

MAY 1996



NUMBER 59

# THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

President  
Brigadier R. W. Acworth 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

Regimental Headquarters  
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment  
(Queen's and Royal Hampshires)  
Howe Barracks, Canterbury  
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## NEWSLETTER





## Regimental and Association Events 1996



21st May	Golf Society v Royal Marines match, Northants Golf Club. By invitation.
24th May	Presidents Reception for Freedom Town, Mayors - Clandon.
1st June	GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794)
9th June	Queen's Surreys Annual Church Service, Guildford Cathedral 1100 for 1115 hrs.
1st August	MINDEN DAY (1759).
9th September	SALERNO DAY (1943).
13th September	Laying up of 3 Queen's Colours - St Pauls Cathedral.
14th September	WOs & Sgts Past and Present Dinner - Bassingbourn.
2nd October	Golf Society Autumn Meeting.
12th October	The East Surrey Reunion, Clapham Junction, Details from: F A W Ramsey MM, 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3EE, 0181 401 2070.
1st November	Annual Reunion - UJ Club. (Details in May Newsletter).
7th November	Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London. Assemble by 10.30 am.
10th November	Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Southwark and Cenotaph, London.
16th November	6th Queen's (Bermondsey) Annual Dinner Dance UJ Club. Details from J T Brown, 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED.
26th November	PWRR Officers Club Regimental Dinner - Cavalry and Guards Club, Piccadilly, London.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY.

### 1997

10th February	SOBRAON DAY (1846).
8th March	Regimental Council Meeting- Clandon.
8th March	Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
15th March	Queen's Surreys Muscum Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
22nd March	Association Trustees and Committee Meetings - Clandon.

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**Front Cover:** This photograph shows pieces of silver which for many years was the property of our Regiments. On the left the large centrepiece is the 'Halt in the Desert' and immediately in front the 'Dettingen Cup'. Both pieces formerly belonged to The East Surrey Regiment. The Statuette holding a colour is 'The Sobraon Sergeant', commissioned by The WOs and Sgts of 1 Queen's in 1980. It depicts a sergeant carrying The Regimental Colour, dressed in No 1 Dress.

On the top of The Queen's Royal drum is the 'Torrens Cup' presented by Major General Sir Henry Torrens, KCB. He was Colonel of The Queen's Royal Regiment and presented the piece of silver 'as a mark of his esteem' to the Regiment.

The 'Indian Infantry Efficiency Trophy' is on top of the East Surrey side drum, won outright by 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in India, it is sometimes referred to as the 'Kitchener Trophy'. At the base between the drums a statuette of an officer of The Queen's c1661. The band banner showing The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment badge originally belonged to 4 Queen's Surreys Band.

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### Editorial

For some time now I have been trying to produce a series of articles on our old silver, where it is now, and hopefully dispel a few myths and rumours that all our lovely silver had been disposed of. Nothing could be further from the truth, the majority of our silver is with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and lovingly preserved for future generations. Further articles will appear from time to time. The development of Cardwells Keep (Stoughton Barracks) continues, the road signs bearing the names of some of our former Colonels are now being erected. The whole project has been very skillfully and tastefully designed.

During the last six months the Regiment mourned the deaths of a number of our former comrades, including Lt Col Bill Peet a distinguished Queen's officer who was awarded an immediate MC, Sgt 'Lakri' Wood MM and CSM Charles Rosoman both from the Surreys. Two old stalwarts from the Sergeants Mess, RSM Fred Harcup and CSM Sid Waldron both characters in the Queen's, died during this period, also one of our oldest soldiers from the First World War, Albert Moren.

I should like on your behalf to send our best wishes to Major General Francis Piggott, recovering at home after a nasty fall in which he broke his pelvis and wrist, and to send birthday greetings

to Clarrie Jarman on his Century on May 9th. Thank you, to all those who have contributed articles and news items, please keep them coming in. Our next main event is the Annual Church Service at Guildford on June 9th, do try and make it.

All the best

Les Wilson.

### Presidents Notes

For a Regiment which ceased to exist as a separate entity in 1966 we remain very much alive and with an increasing membership of the Association. The Association is the Regiment with its home and history preserved in the Regimental Museum at Clandon Park.

The Association has three main functions. The first is to keep the name of the Regiment alive within the county of Surrey and with our successors in the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. We achieve this principally through the President's annual reception for Borough Mayors and civic dignitaries at Clandon Park and with our successors by our support of our regular and territorial battalions practically, and at times financially. Secondly through our association branches, clubs and this



Newsletter to keep us in touch with each other and through these to encourage new members.

Thirdly and most importantly, to look after our former soldiers or their families who require practical or financial help. I believe we are probably unique amongst former County regiments in retaining our identity in Surrey and with our successors so successfully and in helping our former comrades. These traditions will continue and I am very grateful to Les Wilson for the Newsletter which links us all and to all Association Secretaries for the major part they play. To have served in The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment you have to be at least 47. Our oldest soldier Clarrie Jarman celebrates his 100th birthday on 9th May and I would like to offer him our best congratulations as he enters his second century.

You will see that we are including a fuller account of our Association Affairs and Finances in this issue and I hope you will find this of interest. Our ability to help former soldiers and

their families practically or financially and to maintain our museum and Newsletter is helped by our considerable financial resources. The number of cases of benevolence is on the increase and I am grateful to our Secretary who spends much of his time on our behalf dealing with requests for help.

Finally I would like to record my thanks to Lieutenant Colonel John Sherrard who has given many valuable years service to the Regiment. He served with distinction in The East Surrey Regiment during the war and was awarded the American Bronze Star. In 1947 when the Territorial Army reformed he immediately joined. He later commanded 6 Surreys and 4 Queen's Surreys. He has been a member of the Regimental Committee since 1960 and a Trustee since 1964. He has decided the time has come to resign as a Trustee. We will miss his wise and careful counsel.

With best wishes

Bob Acworth



### The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

The last news of the Regiment was published in November 1995. It has been a fairly quiet period for major events but hectic with the normal run of Regimental activities.

The 1st Battalion is in Canterbury and the 2nd Battalion in Omagh. The events in Northern Ireland since the breaking of the cease fire has resulted in the 1st Battalion being at 72 hrs notice to move from late March 96. This has meant that various high profile events have had to be postponed or cancelled. The major event - The Presentation of Colours scheduled for 18 May has been postponed to some time in 1997. The Laying Up of the Colours of 1 Queens on 9 June 1996 and the Royal Hampshire Regiment on 1 August 1996 have also been postponed. The three Freedom Parades due to be Exercised by the 1st Battalion have been cancelled (30 April - Eastbourne, 1 May - Basingstoke, 3 May - Kingston). The good news is that the Laying Up of 3 Queen's Colours will go ahead on 13 September 1996 in St Pauls Cathedral. This will be a morning ceremony commencing at 1100 hrs.

The 2nd Battalion carries on with its increased internal security tasks whilst balancing daily life with energetic activities and exercises abroad.

The two Territorial Battalions (5th and 6/7th Battalions) are in good form with a full programme of training events and social activities. Their annual Camps are in September/October 1996 and work up training is well under way. Both Battalions have been making sterling efforts with recruiting drives - an on going activity. You will have all read in the Newspapers that the Armed Forces are short of recruits. This applies to our own two Regular Battalions. If you know of any worthwhile youth potential recruit please encourage him - frog march him to the nearest recruiting centre or phone 01303 225265 for more information. The London Regiment B (Queen's Regiment) Company have also had a full and interesting programme. In a recent competition at the London District Patrols Competition, the Courage Trophy, the Company achieved the best placing within the Regiment.

Remember your Regimental Headquarters is here to help you, if you wish next time your passing call in and visit the shop.

### A Gold for Cardwells Keep

Gold in the Best Renovation category went to Countryside Residential for its refurbishment of Stoughton Barracks in Guildford, Surrey, which had lain derelict for 10 years. Countryside has converted the buildings, including a four-storey Keep, into 35 apartments and mews houses.

The company has retained as much of the original exteriors as possible and turned the parade ground into a landscaped square to form the centre of the development, which it has called Cardwell's Keep.

*"The award is a fine tribute to one of the country's finest developments, where 34 out of 35 homes have been sold in six months, a testimony in itself to the excellence of the scheme," said Nick Scragg, managing director of Countryside Residential (Western). "To be awarded a gold when being judged by the great and good of the development industry is quite special."*  
Sunday Times 19th November 1995

### Royal Hospital Chelsea - In Pensioners Christmas lunch 19th December 1995.



The Secretary: Major John Rogerson, Sam Dickason, the President: Brigadier Bob Acworth, Jock Henderson, the Chairman: Colonel Peter Thompson and John Kershaw.

## ASSOCIATION AFFAIRS 1996

The purpose of this article is to inform our readers of the background and aims of the Association, its role and plans for the future, to produce a list of Trustees and Branch Secretaries, and an update on the recent meetings held at Clandon.

### Association Background

In October 1959 when the amalgamation of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment took place, the Old Comrades Associations ceased to exist and a new Association was formed - The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association.

All former members of both regiments were eligible to join as were all members of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. Membership of the Association also includes a number of battalion old comrade associations, the Surreys reunion and more recently formed branches of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

### Museum

A museum was established first at Kingston upon Thames and later moved to Clandon where it remains to this day. The museum artefacts are held by a separate body of Trustees and listed in the Accession Book. The authority of those Trustees is derived from a Declaration of Trust approved by and registered as a Charity with the Charity Commissioners.

### Silver and Chattels

All silver and chattels of the two former regiments were merged, both regular and territorial. On the disbandment, merger or amalgamation of military units, all of their Funds and Property are ordered by The Charity Commissioners to be 'held on trust' for purposes as nearly as possible related to the former unit. The Commissioners make formal schemes appointing Trustees and saying exactly what powers are vested in the Trustees, thus on formation of The Queen's Regiment in 1966 all regular battalion chattels were transferred to the new regiment. The Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees however, still administer some silver and paintings which belonged to our old Volunteer and Territorial units.

### Funds

In October 1959 vested in the Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association, there was a large number of funds from both regiments, charitable and non charitable. Since that time efforts have been made to merge the various Charitable Trusts and accounts into a more simple method of accounting. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Colonel W E McConnell our honorary legal advisor, all our funds have now been merged (with The Charity Commissioners approval), to provide one main fund, namely The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity managed by a separate body of Trustees. In addition we have an Association Main Fund which is non charitable and also an Officers' Club account.

### Newsletter

The journals of the Queen's and Surreys ceased in 1959 and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Journal was produced from 1959 until the formation of The Queen's Regiment when it was decided that a Newsletter for The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association be published. This continues with Lieutenant Colonel Wilson as Editor.

### Regimental Council

A Regimental Council was reformed by Brigadier Doyle when he was President. It has no authority to make grants for any purpose, but its role is to discuss and make recommendations for the future of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association to the Trustees and Committee members.

#### Council Members are:

Brigadier R W Acworth CBE - President of the Association.

Colonel P R H Thompson OBE TD DL - Chairman of the Association and Chairman of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Territorial Trustees.

Brigadier M J Doyle MBE - Past President.

Colonel J W Sewell - Past President.

Colonel P A W G Durrant OBE - Chairman, The Museum Trustees.

Brigadier M J A Clarke MBE - Past Chairman, The Museum Trustees.

Colonel W E McConnell TD - Hon Legal Advisor, and Past Chairman.

Lieutenant Colonel J B Ray MBE - Chairman, The Officers' Club.

Lieutenant Colonel L M Wilson MBE - Assistant Secretary and Editor of The Newsletter.

Major J C Rogerson - Hon Secretary.

#### Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity are:

Brigadier R W Acworth CBE - Chairman and Chairman of the Trustees.

Colonel P R H Thompson OBE TD DL.

Colonel A C Ward OBE.

Colonel J W Francis.

Lieutenant Colonel F B Herd TD JP DL.

Major P C Aitkens.

Major J C Rogerson - Hon Secretary.

Colonel W E McConnell TD - Hon Legal Advisor.

### Branch Secretaries

5th Bn OMA-Queens:	Mr D J Mitchell 3 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3JE	Tel: 01483 232043
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6th Bn OCA-Queens:	Mr J T Brown 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED	Tel: 0171 8210028
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7th Bn OCA-Queens:	Maj J M A Tamplin TD 10 Hugh Street SW1	Tel: 0171 8340120
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2/6th Bn OCA-Queens:	R Currie Esq 66 3rd Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex	Tel: 01255 674761 Fax 01255 674565
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2/7th Bn OCA-Queens:	S Messenger Esq 10 South Row, Blackheath, London SE3 ORY	Tel: 0181 8526183
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East Surrey Reunion:	F A W Ramsey MM 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3EF	Tel: 0181 4012070
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2/6th East Surrey		
St Valery Assoc:	W A M Bampton 10 Bridge Gardens, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 1UR	Tel: 01784 258950



Queen's Surreys WOs and Sgts Assoc:	P Henman 35 Downside Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5HR	Tel: 0181 6420585
Queen's Royal Surrey: 60/70 Assoc:	W L Soffe 19 Gale Close, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3QG	Tel: 0181 2603111
Queen's Royal Surrey Kent Branch:	R F Harper 117 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3EG	Tel: 01227 763032
Queen's Royal Surrey Suffolk Branch:	D J Gardner 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS	Tel: 01284 753160
23rd LONDON/42 RTR	Maj D H Conran TD 5 Cherwell Lodge, Water Eaton Road, Oxford OX2 7QH	Tel: 01865 53587

### **Trustees Meeting 30th March 1996**

Each year the Trustees receive the accounts and approve grants which meet the requirements of the charity scheme. As at 31 December 1995 the total value of the charity assets was £2,187,721 of which £2,066,637 represented the market value of investments. The Income from these investments amounted to £152,696 out of a total income from all sources of £182,762. Direct charitable expenditure and management and administration of the charity amounted to £152,568 leaving a surplus of income over expenditure of £30,194.

At their meeting in March the Trustees approved ongoing grants in benevolence as required in 1996 and further specific grants for the administration of the Association, salaries, the Newsletter, the museums at Clandon Park and Dover Castle, The Army Benevolent Fund, The Royal Star & Garter Home, St Dunstons, The Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, The Royal Alexandra Hospital Home, The British Ex-Service Wheelchair Association as well as the PWRR Battalions, The London Regiment, The Kohima Band and towards the restoration of the High Wood Memorial where many of our soldiers are commemorated.

### **General Meeting**

A request for The East Surrey Regiment Old Comrades banner and the silver drums and bugles of the Surreys to be borrowed for reunions of The East Surreys was received. Regrettably this was not accepted for the following reasons. On amalgamation The East Surrey Banner was handed over to the museum for safe keeping. Under the terms of the Declaration of Trust and new stringent rules of the Museums and Galleries Commission items may not be loaned other than to other museums or military units, and then on strict terms as to time, insurance, security and so on. In addition on the formation of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association the Old Comrades of our former Regiments merged and it was ruled by Brigadier G R P Roupell that the Banner would not be used and would remain in the museum. Since 1959 it has only been loaned to commemorate The East Surrey Regiment for instance, at a special exhibition in such places as The Kingston Museum. Should a similar request from a museum be received in the future due consideration would be given by the Trustees, after discussion with The Charity Commissioners. Similarly, The East Surrey silver drums and bugles were gifted to The Queen's Regiment are now the property of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. The drums and silver bugles of 1 Surreys are currently in N.Ireland with the 2nd Battalion, and the bugles from the Territorial Trustees are with the 5th Battalion in Canterbury.

### **Benevolence 1995**

During 1995 a total of 210 benevolence cases were investigated, 177 Grants were 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 electric wheelchairs and provided 20 more wheelchairs and nebulizers during 1995. In addition a number of applications were received from SSAFA for clothing. We continue to administer 35 Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) Supplementary Allowances, these being paid at £8 per case per week. During this period, the Charity have renewed or arranged for 14 Nursing Home Fees at £12 per week to be paid for our old soldiers or their dependants. This side of our benevolence and care continues to increase. The ABF grants totalled £22,835. The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity paid out £57,825 as Benevolent Grants in Aid. Of the 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 5 of our members have received care and treatment during the year, 2 cases are currently being reviewed for full time care. During the year requests for assistance from St Dunstons and Combat Stress (Mental Welfare) have been received and grants given.

### **Benevolence Assistance**

Remember, if you as an ex-member of the Regiment or your dependants need assistance you should ask your local SSAFA representative to assist. Your local representative can be reached through the local telephone book or the Citizens Advice Bureau. If you have trouble finding your local SSASA/FHS telephone 0171-403-8783 or 962-9696. (24 hour answering service).

### **Hospital Treatment - Entitlement**

The current policy with regard to Service dependants is as follows:

- The arrangements now in force with the NHS for the treatment of NHS patients (into which category fall Service dependants in the UK) states that NHS patients accepted for treatment at Defence Hospitals and MDHUs must be resident in the districts served by the hospital. Where patients from outside those districts are referred, their treatment is normally funded by their 'district of residence' health authority (or GP fundholder) by means of an ECR payment. Before making such payments, purchasers will decide whether they are willing to fund the treatment required, taking into account such factors as availability of the treatment in hospitals with which they have a contract.
- Only serving members of the Armed Forces and former Far East prisoners of War (FEPOW) are entitled as of right to treatment in UK Defence hospitals. All others, including retired personnel, dependants resident in the UK and MOD civilians are NHS patients and should be regarded as such for planning purposes.
- Where retired personnel, dependants and MOD civilians from outside the hospital/MDHU catchment area are referred, they will only be accepted for treatment when the patient's local health authority or GP fundholder agree to fund the treatment by means of an ECR and where such referral does not hinder the hospital/MDHU in the achievement of its contracted workload.

## Letters of Appreciation

At last I am able to write and thank you and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association for the Sapphire Scooter. I went to church on it on Sunday (thought the traffic would be light) and found it very comfortable and it will be most useful for the shopping. I have been riding my bike until now but began to feel unsafe, but I do so want to remain independent and I think the scooter will be such a help.

I used to drive a Lieutenant Colonel who was President of the Courts Martial and I stayed with the FANY's almost every week at Canterbury (we used to move from Court to Court), so I stayed at many places in Kent. I was with the 124 C(M)T Coy and had the cliffs of Dover as my shoulder flash. Quite a few of the Company were FANY's (not myself as I joined later than they did) - and like myself they were "Free Spirits". My husband drove the Colonel of The East Surrey Regiment, for some time, so it is very nice for me to receive the scooter from the Association. He died when my three sons were quite young so I have been a widow for a long while. He was 46 years old when he died and the "boys" were 13, 11 and 10, they are a great comfort to me now. Thank you once again for all your kindness.



Mrs Davies 81 of Arundel Sussex receives a motor scooter from a member of the RIT on behalf of the Queen's Royal Surrey Association

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I am writing this letter to thank you and the Association for the assistance you gave us when our son died. We truly would not have known what to do without the good help from the Association. I and my wife would like to thank you on behalf of our family. Myself I say to you and the Association thanks.

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Thank you very much for the money you sent to help pay for my much needed specs, it was very much appreciated.

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I wish to thank you, and the Regiment, for the money you sent to SSAFA on my behalf, I am most grateful. My husband volunteered in 1939, and was in The East Surrey Regiment of which he was most proud, but since his two strokes seven years ago and confined to a wheelchair his life was very restricted. He died last June, receiving this money has taken a great load from my shoulders, so once again thank you.

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It is with some disgust with myself, that it has taken so long for me to write thanking you and those concerned for the Scooter, my body will not do as the brain commands, even now my writing is not as it was. My life has been transformed, being able to shop without the help of others is a boon. I thought I might receive some help towards the cost, so it was tremendous to have it free. When I see some younger afflicted people, I realise how lucky I have been all my life. Thank you once again.

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**The Almoner, Sue Ryder Foundation writes:-** I am writing to advise you that sadly, Mr C's condition gradually deteriorated and he died here peacefully on the 30th December, 1995. He had been quite bright over the Christmas period and was reasonably able to enjoy the festivities. Thank you all again for your kind support for this gentleman's care.

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**From a SSAFA Secretary:-** Thank you for your letter dated 25 Jan '96 enclosing the ABF Supplementary Allowance cheque for £416 covering the period 1 Feb '96 to 31 Jan '97. This grant has made all the difference to this pensioner in improving the quality of his life. He suffers almost continuously from the pain of arthritis and disc problems, for which no medical treatment can ease. Living alone with no family contact the Allowance enables him to enjoy a few more luxuries in the way of food etc., as his limited mobility makes visits to the shops difficult. He is deeply grateful for the help he receives to which I would add my own appreciation. I have written to Lt Col Brewis of the ABF expressing my gratitude.

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**F Roberts writes:-** I enclose a picture of myself on the scooter you contributed to me. It has made a big difference to my life as I can get about a little bit more. Our cap badge is mounted on the front but it does not show up very well.

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**The County Field Officer, R B L Kent writes:-** Many thanks for your letter QS/15/96 dated 8th February 1996 together with your generous grant of £350 to Mr X towards the purchase of a secondhand attendant controlled wheelchair. Mr X will, of course, be advised of your kindness. Thank you also for the complimentary copy of your Association Newsletter which I will pass on to him. I am most grateful for your assistance with this application.

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**Mr R J Bellamy writes:-** I enclose a photo of my wife seated in the lightweight wheelchair that the Association helped us obtain. The chair is a great help as we both have arthritis and it is very hard work lifting a heavy chair in and out of a car boot. My wife and I wish to thank you all, we are most grateful.





# Congratulations and Best Wishes



**Best Wishes to Major B B F White MC** who celebrated his 92nd birthday on 28th December 1995.

**Major E Glanvill - Benn** who celebrated his 90th birthday on 31st December 1995.

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## Golden Weddings

**Congratulations to Major and Mrs John Attenborough** who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on Boxing Day 1995. John was then a Doctor in the RAMC and his wife Frances a Sister in the PMRAFNS. They were married in St Johns Church Peshawar India. Major Attenborough will be remembered by many territorials who served in 5 Queen's Royal Regiment and 3 Queen's Surreys as he was their RMO from 1948-1967.

**Major and Mrs Anthony Hobrow** who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 8th August 1995.

**Mr and Mrs Race** who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 10th November 1995.

**Mr and Mrs A W Petts** who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 21st February 1996. Mr Petts was serving with 1/6th Surreys in Greece when he was married.

**Mr and Mrs F A W Ramsey** who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 11th August 1995.

**Mr and Mrs V F Kearslake** who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 4th July 1995.

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## Best wishes to:

**Major Genral Francis Piggott** recovering at home after being in hospital following a fall.

**Brigadier Geoffrey Curtis** recovering after breaking his right arm.

**Major 'Dom' Domoney** for a speedy recovery, sadly 'Dom' had to spend his second Christmas in hospital, but is now at home.

**Harry Skilton**, recovering from an operation for a new wrist joint.

**Tony Ramsey**, our Standard bearer recovering after a fall.

**Graham Wenn**, our museum treasurer, and **Don Billows** both now hopefully well on the road to good health again.

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**Congratulations to: Major David Robinson** on being appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey. He has been recognised also for his services to Scouting and to the Order of St John. He is a magistrate and was chairman of Woking Urban District Council shortly before it became a Borough. He is a governor of Woking College and he holds Woking Borough's emeritus award as Citizen of the Year. He has been a president of Woking Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

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## Donations

The Trustees wish to record their very sincere gratitude to the following ladies and gentlemen for their generous donations to the memory of the late A Moren. Lt Col J B Parish, Mr and Mrs A Wright, C R Parish Esq., Mr and Mrs C Wright, Mrs M Wright, Mr and Mrs Parish and P Moren Esq., The late 'Jock' Alcock bequeathed a sum of £1000.00 to the Association in his will.

## (6th Bermondsey) Bn: The Queen's Royal Regiment, Remembrance Day and Annual visit to Ghent

The Association joined with the Royal Marine Reserve and the local Unit of the Army Cadet Force for a short service at The Battalion Memorial at Old Jamaica Road. Wreaths were laid by Mr Simon Hughes, Member of Parliament for Bermondsey, the Commanding Officer of the RMR, Major Maurice Nason on behalf of the Association and Fred Blackborow representing the 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

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It started in typical Queen's style. We had found and tried this new route to Belgium. It was to travel by coach from London Victoria to Ghent. Our party was only ten and the three of us, who had already travelled this way, recommended it to Frank Treffry to make the arrangements. Marge and I with Jack and Kath Woodbridge hired a car to travel from Kings Lynn to London. Panic began to set in, when we found that the driver did not know London and at 0900hrs we were only at Big Ben with Coach departure time, 0930hrs. We arrived shortly after 0930hrs, but fortunately, Frank had persuaded the Coach driver to delay departure by five minutes. It ended with the four of us running to the coach, the others running towards us to help and Frank and the driver throwing the luggage into the boot. It looked like something from a "Carry On" film. The journey started with the driver asking if anyone could tell him the best way to the Motorway to Dover. John Roll said he knew the way, (so he should with his experience of London Marathons). Soon we were at Blackheath and then away down the M20 to Dover. We arrived alongside the Ferry with the Channel looking as smooth as a baby's bottom. Then we were on the Ferry and with the rest of the party close on my heels, I led the way to the Bar, where we were soon sitting down to an enjoyable pint. Before we knew it, we were in Calais and on our way to Ghent. Arriving at the Station, a little late, we were greeted by our friends of La Sarcelle and Dave Coles, who in typical CSM's voice welcomed me with "Where yer bin?" Then we were taken on to our billets and that evening to the HQ of the Royal British Legion in Ghent, where a lovely buffet was laid on. The only fault that we could find was that the Steward kept asking us what we wanted to drink. Saturday was a free day, which was spent having Lunch and drinks with our Belgian friends. In the evening, we were entertained to a marvellous Dinner and Dance as guests of La Sarcelle. On Sunday morning we attended an Open Air Memorial Service at a Canadian War Cemetery. I laid a Poppy Wreath, on behalf of the Old Comrades Association at the site where nine of 1/6th Queen's are buried. The rest of Sunday was spent visiting with La Sarcelle. The members of our party were Mr and Mrs A Dimond, Mr and Mrs J Woodbridge, Mr and Mrs F Treffry, John Cates, John Roll and my wife and I. Arthur Whymark was unable to travel because of a recent illness. We missed you Arthur and so did your Belgian friends. In all, a wonderful visit.



To all our friends in Belgium, we say "Thank you"!

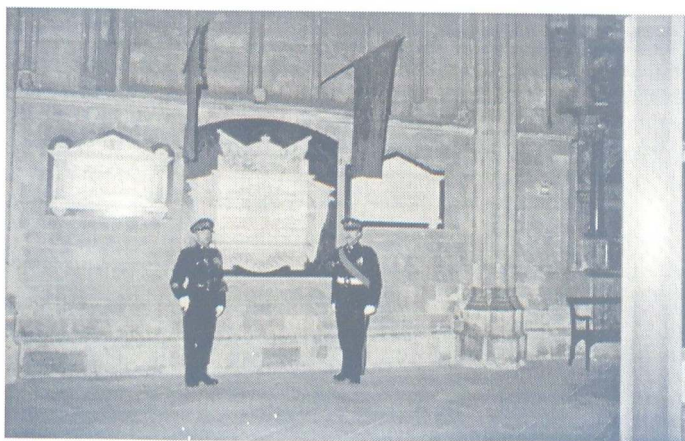
Harry Mitchell



## The Battle of Sobraon, 150th Anniversary,

As readers know, many changes have taken place since the 10th February 1846. In more recent years the formation of The Queen's Regiment in 1966, and in 1992 the amalgamation of The Queen's Regiment with The Royal Hampshire Regiment. One of many traditions carried forward to the new Regiment, is the selection of a Sergeant, known as The Sobraon Sergeant for the day. The account of the battle has been recounted many times, Printed below is Sergeant M Wilkins' 1st Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment's account of his day as Sobraon Sergeant 1996, 150 years on.

