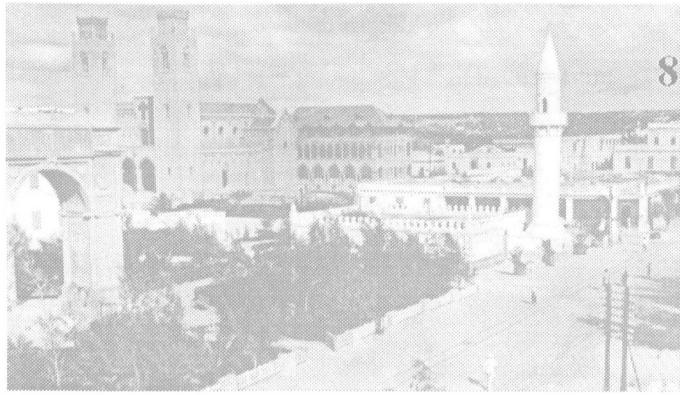
*We'll finish with a chorus that'll make the rafters ring  
About medieval England and its jolly rollicking King.  
So gather round me' muckers, close the Canteen Door,  
And I'll sing you a song of India that you've never  
heard before.*





7

Those Evzones were a poor lot! From Greece the battalion was moved to Mogadishu to take care of possible troubles as the Italians were returning to take over administration of that area. Locals were not pleased having regard to Italian treatment during the war! This was ordained by the United Nations (and there's still trouble there!).



8

Photo No 8. - A shot of the Mogadishu main street.

The battalion returned to UK - I was warned for Korea to replace Gloucestershire signals killed on the Imjin River. I served with the Glosters and returned with them to UK in 1951. Realising I had about a year to serve (extra Queens year) I rejoined The Surreys in Tripoli.

Photo No 9. - show a Tug of War team with me closest. Mrs McGee, Wife of the Commanding officer and RSM Turner (civvies with short hair) in attendance.

The last photo No 10 - shows some of us outside a billet. The chap extreme right is "Windsor Davies" of "It Ain't 'Alf Hot Mum" fame. He was Education Sgt attached to us. I promised when we last met, to not tell anyone the truth about his army career!! Well that very quickly covers my career Jan 1946-1952 inclusive. I was demobbed at Kingston-on-Thames, my one and only time at The East Surrey Depot.



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*Editors Note: Despite Mr Nolans reservations these photos and reminiscences of your service are exactly what the Museum is asking for (see page 20) and the printed sheets with this Newsletter.*

#### Thiepval

We drove along the straight road between Bapaume and Albert on the last day of October 1994. The rain was pouring down and the wind was blowing across the flat fields on either side of us with some intensity. Not a good day to be 'memorial seeing' one would imagine and yet maybe it was the right weather to see this area in - sunshine brings an air of happiness and lightness to a situation but with the bad weather you could imagine the utter despair and suffering that had taken place in the dark, dreary countryside around. A War Cemetery on our left - signs on either side of the road for other cemeteries, other memorials and then, in the distance to our right, a huge cathedral-like edifice standing square against the sky. You move along the road and the building gets larger and then the sign - The Thiepval Memorial - and you turn and drive up through the village, past the church and the building is lost in the trees to your right as you park the car. Walk along the gravel path, turn right and there across the grass is this enormous building that has no doors or windows in it, no feeling of warmth or comfort about it. Up the steps to an altar splashed with red poppy wreaths and then on either side of you on pillars that stretch high above you, are names - thousands and thousands of names - 72,086 to be precise and 90% of them of soldiers 'lost' in the fields around between July and November 1916. The name I had come to find was on the end pillar to the right of me Pier 12, Face C - facing out over the small cemetery and white graves below and the endless French countryside where the battle had been fought.

Here it was 1/23rd London Regiment and a short way below this title DAVID P H - the uncle whom I had never seen, never known but who had died somewhere around here at the age of twenty. Seventy-eight years later, I stood there, his niece aged 60 years full of emotion and tears for this young man who was only five years older than my beloved grand-daughter when he died so many years before.