"Sobraon Day" is a day I have enjoyed since the amalgamation, this year, the 150th Anniversary, was something special for me as I was the Sobraon Sergeant for 1996.



Standing with the Regimental Sergeant Major beneath the Sobraon Tablet and remnants of the original Colours.

The day started at 0700hrs in the bar in preparation for breakfast, where we were briefed on the days activities. After breakfast it was a quick change of uniform ready for, what was for me, the most important part of the day, the collection of the Regimental Colour from the Officers Mess. The Colour Party consisting of the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO2 Hack, CSgt Corbett, CSgt Watley and myself left the Sgts Mess at 0955hrs, marched with the Corps of Drums to the Officers Mess and received the Colour from the Commanding Officer. It was a windy day and carrying the Colour back to the mess was not an easy task, I now know from first hand experience what the Subalterns must go through carrying the Colours on parade for hours on end.



Turning the Page in the Book of Remembrance, The Warriors Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral.

Once inside the Mess I handed the Colour over to the QM and then it was time for a few quick photo's before the next phase of the day. At 1030hrs the RSM and I left camp and went to Canterbury Cathedral where I would turn the page in the Book of Remembrance. After the ceremony was over and a few photos taken under the original Colours from the Battle of Sobraon it

was back to the Mess for the Mess photo and lunch. When lunch had finished and the bar had closed it was home for a few hours rest before the Regimental Dinner at 1930hrs.

The evening began again in the bar, with a briefing from WO2 Nolan, the PMC, on the dinner. The despatches were read, the meal was excellent and then it was time for the speeches, the only part of the day I had not been looking forward to, still thanks to WO2 Terry Moore I was able to start my speech on a humorous note and all went well. Speeches and regimental singing completed it was back to the bar for a few mess games, which the Crockery Fund did well out of. The day finally finished at 0500hrs the next morning. An excellent day was had by all, especially myself as I was guest of honour and didn't pay for a thing.

*The Hero of Sobraon  
The Hail of fire is shattering all,  
As officers with colours fall.  
But brave McCabe takes up the flag,  
With him before them none may lag.  
The soldiers see him at their head,  
Courageous in his coat of red.  
Ignoring noise and battle's row,  
His hour of destiny is now.  
He leads the charge, Sikh foemen break,  
The 31st, the ramparts take,  
Richard Ford*

ooo

## Queen's Annual Reunion, Victory Services Club 1959



L to R: Ron Esler, Harry Boleley, Les Wilson, Bill Roadnight, Bruce Dunkeld, Tommy Atkins, 'Busty' Stevens, Jim Griffin, Joe Simmonds, 'Darkie' Isaacs, Charlie Davis.

ooo

## Have you ever eaten a Braganza?

It was not a great scratch-card win, but enough for me to take my wife Judith to a favourite pub, Woody's at Winchfield, near Hartley Wintney, for a pub lunch. To my surprise, the bar menu figured 'Braganzas'. These are double-deck toasted sandwiches, filled from a choice of any two fillings - bacon, ham, cheese, etc, all served with salad. We had a Braganza each, delicious. I asked the pub-owner why they were so called. He said "some Army type came in and told me about them, I thought it was a good idea".

I don't know who the "Army type" was - but I think I can guess his regiment!

AH LcQC

## 50th Anniversary Commemorative tour

On 31st August 1995, three members from the old 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment, Len Jelley, Jack Griffiths and myself (Cliff Martin), joined a 50th Anniversary Victory Commemorative tour to Thailand and Singapore which had been arranged by the Oldham branch of the Far East Prisoners of War Association. There were 95 on the tour, 46 ladies and 49 men.



During our week in Thailand we travelled on what is left of the original railway from Kanchanaburi to Nam Tok (Tarso) and stayed overnight at the River Kwai Village Hotel. The following morning, on our way back to Bangkok, Services of Remembrance were held in the Kanchanaburi and Chungkai War Cemeteries where the Last Post and Reveille were sounded by buglers from the Thai Army. Jack Griffiths laid wreaths on the War Memorials in both these cemeteries, and in the limited time available to us we searched out as many East Surrey graves as we could find and planted poppy crosses on them.

We then went on to lunch at the River Kwai Bridge Restaurant, visiting the Bridge and the War Museum which was organised and is maintained by the Buddhist monks in the vicinity. On our last evening in Bangkok we were invited by the British Ambassador to a reception at the British Embassy. This was a very pleasant occasion made most interesting by being able to meet and talk with the Ambassador and his staff.

The second week of our tour was spent in Singapore and the most important day of this week was the 12th September, which is the date that Lord Louis Mountbatten accepted the formal surrender of the Japanese in Singapore and which the Singapore Authorities regard as the official ending of World War II.

The day started with a dawn service at Kranji War Cemetery which was attended by over two thousand people of different nationalities, British, Australian, Dutch and of course many Chinese and Malays from the indigenous population. Throughout the service music was played by the bagpipe band of the Gurkha contingent whose buglers also sounded the Last Post and Reveille at the appropriate times. Official wreaths were placed on the War Memorial by the Guests of Honour, including the Duke of Kent, and this was followed by the placing of many private wreaths by people from the congregation. It was at this time that a reporter from the Daily Telegraph spoke to Jack Griffiths and their resulting conversation, with a specific mention of the 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment, was included in the reporter's article on the ceremony, which appeared in the Daily Telegraph on 13th September. The names of Surreys with no known graves are listed on the Kranji War Memorial under Column 70, and I am sure that surviving members of that old battalion will recognise the significance of that number.

Our group then moved on to visit the Changi Prison War Museum and it was there that I had to leave them as I was one of the lucky five from our party selected to accept the invitation from

the British High Commissioner for lunch at his residence which was also graced by the presence of the Duke of Kent. The day ended appropriately with an evening Thanksgiving Service at St Andrews Cathedral, followed by a reception in the Cathedral grounds.

Finally, I must record that one of my lasting impressions of the tour was of the very high standard of maintenance and orderliness of the Cemeteries and graves.

CGM

## Golf Society - Autumn Meeting 4 October 1995

After such a long hot summer one had every reason to expect a reasonable day for the Autumn Meeting of the Society. However, on the day the heavens opened and the morning round was played in almost continuous rain. At one time it looked as if play would have to stop, as many of the Greens were under water. In the event all entrants completed the round, and some were even heard to say they enjoyed themselves.

I am delighted to report that the Society in its 65th year seems to have taken on a new lease of life, 24 members attending for the meeting, and two members for lunch only. We were particularly pleased to welcome five new members playing for the first time - Jeff Midwood and Chris Stanton both having served in The East Surrey Regiment, Major Mike Farrell who joined The Queen's Surreys and then transferred to The Worcestershire Regiment, and Richard Wells and Chris Allanson both of whom served with The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Our thanks are extended to Woking Golf Club for once again producing an excellent meal and a course that was in excellent condition in spite of the inclement weather.

The prizes were presented by the Captain, Lt Col P G F M Roupell.

The winners of the Competitions were as follows:-

Senior Div Autumn Bowl	
H P Mason Esq	72 nett
Junior Div Glasgow Greys Cup	
Lt Col F B Herd	73 nett
Petri Plate Aggregate of Spring & Autumn Meetings	
H P Mason Esq	141 nett
Heales Memorial Trophy	
M J Power Esq	32 Points
Runner Up Seniors C M Howard Esq	31 points
Juniors J R L Wells Esq	29 points
Veterans Halo	
C Stanton Esq	31 points
P M Greensomes 14 holes	
Lt Col P G F M Roupell & H P Mason Esq	31 points

Winners of the Society Sweep, run on the Morning Round:

1st: Lt Col F B Herd      2nd: Major PA Gray      3rd: Major LE Penn

A plea to all you golfers out there - come and support the Society, even if you are now unable to play you can join us for lunch. I guarantee you will meet at least one old friend you have not seen for years.

Dates for your Diary 1996 Fixtures

Thursday 9th May Spring Meeting, Sudbrook Park.  
Tuesday 21st May Royal Marines Match, Fleet. By Invitation.  
Wednesday 2nd October Autumn Meeting, Woking Golf Club.

FBH



## Rupert returns to Nutwood

Gentle reader, you have been most kind to bear with my reminiscences. It is as if we have been on a voyage of discovery together. You have been the voyeur to all my great endeavours and achievements, although at the time, some of them seemed like minor mishaps along the elusive path to power and glory. The Army spends much of its time asking silly questions "Halt, who goes there Friend or Foe" I ask you, what ignoramus is going to say "Well it's me, your mortal enemy." Another one they kept asking me in the early days was - "Why do you want to be an Officer?" And you had to answer without using the words - "They get paid more." "They don't work as hard." "They get better food." "They get to sit in the front of the truck." and "They wear softer shirts." Younger readers will just have to ask their elders about this last point. Other Rank's shirts were made from uncured Tibetan Yak skins.

Now that leads me to another gripe, which is to wonder who it is who comes up with some of the incredibly well thought out ideas and plans that are foisted on us by Staff or Politicians. Take Brigadier Jackson, you remember him, he had a fierce countenance, moustache and monocle. I Queen's Surreys was in 19 Brigade when he was in charge. His pet idea was that we could defend ourselves against a surprise nuclear attack by digging an extra hole into the ends of the standard slit trench. During one exercise the great man came upon my platoon furiously digging these 'Jackson Follies', he was pleased with what he saw. I am no fool, I know how to keep Brigadiers feeling good. But he went and spoilt it all by ordering Sgt Evans from Lt George Wakely's Platoon, to get into the Nuclear Funk hole. Evans was no lightweight and had extreme difficulty going head first into the hole at the end of his trench. From above, all we could see was a wide, undulating, throbbing horizon of the Evans bottom trying to disappear into this impossibly small space. But after a moment or two we realised all was not well. Evans with a great deal of his frame wedged into this hole was now suffering the agonies of acute cramp. Muffled cries and oaths were coming up from the subterranean depths, but there was not room for anyone else to get into the trench to get him out. Brigadier Jackson looked most peeved "*You'd better put terriers down there to get him out*" and with that he turned on his heel and left. It took some time to dig Sgt Evans out, but at least we did not hear about those trenches again. I wonder if anyone else has come up with a way to withstand a surprise nuclear attack? They will probably tell us to use groundsheets next. Mind you they probably would protect you from Nuclear Fall Out. They must be good for something, because they were useless in the rain.

It was during this same exercise that I lost my right arm. Let me tell you how it came about. It was in the middle of the night that I awoke suddenly, My razor sharp and keenly tuned soldier senses could immediately detect that all was not well - but what was it? As I turned to look at my watch I noticed a most perplexing thing; looking down my right side I could not detect my right arm. It just wasn't there. Gingerly, with my left hand I felt all down my right side. No arm. I began to get seriously worried. What had happened to it, how would I cope with one arm, would I get a pension. I started to sweat. Sgt Jennings lifted up the flap to the Basha "*I have just been round the positions and all is well.*" All was jolly well not well, I was sans arm my saluting arm at that. Now promise not to snigger but with the extra light that came in from the outside, I suddenly spotted the corner of my right elbow tucked under my head. I had gone to sleep with my arm underneath me, the blood supply to the arm had stopped and I could no longer feel it. "*Sgt Jennings - that's absolutely terrifically fantastic - thank you!*" Jennings left looking more bemused than he usually did after a conversation with me. How was he to know I had just found my saluting arm.

But if the Army is about anything it is about friends, characters, adventures and memories. We had Jack English from the Canadians, we had Capt Pierre Le Paillet from the French Foreign

Legion we even had Portuguese Officers who never, ever took off their dark glasses. And who will forget Lt Paul Gray being Orderly Officer for about seventeen years after sewing fictitious battle honours on to the 'blanket colours', for the 1959 Presentation of New Colours parade rehearsal. Then there was that time when around 0230hrs I looked out of my bedroom window to see what the noise was all about. I could hear this high pitched rattling, rumbling noise. It was the Officers' Mess drinks trolley going down the hill with Lt Chris Tuckwell aboard. He descended the hill at speed breaking his arm when coming to an abrupt halt at the bottom. I believe it is now the custom to fit airbags to all trolleys used in the Officers Mess. Chris later became a priest. I am quite prepared to write this story up in greater detail for any interested parishioner.

Some time ago, with these sort of thoughts in mind, I was driving through Guildford and on a sudden impulse decided to see what Stoughton Barracks looked like today. I had seen articles about the new development of houses on the site, but I wanted to see for myself. The sun was shining and small groups of potential buyers were wandering around looking at the new houses. I propped myself up against a wall and looked around. The changes were great but not ghastly. After a few moments the old Depot and Regimental Headquarters of The Queen's Royal Regiment shone through.

Over there I could see the windows of the drying room at the bottom of the old Barrack Block. Was it my imagination, or could I see Chuck Sheffield looking out, after ensuring that all his boilers were topped up and steaming. On the other side of the green, where the square used to be, I could see the faint figures of Major 'Buzzy' Wasp and Col Duncombe, chatting as they made their way to the offices. Any moment now I would see Sgts Riley, Brownjohn and Cager coming round the corner to join their Cpls - Turney, Upfold and Christie, to turn another intake into Queensmen. Over towards the Guard Room I could hear the bark of Major Rowley Mans' bulldog - it still sounded like Sgt Pearson yelling "You - Come Here!" Why did it always have to bark just as you were passing the Guard Room. The number of times I have spun round, with my heart in my mouth, wondering what awful fate was about to befall me, only to see a lopsided looking bulldog, staring at me with malicious pleasure. I really disliked that dog. As I thought of the Guard Room I wondered what had become of Ptes Brock and Beacon. What initiative, what daring and what expertise. They had everything that the Army was looking for in its soldiers. Unfortunately they used all this initiative to escape - constantly. RSM Tommy Atkins was not too impressed when they tunnelled out through the wall of the Guard Room bog and escaped yet again. They must have done an incredibly long period of National Service. Perhaps they are still on the run.

It is funny isn't it how emotions come back to you when given the right stimulus. Just looking away to my left and seeing the way out, past the Keep, made me feel again the pride in my uniform, in my bearing and in my Regiment as I stepped out of the gates on my first 48 hour pass. I was just busting to show my folks what a fine chap I had become. We all have a great deal to be grateful for - those of us who had the privilege of being trained into the ways and traditions of the Regiment and I know it was just the same for those who started in The East Surrey Regiment in Kingston. It was the start of our adult life and we were given values and standards that would last for ever.

It is time for Staff Parade and over by the Guard Room Drummer Court is sounding Last Post.....

"Come on Dad, it is time we went home and had some tea." He was right, but it is good to remember and give thanks for the privileges that have come our way.

Rupert



## The Tale of the Century

*Old soldiers, they say, never die but simply fade away. One veteran of The Queen's Royal Regiment, however, shows not the slightest sign of doing so yet. Clarrie Jarman is a rare survivor. Now in his 100th year he was among the badly injured who lived - just - to tell the tale after that fateful morning in July 1916 when the first great Battle of the Somme began. Clarrie was born in Stoke Newington, north London, in 1896, but at the age of six months his parents took him and his two brothers away from the dense crowds of the big city, southwards to Woking, then a quiet country town in North Surrey. A slim, tall man of immense charm and great dignity, Clarrie still lives in Woking, and it was in Woking in 1910, that he began his apprenticeship at a firm of ironmongers called Skeet and Jeffs.*

*But the First World War interrupted his apprenticeship and in the enthusiastic manner of 1914 he enlisted in the Regiment which he joined at the Depot at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford. Placed in the 7th (Service) Battalion, he was straight away transported with them to Purfleet, Essex where, in winter weather conditions of cold and flood, they remained until December before moving four miles away to Averley. Further manoeuvres and training, including long route marches, took place in Essex and Suffolk in early 1915 until a move was made to Codford St Mary on Salisbury Plain for divisional exercises and rifle firing. Here Clarrie made the acquaintance of mules who on one occasion, in torrential rain, refused to pull out gun limbers so the troops had to pull them out themselves. But action and foreign fields were now imminent as Clarrie relates in much interesting and moving detail:-*

About the end of June 1915 the 18th Division, which included my battalion, was ordered to France. As part of the 55th Brigade we embarked at Folkestone for Boulogne. Boulogne seemed rather quiet, I remember, but there were soldiers everywhere and we marched through the town to St Martin's Camp where we stayed for just one night. The thing that amazed me about that first march in France was the fact that all along the road young Frenchmen shouted at us, 'You jig-a-jig my sister for tin of bully!' I think they were rather hungry, poor devils. And there were prostitutes everywhere. It was a job to keep them out of our tents. After that one night we travelled to a place just outside Amiens by train and, from there, we marched to a village called Dernancourt, just behind the British front line. We then went into the front line for our first experience under fire, marching up through the village of Meaulte at night.

We took over a section of the line from the 1st Norfolks. The town of Albert was behind us and Fricourt, held by the Germans, in front. From that moment on we seemed to be under fire the whole time. At first when we heard the bullets whizzing by and the shells whining and bursting overhead we were ducking the whole time, but you soon get used to it and we learned how to tell the difference between bullets and shells that really were coming close and those that were almost certainly too far away to do us any harm. In fact it was a sort of badge of honour with us to treat the shells and bullets with contempt. With experience we learned when to take cover - and quickly and when not. In the first days we sometimes didn't know whether we were ducking because our own shells were heading out over our heads towards the enemy or because we were the ones under attack.

During the rest of 1915 and all through the winter of 1915/16 we remained on this front between La Boisselle and a place called Suzanne, at the right of the British line and linking up with the French. That first winter was terrible, with snow and, at Christmas, rain, then bitter cold. At times the trenches became thick with mud and we were up to our knees in water for days on end which made life miserable, to say the least.

During this time the routine was to spend two weeks in the trenches and two weeks out and, with the mud and cold and ice, at least we knew that there would be little action - conditions



*Clarrie Jarman (right) and two friends, photographed a few days before the first Battle of the Somme. Though badly injured, Clarrie is the only one of the three to have survived.*

made that impossible. I suppose our only real activity in those winter months was to send regular patrols and wiring parties at night into no man's land. Casualties were relatively few, but of course some lads were unlucky - they were shot at while out laying wires, or killed or badly wounded when shells or mortars landed in our trenches.

Our main food in the line was bully beef stew - bully beef was rather like corned beef - and we had to share one loaf a day between four men. Other than this we had a ration of cheese each day and some butter in tins. At night a dixie - a kind of big, open kettle - of tea and rum was sent up. For warmth we relied on charcoal braziers, one for each group of men in dug-outs. Charcoal was always burned as it gave off no smoke and therefore didn't give away our position. There were also tins of hard biscuits everywhere along the front - a bit like dog biscuits - and we could eat these whenever we liked. All day and all night in a front line trench you do two hours on and two off. A lot of the work was re-building after shell damage, although until the Somme I think we were on a fairly quiet part of the front. But having said that there was always a steady stream of casualties from snipers, mortars and occasional shells. I had one or two near misses early on, but nothing too bad. On one occasion during my first winter in the front line I was on duty with two friends and thought I'd better go and get my goatskin coat - we were issued with these because the weather was so bad. Anyway I went off, came back in two minutes and found my two friends dead. A direct hit from a shell.

When we were out of the line our time was always pretty fully occupied. First we had to clean the mud off uniforms and boots and clean buttons, rifles and equipment. We had to parade for a bath and change of underwear. The bath house was usually in some old barn and we had baths in tubs. We were hardly ever free of lice and, after being in the front line, our clothing was always riddled with them. There were rats everywhere too. They invaded the trenches; they came in droves to the villages; as we slept on lice infested straw in old barns they ran over us all night. Up on the firestep - the raised platform on the front of the trench - we used to have a bit of fun now and then by putting a piece of cheese on the end of our bayonets. A rat would soon come sniffing up and the one that got the cheese also got the bullet.



Clarrie Jarman

It wasn't all lying around waiting for something to happen often a lad would be killed by a shell or machine-gun while out on a wiring party and if that happened his body was brought back and a man would have to stand guard over it all the rest of the night to keep the rats off. And he would have to be armed with a cudgel to do it. Next morning the poor devil would be buried. But there

were amusing incidents too. I'll give you an example. I was with a friend in a front line trench with orders to detonate a series of mines we'd placed out in front of us in no man's land. We were supposed to detonate them if and when we saw the enemy coming. Anyway, there we were when along came a colonel. I had no idea he was a colonel and when he said to us, 'Are you sentries?' I replied, 'Well, we're not sandbags.' I discovered later from one of the junior officers that he'd gone along the trench saying to himself, 'I asked for that.' When I found out who he was I thought I'd be court martialled, but nothing ever happened.

When we were out of the line we had numerous other duties. We were on parade a lot of the time or sent on route marches or given physical jerks, as we used to call exercise sessions. But we also had various entertainments - including a drum and life band!

Other times we worked with The Royal Engineers making up roads, laying railway tracks and water mains. This was the origin of the old army saying "*The bees do the work and the bees make the honey, but the Queens do the work and the REs draw the money*"! I remember on one occasion I was on a wagon loaded with chalk for road mending and in the pouring rain the brakes failed and the poor old horse slipped on the slope and went down. The horse stopped the wagon, but the poor thing was rather badly cut. Almost everything was moved by horse wagon then.

It seems odd that we should have gone through all this with men dying every day a few miles away but we had to be kept fit and active I suppose, which is why we also played sports, particularly football. I played in many inter-platoon tournaments, and in the Brigade Sports held at Picquigny in May 1916 I managed to come in second in the 1 mile race and second in the high jump, winning 20 francs in each event. These sports took place during the last few days before we returned to the front line to prepare for the first Battle of the Somme. I remember I treated some of my pals with the money I'd won, but though I didn't know it, this was to be the last occasion I was ever going to be able to compete in sports.

We were at Picquigny, where we'd been given about two weeks rest after being at the front for eight months. It was a pleasant enough place, not far from Amiens. It was such a pleasure to see English girls - nurses - the first we'd seen for eight months. But all good things come to an end and we were soon boarding a train for Mericourt. From there we marched to Suzanne, a deserted derelict village just behind our front line. The weather, if I remember rightly, was good but the sandbags along our parapet on the front line were green and slimy as a result of mustard gas used by the Germans sometime before we arrived.

For the next few weeks things stayed fairly quiet but all the time preparations for the Somme battles were going on. Over the last ten days of June our artillery shelled the German lines day and night but we heard hardly a sound from the Germans. It was a massive bombardment but the Germans knew quite well that the attack was coming and they were fully prepared for it, a fact not known to us ordinary soldiers or, one would assume, to the top brass. We were led to believe that the German wire and defences would have been destroyed by the time we made our attack.

On Thursday 29 June 1916 we took up our positions in what were known as the assembly trenches. We were ready to go, but at the very last moment orders came through that the attack had been put off for forty-eight hours. We never knew why, but the weather turned foul and we had to stick in the trenches, packed together in the pouring rain with no cover at all. Two days later on Saturday July 1, at 7.30 in the morning, zero hour arrived. The weather had turned fine and warm, the trench ladders were in place and, on the blast of whistles and after wishing our chums the best of luck, we went up and over into no man's land where, under normal circumstances, you wouldn't have dared set foot in daylight. It wasn't terrifying at that moment, as many people today imagine it must have been, because we had been told again and again that this battle would be no battle at all. It would be a walk-over. There would be no opposition because we had bombed and shelled the German trenches into oblivion.

We had been drilled to go over in what was called star formation - in other words, the four sections of each platoon formed the four points of the star. Then, as we neared the German line, we were to spread out in extended order, that is into a long, straightish line. I was a bomber - that meant I was carrying 250 rounds of rifle ammunition, 7 Mills bombs strapped to my chest and 7 more strapped to my back. I was also carrying a rifle with bayonet fixed, and a pick and shovel. The idea of the pick and shovel was that we would need to square up the German trenches after we'd taken them. I was in the third wave of men who went over and I think I got about half-way to the German front trench.

To be as precise as possible I ought to say that I went over the top at a place called Carnoy. Our objective - and objectives were always explained to the men very precisely - was Montauban but, as it turned out, only a handful, if any, of the men in my battalion were to reach their objective. What we didn't know as we set off across no man's land that day, but were soon to discover, was that the Germans had been sheltering from our bombardment in complete safety in concrete dug-outs 30 feet down beneath their trenches. As soon as our attack started they came up out of these concrete dug-outs unharmed and ready for us. They came at us with what must have been dozens, perhaps even hundreds, of machine-guns as well as artillery fire. We were simply mown down. What made matters worse was that our field guns were using what was known as a creeping barrage for the first time. This meant firing over our heads but at the same time making sure that the shells landed just ahead of us among the Germans. I suspect that in the confusion a great many



No. 6 Platoon, B Company, 7th Battalion, The Queen's during training at Purfleet Camp, 1914. Clarrie is standing fifth from the right.



of our lads were actually killed and injured by our own artillery. Instead of it being a walk-over we were slaughtered. Something like 20,000 soldiers of Kitchener's great volunteer army were killed or wounded on that one day.

I can remember stumbling and tottering forward under the weight of all my bombs and equipment while all around me was the indescribable noise of shells bursting - you could feel the blast and hear and feel the red-hot jagged bits of metal swishing past you at every angle and height. I don't know how long I managed to keep going forward once I was up out of the trench, but I suppose I was always expecting to be hit, yet hoping against hope that somehow I wouldn't be. I couldn't turn back and, like all the men, I hoped that when I was hit it wouldn't be too bad. Moments later I was bowled right over by a hail of machine-gun bullets that completely shattered my right leg below the knee. All the time as I'd gone forward I'd seen flashes from machine-guns and rifles ahead of me on the ridge of the German trenches but I don't know which one hit me. I just felt a terrific thump, my leg gave way and I was down. There was no pain and I had the sense and the presence of mind to get rid of my bombs and to crawl into the nearest shell hole. Then, during the few moments that I remained conscious, I looked around and saw that the ground as far as I could see was covered with lads in khaki. The German barbed wire immediately in front of their trenches hadn't even been cut by our artillery and there were British soldiers dead all over it, hanging there and, of course, blocking the progress of the tiny number who made it that far without being hit. Those who did get that far found that the uncut wire and the bodies already lying tangled in it slowed them down long enough for the German gunners to make absolutely sure of them. And remember, the distance we'd been asked to cross between our trench and theirs was not more than a couple of hundred yards.

Wherever you looked there were dead soldiers in khaki, others were obviously dying, their life's blood leaking quickly away into the ground. Some were silent, others screamed in agony and terror. I saw that the ground everywhere was being spattered with shrapnel, high explosive and machine-gun bullets. It was virtually impossible not to get hit and the noise of it all was deafening, but I soon lost all awareness of what was happening because I was losing a lot of blood. I lay where I had fallen all through that long day about fourteen hours in all, during which I regained consciousness only now and then. I was very lucky - just as I'd been lucky not to get killed in the first place like most of my friends - because as dusk fell I recovered consciousness for a moment, just as a young lad from The Royal Army Medical Corps came by looking for wounded. These chaps were always very brave, but they'd had to wait until things quietened down a little before they moved out over no man's land looking for wounded. I think he must have seen me move a little or I may have spoken to him. Anyway he came over and asked if I could walk. I tried to stand but fainted, so with the aid of one of his comrades he carried me back - and we were still under fire remember - to our front line where I discovered that I was just one of thousands lying waiting to be removed to a casualty clearing station. A great many died before getting there and many others were killed as they lay on their stretchers by shell fire or stray bullets. Thousands lost one or more limbs or their sight or their hands. Most of my friends were killed in that first half-hour. Of the fifteen men in my section, two came back.

*From the battlefield Clarrie was taken to a dressing station and then to hospital at Amiens. This was to be part of a long journey back to "Blighty". After travelling by barge down the River Somme to Abbeville, where he and other casualties were given fresh underwear and new uniforms, he was taken on to Boulogne and placed on board the hospital ship Western Australia which carried him to Southampton. The cross-channel voyage took seventeen hours on account of dodging U-Boats. But the journey was not yet over. Long distance rail travel took Clarrie via*

*Basingstoke and Birmingham to Aberdeen where he was finally lodged in the Old Mill Military Hospital where he was to remain, mostly in bed, for the next six months.*

*He continues:-*

During all the travelling the wound in my leg had become infected with gangrene and, after suffering great pain and many operations carried out to try to save it, my right leg had to be amputated high above the knee. By this time I was almost a skeleton and when I was taken to the operating theatre for the umpteenth time I told the surgeon (a Captain Mitchell as I recall) that if he was going to take my leg off he could take it off at the neck as I'd had enough. This happened on 20 September 1916 and of course it meant that my war service was over for ever.

After the leg had been amputated and most of the pain had gone I was able to move in bed. This was a great relief because for almost three months prior to the operation which removed my leg I had been unable to move at all as the leg was kept in plaster from top to bottom, and afterwards in a Thomas splint with a weight on the end, which meant I just had to lie on my back with bed sores as big as saucers. With my leg gone I gradually regained my strength and after a few more weeks I was able to get out of bed. The first time I got out I had the strangest feeling - it was as if I was going to float up and up and up! When I reached my full height, 6 ft, I just collapsed and that was my lot for the day! But as the days wore on I made progress and was soon able to ride around in a wheelchair. Like most amputees, I sometimes tried to put down the foot that wasn't there. I couldn't help it - the problem was that although the leg had gone I could still feel my toes tingling as I can to this day.

Towards the end of 1916 I was sent to Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin to convalesce. I remember that during my first days here the other lads used to take me out in an old-fashioned bath chair and once they pushed the bath chair with me in it into an ornamental pond in Cooper's Park! The water wasn't too deep, and I was soon rescued. On the way back to the hospital they pushed me into a pub and I was well received by the patrons who had a whip round for my benefit. After this experience I asked the matron for crutches and was given a pair of the old broom-handle kind. With practice I soon got used to them and got around quite well, although the first time I tried to go down the front steps at the hospital I fell down most of them!

It was universally agreed among all the wounded I met at Elgin and Aberdeen that we were marvellously looked after - we wanted for nothing and apart from those first three months when I suffered acutely, I enjoyed my hospital days. The Scottish people were very kind and generous too - most places of entertainment in the area were free to us and the golf course in Elgin was available if we wanted to play. We had no trouble getting a round of golf with the local girls, although I had to balance on one leg when hitting the ball. With my crutches I got round and could play a fair game. Just before my twenty-first birthday it was decided that I should be sent to a hospital closer to my home in Woking. I was sad to go as I'd made many friends in Elgin.

In spite of the length of time that had passed since my operation my stump had still not healed and it was thought that I would have to undergo another operation. Fortunately, however, I was transferred to a VAD Hospital called Beechcroft where the matron found an ointment which healed the wound and a further operation was avoided.

It was April 1917 when I arrived back at my home in Woking. After a few weeks leave which I spent with my parents and with friends at Salisbury I was admitted to Roehampton Hospital to be fitted with an artificial leg. By January 1918 I was on two legs again although one was made from willow, as all artificial legs were in those days, and it weighed about 9lb - a considerable weight to carry around.





Clarrie Jarman enjoys a joke with the late Brigadier Frank Stafford at a reunion dinner at Sandfield Terrace held a couple of years ago.

At this time I began to wonder what on earth I would do with the rest of my life. I didn't want to go back to the ironmonger's trade, although I'd been an apprentice at it from 1910 till 1914. I was discharged from the army in February 1918 after almost two years in hospital and I found civilian life very difficult at first. This was partly because I just wasn't used to it and partly because I missed the wonderful companionship of army friends.

I spent six months at the Regent Street Polytechnic in London on an engineering course and while I was there I lived in Hanover Square. I don't think I could quite afford to live there now! Anyway we were actually staying in a house owned by Vesta Tilley, the actress. She took a great interest in helping the war disabled, and since that time I've always been fond of saying that I once slept in Vesta Tilley's bed!

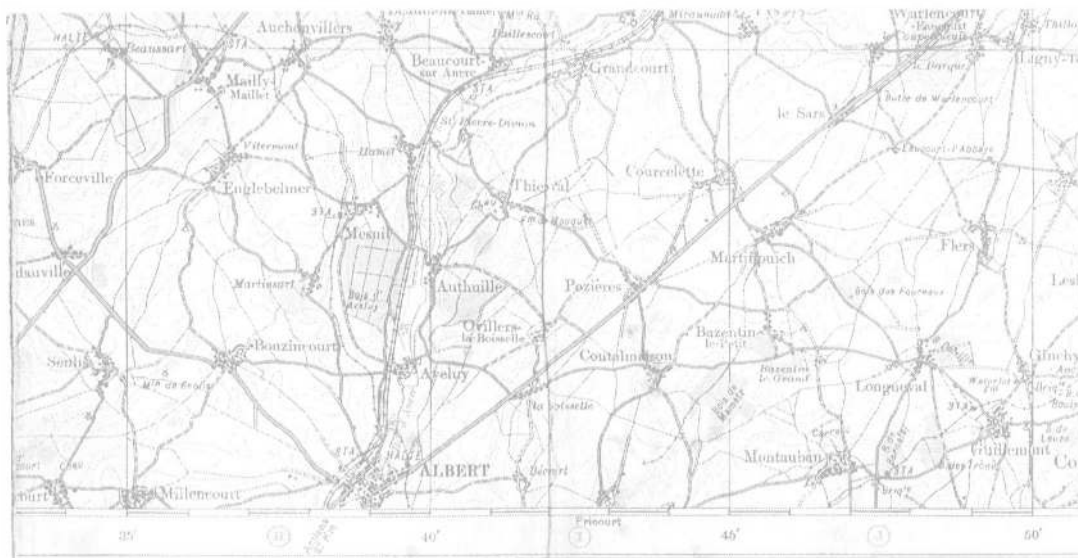
The loss of my leg never really interfered with the rest of my life. After some years in engineering I got a job as a schools' inspector and did that for thirty-six years until my retirement at sixty-five. Since then I've had more than thirty years of happy retirement and in my life I've had two wives - both real good 'uns! For years I swam regularly in the rivers and ponds around Woking - often with one of my dogs - and I was always reckoned to be the best one legged wicket-keeper in Woking!

In those days officers and men were a different species. The line of social class was very rigidly drawn, but today when I'm invited to army occasions and dinners I'm always invited to sit at the top table with the officers! How the world has changed.

*But if the world has changed, the spirit of one indomitable veteran warrior hasn't. Clarrie Jarman, old soldier and cricketer is due to knock up a great century when he celebrates his 100th birthday on 9th May. We wish him well and may his score continue for a long time yet.*

*The Editor would like to thank the author Tom Quinn and the publishers of Tales of the Old Soldiers for allowing us to reproduce the photographs.*

#### France 1: 100,00 LENS map of the area



#### The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment 1914 - 1918

The 7th Battalion was sent to France in 1915 and made no less than four attacks in the Somme battle of 1916. It suffered appalling casualties at Arras and the third battle of Ypres. The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Bushell, a pre-war Queen's officer, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his conduct at Tergnier during the German offensive in March 1918, where his personal courage and example held the line firm against determined attacks. He was later killed by a sniper. The Battalion fought to halt the German advance in front of Amiens, and then, when the enemy was driven back, it pursued them across the battlefields of the Somme and fought almost without a break until the end of the war.

## The Blizzard; A Reminiscence of Suvla

*The Gallipoli Association commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign, with a Memorial unveiled by HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh in St Pauls Cathedral. The following short but descriptive account of conditions at Suvla at the end of November 1915 gives real feeling to the appalling conditions by those involved in the Campaign. The article was written by Dr Lewis Bruce who, at the outbreak of war was in general practice in Scotland. Although over the age of conscription he nevertheless volunteered for active service in September 1914 and was commissioned into the RAMC. He served as a doctor with The Scottish Horse which in Gallipoli was attached to the 2nd Mountain Division. In 1916 Dr Bruce who had been awarded an MC left the army as a Lieutenant Colonel to return to his practice in Scotland.*

The reserve trenches on the Suvla flat, which lay on either side of the Yeomans road, were a labyrinth of narrow winding passages and roofless dugouts. They were spoken of as "Winter Quarters" because rumour had it that a certain "brass hat" engineer had reported to the effect that these particular trenches were a most desirable residence and suitable for winter quarters. To the ordinary observer they suggested flooding and, it may have been an illusion, the hospital ships lying off "C" beach seemed to be above the level of the ground in which these trenches were dug. The weather was pleasantly keen, the wind being in the north-east and there was enough nip in the air at night to keep down the myriads of hatching flies which earlier in the season had been a grievous plague and the carriers of much sickness.

On the afternoon of November 26th the wind changed to the south-east and was blowing so strongly that communication between the hospital ships and the shore was interrupted. A dense mass of inky-black clouds gathered on the south-western horizon and, gradually spreading northwards, first engulfed the island of Imbros and then threw the whole of Suvla flats into a dense darkness, punctuated at frequent intervals by vivid flashes of lightning.

At six o'clock the clouds seemed to burst and the rain fell in torrents; in less than two minutes all who were caught in that downpour were soaked to the skin. Half an hour after the commencement of the rain there were several inches of water in the trenches and as the water from the higher ground was draining into the lower by the main communication trenches the water accumulated very rapidly in the reserve area; at seven o'clock it actually rose in some places two feet in ten minutes; this sudden rise being due to a rush of water coming down a "dere" or dry water course where it had accumulated behind and then destroyed an emplacement of sandbags.

Some of the deeper dugouts had seven feet of water in them and in the case of the Brigade Staff the occupants had to be rescued through the roofs, leaving all their possessions behind them. In the men's trenches and dugouts matters were equally bad. It was the custom at Suvla to dig shelves and recesses into the trench sides for the purpose of providing storage room for rifles, ammunition, and kit. When the rain commenced the men immediately put their rifles, ammunition and greatcoats, into these recesses but when the sudden rise of water occurred at seven o'clock it took everyone by surprise, it swamped the niches and undermined the trenches so that yards of the walls collapsed burying the kit in several feet of mud and water.

At twelve o'clock midnight the rain ceased, the sky cleared and apparently the storm was over. Should the next morning be clear we knew that the Turks might be in a position to take advantage of our lack of cover and if they did so our casualties from shrapnel would be heavy. Officers and men therefore turned out to construct new cover, partly by digging shallow pits and partly by building up parapets of sandbags retrieved from the flooded trenches.

At four o'clock however, on the morning of the 27th November, another sudden change occurred in the weather. The wind veered back to the north-east and became thin and piercing; it was impossible to stand, let alone sit or lie down without some protection. Daylight came slowly, ragged rain-laden clouds scudded to the south, and at ten o'clock the rain commenced to fall. Throughout the whole of that gray, miserable day rain fell without intermission, accompanied by a very cold wind. At the darkening the rain changed to snow and the wind became more bitterly cold.

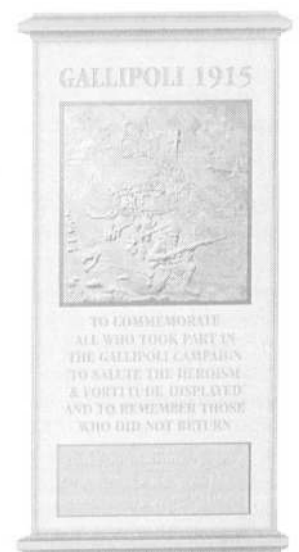
I can see now that scene of discomfort; the gray wind-swept sky, the cloud-capped hills, the driving snow, the flooded trenches and the dim figures of hunch-backed men pacing restlessly to and fro in their efforts to keep warm. Very few of the men had been able to rescue their buried greatcoats, blankets and waterproof sheets from the flooded trenches; everybody was more or less wet; no fires had been made because the little fuel we had was saturated with water and so no warm food or drink had been issued since midday on 26th November. Under these disadvantageous conditions the troops were called upon to face a second sleepless night in a north-east wind and driving snow.

The morning of the 28th November broke in a blizzard, with the wind increased to half a gale; the snow dry and dusty swept the plain and searched out every nook and cranny of the shelter provided by the dugouts and sandbag shelters. Towards afternoon frost set in and by night the temperature had fallen to 8°F. That night the Salt Lake froze for about 150 yds. from its margin and the spray from the waves at the corner of the bay by Anzac froze as it fell upon the pebbles of the beach.

The condition of the surviving troops was now most pitiable with insufficient and wet clothing, without head cover of any sort, without warm food or drink for nearly three days, they were now called upon to spend a third night without sleep in half a gale and 24° of frost. To lie down was to risk frostbite and to sleep was to risk being frozen to death.

From the second day of the storm there had been a steady stream of sick to the Field Hospitals so much so that by the end of the third night of sleeplessness and exposure the strength of the regiment had been reduced by fifty percent. The greater part of the hospital cases were due to exhaustion from exposure and lack of sleep; the majority were able to return to duty in two or three days. Some of the units in the firing line were not so fortunate. Some men were found frozen to death in their dugouts, one or two were drowned, others when making their way through the storm to the Field Hospitals became exhausted and lying down to rest in the shelter of the dwarf-oak scrub fell asleep with fatal results. There were many cases of frostbite and trench feet.

The morning of Monday 28th November came with a clear sun but the wind was still full of frost and the ground rang like iron. The effect of the sun upon the wet and weary remnant of the regiment was wonderful. Fires were lighted, meals were cooked, and hot drinks distributed; the lost kit was fished out of the mud of the trenches and spread to dry. Everyone was busy, dugouts were baled clear of water, the slush of the trenches was covered with frozen mud from the parados, and fatigue parties were told off to bring in fuel.



The Gallipoli Memorial  
St Pauls Cathedral



Fortunately for us the Turks were in an equally bad plight. Up in the firing line both sides for a period ceased hostilities. The Turks could be seen baling out their trenches and sitting on their parapets within 220 yards of our sentries; while on our side the men worked in the open repairing gaps in the sandbag defences. Had either side been able at this juncture to bring up fresh troops very little resistance could have been made to their advance; on both sides the efficiency of the machine-guns was impaired and many of the rifles and much of the ammunition were not in a fit condition to be used.

It was a sad scene the road from the firing line during and after the blizzard. Down the Yeoman's road, as it was called, came a steady stream of men in mud-stained uniforms. There were stretcher-bearers with heavy burdens, men hobbling along with rifles for crutches, and men supporting one another and making two sound legs do the duty of four. There was no reason why the road should be used during the daylight hours and every reason against such a practice, as the Turks had the ranges to a yard, but in spite of orders to the contrary the road was used by daylight because the communication trenches were full of mud and water and impassable.

During the actual period of the storm the Turks never once shelled the road but as soon as the storm passed they took a heavy toll from the men as they made their way to the ambulance tents on the beaches.

Such is the tale of the November Blizzard in Gallipoli; a costly accident to the British Army but an accident for which nobody could be held responsible.

LCB

#### 1/7th Bn The Queen's Annual Reunion

The annual reunion dinner of the 1/7th Queen's took place at the UJ club on Saturday March 2nd. This dinner is always held on the Saturday nearest to March 6th, (one of the glory days of the 1/7th). "The Battle of Medenine" the day when 27 German tanks were destroyed on the battalion front. Fortunately our casualties were only 1 killed and 9 wounded and 10 missing.

Pre-dinner drinks, and an excellent meal, all helped towards renewing old friendships, and taking trips down memory lane, comrades, who lived, and fought together, for five years. After dinner the President, "Major S Playfoot MC" proposed The Loyal Toast followed by the toast to: "Absent Comrades" by Ted Bussey, and "The Battalion" by Joc Rowe MM.

Alderman William Meersman, the Guest of Honour from St. Niklaas, Belgium, then made a short speech, expressing his pleasure to be with us once again, and to convey the gratitude of the people of St. Niklaas for their liberation by the 1/7th in 1944. Alderman Meersman, had, earlier that day, placed a magnificent floral tribute on our War Memorial in Kennington Park.

Major J M A Tamplin TD who had accompanied him to the memorial, together with two other lady guests, from St. Niklaas Town Hall, then officially thanked them for their generosity, and for making the journey from Belgium. Major Playfoot expressed concern about our dwindling numbers - a problem that must be affecting all old comrades associations all over the country. He then asked for views from those present - after discussion a decision was made that in 1997 the dinner would become a lunch, enabling those who had long distances to travel home, to get home at a reasonable hour. It was also agreed that as well as male visitors, wives would be invited. The raffle raised £100.00 this is put towards the cost of the dinner. Everybody then retired to the bar for more trips down memory lane. All agreed that a good time was had by one and all.

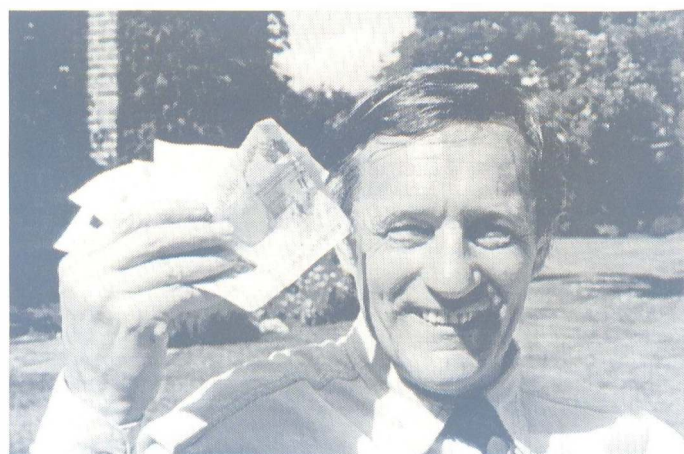
KEB

#### National Service Officers Reunion

On Sunday, 18th June 1995, a group of 15 former National Service officers of The East Surrey Regiment accompanied by their ladies, were invited for lunch at the splendid home of Anthony and Christina Elliott. The occasion was to mark and celebrate the 40th anniversary of joining the Infantry in 1955, and provided an opportunity not only for many "War stories" to be told and old photographs to be pored over, but also to catch up on career and family news since then. Whilst most of us had kept in touch with some of the group, we had not seen others in the years between. It was fascinating to discover how quickly the intervening years fell away, and old friendships were renewed.



We were particularly pleased to see Tim Rogerson, who had flown in from New Zealand especially for the occasion. Coincidentally on the very afternoon of the party, Tim's now home country of New Zealand were playing England in the Rugby World Cup. We reckon that Tim covered the cost of his air fare by the winnings on the book which he ran! (If you remember, England lost!)



*Gambling in a Surrey home*

*Colonel Tim Rogerson (Kiwi Convert) collecting his return fare back to New Zealand from Surrey officers after the New Zealand victory over England in the Rugby World Cup.*

It was also good to see Geoff and Maureen Strong with us; he was the Regimental representative at Eaton Hall in 1955, and as such interviewed and accepted us on behalf of the Colonel of the Regiment. Does he have any regrets now, I wonder?

It was a marvellous occasion, blessed by good weather. The food and wine provided by Anthony and Christina Elliott were quite outstanding, and we thank them both most sincerely, not only for their hospitality, but also for the huge admin task of arranging the party, contacting us all and getting us there. Those who were unable to make it missed a memorable occasion: we did drink a toast to Absent Friends! Here's to the 50th!

PRHT





Hatched in Manhattan and raised in Brooklyn, as a fledgling at the age of just 18, I joined The Royal Canadian Air Force, six months before the Japs kicked the United States into the War at Pearl Harbour for which, at least, we all owe them a debt of gratitude. Having gained my wings, and disillusioned of my rosy dreams of joining "The Few" to fight for Britain in aerial combat with the Hun over the Channel, in late 1943 I found myself reduced to the unglamorous chore of flying Hurricanes on an R.A.F. squadron in Bengal, when a call came around, asking for volunteers to go as Air Liaison officers with the Army's long range penetration columns operating behind the enemy lines. We had just been told that 146 Squadron was to be sent to Bangalore to convert on to P-47 Thunderbolts, and would be out of it for at least another six months. By that time, I was a Flying Officer (1st Lieutenant), and was about to be promoted to Flight Lieutenant (Captain). I had, of course, read of the exploits of the 1943 "Wingate Expedition" and had even talked with a handful of the survivors (they had taken an awful pasting to prove the concept!) and was strongly attracted by the sheer adventure of the thing! So I volunteered, and was attached at first to the 4th Battalion, The Border Regiment, 23 Brigade. Did one training exercise with them, and, to replace Flight Lieutenant Tofield, who couldn't cope physically, was pulled out suddenly and reassigned, this time to the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment (Royal West Surreys), 16 Brigade, under Bernard Fergusson, which had completed its training and was about to go in, and with whom I remained throughout the campaign.

We were trucked 90 (some say 70) miles down the Ledo Road, from which we kicked off, on foot, over what the lads ever afterwards referred to as "Them F\*\*\*\*\*!! Hills", on 5 February 1944. General Wingate personally saw us off with a prayer service and led a couple of rousing hymns, we were the only brigade that marched (or, more precisely, climbed, slithered and generally struggled our way) in, the rest being flown in about a month later. That crossing of "T.F.H." (shown as the Patkai Hills on the map) took weeks, and really took it out of us. Maybe that's why, ever afterwards, until the end of the campaign, I suffered constant hallucinations, (in my case, aura), in Brigadier Fergusson's case, visual - he told me when I visited him in New Zealand in 1965, where he was Governor General, that he saw the trees in the forest all decorated and lit up like Christmas trees!, and have been slightly crazy ever since. We eventually swam the Chindwin (Jackie Coogan flew one of the gliders that brought us the rafts to float our gear across).

Nothing much happened after that, other than a couple of brief, small shoot-outs, in chance jungle encounters, until I personally met Wingate and Cochran, or the first and only time one-on-one. One memorable day I was told to take a casualty pony (the very one who pissed and defecated on my boots and farted in my face for endless miles) and ride to Brigade HQ, a few miles back up the track. On arrival, I was directed to climb into a "basha" hut (on stilts), where, to my surprise, I came face to face with Orde Charles himself, who had presumably flown in aboard an L-1 or an L-5. He was seated at a table, and after the usual courtesies (limited on my side to "Yes sir, No sir, three bags full, sir!") he pointed to the floor, which was totally plastered with maps under a clear plastic cover, and asked "Where are we"? Instead of responding to his one-upmanship by frankly confessing I hadn't a clue, I foolishly made an ass of myself by asking for his permission to get down on my hands and knees (as if the maps, which were finely-detailed ordnance maps covering the whole of north Burma, would have been of any help!). I was halfway there, when he snapped "Never mind we are here!" (pointing). He then ordered me to take an infantry platoon and carry out a reconnaissance to determine if a particular

area, already pre-selected from the air, would be suitable for a landing strip of 1000 yards or so. This I did. We went there, approved the location, hacked out a short strip at one side of what later became our "Aberdeen" stronghold, and the next morning, in came a Noorduyn Norseman carrying the US Army Air Corps legendary Colonel Phil Cochran, head of Number One U.S. Air Commando. Unfortunately, I don't recall our conversation, mainly because there wasn't any. When he seemed to have a free moment, I went up to him, saluted, introduced myself, and told him I was an American, from Brooklyn. All I got in return is what I can only describe as a long, fish-eyed stare. Maybe he didn't believe me, or, as a good Irishman, didn't cotton to the idea of an American being with the Brits, or couldn't stand the sight and smell of this filthy, ragged, bearded semi-skeleton who stank like a wet goat, or maybe he just thought he was Little Lord Jesus Mark II. I'll never know. He just rather pointedly turned away and started talking to another relatively spic-and-span American officer who had come in with him. I hope this account doesn't offend anyone. Maybe he was just having a bad day or had too much on his mind. I can only tell it as it was. Hence there are no golden words of his to record for posterity. Life as a Chindit was quite a shock for a delicate young (20) Air Force boy, of a particularly indolent type, catapulted into it with no physical preparation other than puffing 30 cigarettes a day, lifting Rosa rum-and-limes or drinking the revolting Murree beer. But, frankly, it's my opinion that an out-of-condition guy who works himself into condition in the field, as it were, bears up a lot better, over the long haul, than a highly conditioned athlete, who can fold rather quickly when he loses his edge. That was our experience, anyway. Most of our fitness nuts, including a man in my RAF section, had to be evacuated owing to sheer exhaustion. No reserve energy or fat to work off.



Brigadier Fergusson briefing Chindits etc.

### The Battle at Milestone 20

We didn't hang around the cushy billets of Aberdeen, but went right back into the jungle. The night of 25/26 March, we trapped a long Japanese truck convoy on its way to the Imphal front, bottling them up in a 1000 yard stretch of road, one side of which we had mined and booby-trapped, at Milestone 20 from Indaw. In the ensuing battle we burned, shot and blew up a large number of enemy soldiers for a loss of only four men. Milestone 20 from Indaw was on a major highway leading west to the front at Imphal. This was a great place for an ambush. A hill sloped down, at about a 20-25 degree angle, to the road, which ran parallel to a river from which it was separated by perhaps a hundred yards of flat, relatively open country. At the road, the slope of the hill ended in a short bluff about a three-foot drop. Our soldiers were spread along approximately 1000 yards of the road, on the uphill side, and our engineers mined the opposite side of the road, with trip-wired hand grenades, to greet any of



the enemy who ran in that direction. "Lifebuoy", flame-throwers and other weapons were stationed at both ends of the ambush, to trap any vehicles caught in between them and to prevent them from escaping in either direction.

The morning before we sprang the ambush, and while we were still getting into position, a solitary saloon car drove through, heading from Indaw towards Imphal. The soldiers on watch allowed it to pass unmolested and were subsequently much criticized by Lt. Col. Terence Close, the column commander, for having done so. After all, it was reasoned, the vehicle could have been a staff car containing a senior Japanese officer, the bagging of whom would have been quite a prize. At the same time, it could also be considered that a missing staff car would most likely have completely blown our cover, and brought, a strong enemy force, looking for trouble, against our worn-out, lightly-armed men, with unforeseeable consequences, possibly involving heavy British casualties. However that may be, the lads on watch had to assess, quickly, a totally unanticipated development and, in seconds, decide whether or not to act, in the nature of things, we may never know the truth, but personally I believe that they took the right decision, especially in view of the following night's events. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that the staff car without the supposed senior Japanese officer, had been deliberately sent, as a sort of point section, to trigger off the trap into which, a few hours later, a large Japanese truck convoy was to fall. It must be borne in mind that our strongholds were all established, that the whole area was crawling with our columns, that the Japs knew this, and accordingly had become extremely nervous about the likelihood of running into ambushes, especially on a major supply route like this one. Nothing is more likely than that they would test the water in this way.

Be that as it may, after the passage of this vehicle, we took up our final positions. At about 02:30 in the morning of 26 March, I was awakened by gunfire and hastily pulled on my boots which, against orders, I had removed. A long convoy of Japanese military lorries was moving through our 1000 yard ambush area, heading towards Imphal. The first couple of vehicles had been allowed through, before the main body of lorries arrived, the first of which was incinerated by a flame-thrower; the others, crowding up behind, were trapped by similar burnings at the eastern (Indaw) end of the ambush. As I recall, we caught some 8 or 10 vehicles in the trap. The enemy soldiers apparently jumped from the trucks and headed for the other side of the road, into the area mined by our engineers. While lots of small arms fire was exchanged, we took no casualties, as best I can recall, during this first phase of the action. I crept as close as I could get to the road, while still under cover, to try to get a fix on what was happening. Although it was a very dark night, there was some light from the burning vehicles. A comrade, Lieutenant Walker-Brash, of the East Yorks, slid over next to me and proposed that we go to the western (Imphal) end of the ambush and see if we could do any damage. This we proceeded to do, moving as quietly and as far as we dared, not wishing to tread on any hidden Japs. Having reached our objective, we heard Japanese soldiers calling to each other in the darkness, obviously trying to regroup. I pulled a pin and threw a No. 36 grenade right into the centre of where the voices were coming from. Unless it hit some luckless Jap on the head, it didn't do any harm. I waited for the "BOOM" that never came, with my face in the dirt and my head protected by my arms. Walker-Brash then threw a grenade of his own, with a much more satisfactory result. I don't know what damage it did, but it certainly shut them up. Things quietened down after that, as the Japanese survivors withdrew and left the field to us. At first light, we inspected the site. There were quite a few dead Japs but no casualties on our side. At least one of the lorries was Pay Corps vehicle and we picked up wads of worthless Japanese occupation currency, in various denominations, printed in English, with the words "The Japanese Government" prominently displayed. By about 08:30 or 09:00 hrs, the expected enemy force arrived. We

were well-entrenched on the hill and repelled a number of attacks. Our soldiers were dug in as well as they could manage, in some depth, in the undergrowth along the line of the road. Each time their attacks were repelled, on a number of occasions, the Japanese soldiers retreated across the relatively open area between the road and the river, and our Bren gunners had a field day.