Was I the first of his family who had found and come to see his name in this bleak place? I would like to think I was and that somehow he would know that I had been and brought with me love from the family who are left and who have 'David' blood in them. A misty and somewhat romantic figure, never spoken of by my mother except to say that he was killed in the First World War, this young man who died for what and for whom?

Brenda Tombs

# Regimental Deaths

*Barry* - On 28th November 1994, D J Barry, 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Bartle* - On 15th June 1994, RSM A Charles Bartle, aged 69 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Bevington* - On 31st October 1994, Colonel J G Bevington TD, aged 91 years, 22nd London Regiment (Queen's) and 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Blackwell* - In March 1995, Captain Vincent Walter Blackwell, 23rd London/42 RTR and then 4th Queen's Surreys.

*Branford* - On 11th November 1994, Private Joseph Branford, aged 90 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Buckle* - On 18th December 1994, in South Africa, Major General Denys Herbert Vincent Buckle CB CBE, aged 92 years.

Denys Buckle was commissioned in The East Surrey Regiment in 1923 and transferred to The Royal Army Service Corps three years later. He had a distinguished career in that corps, his last appointment being Major General in charge of administration, Middle East Land Forces. General Buckle maintained his friendships in The East Surrey Regiment throughout his long life.

*Burt* - On 18th August 1994, V J Burt, aged 75 years.

*Cole* - On 19th January 1995, Major Charles Frederick Cole MBE, aged 82 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Cooper* - On 17th April 1995, Private John Cooper, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

John Cooper was a pre-war territorial. He served as the battalion butcher throughout the war and continued in this trade after demob until his retirement.

*Croucher* - On 28th June 1994, Captain William Thomas Henry Croucher, aged 74 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Dennis* - On 16th November 1994, Private Harry Dennis, aged 81 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Drayton* - On 28th October 1994, Band Sergeant Harry Drayton, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Duncan* - Recently Sergeant Leo Duncan, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Sgt Duncan was a pre-war regular soldier who served in India and the NW Frontier. He later served with Airborne forces in the France and Germany theatre of operation. After discharge he joined the 6th Bn The Queen's and later served with 3rd Queen's Surreys.

*Emes* - On 20th December 1994, Norman Emes. The East Surrey Regiment.

He was a member of the Dunkirk Veterans Association (Hemel Hempstead Branch). His fellow comrades attended the funeral with three Standard Bearers. The family were greatly moved by this act of great comradeship, and very proud.

*Esler* - Recently Major (QM) Ronald H Esler, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Forrester* - On 9th November 1994, Sergeant A C Forrester, 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

*Foster* - On 7th December 1994, Major P G Foster, 1/5th Bn The Queen's 1939.

He served with 1/5th Queen's in France and Belgium 1940. He played cricket for Kent pre-war, and subsequently the Regiment. A past President of Kent CCC.

*Fowler* - On 26th January 1995, B D Fowler, 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Gwynn* - On 29th August 1994, H A Gwynn, 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Holt* - On 27th November 1994, Major P H B Holt, aged 78 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Major P H B Holt began his military career in The Artists Rifles. He was wounded at Dunkirk whilst serving as mortar officer with 1/6th Surreys. He later served with The Buffs at their depot in Canterbury where for a time he was 2i/c. In civilian life he became a surveyor, valuer and auctioneer, living and working in Ashford, Kent. On his retirement he went to live in France.

*Hucker* - On 21st November 1993, Corporal Albany John Hucker, aged 75 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Lawless* - On 1st November 1994, Private Patrick Joseph (Tom) Lawless, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Tom Lawless enlisted in 1940 and was posted to the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served in Palestine, North Africa and Syria where he was taken prisoner by the French Foreign Legion. Fortunately he was a POW for only fourteen days.

He then served with the 2nd Battalion at the Siege of Tobruk, Ceylon, India and took part in the Burma campaign as a Chindit. A period of service he was most proud of.