*Centre with monocle, Brig Fergusson, on his left E B G Clowes, Doc Harrison. Back row behind EBG: Ken McL Douglas, Lieut Kemp ATO, Front row: 3rd from right: Jimmy Dell, Sam Sharpe.*

When the fighting resumed, many of our officers, including the column commander, and a number of other ranks, were stretched out prone in a line along a ridge at the top of the hill! The column commander was about six or seven bodies to my left. Before us was a wide stretch of about 20-25 yards of exposed 25-30 degree slope, without cover, while most of our force was dug in and fighting from positions in the brush along the roadside at the bottom of the hill. As the battle progressed, and the pressure on our troops increased, they began slowly to creep back up the hill. The Japanese managed to get at least one sniper, armed with a light machine gun, up one of the tall trees facing us across the road at the bottom of the hill, making it somewhat difficult and dangerous to cross the open area between our command position and the bulk of our soldiers. One of our chaps, Private "Chippy" Woods, was wounded down near the road, and a call went up for an aid man to come to his assistance. I called out to the column commander asking for permission to go after the wounded soldier. The word was passed down the line that I was to remain where I was. Unhappy with this order I pretended to have misheard it, called out "Thank you, Sir!", holstered my pistol, and in a matter of seconds, flew down the slope. That part was easy. Unfortunately, I had overestimated my strength and under-estimated both the weight of the wounded man and the steepness of the hill. I was simply unable to carry him on my back, and could only hold his left wrist in my left hand, take his left arm across my shoulders, and try to support and walk him up the hill. This was a very slow business, of course, and agonising for him, but there was no alternative. There were quite a few bullets flying about, and I don't know why we weren't hit, unless the enemy had uncharacteristically taken pity on us. It seemed to take an hour to get to the top - it must have been all of two or three minutes. About seven or eight feet from the top, I spotted our medical orderly, and shouted to him to come out and give me a hand, which he quickly did. Once finally up, and feeling very lucky indeed, I sat down for a while to catch my breath, while "Chippy" received such emergency medical attention as he could get in the circumstances. He had been hit through the middle and, to try to cheer him up, I told him how lucky he was to catch a "Wingater" (a word-play on the name of our general, this was Chindit slang for a wound light enough not to be fatal but serious enough to require that the wounded man be evacuated to hospital in India - thus "winning the gate"); -that he'd soon be fussed over by a horde of beautiful nurses, etc. In fact, he not only had the death pallor on him, but also



knew himself, that he was finished. He tried to smile at my fatuous attempts to comfort him, and toward the end, I had the strangest feeling that, dying as he knew he was, he was trying to comfort me! A short while later, this very brave young man was gone.

Leaving this battle area was remarkably easy. During a lull in the fighting, at about noon, we buried our dead and simply walked away into the jungle. Another Chindit column took up the same position some weeks later, and found that our dead had been exhumed, suspended by the feet, and used for bayonet practice by the Japanese. That was our one and only battle worthy of the name.

### Bird Droppings

I had malaria once while in there, took lots of quinine, and "walked it off", while still carrying up to 110 lbs.. (I have seen statements by our officers that they carried 75-lb packs - which I regard as a masterpiece of British understatement. A few years before I joined up, I had a job that involved carrying 90-lb bags of cement up three flights of stairs. My full equipment load was substantially heavier than that, by at least 10 to 20 pounds). Right after a supply drop, it took two men to lift our packs and help us to put them on. It was a crushing weight. When we were loaded up, we were bent double, and gradually straightened up as we ate the weight down, until we were almost dancing down the trail a couple of weeks later, just before the next supply drop came along, which it was one of my tasks to call up. By the way, our American "K" rations, apparently so loathed by U.S. troops, were as good food as our boys had ever enjoyed. These rations were supplemented by tea, powdered milk, sugar, and lots of tinned bully beef and hard "Britannia" biscuits. Hence the extra weight. Fifteen or twenty cans of corned beef are damned heavy, added to the ammo, grenades, etc., with which we were festooned, plus the "K" rations, some rice, extra water bags, and so on - not to mention a kukri, a dah (machete), a rifle and, in my case, a .38 pistol and the odd illegal battle souvenir. When we came out, having walked 8-900 miles through the worst possible country, I weighed only 126 pounds, about 16 lbs. more than my full equipment load - and I'm six feet tall!

On reading over what I have already written, I see that I have still failed to catch the flavour of the campaign. I don't think anyone ever really can. A few things spring to mind, as clear today, over half a century later, as at the time they happened: the way that we had to struggle through "T.F.H", cutting zig-zag trails up the incredibly steep slopes for the mules, then manhandling their loads (ammunition boxes, radio sets, machine guns, etc.) uphill ourselves, going back down for our own packs, and climbing straight up the steepest way, so as to avoid further muddying up the track for the animals who were brought up last...looking forward with longing to crossing the Chindwin as a sort of River Jordan, with an ever-receding Promised Land on the other side ... always hearing that awful hallucinatory tune ... cooking with the water we were sleeping in, or vice versa ...covering at least ten miles through that horrible country every day, only to be told at the end of it that we'd gained only half a mile as the drunken Burmese crow flies ... the incredible charm of marching by moonlight...packs on and moving out before dawn, two hours before stopping for breakfast ...having our first glorious bath in three weeks and drinking the marvellous water from a mountain stream coming straight from the Himalayas ...a laughing subaltern, Lt. Harry Sparrow, one month older than me, holding out a mug of this water, crying "God's ale, Johnny, God's ale!" only to be killed a few weeks later, ...lying on my stomach when a soldier stretched out next to me was shot by a Japanese sniper up a tree and died because one of the American light planes couldn't land on the only faintly possible emergency strip, chosen in despair - a rocky dry river bed - to evacuate him, and which, as a pilot myself, I would also never have attempted, ... sitting around a campfire chatting idly with two

other officers, only to be astonished to learn that all three of us had bedded the same girl in Rawalpindi... sitting under a blanket, shivering with fever, waiting for a supply drop, and setting a new world record for the hundred yard dash when a Jap bomber dropped a couple of cookies along our line of signal fires (I had told my sergeant to stop signalling, because that engine sounded funny; sort of "flip-flip-flip", not at all like the hearty Pratt and Whitney roar of one of ours) ... failing in a frantic effort to wave off, and only encouraging, an unwanted supply drop from light planes which had been out looking for another column that had been beaten up and scattered and thought they had found them, and resignedly adding the supplies to our already full loads so that they wouldn't be wasted ... being very annoyed with some of the less daring Dakota pilots who dropped supplies from such an altitude that they drifted all over the map and we lost many hours and sometimes a whole day picking them up in the jungle and even then not finding all of them ... losing a man killed by a free-falling 50-lb bag of mule feed because he failed to follow instructions to get behind a tree - and nearly being killed myself when a load of supplies came down out of the night trailing a torn parachute and, just missing Major Jimmy Flint, landed almost literally on my feet... stopping in a village inhabited by the most utterly gorgeous young Burmese girl and, with no reserve energy left, feeling not even the first faint stirrings of lust - as if General Wingate wouldn't have had a man shot who tried to do anything along that line anyway ... the awful day when we learned of General Wingate's death and realized just how incredibly vital an inspiration he was to us all, and how very much we depended on him ... where I first heard the question, "Joe who?" when we were told that Lentaigne, whom nobody seemed ever to have heard of, was taking over, and the sinking, abandoned feeling that went with this news (we were all hoping for either our own "Fergie" or "Mad Mike" Calvert) ... the unforgettable look on a soldier's face when he read out to us a letter from his wife back in England, telling him that she "just couldn't help herself" from having sex with her U.S. Army Air Corps sergeant boyfriend ... the satisfaction I got from kicking that damned casualty pony hard up the arse - she had been trying to kick me, as I walked behind her at the head of my section, all through the campaign, and finally got me (where it really hurt!) a couple of days before we were flown out, kicked her back, and the soldier leading her had to be restrained from killing me ... the way many of our muleteers, hardened veterans of the Western Desert and the jungle, broke down and cried when they learned that their mules would have to be shot so as not to fall into enemy hands after we were evacuated - the odd one managed somehow to escape! ... and finally, the slow realization that something very basic had happened to us inside - something burned into our souls, that made it possible for us to bear the burden, and that somehow set us just a little bit apart from everyone else, but would still take years to mature into the knowledge that, like the anointed members of some strange priesthood, we were once and forever Chindits.



*Pictured right: Doc Harrison RAMC, 21 Col Med Officer*



*2nd Battalion with The Chindit Force*

We were flown out from "Broadway" the night of 18 May 1944 to Comilla (my old squadron's ex-base) from where we were sent by train to Bangalore, where "The Fighting 146" was now located. Although we got plastered a few times together, I never rejoined them, as I came down with three more separate malarias in a row (I've now had a total of eight), until I was eventually recaptured in full flight by the R.C.A.F. and invalided back to Britain by sea, arriving in January 1945 in fact, I never did get back to the regiment after departing on my first leave following our evacuation, or any closer to Bangalore than the British Military Hospital in New Delhi. I spent the rest of the war, wings finally clipped, as a still flightless intelligence officer in No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Bomber Group, in Yorkshire.

#### **A Bird of Another Feather**

But now, let me tell the story of a man who didn't survive the campaign, and accordingly cannot speak for himself. Indeed, if he had the opportunity, he probably wouldn't say anything much about it anyway. To the best of my knowledge, his name has never been published in connection with a critically important stroke against the enemy.

The 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment was divided into two columns, 22, of which I was RAF officer, and 21, where my equivalent was Flight Lieutenant J.G. Gillies, DFM, a famous character whom I had known since long before our Chindit days. "Gilly" (I don't know anyone who ever knew his christian name), who hailed from Doncaster, had won the Distinguished Flying Medal as a sergeant-pilot in the Battle of Britain. Out on patrol with an infantry platoon one day, he and his formation wandered into a village which contained what they identified as a large number of really huge Japanese supply dumps. Taking careful note of their location, they then withdrew. He then arranged for two Hurricane aircraft to be flown in to Aberdeen. In one of these, he flew over the area and, in "Pathfinder" fashion, pinpointed the supply dumps for the attacking American aircraft, which had been specially called up for the purpose, and which succeeded in blowing up the lot. It was learned from Japanese Army records after the war that this was one of the main supply stores of munitions for the Japanese forces attacking Imphal and, especially, Kohima, and that its loss was a great disaster for them, although this was not known to us, at the time. For this exploit, "Gilly" was awarded the Military Cross, although he never got to wear it. It had apparently been decided to keep the Hurricanes at Aberdeen and a few days later, "Gilly" took off in one and disappeared, down somewhere in the jungle.

To the best of my knowledge, confirmed by Brigadier Fergusson in 1965, he was never found. A day or two later, our Brigade Squadron Leader Lane later took off in the second Hurricane and disappeared in the same way. I have often wondered if, when ordered to supply two Hurricanes, for these operations, some very clever bastard saw it as an opportunity to get rid of a couple of clapped-out old bangers. Both "Gilly" and the Squadron Leader were top-quality pilots; it had to have been the

machines. At the time, I could only hope they wouldn't send in yet another old clunker and order me to fly it!

#### **Back to the Nest**

That's about it, except that I was discharged in Montreal in October '45 and stayed in Canada in preference to returning to my folk's slum cold water flat on Flatbush Avenue. I had never missed Mom's apple pie because Mom, God bless her, was a lousy cook, and my idea of luxury during the Dirty Thirties was a 10 cent hot dog. Having become a Canadian citizen, I took my B.A. and M.A. (Econ) in Canada, worked in the Canadian Public Service for a total of 35-plus years (including war service) during which I had a round half-dozen diplomatic appointments, and retired in 1977 to accept an appointment as a senior official of the United Nations, based in Geneva but working all over the Third World, from which I retired to Cyprus in early 1989.



*2nd from left: possibly E B G Clowes, 3rd, T V Close, 4th, Tony Blackman, 5th, Jimmy Flint, 6th, Possibly R R Acheson.*

#### **Final Chirp**

In closing, I must say that my days with The Queen's, tough as they may have been, were far and away the most rewarding part of my military so called career. One thing I did learn, to my great subsequent benefit, was that the British soldier can somehow manage to make himself comfortable even in Hell. I really loved my Regiment and everyone who served in and with it, not all Queen's men by any means. My service with the Regiment has always been a matter of central importance to me indeed, one of the very few things in a long and chequered life of which I am really, and I think justifiably, proud. It was all the more disconcerting to learn, over fifty years later, that my name was never recorded as having served and that no record exists of anything I may have done, except in the fading memory of a dwindling few survivors. This is certainly not the least of life's little ironies, but I can only suggest, as our doomed civilization is visibly crumbling all around us on an obscenely over-populated, polluted, devastated planet, it doesn't really matter a damn anyway. One thing of which I am certain, however, is that as society falls apart over the next few years, ever greater will be its need for the Army and for peerless regiments such as ours.

JMK

#### **STOP PRESS!**

#### **CAN YOU HELP**

Information regarding whereabouts of L/Cpl John Francis, A Coy, 1/6th battalion The East Surrey Regiment, Italy 1943/1944 would be appreciated. Contact the Curator, The Regimental Museum, Clandon Park, Guildford GU4 7RQ. Tel: 01483 223419.



## Five years to Berlin - by Sqn Ldr J E Edney

Members who may seek an interesting, human and humorous account of Second World War experiences need look no further than that written under the above title by Squadron Leader J E Edney MBE RAF (Retd) formerly Major, The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey). Commissioned into the Regiment in 1940, his story covers travels and adventures in North Africa, Italy, Europe and finally into Berlin itself. The newly commissioned Second Lieutenant Edney joined the Regiment at Sittingbourne, Kent, to find himself soon engaged on coastal protection duties and anti-invasion training around the South East corner of England.

This situation being reasonably happy and comfortable he should have realised that such states of affairs are not allowed to last in the Army. Before long he and colleagues were off on a long train journey to Gourrock where they embarked in the troopship *Christobal* bound for the Middle East. After some of the joys and miseries of sea travel, including the experience of "crossing the line" in June 1942 they eventually disembarked at Tewfik.

There they entrained in some ancient rail transport (humorously described as "still recovering from its efforts to take Kitchener to Khartoum", which conveyed them towards the desert and the lifestyle that was to be theirs for some time to come. Rapidly becoming acclimatised to North Africa, mainly by way of extensive route marches, they soon "got their knees brown" and considered themselves experienced soldiers.

Initially based at Khatabe, which was near enough to Cairo for the latter city's amenities and pleasures to be occasionally enjoyed, Lieutenant Edney soon found that changes were afoot - or possibly "awheel".

*In his own words, "There was an order for me to present myself before the Brigade Commander the next morning at 10.00 hrs. It was rather like being summoned to the headmaster's study! Brigadier Frith looked at me when I arrived and told me he wanted me to join his headquarters as Camouflage Officer in a new establishment. This was literally out of the blue. Staff - Lieut, Camouflage, was the exact title, he told me. I found out later that the second pip would give me an extra two shillings per day, plus 2/6 per' day as staff pay. The final bonus turned out to be a two week course in Cairo and with no hesitation I became a fully paid up member of the HQ staff of 131 (Queens) Brigade".*

*At the time I had little idea how the new job would affect me, and I returned to my Battalion to break the news. Dyer, my batman, obviously saw the chance of giving up the need to clean two sets of equipment etc. and said he didn't want to leave all his pals. Fair enough. I should have to look for someone else at Bde HQ.*

*The next day I moved myself and kit to HQ and reported to Captain Carew-Hunt, who was the Staff Captain, an immaculately dressed individual whose perpetually weak stomach very soon removed him from our reckoning. I only had a short time before setting off for Cairo, but managed to meet a few of the other officers. Jimmy Sykes - Wright was the Brigade Major who appeared to be pleasant enough. The Intelligence Officer was an old friend of mine, Capt Alan Emerson, who had been with 1/5th when I joined back in UK. He gave me a lot of news about the HQ generally, and introduced me to the three Liaison Officers, Norman Buxton, Dicky Hazell and Dicky Morton who were rather hostile at first. Apparently because I was a staff officer and they weren't!*

*Finally I met the Camp Commandant, Lieut Evans, an ex - regular ranker who seemed to spend most of his time walking about the camp waving a large fly - whisk and pouring forth more consecutive bad language than I had ever heard! Before*

*I really had time to settle in, I was off for Helwan and the Camouflage school just outside Cairo. There I had two weeks of comfort, with arm-chairs, carpets, a dining room, lounge and library. There was also much information and demonstration of how to hide everything from everybody! Then, one day, a truck arrived to take me back and the driver told me that we had been ordered up into the desert as there was definitely something big coming up!*

The "something big" was a move into the desert forward areas and after a long, hard and dusty drive, when hordes of vehicles all seemed to be going in the same direction Lieutenant Edney and his colleagues reached El Khadim at the end of Alam Halfa ridge, 1/5, 1/6 and 1/7 Queen's were all in the area, completely surrounded by minefields and expecting Rommel to attack towards Alexandria at any time. Orders were that the position was to be held at any cost.

After indulging in the opportunities to exercise his camouflaging skills to the full, Edney was pleasantly surprised to be sent on a photographic interpretation course in Cairo, but from this he had to make a hurried return to his Regiment when news was received that Rommel had launched his long expected attack.

*Says Edney, "The Munassib Depression was to be our battleground, a most unpleasant area, well below sea level and edged by steep sandy cliffs. Somewhere in the middle of it was the Italian Folgore division, probably just as unimpressed with the whole situation as we were!"*

Introduction into battle took the form of artillery duels which were followed by Stuka bomber attacks. It was in the middle of one of these that Lieutenant Hasell ran over a mine in his jeep and was killed. The 1/5 Queen's suffered badly, losing twelve officers and 260 men, but the other two battalions were thankfully more fortunate. After being relieved by 132 Brigade, Edney's Unit returned to the Hogs Back where establishments were brought up to strength and concentrated training took place. Again, "something big was on its way". The "something big" was of the biggest - the battle of El Alamein which started on 23rd October 1942.

Under a heavy artillery barrage the 1/7 Queen's, near Himeimat, cleared a gap through the minefield and overran the enemy, although sustaining heavy losses in the process. Mixed forces, including Highlanders, Australians, New Zealanders and Free French moved forward, albeit with difficulty in some cases, and at least one German prisoner testified as to the weight of the attack which was falling on the enemy lines. A welcome relief to Edney's battle weary Queen's men, as they moved northwards to the Beachy Head concentration area, was the provision of mechanised transport. From now on they were lorried infantry in the truest sense of the word and were to remain as such until they "finally de-bussed in Berlin".

A change of command took place soon after this and, to quote Edney, "It was Brigadier Stamer who arrived to take over command. There were quite a few characters in 8th Army, but this one really took the biscuit".

*When I first met him I could scarcely believe what I saw! He had a short beard, straggly white hair, and a skeleton-like body encased in a scruffy bush-jacket and shorts, with a red-banded hat, which was soaked in sweat stains, and minus its wire stiffener. He made it quite clear to us that he required to get to Benghazi without delay and as petrol was of utmost importance to attain this goal, God help Bill Souttar or anyone else if we ever ran short! We discovered later that he was known as the King of Benghazi, because he had been up and down the desert so many times but never managed to get beyond it, or even stay in it, for very long! Anyway, amidst all these events, we had reached a state of "ready to go", living daily in a dense fog from the movement all around us of so many tanks and vehicles. We were*

*covered in sand, dust, grit and sweat and we just wanted to get out of it! By 2 November we were located just behind the South African Division and the holes in those minefields ahead were at last beginning to show.*

In their role of Lorried Infantry the task of the Queen's was to support the tanks of the 22nd Armoured Brigade by keeping close up with them when battle started. But as Edney says, it was rather difficult to keep up with anything in the confused and congested state of the battle at that time. Eventually columns moved forward. Edney in his open jeep was smothered with sand and dust thrown up by a lorry in front of him and he describes the scene as *"tortoise-like lines moving slowly on, crawling, crawling all the time"*. Artillery added to the confusion by firing off occasional rounds. MP's waved their arms furiously in traffic control but in stark contrast to their agitation other bodies lay ominously silent and still beside the tracks of the moving vehicles.

Emerging eventually from the dust and the dangerous proximity of minefields, the Lorried Infantry pushed forward in an attempt to catch up with the Armoured Brigade and fulfil their intended role. The intention now was to try and prevent Rommel withdrawing a vast amount of transport into Libya but adverse weather conditions, coupled with possession of better roads, enabled the enemy to escape. Of those who, with hindsight, have criticised tactics, Edney pointedly wonders if they could, pausing only for the occasional ritualistic brew-up of tea and carefully avoiding cunningly planted booby traps left by the retreating enemy, the troops pressed on. One impediment to their progress was the number of surrendering Italian prisoners. One Italian even arrived in a 3 ton truck with seven girls in the back. All of them, complete with driver and truck, were pointed in the direction of Cairo and sent on their way.

Despite difficulties over petrol supplies, Edney's column managed to keep moving and eventually arrived at El Adem which they found to be in a state of ruin with the wreckage of aircraft, vehicles and stores littering the place. The same scenes of destruction were everywhere as the troops moved on towards Tobruk. With true soldierly initiative they managed to salvage some material from the dereliction including, unusually, some metal bedsteads. Arriving at Tobruk in pouring rain Edney, together with members of the HQ staff, endeavoured to settle themselves in the generally inhospitable surroundings. Not surprisingly, the Brigadier collapsed from complete exhaustion at this point and had to be returned sick to the Delta for medical treatment. Far from exhaustion, however, General Montgomery arrived on the scene and was obviously delighted with the progress achieved. After speaking to the officers he quickly departed to other fields of activity.

Thankfully, amidst all difficulties, supplies of rations were maintained which, although not of Ritz Hotel standards, were nevertheless adequate. Needless to say the ubiquitous bully beef and biscuits were often on the menu. Some scraggy native hens sometimes provided welcome changes in the form of undersized eggs. "Victory" brand cigarettes were a tolerable doubtful luxury but most welcome of all were the occasional issues of rum, officially authorised by Rear Div HQ in the form of the nautical signal "Splice the mainbrace".

But the Royal Navy themselves were off Benghazi and impatient to get in there, as were the Royal Air Force, so the Queen's, quickly on the move, were effective in seizing and securing the port and airfields. After some good Xmas Day festivities at the structure known as Marble Arch the Queen's were on the move again and Boxing Day saw them pressing forward in a sandstorm towards Wadi Tamet.

When pulling into their destination they came under heavy air attack which Lieutenant Edney graphically describes - *"The first*

*I knew of it was the rattle of machine guns and the "pop pop" of Bofors somewhere in the area. Then we saw them circling round the landing ground and three quickly turned in the direction of the large number of vehicles they could see down below! That was us, of course!!"*

*"The general noise was deafening as I grabbed my rifle from the back of my jeep and disappeared under the nearest vehicle! Most of the HQ had done the same! We all knew that nothing we had was really bullet or bomb proof, but as usual just to be underneath something kept up the old morale. Spurts of sand were flying in all directions as the aircraft roared over us and then we fired everything we had after them in the vain hope that one lucky shot might find the right place!! Not a chance! But some of our own aircraft had managed to take off and diverted German attentions away from us! We lost four vehicles as a result of that attack with two men killed and several wounded! Fortunately, a squadron of Spitfires arrived and for some time we had no further attacks like that!"*

The next objective for the now highly mobile Queen's men was Tripoli. Taking ten days rations with them, and relying on reaching Tripoli before these supplies ran out, they were soon on their way.

An attack by the 1/6 Queen's at Tarhua met with resistance which resulted in the death of Captain Howard who was one of the Battalion's original Dunkirk officers. The 11th Hussars were first into Tripoli. Close behind them The Queen's Brigade settled down at Suani-Ben-Adem. While there they received news that they were to become a permanent part of the 7th Armoured Division the oldest and most experienced in the 8th Army. They were now truly "Desert Rats" and Edney comments, *"You don't get to wear the Rat firmly unless you have earned it, and obviously we had"*.

The new status meant improved vehicles and equipment. One beneficiary was Lieutenant Edney who continues, *"We had some extra vehicles sent to us which changed the general outlook to no small extent! The main increase consisted of two large, Armoured Control Vehicles, one for Main HQ and one for us at Rear! ACV2 was ours and just to look inside was a revelation. It was partitioned into two, the rear half being fitted with brand new wireless sets which sent our signallers into raptures! No more sitting in cramped 15 cwts, wedged in between two sets! The front half was fitted up as an office with a fixed table and revolving chairs and there were telephones for use if and when we were ever static long enough for lines to be laid! As we discovered later, however, the great advantage was that it was proof against small arms fire, shrapnel and bomb splinters and in this respect it served us well"*.

But the new arms and equipment were soon to be put to the test as the Queen's reached the spot that was to become engraved in Regimental History and a battle honour, Medenine.

Rommel launched a fierce attack on 6th March 1943 and in Edney's own words *"for the next twenty-four hours it was hard going"*.

1/5 Queen's dealt with the Italian infantry without much difficulty but the 1/7, manning 6pdr anti-tank guns, faced heavy armoured attack from seventeen tanks. Determined and heroic resistance was put up by the gunners, particularly the crews commanded by Sergeants Andrews and Crangles, and many enemy tanks were destroyed. Eventually the gun positions were overrun but the heroism of the crews had made an invaluable contribution to the battle. Sergeant Andrews was decorated with the Distinguished Conduct Medal and his gun was later brought back to England where it now stands at the gateway of Howe Barracks, Canterbury.



Heroism was present in good measure and in various forms that day as Edney records *"There was the medical officer whose aid-post came under direct fire from tanks and artillery and who conducted many wounded to safety"*.

The private soldier, a signal orderly at his Company HQ, who made five journeys back to Bn HQ under heavy shell fire in order to repair signal cable.

The Lance Corporal in the MG platoon which was cut off all day by enemy tanks. He was firing his gun at the crew of one of them as they got out of their turret, when a shell landed within three feet of his gunpit. Another hit a shovel used to keep up the camouflage net, but he continued to fire his gun, encouraging the whole platoon who had been forced to lie flat all day under very heavy fire.

The officer who commanded the left forward Company of one battalion which was in an isolated position and under continuous attack the whole day. He kept moving from platoon to platoon encouraging his men and completely disregarding his own safety. In the evening he led the counter attack with reserves that had been sent forward. Another private soldier was in a platoon whose position was attacked by German tanks and infantry, which got to within fifty yards of his trench. Throughout the day he kept a constant watch, although under very heavy fire from enemy MGs and artillery, causing the tanks to withdraw. Once he took some hand grenades to a position from which he could reach the enemy, which he did with great effort.

*All these exploits and many more were happening within half a mile of us in Happy Valley and we could hear it, of course, although we were left to "imagine much and expect anything".*

As was to be expected, a heavy price was paid in casualties. Alan Emerson, a great friend of Edney's was blown to pieces through some unknown cause - presumably a booby trap. Once more on the move the Queen's followed the New Zealanders through the Matmata Hills to El Mdou where they stayed for several days before travelling once more behind the 11th Hussars, to Sfax.