He was demobbed in 1946 but three months later he re-enlisted and was posted to 1st Queen's then in Singapore. He returned home with them and was posted back to 2nd Queen's in Dortmund. He served with them through the Berlin Air Lift and then moved to Iserlohn. By this time the 2nd Battalion had gone into suspended animation. Tom Lawless was a member of the draft sent to reinforce 1st Middlesex in Korea and stayed with them until 1952 when he rejoined 1 Queen's. He then served with that battalion and its successors in Malaya, BAOR, Aden, Hong-Kong, BAOR, Bahrain, UK and Berlin. He left the 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment in 1973 after serving for 33 years. He then served a position as storeman at The Staff College Camberley, where he served a further eleven years.

He served eight Quartermasters in the Regiment and three at the Staff College. No one entering his stores could fail to be impressed by his meticulous eye for detail and the order with which he ran his stores.

*Ling* - On 7th May 1995, Major General Fergus Alan Humphrey Ling CB CBE DSO DL, aged 81 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Colonel The Queen's Regiment 1973-1977.

*MacDonough* - On 17th November 1994, Sergeant Dermot Arthur MacDonough, aged 81 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*May* - On 19th September 1994, Sergeant Alf May, aged 82 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Many 1 Surreys, especially, B Coy in N. Africa will be sorry to learn of the death of Alf May. Pre-war he had been a Territorial in the 5th Northamptons. At the outbreak of

war he volunteered for the Surreys (his father served with the Surreys in the Great War). In Tunisia Alf was a platoon sergeant in B Coy 1 Surreys and he did a great job. He was very quiet but a most gallant soldier. He merited a decoration but like many others was not awarded one. He was badly wounded and this obviously affected his health. In his latter years he suffered quite a lot but always remained cheerful. When he was demobilised he became a railway signal man on the Kings Cross line.

**Merrett** - On 15th October 1994, Major R M Merrett, aged 80 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Mills** - On 11th March 1995, Private Douglas Mills, The East Surrey Regiment.

Douglas Mills joined the 1/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment at the outbreak of the War in 1939 and served with the Signals Platoon in North Africa and Italy and was about to come home for a well earned leave when the 1/6th Surreys were sent to Greece. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his courage in Italy.

He was demobbed after VJ Day 1945 and throughout his working life was the Secretary for the Hanworth Football Club an appointment he held for 40 years and was also the Vice President of the South West Middlesex Football League. Both he and his wife Joan were active members of their Royal British Legion Club.

**Thompson** - On 15th December 1994, Major B A Thompson, aged 84 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Major Thompson served with 1st Queen's in Tien Sin, N China as a Boy soldier. He served for a short period and then left the Army. On the outbreak of the Second World War, he re-enlisted and served as a training sergeant at the Reconnaissance Centre. He was parachute trainer and was an instructor for airborne forces prior to the Arnhem drop. He was commissioned from Staff Sergeant and completed his service as a Major.

He later worked for the Whitbread Brewery Group before starting his own business as a transport engineer.

**Todd** - On 13th January 1995, WOII P L A Todd, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Regiment.

**Waters** - On 6th May 1995, Colour Sergeant David Waters, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Regiment.

**Webber** - On 5th August 1994, Private Stan Webber, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Williams** - On 23rd June 1994, A J Williams.

## Regimental Families

**Craddock** - On 7th March 1995, Lady Jo Craddock, wife of Lt General Sir Richard Craddock, first Colonel of The Queen's Regiment and CBF Hong Kong 1963-64 during 1st Queen's Surreys tour.

**Fairbairn** - On 24th December 1994, Mrs Doris Edith Fairbairn, wife of Major R Fairbairn TD, late The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Lasbrey** - On 17th December 1994, Mrs Enid Lasbrey, widow of Lt Colonel J A Lasbrey MBE, late The East Surrey Regiment.

## Obituaries

### Colonel J G Bevington, TD

James Geoffrey Bevington died peacefully at home on his 91st birthday, 31st October 1994. Cremation took place at a private family service on 4th November 1994, followed by a Thanksgiving and Memorial Service at St George's Church, Wrotham on 9th November 1994

Married to Rosemary in 1949 he leaves a widow and three children, John, Peter and Jo.