Patrol activity now took place, some of it led by Major Archie Wilson DSO who Lieutenant Edney describes as, *"A rather flamboyant character at any time, he had now really excelled himself! His splendid handle-bar moustache was off-set by a monocle clasped firmly in one eye, while a loaded Bren-gun was slung round his neck and he was waving a thick walking stick aggressively over his head. He looked a complete one-man war and I could clearly hear King Henry V urging us all once more into the breach!!"*

Still forging ahead, the target now was Tunis where it was intended that the 7th Armoured, 4th Indian Division and various other units would join up with the 1st Army. What is described as a nightmare journey in pitch dark over rough and dangerous terrain but followed by what is described as "some miracle" the exhausted troops reached their destination of Le Krib on the 1st Army front.

Here, at least as some form of reward, ample supplies and NAAFI stores were found. Full advantage was taken of them. Seemingly the 1st and 8th Armies, both with their own distinctive experiences and pride, took a little time to settle down with each other but eventually did so. A successful attack by both armour and infantry followed and Tunis quickly fell to the Allies. Italian troops seemed pleased to surrender but members of the Afrika Korps were more inclined to fight until dealt with by 1/7 Queen's. Prisoners came in "literally in thousands" and "celebrations shook the town to its roots".

But movement was still the order of the day for Lieutenant Edney and his friends who before long passed through Tripoli and eventually came to a halt seventy miles beyond it at Homs. In

six months they had fought over 6000 miles from their original starting point.

A welcome factor was that the new home was on the coastline so water was there in abundance for washing and bathing facilities. Leave centres were set up in Tripoli itself and their pleasures were enhanced when news of various promotions came through, Lieutenant Edney became Staff Captain A and Q while his friend Bill Souttar went up to Major with the lengthy title of Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General. Other changes took place until, as Edney says, *"Finally, there was one further arrival, temporary, but very welcome! I was sitting one morning at the table in my office tent, when the flap opened, an Aussie-hatted officer came in, saluted smartly and placed a bottle of Booths right in front of me! Gazing at the bottle I heard him say "Major Wilson, Australian Army, reporting for duty, Sir". He was attached as a mechanical engineer and took over our workshop and vehicle recovery while he was with us"*.

Some relaxation was permissible but renewed training, coupled with a visit from King George VI and receipt of various directives from General Montgomery, suggested that something important was afoot. Speculation heightened when vehicles were moved into a concentration area at Tripoli for waterproofing. Sicily was the suspected destination but it eventually proved to be Salerno. For the Queen's warfare in Italy was to be of an entirely different nature from that they had experienced in North Africa.

JEE

*To be continued.....*

### Wo's & Sgt's Association - Kingston

1995 proved to be a busy one for the Association. We were well represented at the various ceremonies to commemorate VJ Day held in Kingston. The day started with the unveiling of the plaque on the Keep of the old depot of The East Surrey Regiment marking the occupation by the Regiment, the Mayor of the Royal Borough officiating. Then a Service of Remembrance took place at the Memorial in Kingston Market Place followed by a full service at the Parish Church of All Saints. During this service we were invited into the Chapel dedicated to The East Surrey Regiment to witness the consecration of a new lighting system which, when turned on, gave the effect of mellow sunlight shining through the screens. A march past and reception then took place at the Guildhall, during which the Mayor received all members and took a great deal of time talking to everyone present.

On Remembrance Sunday here again we were well represented and were pleased to have with us Col P R H Thompson, OBE, TD, DL, Chairman of the Regimental Association and Col A C Mieville OBE, Deputy Colonel of Surrey, PWRR, both of whom spent a considerable time talking to those members on parade. After the parade many members and their families retired to our new venue for a buffet lunch and refreshments.

With regard to our new venue, we were given very short notice to quit our old location at Portsmouth Road and to find a new HQ. We were fortunate and without disruption have carried on our monthly meetings at the Surbiton Conservative Club, 200 Ewell Road, Surbiton, Surrey, where we have private accommodation, to which all ex WO's and Sgt's are very welcome.

Our Christmas Draw took place there and again was an outstanding success, thanks in no small way to those who gave of their time and talents to ensuring the outcome.

PH

## The Officers' Mess. 2 Queens 1937/38

Having sustained an injury at football and after discharge from Netley Hospital I was assessed as being fit for "light duties" and, as a result, found myself transferred from D Company to the Officers' Mess as a steward. With instructions from the P.M.C. and Mess Sergeant I was made acquainted with the rules and regulations pertaining to officers' messes and the traditions associated with The Queen's Regiment. These stood me in good stead when I was commissioned into the regiment in 1940.

The mess staff was under the supervision of Sergeant Dixon. He had a wide knowledge of catering, administration and mess ceremonial. He was a strict disciplinarian and inspected all staff before they went on duty. He was also a very fair and reasonable superior. The staff under Sergeant Dixon consisted of Corporal Domoney (the writer), L/Cpl. Lionel Turner (He was killed in action at Tobruk in 1941), Sid Waldron (we were recruits in Tangier Platoon in 1933 and he became an R.S.M.) and 6 other privates.

The cooking was under the control of Jack Hoy, literally the son of a sea cook, who followed his father as a naval cook. He was a naval pensioner and, although he was only 5 feet 2 inches tall, handled the heavy cooking equipment with consummate ease. Jack could produce the most varied menus that were required and the food would be of a high quality. It puzzled some of the diners when "H.M.S. Mysterious" appeared on the menu. It was Jack's speciality soup. When the battalion moved to Palestine Jack returned to Dover and it was there he and his lovely old wife were killed by enemy bombers in 1941.

Mess stewarding was no cushy job for the hours were long and irregular. The duty stewards would be on the go long before Reveille preparing tea, for the batmen to collect for officers living in mess. Then there would be breakfast to be served from 07.00 - 0.900. Usually the junior officers would be the first arrivals. On one occasion a junior officer, having finished breakfast, lit a cigarette. There was a stern rebuke from Capt. Duncombe. "Do you mind if I eat while you smoke Mr - - -?"

Preparations would be made for lunch and those not on duty could relax until it was time to lay up for dinner; and after dinner they would be free, usually from 21.30 except on Guest Nights or Dining-In Nights, when 23.00 or later would be their lot. Dining-in-Nights would see all the officers foregathering in the ante room in full mess dress - how smart they all looked - whilst the regimental band would play in the hall suitable music for the occasion under Bandmaster Roger Barsotti. (On retirement he became Bandmaster of the Metropolitan Police Band.) At the appointed time the Regimental Bugler sounded the Officers' Call and gradually the hall would fill as the members took their seats. The P.M.C. would head the table and junior officers would be at the other end. The band continued to play throughout the meal.

The dining room, with its long mahogany table, and the photograph of Queen Mary on the wall would be set up to rival any function at the Mansion House. Everything in line, the cutlery shining, napery pristine white and the glasses sparkling. The regimental silver would line the centre of the table throughout its length. The stewards, in tails, white shirts, black ties and trousers would be dispersed around the room on a basis of one to four officers. The P.M.C. would instruct Sergeant Dixon to commence serving and the whole dinner would be taken in leisurely fashion. Sometimes the commanding officer would discuss a certain matter regarding the battalion or the Regimental Historian, Major R.C.G. Foster would give forth on some period of interest from the regimental archives.

When all courses had been served and the port poured the PMC would instruct the vice chairman to initiate the Royal Toast. He would say "*Gentlemen, the King*" all diners would stand and repeat the Loyal Toast. On occasions a toast to the Regiment would be given.

The PMC would invite the Bandmaster to take port with the officers. The band continued playing until 21.30. The PMC would then announce, "*Gentlemen, you may smoke.*" The regimental silver cigarette boxes containing Rothmans No. 1 and regimental crested cigarettes would then be passed round the table.

The meal finished, officers would disperse to the ante-room, billiard or card room. Two stewards would be detailed to wait upon them whilst the rest of us would clear the table, do the washing up and lay the table in preparation for breakfast. The regimental silver would be collected by L/Cpl. Harry Dudley, the Mess Silverman, who would place the silver in the strong room which adjoined his sleeping quarters. The cutlery would be counted and polished and any drinks entered against the officer's name on the bar list.

For breakfast and lunch the stewards would wear blue and white striped monkey jackets, white shirts, black ties and trousers. Free time was normally available from 14.00 to 18.00 when all would take the opportunity to partake of some sport in the open. Occasionally the local hunt would meet at the officers' mess and the regimental officers would join in. Who could not but admire Captain R.E. Pickering in hunting pink astride a 15 hand horse. The hunt would be offered a stirrup cup or sloc gin before moving off. Three defaulters would be lurking in the mess with shovels and brooms ready to clean up any offensive matter left by the hunt.

During my stewardship several young officers joined the battalion. 2/Lt. Mansell (He was killed in action at Kohima), 2/Lts. David Lloyd Owen and Michael Forester, both now Major Generals, 2/Lts. Reinhold and Stubbs. They would all sit at the foot of the mess table on guest nights. The PMC was Major George Becton who was killed in Palestine with the 2nd Battalion. Three months after I joined the mess staff the PMC introduced me to the mess accounts - a double entry system - which had to be balanced monthly. In addition there were the stock and proof books for wines and spirits and consumables to be maintained. I was also responsible for the production of mess bills for all members and for notifying the PMC if any officer was overstepping the allowable amount against pay. I usually forewarned the potential offender. Some took it in the right spirit, but some said it wasn't my business. You cannot win them all, but generally I had a good relationship with the officers.

The highlight of my time as a steward was the visit of HM Queen Mary, the Colonel of the Regiment. A very special effort was made by all concerned and Her Majesty seemed pleased and was introduced to each officer and also spoke to Sergeant Dixon and myself. Soon after this I returned to duty.

AWVD

□□□

## A Quintet of Surreys



Majors, W D Caffyn, H Crabtree, P G E Hill, Colonel Buchanan and Major R C Taylor all served with 1 Surreys.



## Fond Memories

In June 1949 the trooper, *Empire Test*, delivered me, a baby faced 18 year old Sgt in the RAEC to Piraeus. After a few days in the transit camp I was posted to The 1st Bn the East Surrey Regiment at Aliko camp just down the road from Glyfada. I can still see the look of amazement and incredulity on the face of the Provost Sgt 'Smudger' Smith when I asked him the way to the Sgts Mess. He may well have wondered who on earth would have given three stripes to this boy wonder. It became very apparent to me when I went into the mess. There was not a mess member with less than four medals - many with more.

These were veterans of the 1st Army having fought through North Africa, Sicily and Italy before coming to Greece. Members of the 2nd Bn (only recently amalgamated with the 1st) had also been in Palestine to bitter end! Names like RSM Wooley, Bill Hoddinott the ORQMS, Darky Foster (from the RWK) Bert Hartly (from the MX) and Peter Collman spring instantly to mind. Old photographs taken in Athens and Mogadishu add to the memories.

Greece, at this stage, was in the middle of a vicious civil war. We were there as hostages to fortune. Together with the Beds and Herts and the Ox and Bucks, both of whom were in Salonika, we were studiously ignored by both the Royalists and the Communists. We knew our role was to step in to the line if the Royalists failed. We would probably have not lasted longer than 48 hours but that would have given the US 6th fleet time enough to come to our rescue and ensure Greece would not become Communist. We lived an 'Alice through the looking glass' existence. Really it was garrison soldiering in the middle of a civil war in which we did not participate. We played a lot of sport, I was in the battalion cricket team, trained a bit and occasionally showed the flag.

However Tito, of all people, was the prime mover in our leaving. He fell out with Stalin and promptly closed his borders with Greece denying the communists the safe haven they had enjoyed up till then. Once they could not cross into Yugoslavia to refit and retrain they knew they had lost. Once this happened we were got rid of with almost indecent haste after we had paraded in front of the King of Greece in Athens.

Our next port of call on the *Empire Ken* was Mogadishu in Somalia - from one anachronistic situation to another. The UNO had decided in their wisdom to give Somalia back to the Italians and they were to have ten years to prepare them for democracy and independence (they succeeded with the latter but not the former). Needless to say this idea was not exactly received with great rapture by the Somalis who had some experience of the Italians as their previous colonial masters. Alf Mann (the other schoolie) and an ex-East Surrey who had been badly wounded in Sicily) and I often discussed this extraordinary decision of the UN. We never came up with any definite conclusion of how the decision had been arrived at.



1 Queen's Surreys Officers Mess, Stanley Fort, Hong Kong

I went off with A Coy to MERCA returning later to the Bn in Mogadishu to work with Alf - a great character. In Mog were the DCLI and the Border Regiment The Borderers need to wake up every morning with the full band playing reveille and then marching through the lines to the tune of John Peel, great if you had had a party the night before!

In April of 50 I was sent for by the Adjutant who told me I could not return with the battalion to Co Durham because I was on the strength of the MELF pool of instructors. I was to forgo the pleasures of Barnard Castle for Zomba "you know where that is, don't you?" the Adjutant asked. 'Sir' as I beat a hasty retreat to my office and an atlas! I was not to see the battalion again until late summer of 1961. The Army in its un wisdom had decided to commission me and my first posting was to the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in Aden. I travelled out, unaccompanied, on the *Oxfordshire*. At Steamer Point I was met by Capt Mike Hare, the RSO and my old friend Peter Collman, now RSM. In many ways it was almost like coming home although I had to accommodate to the ways of the newly amalgamated battalion about to Troop the Colour before Princess Alexandra in honour of its Tercentenary. This was no problem because under the excellent tutorage of such characters as Mike Hare, Michael Perreria, Bob Acworth, Mike Doyle and John Francis all went very well.



The battalion hockey team, Hong Kong

By now I had turned to hockey and played in the Bn team eventually becoming both Captain and Bn Hockey officer. It was probably one of the best battalion hockey teams I have ever played in with the CO, Mike Lowry, occasionally turning out but as good as he was he had to fight for his place alongside people like Stewart Anderson. Sgt Todd (the armourer) Cpls Story and Fernandez. John Winderfeld, Chris Allanson, Toby Sewell, John Westing, Chris Reeves and Stephen Petzing amongst some.

We were relieved in Aden by the KOSB and went to Hong Kong. That was, after Aden, sublime although the soldiers found the Garrison duties somewhat irksome. I have always held that God looks after drunks, fools and Irishmen and, as my father was Irish, this means he will almost certainly look after me. It is very apparent when you consider that at two of the most important junctures of my life I fell amongst those who took me in and pointed me in the right direction.

As an incredibly young Sergeant on my first posting on man service - 1 East Surreys - I could not have asked for better tutors! And then when making that difficult change from the Sergeants Mess to the Officers' Mess - lightning had struck twice. I shall always have very fond memories of these battalions from Surrey and will always be very grateful for what they did for me.

## So there we were

**1666** The Tangiers Regiment, on their nominal territory, were enduring their usual hardships and periodic fights with the troublesome Moors. It seems, however, that the pay situation, usually a recurring problem for the troops, was eased by the capture of French ships. Colonel Norwood was given permission to use the resulting prize money for payment purposes.

**1686** The Queen's were encamped at Hounslow where large forces of cavalry and infantry were inspected by King William who seemingly was much pleased. One matter that the leniency of punishments meted out by civilian courts to deserters. The King ordered that in future such miscreants were to be tried by Court Martial.

**1706** Villiers Marines, predecessors of The East Surrey Regiment, were fighting an arduous campaign in Spain. Their Commanding Officer, Colonel Alexander Luttrell, retired on January 31st to be succeeded by Colonel Joshua Churchill. Also in Spain the Queen's, with the advent of Spring, were operating in the region of Salvador. By April 3rd they were at St Vincento as part of a large Allied force which included English, Dutch and Portuguese regiments of infantry and cavalry.

**1726** The Queen's were in England, apparently enjoying a period of comparative calm, while the 31st Regiment (as Villier's Marines had now become) were serving in Scotland and Ireland, likewise in a quiet period.

**1756** The 31st Regiment were in Glasgow where their establishment was increased and a second Battalion (later to become the 70th Regiment) was raised. The Queen's were in Ireland serving in territory that was to become very familiar in later years of the Regiment's history.

**1766** The Queen's were in the Isle of Man where they were engaged on anti-smuggling duties - much to the annoyance of many local residents who were involved in the illegal activity and who were determined to continue it. The 70th Regiment were in the West Indies as part of a ten year tour of duty there.

**1786** Having returned to Home Service from the American War of Independence, the 70th were in the Channel Islands, serving in both Guernsey and Jersey. The Queen's were at Gibraltar where an order was received as to the types of swords with which officers of infantry regiments were to equip themselves. As well as being decorative such weapons were to be made to "cut and thrust". Economically, application was made by Surgeon Wilson of HMS *Vengeance* for payment for services rendered to the men of The Queen's who served as marines on the ship.

**1806** Having recently arrived home from foreign service in the ships *Diana* and *Acton* the Queen's were at Winchester where they received new Colours which in addition to former devices bore the words "Sphinx" and "Egypt". On January 9th the 31st Regiment, as befitted their former Marine connections, lined the streets for the public funeral of Lord Nelson. By the end of the year they were part of a 19,000 strong force in Sicily opposing the French.

**1826** The 70th Regiment were at Montreal in the early part of the year where their "uniformly correct and praiseworthy conduct" received the "regard and gratitude of the magistrates and inhabitants" who presented to the Sergeant's mess a handsomely inscribed silver cup. The Queen's, in India, were inspected by Major-General Sir L Smith KCB who reported very favourably on them, particularly as regards the Officer Commanding, Lieutenant Colonel Williams, for the zeal and ability which he showed in his command.

**1846** The Queen's at Winchester were reported on unfavourably at an inspection by Major-General the Hon. Sir H Pakenham in May, largely as regards money matters but by October, when  
26

they were at Gosport, he had revised his opinions and considered them "in all respects in a promising condition". The 31st completed service in India and on returning to England they landed at Gravesend where they received an enthusiastic reception, the officers being entertained in high style by the officers of the Royal Marines who had "never lost an opportunity of recalling their ancient alliance with the 31st Regiment".

**1866** The 70th Regiment, who had been engaged in the Maori War, left New Zealand in January and on arrival at Dover in March and April they marched to Shorncliffe where they were to be stationed. The Queen's, after a spell of Home Service, went to India to remain there for thirteen years.

**1886** Having recently returned from Egypt, the East Surreys, as they were now titled, were on Home Service. The Queen's sailed from Calcutta on the transport *Secundra* for Burma where they were engaged in a campaign against the Dacoits in most trying and unhealthy tropical conditions. One particularly exhausting train journey brought them to "the extreme limit of their endurance".

**1906** The Queen's were in India, where they received highest praise from Brigadier-General B Mahon CB on his inspection of the Regiment which he declared to be "in every way fit for active service". Within a decade his words would be put to the test and proved right. Also in India the East Surreys seemed to be at a pinnacle of efficiency. They carried all before them at the Lucknow Assault-at-Arms and also won the Southern-Indian Command Musketry Challenge Shield.

**1926** On Eastern duties the East Surreys were in Hong Kong where there was a memorable ceremony on "Ypres Day" when a new set of silver drums was trooped and dedicated by the Bishop of Hong Kong. In October the Regiment embarked for India in the transport *Neuralia*, being bid God-speed by Prince George (later the Duke of Kent). At home the Queen's were performing special guard duties in connection with the General Strike, particularly at Dover Harbour railway station where boat trains, manned by volunteers, ran as usual.

**1946** With the ending of the war in the previous year, demobilization and re-organisation were taking place as some members of both the Queen's and East Surreys returned home while others remained overseas on occupation and security duties. At that time there still seemed demanding needs for individual Regimental roles. None could foresee the drastic changes which were to take place in succeeding decades.

RF

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*Major J.L.A. Fowler TD.*

*Thank You once again for your help particularly in view of the increased cost of paper, and the increased size of our Newsletter.*



## The Home Service Dress Uniform 1860

In January 1855, a new infantry headdress was introduced replacing the 'Albert' shako, which had been in use since 1844. The new cap of the period resembled the French infantry cap of the period with a slightly tilted front. Known as the second 'Albert' the officers' pattern was 5½ inches deep at the front, 7½ inches deep at the back and was slightly tapered. The 2 inch woollen ball tufts were two thirds white, one third red, at the bottom for Field Officers and Officers', NCO's and Other Ranks of Battalion Companies, all green for Light Infantry Companies and all white for Grenadier Companies. The universal pattern shako plates were gilded and had black leather centres, red for Royal Regiments. Other Ranks shako plates were brass, cast in one piece with the regimental number within the garter on a black enamelled backing. Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels had two bands of ½ inch wide gold lace around the upper part of the shako and Majors had a single band of the same lace. The officers' pattern undress cap was dark blue, with a black, oak leaf pattern, braid band. Royal Regiments had a scarlet band. There was a black cord button with a braid figure on top and it had a narrow black leather chin strap. On the cap band was the regimental number embroidered in gold. The 2nd Queen's, had its ancient badge of the pascal lamb in silver and gold with coloured silks for the flag.

In 1856 the long skirted, double breasted tunic was replaced by a smarter and shorter single breasted tunic. This was in scarlet cloth for officers, staff sergeants and sergeants and in red for the other ranks. Collars, cuffs and cuff slashes were in the facing colour. Buttons were gilded and with regimental pattern for officers and of brass with regimental pattern for the other ranks.

Badges of rank for officers were silver embroidery and were worn on the collar. Colonels and Captains a crown and star; Lt. Colonels and Lieutenants a crown; Majors and Ensigns a star. Field Officers had ½ inch gold lace all round the collars on the cuff and skirt slashes and had two rows of the same lace around the cuffs. Captains and Subalterns had similar lace on the outer edges of the collars and a single row of lace around the cuffs. The tunic had a crimson twisted cord on the left shoulder to retain the crimson silk sash. NCO's badges of rank were worn on the right upper sleeve. Chevron bars were formed of double white worsted lace for Sergeants and Corporals and gold lace for ranks above Sergeant worn on the right upper sleeve or, sometimes, on the lower sleeve. Staff Sergeants and Sergeants wore crimson worsted sashes over the right shoulder.

In undress either a scarlet shell jacket or a dark blue frock were worn by officers. The shell had basket weave cords on both shoulders and the frock a twisted crimson cord on the left shoulder only. The shell jacket usually had ten buttons down the front but there were regimental differences. The frock had two buttons at the waist at the rear and two further buttons on vertical pocket slashes. There were three buttons on the cuff slashes. The other ranks' shell was red, with facing colour collar and cuffs.

In summer, Indigo trousers with scarlet welts were worn and in winter Oxford mixture (almost black) were taken into use. Officers trousers tapered slightly and mounted officers wore trousers strapped under the instep. Brass screwed on spurs were used by Field Officers for Dress but steel for Undress and by Adjutants. Other Ranks trousers were straight cut and had red welts. Long black leather marching gaiters, laced at the sides, were worn at the C.O.'s discretion.

Officers' sword belts were of enamelled leather with regimental clasps. Swords were the 1822 pattern with gilded half basket hilts with the VR cypher set in the outward bars. The scabbards were of black leather with gilt mounts, steel for duty in the field. Field Officers had brass scabbards.

Other Ranks equipment was the pattern approved in 1850. The waistbelt was of whitened buff leather with a brass cast locket. The 17 inch socket bayonet was carried in a frog on the left side. Sergeants' were armed with a 22¾ inch sword bayonet.

The buff leather pouch belt was carried over the left shoulder. The black leather cartridge pouch was carried on the right hip, retained by a short strap to the waist belt. It held 60 rounds and was fitted with a small pocket inside for 10 percussion caps. Sergeants' pouches were slightly smaller. By 1860 a small leather percussion cap pouch was fitted to the front of the pouch belt. The knapsack was made of japanned canvas with a rigid wooden frame and stout leather corner pieces and was carried on buff leather shoulder straps. The semi-circular mess tin in a black canvas cover was buckled to the top of the knapsack. The blanket or greatcoat was strapped to the outside of the knapsack. An unbleached linen haversack with a buttoned flap was worn over the right shoulder. The blue painted wooden water canteen was bound with iron hoops and had a leather strap buckled at one end.

Staff Sergeants' were armed with swords similar to the Officers' 1822 pattern with polished brass mounts and white leather sword knots. Other Ranks' had the 39 inch barrel, three band, Enfield rifle. 'Sergeants' were armed with the shorter Enfield rifle with 33 inch barrels.

### Caption to Home Service Uniform

*Top centre: Colonel's 1855 shako with two gold lace bands. 31st Regiment. A Major's shako with single lace band, 2nd, Queen's Regiment. Back view of the same shako for a Company Officer. Officer's sash. Officer's 1822 pattern sword in brass. Field Officer's, scabbard and Company Officer's scabbard. Shako plate of the 2nd Queen's, Royal Regiment.*

*Top left: Light Infantry Private, 31st, in Drill Order.*

*Top right: Battalion Company Private, 2nd Queen's, in Marching Order.*

*Bottom left: Colour Sergeant, 2nd Queen's in walking out dress.*

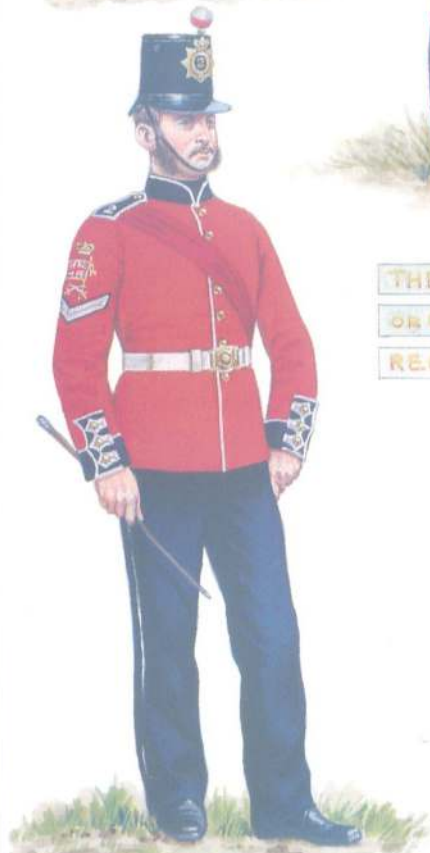
*Bottom right: Grenadier Company Private, 31st in shell jacket.*

*Centre: Field Officer in Dress. 2nd Queen's and a Company Officer 31st in Frock Coat.*



THE 2ND  
OR QUEENS ROYAL  
REGIMENT

THE 3RD  
HUNTINGDONSHIRE  
REGIMENT







THE 2ND OR QUEEN'S ROYAL REGIMENT  
THE 31st HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIMENT



## The Uniforms worn in the China Wars The 2nd and 31st at Taku Forts, 1860

Following the excellent article by PC in the November, 1994 issue of the Newsletter we expand, here, on the uniforms worn by the 2nd Queen's and the 31st Huntingdonshire Regiments during that campaign.

The General Orders for the Expeditionary Force landing in China 1st August, 1860 state: "Oxford mixture trousers, red serge summer frocks, wicker, airpipe helmets. Each man to carry 56 rounds of ammunition, the greatcoat folded with canteen attached, waterbottles and haversacks with three days rations. Once ashore the men are to carry their knapsacks with greatcoats folded flat and strapped to the back. Waterproof sheets, if in possession, to be rolled 'horsecollar' fashion around the knapsack."

When in action the knapsacks were set aside, to be carried in regimental transports. Officers did not have knapsacks but carried their greatcoats, rolled, over the left shoulder. Some wore their forage caps instead of helmets. Crealock's drawings confirm this dress but they do show all the officers, but one in helmets.

The shell jacket worn, for many years as an undress garment, began to disappear after the Crimean War. In 1856 the rank and file, serving in hot climates, were issued with a red summer frock in place of the shell, initially as an experiment. The frock was completely plain, without facings and with the regimental numerals embroidered in white on the shoulder strap. It had a five button fastening and a large pocket with flap, set at an angle, in the left breast. Later, facing colour collar and cuffs were adopted.