Gardening, sailing, writing, and in his younger days, riding point to point and motor racing, where at times he assisted in the pits at Le Mans, were among his many and varied interests. His writings, included a History of Bevington and Sons, upon which he had been working for some time, and was to see published before his death.

Following in the Territorial traditions of his grandfather, Colonel Samuel Bevington VD, and his father, Colonel R K Bevington VD who was appointed Honorary Colonel of 22nd London Regiment after the 1914-18 War, Geoffrey Bevington joined the 22nd London Regiment (Queen's) at The Drill Hall, Jamaica Road, Bermondsey on 20th June 1929. The programme for the Annual Prize giving and Ball for 1935 shows, that by that year he had attained the rank of Captain and was Oi/c Transport. With the renaming of the 22nd London Regiment to 6th (Bermondsey) Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, it was in 1938, following the withdrawal of the Horse Transport, that Major Bevington moved to the new Drill Hall at 411 New Cross Road with "B" Company, which he now commanded.

Mobilised with the Battalion in September 1939, he went to France in April 1940 as 2i/c of the Battalion, before moving up to the River Escout in Belgium. It was here that he was seriously wounded and brought back to England on the last destroyer to leave. On his return to England he was taken to Epsom Hospital for treatment and it was two years before he was fit enough to return to Service overseas.

Although, he never returned to 1/6th Queen's, he never lost his interest in the Battalion and when the TA battalions were reformed in 1947, he was in the forefront with help. In 1955 he was appointed Honorary Colonel of 6th (Bermondsey) Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, an appointment which he held until the Battalion was amalgamated with 5 Queen's and 565 LAA Regiment, Royal Artillery (4 Queen's) in 1961. With the demise of 6 Queen's, Colonel Bevington devoted his energies to the formation of 6th Queen's Old Comrades Association, of which, he has been President until his death.

It was about 1860, that Samuel and Henry Bevington started their Tannery at Neckinger Mills and it was in 1876 that Samuel Bevington built the Bermondsey Drill Hall on adjacent ground. Geoffrey Bevington followed his father into the family leather business and in 1970 was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Leather sellers, having been a member of the Company since 1927.

MRN

### Major C F Cole MBE

Charles Cole who died in February is probably best remembered in the Regiment from his time as Retired Officer at Canterbury from 1958-1970.

His Army career in the Queens started with enlistment as a private in 5 Queens in March 1937. He went to France with them in 1940 and soon after being evacuated from Dunkirk attended OCTV and won an Emergency

Commission which he converted to a Regular Commission at the end of the war. He served in 1 Queens in Singapore and Berlin, with a year seconded to the Somaliland Scouts in between. Three years with the Malay Regiment from 1952- 55 during the Emergency followed, for which he was Mentioned in Despatches, and his last posting before retiring in 1958 was as DAAG, Northumbrian District from 1955 for which he was made MBE.

Hard working, meticulous, efficient, each of these words helps to describe Charles in his work. He was not a man to look for popularity, but many people who knew him at Canterbury felt that later visits were incomplete if they failed to see Charles. His widow Betty, whom he married before the war has said that he kept his 'parade' life quite separate from his 'home' life and never came home to unload his worries on to her. He enjoyed life 'off parade' to the full whether at a guest night or other entertainment, or indulging in his great hobby, photography.

The regimental museum at Clandon remains so grateful to Charles Cole for all the photographs he took and negatives he supplied to the museum. At all ranks reunions he attended he would be seen with his camera and went round photographing all groups of old comrades.

In retirement Charles and Betty lived in Wiltshire before moving to Mouschhole near Penzance. There are scores of photos of Mousehole harbour, but he was liable to say to Betty that he would like to go to, perhaps, the Lake District to do some photography for a few days - would she be ready in 20 minutes? For all that it was a wonderfully happy marriage, made closer by their daughter Helen.

Sadly he suffered a stroke in 1989 and lived with this handicap for the remaining years of his life. He struggled bravely to do what he could - including insistence on pouring out drinks for visitors.