In India officers adopted a scarlet frock to conform with those worn by the rank and file. It was not until 1864 that the frock was mentioned in Dress Regulations. However, there is plenty of photographic evidence that it was worn before that date. The officer's frock was of scarlet cloth with no facings, the collar and front skirts rounded. Five regimental buttons at the front. Edged all round with narrow gold braid forming a crows foot ornament at the back of the collar. The frock had Austrian knots in gold braid on the points of the cuffs and similar knots at the top of the side vents. There was a large pocket on the left breast, set on a slant, also edged with gold braid. There was a twisted crimson cord, on the left shoulder only, to retain the sash. The rank badges were in silver and were worn on the collar. Oxford mixture trousers were virtually black with a scarlet welt (red for the rank and file).

Undress headdress for the rank and file was still the Kilmarnock bonnet with brass numerals. Flank companies had small brass bugles or grenades according to company. The coloured touries distinguishing the companies disappeared at the beginning of the 1860's in favour of a dark blue tuft. During many campaigns in hot climates the Kilmarnock was adorned with a variety of covers. Usually of unbleached linen with, or without, neck curtains. Officer's forage caps were the same as worn at home with similar covers to the rank and file with frequently rather more lavish swathes of linen.

Various types of helmet had been tried since the Indian campaigns of the late 1840's. Earlier versions were made of wicker covered with cloth. By the 1860's they were made of cork with an airpipe for ventilation, a rather large brim and were usually wrapped with a pugri and neck cover of generous proportions. Crealock shows both officers and rank and file wearing the helmet. Officers wore many unofficial or non-regulation items. On the march they frequently wore twill breeches tucked into knee boots. They carried haversacks and personally purchased water can. They carried a revolver in a tan leather holster on the waistbelt and the 1822 pattern sword in a steel scabbard. At other times the sword belt was worn under the frock. Such items as binoculars and revolver ammunition were carried in a variety of pouches. At the end of the action at Taku very little distinction would have been discernible between officers and men, such were the weather conditions. Pouring rain and liquid mud and fighting across a flat quagmire must have been awful conditions in which to fight.

### Caption

**Top centre:** Officer's and Rank and File forage caps. Officer's sash. 3 band Enfield rifled musket.

**Top left:** Corporal 2nd Queen's in forage cap.

**Top right:** Lance Corporal 31st.

**Bottom left:** Private 31st in forage cap.

**Bottom right:** Sergeant 2nd Queen's.

**Centre:** Company Officer 31st and Sergeant Major of the 2nd Queen's in forage cap.

An excellent article was written for the November 1994 Newsletter (No 56) by Major Patrick Crowley "China 1860 - The Taku Forts".

### The Grenadier was not amused



Major Peter Hill, Major General B St G Irwin CB and the Chairman of the Museum Trustees, Colonel Peter Durrant. Grenadier Carlisle was not offered a drink!

### From the past



W Morgan, a national serviceman, riding one of the horses owned by 1 Queen's, Iserlohn 1951



# LETTERS



## Colonel Mac McConnell writes:-

Again, congratulations and thanks for the Newsletter. It continues to amaze me how varied, how exciting, how humorous, how moving, and generally how interesting are the experiences of our members. They are (of course!) a very talented lot, but would that more of them would come forward. When one realises that for every one of our two thousand odd paid up members there are probably hundreds more who have not yet joined and who are equally experienced and equally talented there must be material for many more excellent editions.

I was particularly interested in the article by FWM on Soldiering in Salonika. From the end of WW2 in 1945 until the late 1950s British soldiers, initially mostly conscripts, served all over the world, carrying out the peacekeeping role nowadays undertaken by soldiers from dozens of other countries under the authority of the UN or NATO. Many of them were officially classified as being "On Active Service", and performed their duties "in aid of the Civil Power". They usually lived in conditions of danger and discomfort often for a year or more and as FWM relates, some lost their lives. Except for those who served at particular periods of time in Palestine, Malaya, Korea, Cyprus and Kenya, the kind of service given by FWM and his comrades was never recognised by the award of the General Service Medal, or indeed any other medal. I have never understood why. All comparisons tend to be invidious, but when the General Service Medal and United Nations medals seem to be awarded for very short periods of service in relatively peaceful conditions there is surely a case to answer.

In one official answer I was informed that it would be politically incorrect to award any medal for service in a friendly country. That was twenty years ago, before the troubles of Northern Ireland! I was later informed that recipients had to operate in a war-like situation, or counter insurgency operation but that was before the present truce in Northern Ireland. I was also informed that it was contrary to policy to consider granting awards for service performed so long ago, but the Civil Servant responsible for that assertion was unaware that soldiers of the 2nd Foot who served on HM Ships on the Glorious First of June had to wait 50 years for their medals!

I wonder how many members of the Association have taken part in active military operations such as a war or counter-insurgency campaign who have no medal to show for it?

## Eric Lockwood writes:-

On receiving my November issue of the Newsletter, the name of Joe Lancaster (alias Richard Woolcott) brought back so many memories to me of boy service with the 2nd Bn The Queen's. In the February of 1948 five boys were taken from Stoughton Barracks, Guildford to join the Battalion as the first Drummer boys since the war. Along with Fred Westrop, Tom Moore, Derek Palmer and Lofty New, I arrived in Dortmund to be met by the Drum Major who at that time was Sid Harman. He soon taught us the routine of the Battalion. I can well remember being in Berlin Olympic Stadium with Joe Lancaster and also the parades on the Olympic Platz, then under the guidance of Drum Major Lance Bennett. Happy days!

If any of those named above, or anyone else who remembers me, would like to get in touch, please telephone me on 01323 642045 or write to me at 167 Bridgemere Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 8TZ. I look forward to hearing from you!

## Canon R R Acheson writes:-

Thank you for another interesting bulletin of regimental history and news.

I should have written to you when I received the May 1994 issue of the Newsletter about an inaccuracy in your account of 2 Queen's in the article on "Formation Signs" on p.42, an inaccuracy now repeated on p. 17 of the current issue, No.58.

I served with the 2nd Bn from Sept 1940 - March '45, for a time as Bde Liaison Officer and later as Adjutant. When I joined the Battalion at Baggush in the Western Desert, before our advance to Sidi Barrani and Bardia, 16 Inf. Bde was part of what was then called 3 Ind.Div., a pseudonym to conceal from the enemy the fact that we were both an originally regular and a wholly British Division without any Indian troops within it. The deceit has confused later military historians also! I do not remember learning the previous designation of the division nor do I remember the date of the change to 70 Div. Certainly we went to Ceylon as 70 Div.

Later on in India in 1943 the Division was transferred to General Wingate's command as part of Special Force and the old designation "3 Ind.Div." then revived, again as a camouflage. There were still no Indians in 3 Ind.Div., but a few Burma Rifles were attached to each battalion. Also in Special Force (the Chindits) were units of Gurkha Rifles and a West African Brigade, but I think no Indians.

I wonder how many other bits of wartime camouflage have survived to confuse the historians.

## Jock Stewart writes:-

It was with regret that I read in the November issue of the passing of Eric Stenning.

My family and I visited Dover Castle in August 1990, and of course the museum, this was the first time I had met Eric since I left the Regiment in 1969, so we had a great deal to chat about over a cup of tea, my family retired to the castle restaurant leaving Eric and I to our reminiscences. Unfortunately I got so engrossed that eventually when I did rejoin my family they were about to organise a search party with the wife in the process of striking me off the rations roll.

My deepest sympathy to Eric's family.

## G V T Church writes:-

Enclosed please find cheque in payment of this year's Newsletters, with many thanks and congratulations for such an excellent publication. The November issue certainly presents a comprehensive picture of the Queen's world-wide role during the war years, from Dunkirk on to Singapore, Burma, Middle East, Italy and Normandy to the final victory parade in Berlin.

Don Green's on-the-spot sketches of the Normandy fighting made a brilliant and most unusual centre pages feature. Many thanks again.

#### **H G Meatyard writes:-**

Thank you for the interesting, as always, Newsletter. I enclose my subs for the coming year.

The report on page 39 regarding some signal platoon bods brought back memories of the days at Venice whilst I was with 2/7th Queen's. At that time I was in 13 Platoon C Coy, my platoon commander being Lt Beddingfield, with section Corporal Arthur Butt. I lugged the bren up from the Senio via Cammaccio with my No 2 Stan Lee. What heady days they were, then on to Malfraccone and the Yugoslavs, they haven't changed much have they?

Thanks again for the Newsletter, I look forward to many more, all power to your elbow.

#### **W Daybank writes:-**

I regret being late in sending my subscription, but I've had a spell in hospital, and my son brought the Newsletter for me to read. I must confess I look forward to reading it.

I was posted to the 1st Battalion as a reinforcement before the Arakan and remained until repatriation in July 1946 in Bangkok. I was in the Mortar Platoon. I would be very interested in hearing from any mortar men.

Many, many thanks for your excellent Newsletter. Keep up this standard.

#### **John Livermore writes:-**

Reading the Newsletter brought back some boyhood memories of the early war days at the Depot, Kingston.

Your photo of King George VI on page two of the last issue brought to mind the King carrying out the same type of inspection at Kingston, we were allowed to watch from our married quarter above the King. I seem to remember he had green and red on his face for photographic purposes. On the eve of the evacuation of Dunkirk I attended a boxing match in the Depot gymnasium, when the Adjutant entered the ring and spoke about the hard time the men had gone through, next morning we awoke to find the Depot full of French, English and foreign soldiers.

Lastly I remember when we had a five hundred pound bomb under our house which was next to the Sergeants Mess, the bomb did not explode. We were evacuated to married quarters well to the rear, all was fine until my Mother decided we should retrieve the wireless set and other important articles, so we entered the house above the bomb, all went well until the RSM saw us, I don't know who moved the fastest my Mother or myself, we were both willing to face the bomb, but in no way the RSM. Best wishes to all.

#### **K H Barber writes:-**

As usual I found the November Newsletter full of interest. The section dealing with events leading up to Dunkirk in 1940 coincided with an experience I had at the local Royal British Legion parade on Remembrance Sunday. A group from the Sussex Branch Royal Engineers Association were on parade and one of them asked about my Regimental Association badge.

I explained having served with 1st Bn East Surrey Regiment and 6th Queen's Royal Regiment (TA). With great excitement he shouted to his group - "Hey I've found a Surrey they were our Infantry screen at Dunkirk". Hastily I explained that although having reached State Retirement age, I was still too young to have taken part in that epic. "Don't matter" he said, "Its the Regiment that counts". So for those that did take part they are

still well remembered. Come to think of it that is what the parade is all about really.

#### **J R Stokes writes:-**

May I say that as a war time soldier, I served with the 2nd Bn Queen's Royal Regiment, and although only recently joining The Regimental Association, I thoroughly enjoy reading your excellent Newsletter. It is good for us "Oldies" to revive old memories and learn how other battalions and units have served their country in the past and in more recent times. My sincere thanks to you for all your efforts and those who print and despatch the Newsletter.

#### **Bob Brinkley writes:-**

I arrived at Stoughton Barracks on 4-1-37; green; and straight from the farm. I was given the number 6087209. I was a member of the Supplementary Reserve; six months training and back to civvy street if I wished. From the Recruiting office in Ipswich I was sent to the Queen's, possibly to make up the strength of the Battalion for Palestine. This was a change of destiny which was ordained by someone greater than I! I am still a Queen's Man, and my ten years I look back on as the greatest years of my life.

From the Depot at Guildford to Parkhurst where I was chosen for the M.T. Section. On boarding HMTS *Navassa* at Southampton, on 28-12-1938 I was given the job of guarding the prisoners in the "Brig".

Our arrival at Tulkarm, and our "Policing" of the "Triangle of Terror", Nablus Genin-Tulkarm. (I see that Nablus has just been handed back to the Palestinians!) and our move to Jericho when a truce was declared. It was here that I had to take drivers on refresher courses, on those S bends from Jerusalem. (my hair is grey)! The drive to the "Bagoush Box", across many miles of Desert; The first campaign at Bug-Bug, Sidi Barrani; Salloun and Bardia. The attempts to get to Crete, on the old *Glenroy*; The return to Mersa Matruh; the drive from there to Syria across the Sinai Desert, and through Palestine again. The Armistice in Syria and the return to Alex by sea. The journey by sea to Tobruk; and then to Ceylon India and Burma. I think that, quite rightly by this time, we had wondered if we were the only Brigade in The British Army?

I have followed with great interest Tommy Atkins continuing story in the Newsletter and you can see that I was with him the whole time. Then someone decreed that MT drivers would make good muleteers, and I became a muleteer and the one who decreed, was probably right, and made one of the good decisions in the Army!

There is a movement afoot to honour our animals in War, by the erection of a statue on the vacant site in Trafalgar square. If you or your readers feel strongly about "Our Mules" please would you write to Miss Prue Leith OBE 94 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2PN. Certain newspapers have supported her, and a letter will be sent to Virginia Bottomley when sufficient support has been reached. What would we have done without those magnificent beasts!! I must confess that I cried when 'Lassie' was shot by our own officer before 'fly out' from Broadway. She carried our columns 22 set. The weight of our pack was about 60 pounds (when dry) which was seldom. The Chagul of water etc brought the total weight carried to approx 75 lbs.

We carried 7 days rations from the Ledo road but they did not last to H Kalak Ga because of the gruelling march. We had a drop at an unnamed place, of which we recovered about a third. We had nothing but K rations until we arrived at Aberdeen Stronghold. Most of the drops were five days K Rations.

I am almost sure that we were armed with Sten Guns, when we set out and replaced by American automatic Carbines during the



campaign. We also carried the machette mostly for cutting a bivouac area and bamboo for mules. Major Terence Close was our officer in charge of '22' Column later promoted to Lt Colonel. I remember that on enlistment, Sgt Holdaway, was Corunna Platoon Sergeant, Sgt Batt the education Sgt (I have my 3rd and 2nd certificates signed by B.L. Montgomery, who was I believe Southern Area Commander). I think the PT bloke was Cpl Tyler, I doubt whether he had a Mum or Dad?!

6087209

#### **G J Thornton writes:-**

My wife and I were lucky enough to get to Southern Spain last November, through the kindness and thought of my youngest son and daughter in law and last but not least our grandson, we had a wonderful holiday and a lovely flat which helped to make the holiday.

However it also provided me with some history of The East Surrey Regiment. We decided to go to Gibraltar for the day, as you approach it by road it looks as if it is stuck out in the Med; all on its own, we parked the car in Spain and walked through the Customs and you have to go right across the main runway of Gibraltar airport which we went over in a local bus to the High Street which was very well decorated for Christmas.

We now come to near the centre of the High Street where there is an archway leading in to a square, in the Plaza there is this plaque remembering all the people who died during the last war and all embedded in the floor right through into the square regimental badges of quite a lot of British Regiments one of which was The East Surreys Regiment.



#### **G Swain writes:-**

I very much enjoyed reading the latest issue of the Newsletter, especially its reference to the Italian campaign. The 56 Div Black Cat looked marvellous on the cover. You will be interested to know that my article has produced a number of enquiries from former members of all regiments about membership, of The Italy Star Association.

In addition, the parading of our national standard at the Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall, coupled with the commentary of the parade in Whitehall, in which we participated has produced another 20 enquiries so far. We are so pleased to see that interest is still there once people hear about the Association. Thank you for your help.

#### **A W E Hitchcock writes:-**

I am writing to you to correct a couple of inaccuracies in the Nov.95 Newsletter.

The first is that Lt Col R O V Thompson was killed during the battle for Cassino. (page 14) In fact he, together with Lt G H Gudgeon and Cpl H Efford were killed on June 7th 1944 at

Sant'Angelo Romano when their jeep ran over a mine. This is partially confirmed on Page 46 (P J Carpenter para 3). Immediately after Cassino, Colonel Thompson gave me the job of recording and keeping in touch with casualties or finding out what had happened to them. This included visits, a newsletter and mail wherever possible. It also meant we were able to retrieve those who were fit enough instead of them being posted to other units. I still have all my original lists and notes which also include casualties for N. Africa and Greece.

Which brings me to the second point. On page 21 'Soldiering in Salonika' there is a paragraph about the White Tower. As far as I know it has always been the White Tower. Possibly the troops called it the OXI (pronounced OC HI) Tower because of the word OXI appearing in lights on it. Far from being the dim distant past and the Turks, it commemorates October 28th 1940 when the Greek people said 'NO' to Mussolini and promptly, in terrible conditions, drove the Italians half way up through Albania. Although Greece fell later to the Germans it was a very proud moment which is still celebrated as a National Holiday. I see this writer also refers to 4th Div as 'The Cheshire Cheese'. It should, of course, be 'The Dutch Cheese' which was the name of the Divisional Canteen in Athens 1945-6, and maybe later.

I met my wife in Athens when I was there with 1/6th Surrey's. In spite of all the possible problems which were put forward as reasons not to get married (I was even offered leave in Italy!) we persevered and celebrated our Golden Wedding on Dec 29th 1995. Once it was accepted that we were determined to marry the Battalion was most helpful including providing transport for the ceremony.

#### **E Jephcote writes from Warwickshire:-**

Please find enclosed my subscription for Newsletter. Thank you for all your good works on behalf of all Queensmen. I keep in touch with several old comrades of 2/6th Queen's. Geoffrey Curtis was my very young platoon officer in W W II and I join them on Salerno Day when this is possible. Best wishes to you Les. Newsletter is brilliant.

#### **Les Mitchell writes from Northants:-**

Please find the enclosed cheque to cover my subscription for 1996, the remainder to be donated to the Associations funds. Many thanks for the 1995 Newsletter which I found most interesting to read. Having joined the regiment in September 1931, I sincerely hope having reached my 80th birthday on January 28th 1996, I will still be around for some time yet, to receive the Queen's Surrey Newsletter.

*Mr Mitchell served with 22nd London The Queen's - 1/6th Queen's and 1/7th Queens.*

#### **Mrs G Berry writes:-**

On April 3rd 1995 my beloved husband died. My daughter, Mrs Elaine Collins wrote to you, and you very kindly sent photo copies of the History of 1st and 2nd Bn's of The Queen's to her. We had no knowledge of where my husband went or what he did. He often mentioned the Chindits, but not in detail. To cut a long story short, after reading the photo copies of the war in Burma I wanted to know more so I borrowed a book from the library called 'Chindits' by Richard Rhodes James, and followed this with 'Chindits at War' by Shelford Bidwell and felt really proud to read how the Queen's crossed the Irawaddy in 2 hrs 10 mins. As you will know it is a mile wide in places, and General Wingate had a posse of news reporters to watch this manoeuvre. The men saw some horrific sights but all my husband told me was only the funny things that happened. My husband to give him his full title was 6099434 Private Walter Henry Berry and he served with the 2nd Bn The Queen's. He did not get home until 1946 and from what I've read in these two books there was still fighting going on almost until some time after VJ day 1945.

I am so grateful to you for sending my daughter the photo copies of the history of the regiment, without that information I would never have known of his experiences which were explained more fully in the two books I have mentioned; many thanks to you.

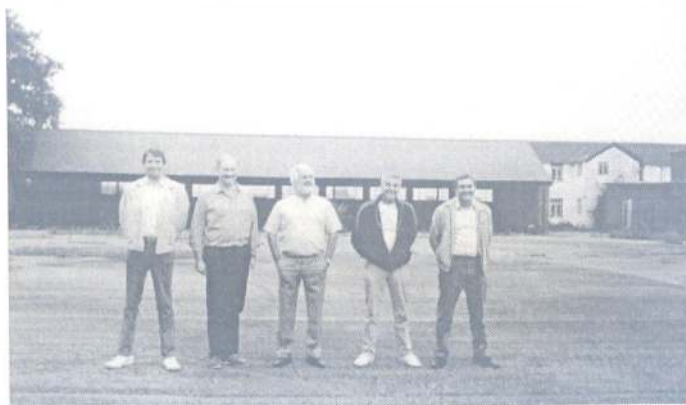
He suffered extreme pain for many years. I know he is now at peace, but sadly missed after 58 years of married life, through hard times we worked at it together, and I can only thank the Good Lord who made it possible.

#### **Ray Rosado writes:-**

Please find enclosed cheque in respect of Newsletter subscription for 1996. Very sorry for the delay but I'm just getting over a by-pass operation and as a result my correspondence is a bit retarded. May I take this opportunity to say what a wonderful publication the Newsletter is and all the staff involved are to be congratulated for a first class job. I look forward very much to each issue. Glad to hear that our standard bearer, 'Tony' Ramsey MM is making good progress after his recent accident. I do hope also that Bryan Fosten has made a good recovery from his heart attack and that we can look forward to more of those excellent illustrations of his.

#### **Phil Cable writes from Woking:-**

The photo was taken at Stoughton Barracks about seven years ago, it was the last Parade on the Square!



*From left to right are:- Pte Polly Perkins, Cpl Ken Munday (Standing to attention), Pte Fred Lidyard, Pte Phil Cable, Pte Joe Verrico.*

We all did National service from Nov '57 to Nov '59.

We did our basic training at Stoughton. At that time our R.S.M was Tommy Atkins he was the first person I saluted and got a right B..... for it! I never did it again. After our training we went to Germany (Iserlohn) for nineteen months, on our return we finished our last three months at Canterbury.

For the last two years we have been to the Union Jack Club for the Annual Reunion and I met R.S.M Tommy Atkins again. Ten of us have our own Reunion every year, it will be 37 years come next Nov '96. One year we went to Iserlohn to our old Barracks, German Paratroopers were in there, they let us walk around. Brian Cheeseman spotted a birds nest on the back axle of a lorry, we looked at one another and laughed. It would never have happened in the British Army.  
Best wishes to all.

#### **Jim Jeffery writes:-**

Another excellent Newsletter in November 1995, (number 58) full of information and interest, not least of which was Tommy Marshall's reminiscence of his P.O.W. days-after service with the 1st/5th Queens and capture in France in 1940.

I was with 2nd/5th Queens in France in 1940, where we lost a substantial number of troops taken prisoner, just about all of

them either Territorials or call-up (October 1939 and January 1940) personnel. One particular friend of mine, Eddie Ewens (from Ilford), was in the October 1939 call-up and was taken prisoner in the Abbeville area just north of the Somme, around 20/21st May 1940. Eddie eventually spent 5 years in Stalag 20 A in Poland. On de-mob, together with his wife Rene, he became Postmaster of the village of Gillingham in Norfolk. Sadly he died in the summer of 1991, he was 73.

The thought comes to mind that we do not hear enough of such as Tommy Marshall and Eddie Ewens and the many, many others who struggled through what must have seemed an endless P.O.W. stint in mightily harsh conditions. If any Newsletter readers knew Eddie Ewens in Stalag 20 A, I would be happy to hear from them, and to pass on any such information to his widow. Their P.O.W. experiences would I'm sure make interesting Newsletter copy. Looking forward to the next Newsletter.

#### **Larry Fish writes from Ontario, Canada.**

In the November, 1995 Newsletter I saw an item from a A.H. Whitmarsh who seems quite likely to have been a fellow member of 1st Battalion East Surreys.

In my recent book, "Up The Boot; A Private's War", I refer to a Sergeant Dizzy Whitman (obviously didn't get the name quite right) who served with me in 12 Platoon, B Company. I was with him when he was severely wounded at Ripiano, below Monte Spaduro. One of his arms appeared almost severed. (Page 154 in my book). Perhaps the above mentioned A.H. Whitmarsh is one and the same? If so, I would be interested in hearing from him and to learn what happened subsequent to his wounding and evacuation. If it is you, Dizzy, and you feel so inclined I would appreciate a note addressed to: Larry Fish. 70-3033 Townline Road, Stevensville, Ontario, Canada. LOS 1. In case you try to find Stevensville on a map of Ontario, it is only a twenty minute drive from Niagara Falls.

#### **Enfield Price writes:-**

I joined the 1st Battalion The Queen's Surreys in Aden having just come straight out of training at Canterbury. The CO at the time was Lt Col M A Lowry MC. I was and still am a great lover of cricket, was born and brought up in Barbados, where I represented my school, I played on some pretty good grounds there during my early years, came to England in the summer of 1960 and played on some beautiful grounds.

During the middle of May 1961, I heard talk going around the battalion regarding a cricket match to be played at Waterloo Lines on the Glorious First of June, and immediately commenced scouring the area for the cricket field, I even walked for miles along the beach near to Waterloo Lines but could not locate a suitable pitch and thought to myself, well, this is going to be a game of beach cricket. I thought no more about it for some days, by which time I had given up my search for the cricket ground.

I was very pleasantly surprised when on the morning of the game by which time I had learned that the opponents were to be a team from HMS *Centaur*. There was a lot of activity on that morning, kit being collected from the battalion sports store, and I remember Lt Col Lowry, the then Lt Acworth, Lt Stephen Petzing, and others beautifully decked out in their whites and in some cases club caps. We all then proceeded along with the sailors, who had by then arrived to a location surrounded by stunted trees adjacent to the APL Lines where to my delight, the sandy area forming the outfield had been well watered, and rolled to a hard consistency with what I understood to be a road roller, the pitch was a concrete strip covered by cork matting. This extraordinary and unexpected setting provided along with the enthusiasm of all the players concerned, the most memorable game I have played during over 50 years in the game, in a place I never dreamt it possible to play me beloved game.



**Mrs D Maloney writes:-**

As you see in the enclosed photo I am enquiring as to the history of the drum. We were in an antique shop in a town called Peninsula, Ohio, USA last year when the owner on hearing our English voices presumed we would know all about the drum! Could you shed any light on the mystery drum. We are actually moving out to Ohio in mid April and it would be great to go back to the shop armed with knowledge!



*The drum belonged to the 1st Cadet Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Further research is continuing to try and find the reason why one of our Cadet Battalion's drums ended up in the United States of America.*

LW

**Arthur Ashby writes:-**

I was conscripted at Maidstone in the General Service Corps on the 18th September 1947. Primary training at Invicta Lines, then to 28th training Bn at Holywood Barracks, Belfast, Northern Ireland, and accepted in to The Queen's Royal Regiment, but I never served in a Battalion. I was posted to Egypt, and there sent to 2nd Bn The Middlesex Regiment in Palestine. I was a victim of the typhoid epidemic, eventually sent to BMH El Ballah in Canal Zone. After release from hospital and convalescence I was sent to 156 Transit Camp and then to 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Salonika, Greece, in September 1948 and moved with the battalion to Aliko Camp near Athens and demobbed on 7/9/48.

In 1993 my wife and I went on holiday to Halkadiki, Northern Greece. We hired a car and found all the places where I had been stationed. Even the site of the camp site at Khertartis, the old Salvean Barracks just outside Salonika is now a Police Training School, or an Academy. It is completely built up with factories and Trading Estate. A very enjoyable holiday. I shall try to come to the Museum in 1996, I have quite a few photographs that may interest the museum.

**Letter from Mrs Janet Tice, a teacher at Northmead Junior School, Stoughton.**

*The children in her class went to the display in Cardwells Keep and later the Association arranged for a large aerial view of Stoughton to be given to the school.*

Many thanks for the parcel of goodies (brochure on Cardwells Keep) that you sent us. The children could not wait to sketch the cap badges, although some of the boys were interested in the old army uniforms in the booklet. One of the boys did a marvellous drawing of the 1943 uniform. Unfortunately he is colour blind and before I could advise him on the colours to use had painted it a bright green - not very good for camouflage! The booklets and Newsletter are full of information. It is good to know that the connection with the barracks is to be continued in the street names for the new housing development. One of the girls in the class is moving to a new house in Fairborne Way

- so we have a double interest this year. I think the family move in just after Christmas. Anyway, once again, many thanks for thinking of us.

**J Armstrong writes:-**

The enclosed photo is of me on VJ Parade, I am the only ex East Surrey in my branch at Ashington, and I was the only ex Jap POW on the Parade.