ARCM

#### **Major (QM) R H Esler**

Ron Esler was a pre war TA soldier, and on 1st September 1939 was up a ladder signwriting a shop front when a nearby notice board displayed the Mobilisation posters. In spite of the protests of the shopkeeper, he cheerfully left the job half completed and pointing at the Proclamation said "I'm off to join the Army"! Such smiling enthusiasm was to be typical of the next 34 years. During the war he served with Searchlight Batteries defending the Thames Estuary, London and SE England; in 1942 he managed to get some leave and married May at Belvedere near Erith.

He joined 1/6th Queens at Helmsley, Yorkshire in November 1945 and sailed for the Middle East on 23rd December. After transit through Egypt, the battalion commanded by Lt Col H G Duncombe served in Syria, the Lebanon and then Palestine where I first met him as CSM of C Company in a tented battalion camp at Gedera. Always a very cheerful man he played all the team sports and played the drums in the battalion dance band. 1/6th Queen's arrived home in February 1947 and was placed in 'suspended animation'. Its personnel dispersed to other units.

Ron Esler, by now a Regular, was sent as a PSI with the TA and then went on long tours with the Malay Regiment in the 1950s. Firstly as an instructor at their Officers' School at Alor Star and then as RQMS at their Depot at Port Dickson. In 1958 he returned to UK as RSM of 5 Queen's at Guildford where his resourcefulness was once more evident, and he was particularly successful with the

soccer and shooting teams. In 1961 there was a major reorganisation of the TA and he was to be the first RSM of 3 Queen's Surreys, an amalgamation of 5 and 6 Queen's and 565 LAA Regt. The latter had originally been 4 Queen's (and four other separate units!).

In Sept 1962 Ron Esler was granted a QM's commission as a Lt., and for the rest of his service was to serve away from the Regiment. His first posting was to HQ 51 Inf Bde Gp, initially in UK and then on active service in Borneo. In 1964 he was promoted to Capt and posted as Admin Offr HQ 6th Inf Bde Gp and Sig Sqn in BAOR for four years.

His next posting in 1968 took him to Singapore as QM of HQ FARELF; he became a Major in 1970 and oversaw the rundown and final closure in Dec 1971. One was not surprised to learn that General Sir Harry Tuzo the last CinC FARELF, asked for Ron to be his Staff Captain Q Ops when he became GOC N Ireland, and there he remained until he retired from the Army in August 1973.

He settled down at Belvedere to a happy family life with his wife May and his son and daughter, and his good nature found him a whole lot of new friends in the neighbourhood. His death from cancer last October has left a big gap in the lives of many people, and not just his immediate family to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

PGC

#### **Major General F A H Ling CB CBE DSO DL**

Major General Fergus Ling who has died was the second Colonel of The Queen's Regiment, formed in 1966 by the amalgamation of the Infantry Regiments of the South East Counties, which included the two senior English Regiments of the Line, The Queen's Royal Regiment dating from 1661 and The Buffs dating from 1572. Major General Ling was Colonel from 1973 to 1977.

Fergus Ling was born in 1914, and was educated at Stowe and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, before being commissioned into the Queen's Royal Regiment in December 1934. Soon after, he went out to India to join the 1st Battalion of his Regiment, and then received his first experience on the staff, as Staff Captain of the Allahabad Brigade in 1938/39.

After the outbreak of war he returned to England, and was Adjutant of 165 O.C.T.U at Dunbar before joining the 2/5th Battalion of his Regiment in 1942. This was one of the Battalions of 169 Queens Brigade in 56 London Division which went overseas, initially to Iraq in August 1942. From Iraq the Division motored all the way to Tunisia where it took part in the final Battle of the Eighth Army's campaign at Enfidaville. By this time Fergus Ling was Second-in-Command of the Battalion and took part as such in the landings at Salerno and its subsequent advance to the German Winter line.

After the Battle for Monte Camino he was appointed to command the Battalion and led it as one of the assault Battalions in the crossing of the River Garigliano in January 1944. In this action he had to re-organize the Battalion's attack after one crossing had been put out of action by machine gun and mortar fire, and then pressed home the attack through minefields on to the steep hills overlooking the river. As a result of his personal example and leadership which inspired his Battalion to great efforts all of its objectives were achieved, and he was awarded an Immediate DSO. After the Garigliano, Fergus Ling led his

Battalion with enthusiasm and resolution through Anzio, and later throughout the intense battle of the Gothic Line in September 1944.

After the War, Fergus Ling undertook a number of staff appointments, including being on the Directing Staff of the Staff College before commanding the 5th Territorial Battalion of his Regiment from 1954 to 1957. He subsequently commanded the North Midland Brigade TA, was Deputy Adjutant General of the British Army of the Rhine, and finally General Officer Commanding 54 (East Anglian) Division and then Eastern District before retiring in 1969. He was appointed C.B.E. in 1964 and C.B. in 1968.

In retirement he was, President of The Queen's Royal Surreys Regiment Association, and first Deputy Colonel of The Queen's Regiment before becoming Colonel. He also was the Defence Services Consultant to the Institute for the Study of Conflict. He was also Chairman of SSAFA for Surrey, and Chairman of the County Territorial Army and ACF Committees. He was appointed DL for Surrey in 1970, and subsequently became Vice Lord Lieutenant in 1975.

Fergus Ling was a good games player, playing cricket and rugger for Stowe, cricket for the RMC and Wiltshire, and representing the RMC at Athletics and Fencing. He married Sheelah Sarel in 1940, and they had two sons and three daughters, the elder son now being Brigadier Anthony Ling, who also has had a distinguished career in the Army.

JWS

#### **Major R M Merrett**

Dick Merrett died on 15th October 1994 at the age of eighty. He was commissioned in 1940 and was posted to 2nd Queen's in the Western Desert. He served with distinction in the first desert campaign, in Syria, the seige of Tobruk, Ceylon, India, and, as a Chindit, in Burma.

His gallantry was mentioned in despatches. One of his more notable exploits as a patrol leader was when, having run out of ammunition, he challenged a German patrol to surrender. After an exchange of blows his bluff was called and he was wounded by a grenade, but nevertheless withdrew his patrol to safety.

After the war he practised as a chartered auctioneer and estate agent in Croydon. He was a keen cricketer and rugger player and was active in a number of local organisations and charities. His prowess as a gardener was legendary. He will be remembered by all ranks who knew him and by his friends for his kindness, integrity and great sense of humour.

Our sympathy goes out to his widow, Marjorie, their son Nigel and their grandchildren.

AGC

#### **Captain V W Blackwell**

Captain Vincent Walter Blackwell was frustrated from joining the Army for medical reasons. At the end of the war he served for a time in the Control Commission in Germany. To his delight he then found that he could join the TA and enlisted with the Westminster Dragoons as a trooper. His cousin, Bernard Hall, serving with the 42nd RTR, helped arrange a transfer and Vincent went to Mons and received a Territorial Commission, serving with the 23rd London and the 4th Queen's Surreys. He was a staunch supporter of the 23rd London/42nd RTR Association and when Bob Nash, the Secretary suddenly

died in August 1989, Vincent stepped in as Secretary until July 1990 when Derek Conran was able to take over. Vincent continued to lend support and acted as Honorary Auditor.

He will be greatly missed by the Association.

DRC

#### **Captain D White DSO RN**

Captain Dick White, DSO and two bars, Royal Navy, who died recently was executive officer in the Headquarters ship HMS *Despatch* off Juno beach during the Normandy landings in 1944 when members of the 4th Queen's served aboard her in an anti-aircraft capacity and manning Bofors guns. They thus emulated, in modern form, the feats of their gallant predecessors who fought with distinction on board HM Ships 150 years previously at the Battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794.

RF.