□□□

**Lewd Paintings on the NAAFI wall**

During The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment's stay in the old wooden hutted Blenheim Lines Camp at Bury St Edmunds 1959-1960 a young National Service soldier with an artistic flare spent his spare time brightening up the NAAFI walls with French style bathing scenes à la St Tropez. Those, pictures were much admired and appreciated by soldiers and NAAFI Staff since they tastefully brightened up a very dreary NAAFI hut.

On the Battalion's move to the Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester, the camp was handed over to The Royal Suffolk Regiment, however the CO of the incoming regiment refused to take over the NAAFI until bikinis were painted on the ladies. The young soldier artist who was about to be de-mobbed was hastily redeployed to oblige the Suffolks CO (but maybe not the soldiers).

Blenheim Lines Camp was put to the bulldozer some years ago and sadly the paintings were destroyed - which is a pity since the artist was Jason Monet the great grandson of the famous French impressionist Claude Monet.

JCR

□□□

**Field of Remembrance November 1995, All Teeth!**



*L to R: Major John Rogerson, Joe Rowe MM and Jim Burgess.*



## Sheppard's Scraps, and Snaps

An interesting scrap book, compiled by the late Captain Percy Edward Sheppard MM, The Queen's Royal Regiment has recently come into the Editor's hands.



*8th Queen's Camp, Shoreham 1914*

Of mainly First World War vintage, its story is principally told in pictures, early ones being of the tented camp at Shoreham in 1914 and of a house, later known as "Queen's House", which was personally rented by Lieutenant Colonel Fairclough, Commanding Officer of the 8th Queen's, for use for recreational purposes by all ranks. Sadly it is recorded that Colonel Fairclough was killed in action at Loos in 1915.



*Queen's House*

Youthful enthusiasm of the period is shown by a photograph of Pte Arthur Fagg in November 1914 aged 15.



*Private Arthur Fagg aged 15 years*

The havoc of war is aptly captured by Daily Mail pictures of Ypres in ruins after two years of war. That domestic activities could still be continued is demonstrated by the picture of a woman lace making at Poperinghe.

Some hand written diary notes record "The movements of the 8th Queen's in France and Belgium 1915-19", showing that after the Armistice in 1918 the Battalion went to Baisieux for dispersal to England. The notes are

supplemented by some excellent detailed maps.

Colourful postcards depicting Le Touquet-Paris-Plage are obviously of a peace-time nature but it is unclear as to whether they were taken before or after the war.

Injury and romance seemingly crossed the Captain's path. A poem written by him after a spell in hospital at Amiens in 1917 is closely followed by a photograph of the attractive V.A.D. Nurse Ellen May Blackhall who he later married.



Captain Sheppard was on home duties between February 1918 and October 1919, spending a spell with the South Notts Hussars who had been reorganised as a Cyclist Corps. Further evidence of war's bodily toll is indicated by his Protection Certificate, dated 2nd November 1919, "Gazetting him out of the Service" and showing him as Medical Category C1.

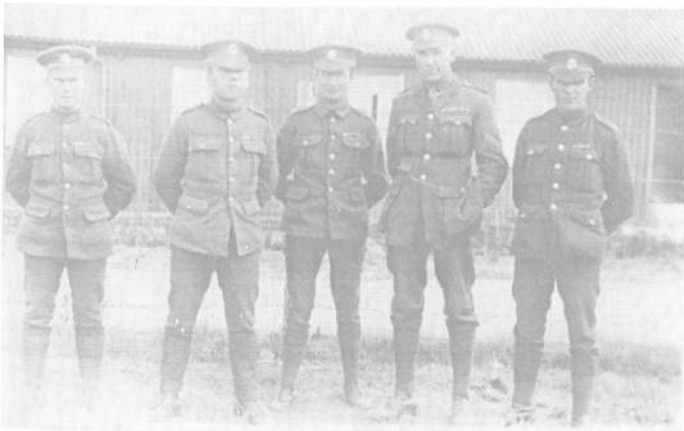


*Littlebourne, near Canterbury, the pub The Anchor on the left of the picture was the officers mess, South Notts Hussars. On the right the public house William IV. Both pubs are still thriving.*

But his days in khaki were not yet completely over. A photograph of himself and other ex-officers in uniform, noted as being that of The Middlesex Regiment, is captioned "Hounslow Heath



1921. The Defence Force formed for defence of England during Sinn Fein terror campaign".



A footnote indicates a certain amount of sympathy for the Irish cause but not for their methods.

Obviously mindful of the war's sacrifice, an Order of Service for the Dedication of the 4th Bn The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Memorial at Croydon Parish Church in 1922 is included in the closing pages of the album.

A final note on Captain Sheppard records that for "most of his life after leaving the Army he was a police officer in the Metropolitan Police".



L/Cpl P E Sheppard

Information from the Curator of the Metropolitan Police Museum, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged, shows that Police Constable Sheppard joined the Force on 2nd January 1922. Born at Chelsea on 3rd February 1895, his immediate previous occupation before joining the Force was that of builder's merchant. His height was 5ft 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ins. During his service he was stationed at Norbury and he received three

Commissioner's Commendations for good police work. Two of these were for arrests in connection with breaking offences and one was for zealous work in promoting Road Safety.

Retiring on 5th January 1947, he died on 21st February 1978, aged 83 years and 18 days - a true servant of his country.

These words were written by Captain Sheppard on April 16th 1917 at Amiens after a spell in hospital.

*"The night falls upon us like a kindly garment upon a deformed body. And at it's coming the thousand brutalities of the day depart. It blots out cruelty and drops like reviving rain on memory, and dreams and desire are born again, - and hope, and fear".*

PES

## Movement Control Staff

As promised I enclose a photograph of the Embarkation Staff Southampton, together with a photocopy of the picture of the combined RAF and Army Staffs as it appeared in the Southern Daily Echo. I can't remember where the RAF were located, but they were not with us. I append a list of the third and back rows, where the most important members of the staff stand and have underlined the The Queen's Royal Regiment personnel. (MFP), in case you didn't know, stood for Military Foot Police, as opposed to MMP (Military Mounted Police). They weren't RMP then!



Back row: Mr J Neale, L/Cpl R Lloyd, Pte R Anderson, Pte H Garrett, Pte J Stone, Pte J Dominy, L/Cpl E Forsyth (RASC), Pte C Sykes, Pte F Smith, Pte A Jenner, L/Cpl F Saxton (MFP), Pte G Hammans, Mr R Gurd. Third row: Mr J Wheeler MM, Pte F Smith (RAMC), Cpl G Dobson (MFP), Cpl W Collins, L/Cpl E Hall, (MFP), Sgt W Plaw, Sgt T Brown (MFP), Cpl W Dimond (RAMC), Pte T Whittaker (RAMC), Boy R Cooley (RASC), Mr W Henry MM.

The Troopship Somersetshire is in the background

The (Army) Movement Control Staff (Southampton) to give it its full title, had its offices in the Docks at 20 Berth, which usually served incoming and outgoing troopers. It was a War Office-controlled unit under the AQMG (Movements), reporting to a Staff Captain (Movements), based at War Office.

There were no officers permanently stationed at Southampton: the day-to-day running of the organization was in the hands of a First Class Staff Sergeant Major RASC, which Corps provided the admin back-up. It was the RASC staff who organized the dispersal by rail and road, all disembarking troops and families, and produced the schedules for the arrival, reception and embarkation of outgoing battalions, details, and families of the three services in conjunction with the RN and RAF.

In addition to the RASC staff there was a small RAMC detachment of a S/Sgt, Cpl and Pte, and, essentially, an Infantry party from the Battalion stationed at Parkhurst Barracks, Isle of Wight, who provided baggage parties and general duties personnel. During my time at Southampton (1936/37), the 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment carried out these duties.

We single soldiers all lived in a "barracks," - a converted dwelling house about a hundred yards from the dock gates. This barracks was presided over by the NCO IC, Sgt 'Jock' Plaw, a well known, larger than life, character in the Regiment. I was then a 15-years-old RASC boy soldier, and cannot speak too highly of the kindness consideration and friendship that he, and indeed all the boys, showed to me. I don't suppose there are many of them left now, but I have never forgotten them.

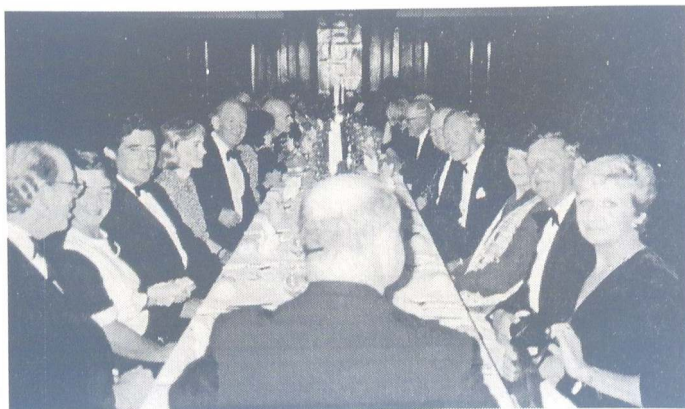
I hope you can use the enclosed and the above; it would be nice for members of the successors of The Queen's Royal Regiment to have their attention drawn to a little bit of regimental trivia (one can't really dignify it by calling it history!).

## 5 Queen's and 3 Queen's Surreys at Queen's College, Oxford

Thirty five years ago during a TEWT, 5 Queen's officers dined in hall at Queen's under their Commanding Officer, Lt Col H M W Harris (a Graduate of Queen's).

In 1995, many from that last occasion, but reinforced with some from 3 Queen's Surreys, together with their ladies, dined on the 16th September 1995 in hall, and again presided over by Colonel Hugh. The aim of the exercise on this occasion was to "meet again, remember old times and faces and to have a splendid dinner". We believe the aim was achieved.

Members foregathered on Friday 15th at the East Gate Hotel, and in the end twelve of us dined very well. Saturday was taken up with conducted visits to various colleges, but the highlight was provided by Sheila and Peter Dorey, who had specially repositioned their narrow boat, near Folly Bridge, opposite Christchurch Meadows, and only ten minutes walk from Queen's. They kept open boat and took a party of us along the river to the Trout Inn for a pub lunch. The dinner in hall was presided over by Colonel Hugh, and the grace was said in Latin by The Rev Professor (Capt) Bill Frend, (Int. Offr. 5 Queen's). There were no set speeches, but anyone was allowed to speak for two minutes. Richard Asser to name but one, as usual lived up to expectation.



The dinner was attended by in total 32, which is one better than the last dinner held in Andover in 1992. We were honoured by the presence of a training Major from the period Lt Col John Burgess OBE and his wife Enid. We were pleased especially that Enid was able to be with us, as she has just recovered from a recent illness and showed great courage in attending.

### Those present:-

Jane and Richard Asser.  
Jill and Ray Brooks.  
Enid and John Burgess.  
Judith and Tony Clayton.  
Sheila and Peter Dorey.  
Jackie and Julian Gill.  
Rachel and Hugh Harris.  
Bill Frend.

Mary and Nigel Moreshead.  
Christine and Noel Napier Ford.  
Liz and John Pullingier.  
Joy and David Robinson.  
Maxine and John Samuels.  
Patricia and Barrie Sidwell.  
Helen and Michael Wigan.

John Rae.

Desmond Wilson.

DGW

## Double Issue

An unusual medal group has recently been donated to the Museum at Clandon together with full supporting documentation. It was brought to the Museum by the recipient's daughter, Mrs Norton, and her husband. Her father, Pte J H Lewis enlisted in the Territorial Force in 1909 and served with 22nd Bn The London Regiment. He was directed to join his regiment which was embodied on 5th August 1914 and he served with it in France but by June 1916 his time in the Territorial Force was up and he received his discharge certificate. He enlisted again in the same unit "to be with his pals" in March 1917, and was eventually transferred to the Army Reserve in April 1919. What makes his medal group unusual is that, due to a relatively rare

official mistake, probably caused by his enlisting twice, he was issued with the 1914-15 Star plus two British War Medals and two Victory Medals. Here at Clandon we have some 2,400 medals and this group is the only example of its kind here.

PJ

□□□



# Book Reviews

## Up The Boot - A Private's War by Lawrence Fish

This is the story of a private's progress from North Africa, to Greece, via Sicily, Italy and Austria. Mr. Fish joined the 1st Bn. The East Surrey Regiment. in a draft from The Royal Norfolk Regiment reinforcements being urgently needed after the Tunisian Campaign. From Guelma (where he records that 'his country accent was a curse in a regiment largely populated by cockneys'), he takes the reader through the hard but necessary training to the little Arab village of Hammamet (now a modern luxury holiday resort) and on to Sousse, before embarking for Sicily.

The battle of Centuripe is well covered as is the description of that delightful little seaside village, Gioiosa Maria (which he has since re-visited) and where the Battalion rested for a while prior to the Italian landing. The long slog up Italy (hence the title) is graphically described. It is a tale of the F.D.L's, the slit-trench and the 'sangan'. Very much the story of himself and his friends; officers are seldom mentioned except for his own Platoon Commander the great 'Chips' Louis who seemed to stay a permanent Platoon Commander until he was inevitably killed in the last days of the war. His Commanding Officers (Lt. Col's Smith and Hunter) and the R.S.M. (Woolley) are not named but presumably their paths rarely crossed!

At Cassino, the squalor of 'Snakeshead' ridge and the 'Bowl', where soldiers somehow managed to survive, is well recorded. Austria, after war torn Italy, is well recalled, but unfortunately Mr. Fish was on leave when the Battalion formed part of the Vienna garrison. His comments would have been most informative!

In Greece the Nissen-hutted camp at Veroia (sometimes referred to as Belsen) was his home until de-mob. This gives Mr. Fish at last an opportunity to write about two of his officers. One straight out of P G Wodehouse, Major 'Frankie' Stewart-Francis, all dogs, horses and race-meetings; the other Lt. Col. 'the Nipper' Armstrong. Mr. Fish recalls (who can't?) the latter's frequent lectures to the whole battalion and in particular the one about the natural bodily functions!

Occasionally the book is a bit 'Boys Own Paper', but none the worse for that, as it does not pretend to be military or Regimental history. He is to be congratulated on his excellent memory of over 50 years ago, and like an angler, an old soldier is allowed slight exaggeration here and there. It is a good read for anyone interested in front-line soldiering, especially for those who had the privilege of serving in 1 Surreys during the war.

RCT



# PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



**V F Kearslake writes:-**

Please find enclosed a cheque for the Newsletter. As usual I enjoyed reading the various items of news, in particular Brigadier McWilliam my old CO when I was in the 1/7th Bn Queen's Carriers Platoon he was CO. I look forward to seeing him again at our re-union next year, after his operations. The Newsletter is doing good things. I had a letter from one old friend, Mickey Marsh, ex platoon member who later was a transport driver with 169 Brigade, the first news since the early 40s. I'm hoping to find news about a chap called Bill Copeland who went to another battalion. If anybody who gets the Newsletter knows anything I'd be grateful. I look forward to the next issue.

**Gerry Lewcock writes from Hampton Hill, Middlesex:-**

Your name has been passed to me by staff at the Queen's Surreys Museum at Clandon and Colonel Peter Thompson whom I met at the Surbiton Conservative Club last November. The subject at that time was a discussion about gaining a War Widows pension for my mother which is currently in the hands of the War Pensions department at Norcross Blackpool.

My father's name was Douglas Lewcock No 6141852 known as Lew to his friends and fellow comrades. He was a Private serving with the 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment, B Company. He was in Shanghai, China from 1.9.1938 to 22.8.1940 and then Singapore from 23.8.1940 and then into Malaya on the front line at Jitra before the Malaya campaign commenced.

My father then served, with the British Battalion and although I am not certain, I believe he was in D Company serving under Captain Vickers, because he did talk once of Cemetery Ridge at Kampar. Following my investigations and the data I have read on the Malaya Campaign I am hoping there maybe someone who may have known my father during the campaign or after, when he became a P.O.W.

I am trying to find if there is anyone left alive who fought with my father from Jitra to Singapore and who also may have known him in one of the P.O.W. Camps working on the Railway. I do believe he once told me that he worked on the infamous Bridge of the River Kwai. He spent three and a half years as a Japanese P.O.W. until his release on 11.10.1945.

It is only recently that I have started to find out what really happened during the War as my father was very reluctant to mention anything about his experiences during that time. With the little information I have at present I feel very proud of my father and of the other soldiers who fought and subsequently became prisoners of war and up to VJ celebrations last year appeared to have been forgotten especially those who never returned. I feel honoured to be the son of a soldier who fought from start to finish in the Malaya/ Singapore campaign but have a sense of sadness that my father must have been so overcome by the campaign and the P.O.W. camps that he did not want to talk about his experiences to even his own family.

Presently I am fighting on behalf of my mother for a War Widow's Pension in the hope that my father's gallant service during the war and his subsequent suffering with the tropical diseases he contracted during the time he was serving in the Far East, and if successful it may open the door for other widows who have been forgotten. To my delight, through our local paper the "Informer", I have been able to make contact and personally meet Jack Shuttle who knew my father in Shanghai and the early days at Jitra before he was transferred to Penang. I have also had the pleasure and honour to meet Dave Boorer, George Deane, Cliff Martin, Bob North, Roy Pagani, Tony Ramsey and George Britton (who was my father's best man after the war) and others at the East Surrey Reunion. If your readers have any information on the addresses or phone numbers of the following persons who served in the British Battalion I would be very grateful.

Pte P Graves (M.M.) D Coy - L/Cpl J Wyatt D Company

My office telephone number is 0181 397 5301 (Chessington) and my home number is 0181 979 4504 (Hampton Hill). I would be grateful for any information and look forward to hearing from any of your readers. May I say that I think yours is a splendid publication and I look forward to receiving it every six months.

## Shared memories, different lives



Two strangers with shared memories of the war in Singapore 50 years ago, met for the first time last Friday, thanks to the *Informer*. Gerry Lewcock, from Hampton Hill, is fighting for a war widow's pension for his mother.

His father, Douglas Lewcock, who lived in Molesey, became a Japanese POW and was put to work on the infamous Burma Railway where he contracted a tropical infestation. He suffered in silence, without compensation, until his death in 1990. Gerry approached the "Informer" with his story, and we highlighted his mother's plight. Separately, author Jack Shuttle, from Staines, contacted us about a book he had written about his experiences as a POW on the railway. We put the pair in touch and, to Gerry's delight Jack had known his father well. The two had been good friends. Last Friday they met to talk, an emotional moment for both of them. Mr Lewcock said: *"It's amazing that all this time I've been living a few miles away from Jack and never knew. It is good to know someone who went through the same things as my Dad. It's a real honour"*. Gerry is now learning more about his father's wartime nightmare - ammunition in his fight for a widow's pension. Jack was delighted to help Gerry's cause. He said "I can fully appreciate what is motivating him. I, too kept quiet about my experiences. I only opened up after I wrote my book". Jack's book, *Destination Kwai*, which is available in W.H. Smith and John Menzies in Staines, has reunited several POWs. Gerry now has vital files from Kingston Hospital which document his father's suffering. He will be presenting them to the War Widow's Pension Board. It is the first victory in what could be a long battle.

*With acknowledgements to the Editor, The Staines Informer, Friday October 13th.*

**R J W Scowen writes:-** Last September I went with my wife to visit her father's grave at Cesena in Italy upon the 50th anniversary of his death and can but still admire the marvellous condition in which these cemeteries are maintained. 6096824 Colour Sergeant Leslie Charles (Charlie) Brookes was CQMS in the 2/6th Queens and killed, we believe, close to Santarcangelo on 29th/30th September 1944.

Whilst his widow is still alive she won't talk about the war years and we are wondering if any of his former colleagues are still alive and have memories of Charlie. I am sure that some must still survive. All we know is that at the time of his death his Commanding Officer was PMA. Taylor. If you have space perhaps you would be good enough to print our appeal. If any member can assist please write to R J W Scowen, 2 Coniston Close, Barking, Essex, IG11 7RE - 0181-594-6247.

**T K Price** of 211-110 Highview Avenue E London, Ontario, N6C5H1 Canada is trying to 'establish Communications' with old mates. He served in the Signal Platoon 1/6th Queen's and was known as Paddy. During the Mareh Line operations he joined the Battle Patrol and served with Lieutenant Kime. He left and later served with Airborne Forces. He would very much like to hear from any of his old mates. Anybody who remembers him please write direct to the address above.

**Private James Fitzgerald** aged 24 was killed on the 9th March 1946. He is buried at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand. His brother who is in poor health would like to hear from any of our readers who served with him and in particular if they have photos of him they would like to make copies. Any information would be very welcome. The contact is S Bishop, 11 Jim Broadley Close, Woolwich SE18 6QA (0181 316 4148).

**L/Cpl H Fake**, On Page 52 the death of L/Cpl Harry Fake is recorded. It is known that he served with 1 Queen's in Singapore and Malaya in 1946-47, also the RASC School, Far East. Harry Fake had a grandson Daniel who adored his grandfather. Efforts are being made to 'piece together' Harry's service with the Regiment. He was always talking about his days in the army and his service days, but sadly he left no records. It is appreciated that it is a very long shot indeed but if any reader thinks he can help please contact the Editor. Up to the time of his death he was a very active member of the Royal British Legion.



**Raymond Carrington writes:-** I would greatly appreciate any information regarding Lieutenant Alan Curtis, Queen's Royal Regiment, a brother officer, for whom I have been searching for some years. The Newsletter is now my only hope, please contact me at: 3 Derwent Avenue, Warden Hills, Luton, Beds LU3 2DX (01582 654878).

**Mrs S Black**, 2 Lewis Court Drive, Boughton, Monchelsea, Nr Maidstone, Kent ME17 4LQ, is trying to contact wartime members of The East Surrey Regiment who served with her father, Colin Douglas Green, who sadly died four years ago. She is particularly keen to trace a Private Luckett, Private Shapel, Private James Lord and a Private William Fox. Mrs Black believes that Luckett was awarded a bravery medal but his name is not recorded in Vol 4 of The East Surrey History. It is not known which battalion the late C D Green served with. If any member can assist please contact Mrs Black direct.

**Barbara Smith** is trying to contact any members of the Regiment who served with her father Private David Thomas Smith. Smith enlisted in 1938 at Braganza Street into 7th Queen's and is believed to have boxed heavyweight for his battalion. The Daily Mail featured him in an article titled "Tiny does his bit!" He was 7 feet tall.



He later served with the Military Police but wished to return to regimental soldiering. He served with 2 Queen's in India and was in D Company. He was killed in Burma between 1st and 8th April 1944. His name is recorded on the Rangoon War Graves Cemetery as having no known grave.

He served with a Charlie Taylor believed to be a pre-war Territorial who was with him in D Company. Smith was a Bren-gunner for most of his service. If any reader can recall Smith please write to the Editor who will pass on any information to his daughter.

#### East Surrey Reunion

At 1800 hours I stood at the Clapham Drill Hall and watched with interest as members drifted in - some old regulars and some new faces. After an hour I knew we were heading for a full house and another successful evening.

The committee appointed as our President for the next two years Major Noel Pepperall and wish him success. He takes over from Colonel Derek Bishop MBE who has retired after five years. We presented him with an engraved pot and thanked him for his long service as President. We also appointed Colonel W E McConnell TD as Vice President and President Elect in two years time. He will be well known to members as a Chairman of the Queen's Surreys Regimental Association and the last Commanding Officer of 4 Queen's Surreys TA.



I would like to thank my Committee for their help in making the evening a success - Olly Hyman, Chairman and Fred Jenkins, Treasurer. We are most grateful to Kath Bedford who handles ticket applications and with her family ran a most successful raffle. Such a good turn out makes our efforts very worthwhile and we look forward to seeing you again in October 1996.

TR



## The Syer Saga

In 1973 one of the Army Benevolent Fund Christmas cards was a picture of a 1914-18 War soldier wearing the badge of The East Surrey Regiment and playing a mouth-organ. The picture was signed P.E. Syer. Inquiries revealed that L/Cpl Percy Syer was a professional artist serving in the Orderly Room of the 8th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. The picture named 'Tommy Atkins, 1914' was traced to Lieutenant General Sir Denis O'Connor CB CBE of the Army Benevolent Fund. The General kindly supplied the address of the artist's widow, as their daughter Pamela was Nanny to the O'Connor family!

Mrs Syer wrote as follows;

*"My husband earned his living as a commercial artist with the Association of Designers. I have a water colour painted while he was in the trenches in France. It is called the 'Stretcher Bearer', a British stretcher bearer, supporting a wounded German. This was to have been a full-length picture and was painted in a dug-out by candle light, but the candle fell across the lower half of the picture, so Percy cut it in half and sent the picture over to me in London. I took it to the Royal Academy and it was hung there in 1918. As an accomplished artist he drew and painted his fellow soldiers, including a vivid picture of the 'Football Charge', 1st July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He painted his commanding officer, Lt Col A P B Irwin DSO, who remembered him well, so did Pte L M Baldwin MM whose portrait is also recorded, both men are sadly no longer with us".*



After the war Syer continued to paint and exhibit, but unfortunately died of peritonitis in 1925 at the age of 35. Then by strange coincidence in 1995, Brigadier M J A Clarke MBE sold his house near Salisbury to a gunner, Brigadier M O'Connor, the son of the General. He told how the family Nanny had been Pamela Syer and that she had stayed with the family for 15 years. On her retirement she had given him the residue of her father's drawings. When Brigadier O'Connor found Brigadier Clarke was an East Surrey and connected with the Regimental Museum, he handed them over for safe keeping. The Museum now have traced some of the pictures and are in touch with "Nanny Syer" who is delighted that her father's work will be on display when Clandon re-opens.



The grandson and granddaughter of L M Baldwin MM visited the museum recently as the family have a watercolour of their grandfather painted by P E Syer. It was at first thought, that one of the watercolours illustrated above was of their grandfather but this is not so.

Readers may recall that the late Mr Baldwin MM took part in 'The Highway' programme and was interviewed by Harry Secombe CBE at Canterbury Cathedral. The photo shows L M Baldwin, Harry Secombe and one of the footballs used in the attack on July 1st 1916 by 8 Surreys.

DH

## Naval Connections

Mindful of our Regimental connections with the Royal Navy and the sea, members may be interested in the heritage attractions now available to visitors at Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard.

Still in commission and theoretically "active" is Nelson's flagship HMS *Victory*. Wooden walled, high masted and gun decks bristling with cannon she typifies the vessels in which our predecessors fought in Marine capacities in the days of sail. Close by are the Royal Naval Museum and the Dockyard Apprentices' Museum, while at Victory Gate is berthed HMS *Warrior*. Built in 1860, she was the Royal Navy's first ironclad warship and was capable of propulsion by either sail or steam. An economically minded Admiralty directed that the former means should be used in preference to the latter to save coal.

But *Warrior* was soon to gain Royal favour with a future Princess of Wales. In 1863 she escorted the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* bringing Princess Alexandra of Denmark to England for her marriage to the Prince of Wales the future King Edward VII. So impressive was *Warrior's* performance that the Royal Yacht's Captain signalled, and later verbally confirmed, "*Princess is much pleased*"! It was ordered that the message be engraved on the quarter deck steering wheel where it can be seen to this day.

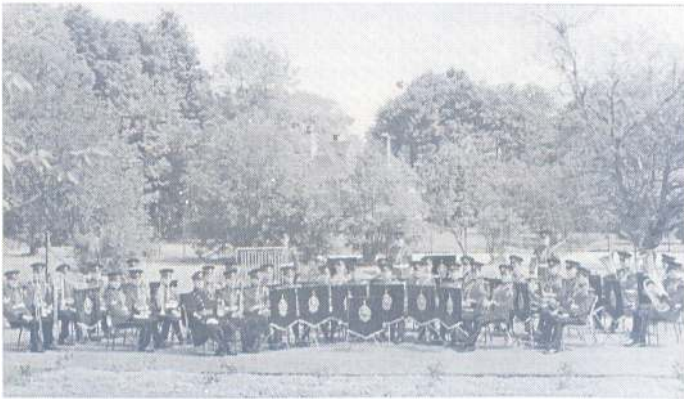
In the 1970s and 80s *Warrior* was rescued from derelict decay by enthusiasts and restored to her former glory at Hartlepool before being ceremoniously returned to Portsmouth.