Recently The Daily Telegraph reported the deaths of two officers who many of our readers may remember:-

**Major General Robert (Robin) Goldsmith** who commanded 131 Brigade (TA) from 1950 to 1951 and was awarded a CBE for his services to the Territorials and the Brigade. He moved to Egypt and the Canal Zone where he was awarded a CB for his services. He was also the holder of an American Order of Merit for services with the 1st Allied Airborne Army during the Second World War. He was Colonel of his Regiment, The DCLI, and later, after amalgamation The Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry.

**Lieutenant Colonel Jack Tirrell**, Royal Artillery who commanded D Battery RHA who were in close support of 1/5th Queen's on 17th January 1945 during their attack on Susteren. To get to their start line the battalion had to cross the half-completed bridges between Bakenhoven and Dieteren.

*"A heavy enemy counter-attack developed in the bridge area, holding up the advance of 1/5th Queens. Major Tirrell moved out under heavy fire and positioned himself in the immediate vicinity of the bridge."*

*"He then gave orders to bring down the fire of the regiment on to the leading enemy infantry, who were by this time within 200 yds of his vehicle. He continued to direct the fire from his vehicle; the enemy counter-attack was broken up, with very heavy casualties, and the 1/5th Queens were able to continue their advance."*

*"While on the start line for their attack on Susteren the infantry were being fired upon at short range by a self-propelled gun. Major Tirrell moved forward to a position where he could observe this gun and despite casualties around him continued to bring down fire until the gun was put out of action."*

Lieutenant Colonel Tirrell was probably unique in being awarded the DCM as a warrant officer and then, after being commissioned a MC and two Bars. The recommendation for the third MC had originally been for an immediate DSO, a tribute to his exceptional courage and skill.

## 1851 Serjeant Thomas Edwin Burchett

It was the 3rd August 1918 when Serjeant Thomas Edwin Burchett, aged 24, of the 7th Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment was killed during an artillery barrage at the Somme. He had enlisted on the 4th September 1914 and had gone out to France in July 1915 where he saw continuous service, without a scratch until his death on the 3rd August 1918. Tom was the youngest of 3 brothers, all of whom served with The Royal West



Surrey Regiment during the 1914-1918 war. Fortunately both his older brothers Jack and George survived the war. Jack serving with The Royal West Surrey Regiment until discharge at the end of the war. George was discharged from the Army after being gassed at the Somme.

George married in 1918 and on the 10th November 1919 his first son was born and named Tom after his lost brother. 76 years later, on the 11th November 1994, Tom went to find the final resting place of the Uncle he never knew. He

was to be the first of the family to visit his uncle's last resting place. He had unknowingly been very close once before in 1940 with the 6th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment at Amiens shortly before their withdrawal to St Nazaire after Dunkirk.

Tom accompanied by his son and son-in-law travelled to Amiens on the Friday. On the Saturday, aided by the excellent directions provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, they located the cemetery easily. Tom is buried in a small cemetery at Querrieu, about 6 miles north east of Amiens, overlooking the Hallue river, a tributary of the Somme river. He is not alone, there are many members of "The Queens" with him, including his Commanding Officer Lt Col C Bushell VC DSO.



Above left: the grave of Lt Col C Bushell VC DSO  
Above Right: the grave of Sgt T E Burchett



It is impossible to ignore what happened in the Somme between 1914-1918 as you cannot travel more than a few kilometres without seeing a memorial or a cemetery. On the Saturday afternoon they visited some of the memorials around Querrieu. At Thiepval there is a memorial to the missing, a magnificent arch bearing the names of over

73,000 missing after the Battle of the Somme. At Fler a statue of a single soldier commemorates the 41st Division (there is an identical statue at High Holborn, London) and in Chipilly the memorial to the 58th London Division is a statue of a soldier comforting a wounded horse (250,000 horses were killed).

On the Remembrance Sunday they returned to the cemetery at Querrieu to pay the families respects and lay a wreath to the memory of Serjeant Thomas Edwin Burchett 1851.

## Bournemouth - 1940

For an infantryman to be killed in action on an overseas battlefield is not exactly unexpected, but to be killed on active service by the enemy, in England - in Bournemouth of all places - surely is unexpected.

After Dunkirk, the 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment assembled at Axminster and moved via Northwell Park and Marwell Hall, to Bournemouth. We were billeted in the western, residential part of town in very pleasant billets, mostly private houses.

In October (1940) the air raids began, primarily on Poole and its important harbour, but also on the residential parts of Bournemouth. Early in November a parachute mine landed on the house in which the headquarters of 'D' Coy were quartered. Some sixteen men were killed including CSM Gravett and CQMS Blackman. They were buried with full military honours in Bournemouth (North) Cemetery.



As I have now moved to Wareham, nearby, I thought I must visit the graves once more and also take some photographs. The small military cemetery is, as is usual, extremely well kept. Eleven men are buried there including CQMS Blackman. I have a list of them giving rank, name and number. Enquiries led me to believe that CSM Gravett and several others, having been claimed by relatives, are buried elsewhere. Just over two years later the whole of 'D' Coy was wiped out at Fort McGregor, in Tunisia.

RCT

## Correction - For The Record

In our last issue we published extracts from a diary written during the First World War. The name of the diarist was recorded as Smith, this was incorrect. The writer of the diary was Swift and the diary was forwarded to the Association by a G E Hallam who served with 2nd Surreys in Egypt and Palestine. The diary is now a museum artefact and is currently being refurbished. It is a most interesting diary of life and travel during the First World War.

# Barrack Room Ballads by Rudyard Kipling

## The Absent Minded Beggar

When you've shouted 'Rule Britannia', when you've sung  
'God save the Queen',  
When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth,  
Will you kindly drop a shilling  
in my little tambourine For a  
gentleman in khaki ordered South?  
He's an absent-minded beggar,  
and his weaknesses are great -  
But we and Paul must take him  
as we find him -  
He is out on active service,  
wiping something off a slate  
And he's left a lot of little  
things behind him!  
Duke's son - cook's son - son of  
a hundred kings (Fifty thousand  
horse and foot going to Table  
Bay!)  
Each of 'em doing his country's  
work  
(and who's to look after their  
things?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,  
and pay - pay - pay!

There are girls he married  
secret, asking no permission to,  
For he knew he wouldn't get it  
if he did.  
There is gas and coals and  
vittles, and the house-rent  
falling due, And it's more than  
rather likely there's a kid.  
There are girls he walked with  
casual. They'll be sorry now he's  
gone,  
For an absent-minded beggar they  
will find him,  
But it ain't the time for sermons with the  
winter coming on.  
We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!  
Cook's son - Duke's son - son of a belted Earl -  
Son of a Lambeth publican - it's all the same today!  
Each of 'em doing his country's work  
(and who's to look after the girl?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,  
and pay - pay - pay!

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or speak,  
And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the spout,  
And they'll live on half o' nothing, paid 'em punctual once  
a week,

'Cause the man that earns the  
wage is ordered out.  
He's an absent-minded beggar,  
but he heard his country call,  
And his reg'ment didn't need to  
send to find him!  
He chuck'd his job and joined it  
- so the job before us all  
Is to help the home that  
Tommy's left behind him!  
Duke's job - cook's job -  
gardener, baronet, groom,  
Mews or palace or paper-shop,  
there's someone gone away!  
Each of 'em doing his country's  
work  
(and who's to look after the  
room?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake  
and pay - pay - pay!

Let us manage so as, later, we  
can look him in the face,  
And tell him - what he'd very  
much prefer -

That, while he saved the  
Empire, his employer saved his  
place,  
And his mates (that's you and  
me) looked out for her.  
He's an absent-minded beggar  
and he may forget it all,

But we do not want his kiddies to  
remind him

That we sent 'em to the workhouse while their daddy  
hammered Paul,

So we'll help the homes that Tommy left behind him!  
Cook's home - Duke's home - home of a millionaire, (Fifty  
thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!) Each of 'em  
doing his country's work  
(and what have you got to spare?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,  
and pay - pay - pay!

Regimental History as seen by G. Robinson