RF



## A typical day for the Regimental Band

During the "Summer Season" the Band often appeared in performance at various seaside bandstand venues throughout the South. On one such occasion the Band were due to appear at Bournemouth Pinewood Bandstand. The concert was to start on Sunday morning for a week of daily regular performances. The only problem being that the Band and Drums were taking part in Carisbrook Castle Tattoo on the Isle of Wight which did not finish until after the last ferry crossing Saturday night! The answer was to be provided by The Royal Corps of Transport.



*The Band of 1 Queen's at Lingfield. Bandmaster Tom Crichton is shown with band. Tom Crichton later joined The Royal Oman Band and was Senior Director of music and retired as a Colonel.*

As soon as the Tattoo had finished the Band and Drums were transported to an unknown jetty to make the crossing back to the mainland by landing craft! Arriving at about 23.30hrs. and in almost total darkness the only light being the outside light of what turned out to be a recently closed pub! Way out in the distance could be seen the dim lights of the landing craft. Unknown at this time was the fact that The Royal Corps of Transport had been expecting to pick up its passengers much earlier! As everyone started to unload the mass of drum and band kit and head towards the distant dim lights it became apparent we were not alone. On the jetty, several local fishermen were attempting to fish! Needless to say they were very much disturbed as the full band and drums tripped over rods and other tackle as we tried to move the kit onto what turned out to be a very large landing craft.

After much chaos and disturbance to the locals everyone managed to get on board for the journey across the Solent. As the engine roared into action it became apparent all was not well. With much noise and splashing of water it was soon realised we had not been untied from the jetty!! Eventually with much commotion we were finally cut free. Refreshments were provided by the crew and it was now very obvious that quite a few of our hosts had spent considerable time in the pub that was disappearing from view.

It was a clear still warm summer's night as we headed across the Solent and it seemed a good opportunity to stand on the "bridge" to survey the scene ahead. I was joined by a crew member dressed in cook's clothing (I didn't remember seeing a "cookhouse" anywhere) who asked "if I had ever been on this part of the river before?". River, I thought and just as I was about to answer he continued "we aren't 'arf going fast!" Within moments a bright light appeared in front of the craft. suddenly the whole vessel lifted out of the water and came crashing back down like some giant whale. With crew dashing about like maniacs the craft came to a halt. Band and drum members in the "well" below me were putting on life-jackets. Everyone thought we had hit one of the many yachts that were now surrounding us. Searchlights were brought to bear on the murky water. After much deliberation that there were no survivors it was decided that we had in fact hit one of the large lamp topped

wooden post marker buoys! A light accompanied by air bubbles could be seen below the water! The engine roared back into life and we set off once again for the mainland that still seemed miles off.

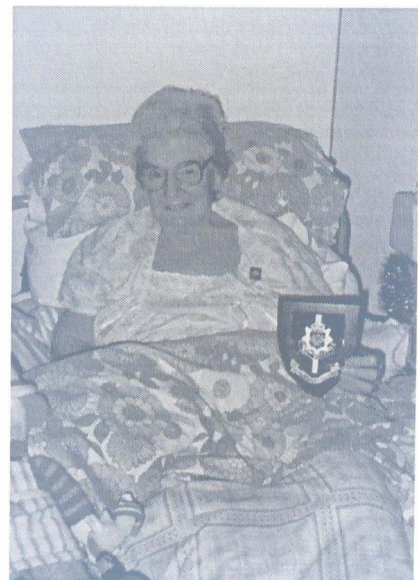
Having seen enough looking forward I walked round to the side of the "bridge" to join, (Sergeants - I think at the time) Mick James and Ivor Routledge only to be pushed with much haste back to where I had come from!! As the three of us arrived in a heap our craft crashed into yet another large wooden marker buoy. The steel side rails where Mick and Ivor had been leaning only seconds before were crushed as though they were matchsticks. As we regained our stance and looked back we could see the lamp that was once at the top of the marker buoy was now swinging by its wire like some giant ball pendulum just a few feet from the water.

It was with much relief when we finally entered the mainland port, however, we had not landed. Looming out of the darkness were several British Rail Car ferries which our "Captain" decided to play billiards with! First it was the ferry on the right that we bounced nicely off to get the other ferry calmly berthed on the left. We finally managed a full assault landing on to the beach where the whole band and drums were very relieved to see the main ramp lower for us to get off! It was by very much luck that the coaches sent to meet us arrived in the right place. The drivers had been driving up and down for several hours trying to find us!!

We were taken to a Territorial Army drill hall for the night where camp beds had been laid on for all. It was now quite early in the morning and unaware of our location the coach was unloaded for the night. Needless to say it was quite a noisy affair with cymbals and the like crashing to the ground. It was not until everyone was finally about to retire that our location was pointed out to us by the arrival of the local constabulary!! A very red faced WPC and her partner (who I think was male) arrived inside the hall to be greeted by several members of band and drums in various states of undress to advise us we were in the middle of a housing estate and had managed to wake most of the local residents!! With many apologies the rest of what was left of the night continued without problems. The next day the Corps of Drums returned to barracks and the Band started the bandstand performance on time at Bournemouth.

MG

o o o



*The Late Mrs Gladys Wyers widow of Tony Wyers, 1 Surreys proudly displaying the regimental plaque presented to her by the WOs and Sgts Association. The plaque gave her enormous pleasure.*



## Colonel Buck's 'O' Group

A few of the survivors of the 2nd Battalion who had been Prisoners of War of the Japanese, disembarked at Liverpool on 14th November 1945. Three days later the Colours of the original Regiment, the 70th, were brought home in the battleship HMS *Nelson*. New Colours were being prepared for the 2nd Battalion before they sailed for Shanghai on 1st September 1938.

The Commanding Officer of the re-constituted 2nd Battalion, Lt Col TA Buchanan decided that as the Battalion was on stand-by for overseas service, the opportunity should be taken for the new Colours to be presented. They had been warned for service against the Japanese but went to Palestine to support the Civil Power during the terrorist threat. The trooping and laying up of the old Colours took place on the 30th November, 1945 at West Chilington, Sussex. The new Colours were then consecrated by the Chaplain-General and presented by General Sir Richard Foster, Colonel of the Regiment representing His Majesty the King. These old Colours were laid up in the Regimental Museum at Kingston.

The new Colours saw little service. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Regiment amalgamated at Salonika, Greece on 12th July 1948. A ceremonial Trooping of the Colours ensued. In due course the 2nd Battalion Colours were also laid up in the Regimental Museum, alongside those of the 70th. These Colours can now be seen in the Regimental Museum, Clandon.

Over the years, Colonel Buchanan, has with all officers, observed the ten-year anniversaries. In 1995 the Colonel, having moved to St Leonards-on-Sea, where the Battalion was stationed before going overseas. The following officers responded to their CO's 'O' Group. Majors: L Brown CWJ Clark, JP Gray, W Large, W Madigan, FB Oram. Captains K Batherson and GE Ellis and Lt P Best. Apologies for absence were received from Major D Poulson in Australia, Lt Col BA Hannaford and Captain DG Gee were unfit for duty. A number of wives and friends of the Battalion made up the party.

It was a very happy Golden Jubilee and the health of the old Battalion and its Commanding Officer was drunk. The picture shows Colonel Buck and some of the members of his 'O' Group.



Any Questions? The O Group

L-R Maj A H Newton, Capt G E Ellis, Maj J R Gray, Maj W Large, Maj W J Madigan OBE, Col T A Buchanan DSO OBE MC ERD TD.

DH

## Famous Last Words

General Rowley Mans remembers, after the evacuation from France in 1940 11 Queen's officers were sent to 1 and 1/6th Surreys re-forming in the West Country. With my close friend John Stode (later killed in Italy) I went to 1/6th. We joined A Company (Charles Barham) in Henstridge in Somerset. We were billeted in a pub in the village owned by a former RSM of the SLI. Three officers lived in a furnished loft over the kitchen. Our third subaltern had acquired an automatic pistol. Against John and my advice he would insist that it was not loaded and pointed it at the sofa. There was a loud bang and a hole appeared in the sofa. The landlady had been singing in the kitchen below and the song ceased abruptly. 'You've killed the old dear' John

shouted and we rushed downstairs expecting the body on the floor. Hole in the ceiling but no one in sight. Ex RSM comes in 2/Lt explains 'I've shot your wife'. We intervene as RSM attempts to throttle 2/Lt. I was searching for blood when the good lady came in with the washing. 2/Lt permanently disarmed!

RSNM

## 1 Queen's Malaya 1954

Soon after C Company's arrival at South Johol, our reserve scout car driver a well known eccentric rang Coy HQ to say that he had had an accident en route to Bahau (A Company). He was asked "where are you phoning from"? Reply - "from the shop on the corner". Question - "where's the scout car"? Reply - "in the shop with me I'm still sitting in it".

RSNM

## Fish and Chips and Champagne

A fast food fanatic took away more than he bargained for when he turned up for his daily dose of fish and chips. Staff at Seafare laid on a lavish treat for pensioner Bill Roadnight who has been buying fish and chips at the Worplesdon Road shop everyday for the past fifteen years.



To celebrate his 90th birthday, they gave him a special cake, a bottle of champagne as well as a free dinner. Not only that, they made sure he went home in style, hiring a Rolls-Royce for the day. "He's a really sweet man. He knows us all by name and always bring us sweets and fruit," said area manager Blair Butler. "We wanted to give

him a birthday surprise." They certainly made his day. Pictured with him are: back row (left to right) assistant manager Andrew Cooper and manager Michael Hales and front Pauline Gumbrell and Kim Stafford.

Extract from *The Surrey Advertiser*.

## Retirement of Major J A Jessup RAEC

A large and noisy lunch was held on 30 November in the HQ 2nd Division Mess in York to mark the final retirement, after 49 years service for King, Queen and Country of John Jessup. Some 40 were present representing comrades from RAEC days and those currently serving in the Divisional Headquarters.

Those who served in 1 East Surreys in Greece and Somaliland in the 40's and in Aden and Hong Kong in the 60's in 1 Queen's Surreys will remember John only too well, he educated them! He was posted to 1 Queen's Surreys in Aden as a young subaltern of 30 in 1961, having just been commissioned. John's love of sport quickly led to his being a member and subsequently Captain of the Battalion Hockey Team which was amongst the best in Aden and Hong Kong.

Having retired at 55 John became an academic for a while at York University and then, armed with his qualifications found HQ NE District in York as an RO in the Education Branch, where he served until retirement. John was an equally loyal and active member of the headquarters as he was when serving. A deputy secretary of the ROA, a member of the main committee plus numerous secretaryships he was, and will remain, a busy man interested in sport, military activities and now taking an active part in the expansion of the Kohima museum in York. We wish him well.

RAJ

## Honours and Awards in the Armed Forces

The 'Honours and Awards' system was radically changed in 1993 to meet the political wish that awards should no longer be automatically given to people in certain appointments or directly reflect the rank and status of the recipient. For the military, the most provocative of all the changes, but certainly a change in keeping with the new approach, was probably the removal of the British Empire Medal (BEM) (see Note 1) from the system. In place of the BEM, members of the Armed Forces of all ranks from Lieutenant Commander/Major/Squadron Leader to Seaman/Private/Airman are eligible to be appointed Members of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The new system has been in place for a few years and so it would be appropriate to bring members of the Society up to date on the Honours, Decorations and Medals that are now available to members of the Armed Forces. The honours and awards in general use throughout the Armed Forces are now as follows:

### ORDERS OF CHIVALRY

**The Military Division of the Order of the Bath:** Knight or Dame Grand Cross (GCB): Knight or Dame Commander (KCB/DCB): Companion (CB)

**The Military Division of the Order of the British Empire:** Knight or Dame Grand Cross (GBE): Knight or Dame Commander (KBE/DBE): Commander (CBE): Officer (OBE): Member (MBE): The Distinguished Service Order: Companion (DSO):

### DECORATIONS

The Victoria Cross VC: The George Cross GC: The Conspicuous Gallantry Cross CGC: The Royal Red Cross (1st Class) RRC: The Distinguished Service Cross DSC: The Military Cross MC: The Distinguished Flying Cross DFC: The Air Force Cross AFC: The Royal Red Cross (2nd Class) ARRC:

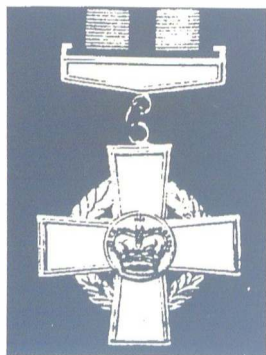
**MEDALS FOR GALLANTRY AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE** The George Medal GM: - The Queen's Gallantry Medal QGM:

### MEDALS

The General Service Medal and medals for specific campaigns: The Meritorious Service Medal: The Accumulated Campaign Service Medal Awards for long and efficient service in the Regular, Volunteer Reserve or Cadet Forces (Note 2).

All these honours and awards are restricted to members of the Armed Forces with the exception of the George Cross, the George Medal and the Queen's Gallantry Medal which are available to military and civilians alike.





Readers will immediately recognise that this list excludes many distinguished awards with which they will be familiar. The Armed Forces medals for gallantry which were restricted to other ranks (the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal, Distinguished Conduct Medal, Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Flying), Distinguished Service Medal, Military Medal and the Air Force Medal are no longer available. One of the most important changes is that all ranks are now eligible for the decorations (listed above under "decorations") in the new system. In addition a new, prestigious decoration (a so-called Level 2 award) has been instigated: the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC). This new decoration is shown in the photograph and ranks below the Victoria Cross and above the Distinguished Service Cross (for action at sea), the Military Cross (for action on land) and the Distinguished Flying Cross (for action in the air). The award of the first Conspicuous Gallantry Cross was made in May 1994 to Corporal Wayne Mills of the First Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment for his gallant and distinguished service as a Section Commander with his battalion in Bosnia.



Public commendation in the London Gazette by order of the Sovereign is outside the system of "Orders, Decorations and Medals" but is part of the state system of honours and awards. As a group, these commendations are referred to as Level 4 awards and include: Mention in Despatches (MiD), the Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB), the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air (QCBA) and the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS). The MiD and QCVS are only available for operations, whereas the QCB and QCBA may be awarded to military and civilians alike for non-operational gallantry. Again, readers will note the omission from this list of the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct and the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air: these have been restyled the Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB) and the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air (QCBA) respectively. The latter, with the Air Force Cross, is awarded solely for non-operational gallantry in the air. The new awards and emblems are illustrated below.

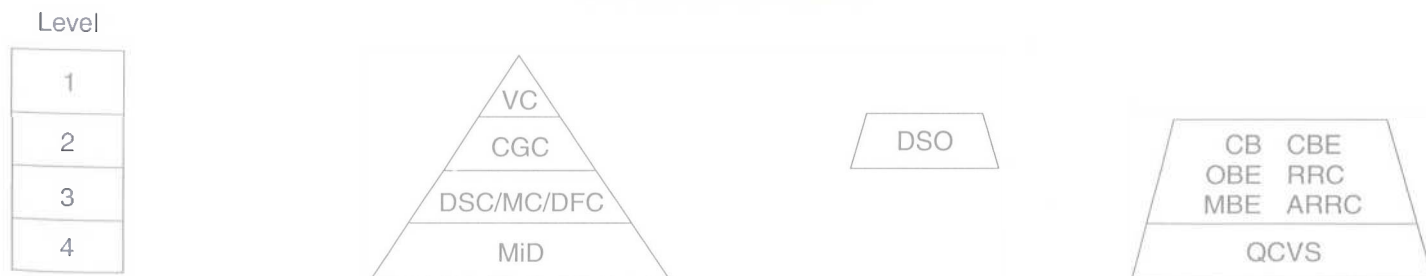
*The Conspicuous Gallantry Cross. The ribbon (blue - white - red - white - blue) incorporates the colours of the ribbons of the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal and the Distinguished Conduct Medal (both introduced in the 1850s) which the CGC replaces.*  
(Photograph - Royal Mint)

### Emblems Denoting Mentions and Commendations Announced on or after 26 April 1994

FOR GALLANTRY			FOR VALUABLE SERVICE
IN ACTION WITH THE ENEMY (ALL ENVIRONMENTS)	NOT IN ACTION WITH THE ENEMY or OUT OF THEATRE (EXCEPT FLYING)	NOT IN ACTION WITH THE ENEMY or OUT OF THEATRE (FLYING)	IN-THEATRE BUT NOT IN ACTION WITH THE ENEMY
MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES  A single oak leaf in SILVER	QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY  A spray of laurel leaves in SILVER	QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR BRAVERY IN THE AIR  A new emblem in SILVER	QUEEN'S COMMENDATION FOR VALUABLE SERVICE  A spray of oak leaves in SILVER
			



## Armed Forces Awards



## Civilian or Non Operational Gallantry Awards



The tiered structure of operational gallantry awards which, together with the tiered “civilian” awards for non-operational gallantry and the meritorious service awards, can be summarised and illustrated as follows.

It should be noted that there is an important distinction between the three general categories of awards: Orders of Chivalry; Decorations and Medals; and Commendations:

- a. The appointment to an Order of Chivalry is in itself the honour. The badge of the Order (for example the OBE) and the warrant by which the “grant of dignity” is made are simply outward signs of membership of the Order.
- b. The award of a decoration or medal is an honour but in this case the cross or the medal itself is the honour - and is also the only outward sign of that honour.
- c. A public Commendation in the London Gazette is an honour. The emblem and certificate are outward signs of having received the Commendation by order of the Sovereign.

In 1994 it was agreed that future announcements of awards to the Armed Forces for services in, or in certain cases in support of, operations around the world would be consolidated in the form of ‘Armed Forces Operational Honours Lists’. The first of these lists appeared in the London Gazette of 25 April 1994 and included awards in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Northern Ireland, the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. Subsequent lists are being published in May and November each year and are likely to include the following:

### a. Armed Forces operational awards

The Victoria Cross, Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Military Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross and Mention-in-Despatches (all for gallantry ‘in active operations against the enemy’).

The Distinguished Service Order (for conspicuous leadership and gallantry in active operations against the enemy).

### b. Armed Forces non-operational awards

The Air Force Cross (for gallantry while flying ‘not in active operations against the enemy’).

### c. Civilian gallantry awards

The George Cross, George Medal, Queen’s Gallantry Medal, Queen’s Commendation for Bravery and Queen’s Commendation for Bravery in the Air.

### d. Armed Forces awards other than for gallantry

Appointment in the Military Divisions of the Order of the Bath and The Order of the British Empire. The Royal Red Cross (1st and 2nd Class). The Queen’s Commendation for Valuable Service. (see Note 2)

In general the changes have been welcomed and the Armed Forces now have a full array of gallantry and meritorious service awards for both operational and non-operational settings.

This brief description of the new awards should help readers to follow the announcements which will be made annually in May and November. Members of the Armed Forces continue to be eligible for meritorious service awards in the New Year and Queen’s birthday lists.

Note 1) The BEM is still awarded in New Zealand and some smaller Commonwealth countries.

Note 2) Although referred to as “decorations”, the Royal Naval Reserve Decoration and the Territorial Decoration (TD) are normally included in this category.

*Acknowledgements: The Editor records with thanks permission to print this article to the Editor and Secretary of The Pennant, and the author, Lt Col R Bird.*

## The Old Contemptible Mutton Lancer.



6760 Private Albert Moren was born in London in March 1897. His parents owned a tailoring business at 144 High Holborn, which specialised in high class suits for both ladies and gentlemen. Albert worked in the business and quickly learnt about life in the immigrant workshops of the East End of London. He cycled around the narrow back streets taking outwork to the Jewish tailors

who quickly taught him the rudiments of Yiddish. He was to remain in the clothing and drapery trade all his life.

In August 1914 with the outbreak of war with Germany, he decided to volunteer for Army service. A quick walk down to the recruiting office in Whitehall, and Albert found himself an Infantry man in the 2nd Battalion of The Queens Royal (West Surrey) Regiment. The parade ground at Stoughton Barracks Guildford became his stamping ground in the real sense. Rifle practice at Ash Ranges near Aldershot would prove to be invaluable in the next three years.

In October 1914 he was shipped out to France with his battalion, and so became part of the Kaisers "Contemptible Little Army". Sadly due to the combined ravages of either the German guns or Old Father Time there are few of them left in 1996.

Albert's job was to act as company runner for B Company. This was a thankless task at the best of times, but with water filled shell holes, dead bodies of men and horses, and the usual debris of war, it was a hazardous occupation particularly at night.

His first Christmas in 1914 was memorable for many reasons, as he recalled in the 1981 BBC documentary TV programme "Peace in No Mans Land". Initially he was at Bois Grenier between Armentieres and Lille, but later moved to the small village of La Chapelle d'Armentieres. The opposing front lines were often only a few yards apart. As Albert remarked in the programme "We were so close that we were able to throw across tins of corned beef, Ticklers jam, or biscuits to the Germans. It was not done regularly, just an occasional sort of thing. They used to shout across "Englander Englander", and we would shout back "Good old Jerry". The famous brief Christmas truce is believed by Albert to have started because there were dead of both sides lying out in no mans land and arrangements were made to retrieve and bury the bodies. His memory of Christmas Eve is clear and vivid. "It was a beautiful moonlight night with frost on the ground and white everywhere". Around 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening we saw some lights in the trenches opposite. Then the voices of the Germans could be heard singing Silent Night .... Stille Nacht. I shall never forget it, as it was one of the highlights of my life. I thought what a beautiful tune.

On Christmas Day the opposing troops met in between the trenches, and exchanged gifts. Albert chatted to an ex waiter from De Kuysers Hotel in Blackfriars who spoke good English, and was one of many Germans from England who made their way back home before the War started. He was a Saxon from the 55th Regiment. War Office diaries show that 71 bodies were recovered many of whom were from the Royal Warwicks.

Albert moved with the fighting all over Flanders, although he did spend some time at General Rawlinsons 4th Army Corps H.Q. at Aire sur la Lyse. Among the locations mentioned are Festubert, Mailly Mailly, Beaumont Hamel, Achiet le Petiet, Bucquoy, Mametz, Delville Wood, as well as the major towns such as Arras, Lille, and Albert where the famous statue hung precariously at the top of the church. Alberts luck finally ran

out in the early hours of the 2nd April 1917. At 5.15a.m. the 2nd Battalion commenced an attack on the factory road in the large village of Croisilles situated 8 miles south east of Arras. B Companys officers had all become casualties soon after zero hour, and at the same time Albert was hit by shell splinters which smashed his jaw and teeth, as well as taking off the top of his right thumb. His only memory was seeing his gas mask case saturated in blood before losing consciousness. He was taken to a Canadian field hospital at Etaples (known to Tommies as Eat Apples), before being shipped back to the U.K. Albert believed his ability to chew and eat soft foods was due to the skill of an American dental surgeon who had volunteered to work in Allied hospitals before his country had entered the war. Whilst in hospital the cheering of staff and nurses on the 6th April heralded the American declaration of war, following the sinking of many boats with U.S. civilian passengers by German submarines.

An idyllic convalescence for many months at Fairburn House, Muir of Ord in Scotland, the home of Major John Stirling, was not without worrying relapses in health, with his mother being called from London. However good Scottish home cooking at the hands of house-keeper Mrs Fraser, together with fresh country air, and walks along the River Connon eventually had a beneficial effect. Captain Roderick Stirling the present Lord Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty is the son of the late John Stirling. Upon release from convalescence Albert was downgraded to the lowest medical category of C3, and spent the closing months of the war in the newly formed Royal Flying Corps at Blandford Forum.

70 years later in 1987 Albert was taken back on a well planned visit to the village of Croisilles. He saw the graves of the young officers and men who were killed on the day he was wounded. The neat rows of white headstones with the famous Regimental Emblem lying in the British Cemetery at Croisilles spoke volumes of the sacrifices made by the men of the 2nd Queens. It was an emotional moment after such a lapse of time. Later he visited a much larger Queen's Cemetery at Bucquoy.

War Office diaries revealed that on that day long ago in April 1917, the battalion captured their objective and small parties of the enemy escaped to the north west of the village. The battalion was relieved by the 1st Battalion of The Royal Welch Fusiliers in the evening, and they retired behind the lines to orchard country near the village of Ervillers. What a credit to the efficiency of War Office records and the Public Record Office at Kew that Albert was able to find out at long last just what had transpired all those moons ago in the muddy fields of France.

In the post war years he saw success as a drapery store manager and eventual owner in Fleet, Gloucester and West Bromwich. He enjoyed a very happy family life with his wife and five children. In the Second World war he had one son who was a senior N.C.O. in the Service Corps at Caen and Falaise and another son in the R.A.F in the Middle East. He is particularly proud of a grandson who is a Lieutenant Colonel serving in the present day Army.

Albert's health began to fail as he approached his 99th birthday. He regularly attended Remembrance Day services including those at Gloucester Cathedral and also Guildford. He retained a rather tarnished Old Comrades Association lapel badge, and also an unused tin of cigarettes and tobacco given to the troops by Princess Mary as a personal gift during Christmas 1914.

In his closing days of a busy life, he was still able to laugh and enjoy recollecting the good humour and comradeship of his years in the trenches during "the war to end all wars".

*Sadly, Private Albert Moren died shortly before his 99th birthday.*

PAM



## Pilgrimage to Minturno



Jim and Elsie Shaw were only married for two years when he went to serve with The Queen's Royal Regiment. She never saw him again. Wounded in action, he died on 6 February 1944 and is buried at Minturno War Cemetery in Italy. Elsie knew that something very final had happened to Jim even before the Army telegram arrived because his regular letters suddenly stopped. Elsie became a War Widow and her

only reminders of her "kind and loving" Jim were her memories, his letters and photographs.

But all that changed in March 1995 when the Army Pay Book of Private 14397737 James Shaw was discovered in Moscow's War Archives by Daily Express reporter, Will Stewart. In the Pay Book he found a photograph of Elsie as a young woman and a final poem to her which Jim had written on the back page. A poem which has become so famous that it featured on BBC TV's "Bookworm" programme on Remembrance Sunday.

*It's sweet to remember a wife so dear  
Though absent from me she's ever so near.  
Unseen by the world she walks by my side,  
and whispers 'Dear loved one death cannot divide.'*

*In Loving Memory of a Dear Wife.*

The Russians forbade Stewart to take the Pay Book away with him but the Daily Express printed the poignant verse with Elsie's photograph and appealed for Private Shaw's widow to come forward. Spotting the story, Elsie suddenly found herself the centre of attention on local TV and radio stations.

With the help of the Queen's Surreys Association, SSAFA organised the reinstatement of Elsie's War Widow's Pension and arranged for her to join a Royal British Legion War Pilgrimage to Minturno. The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association met the additional costs of her journey and has also provided Elsie with a new television set.



All Elsie had been told was that Jim was buried in Row F of Plot 3 in the Italian Cemetery. Finally, on 29 October 1995 just a few days before Remembrance Day, accompanied by a Royal British Legion guide, she saw her husband's last resting place for the first time in over 50 years.

Elsie was one of four widows on the pilgrimage to Minturno. "The other three ladies had husbands who were in different Regiments. It was very touching and

*I was left alone by the graveside to make my own private farewell to Jim. The exact inscription I requested at the time of Jim's burial was written on his headstone. On one side of Jim is buried an "Unknown Soldier" and on the other side is another soldier from The Queen's Royal Regiment. So, at least he's got one of his comrades in arms resting next to him.*

*All the widows were given a poppy spray to place at the graveside. I was so impressed with the beauty and tranquility of the graveyard. There were no other people there except for our little party and the gardener, and even he seemed to vanish after we arrived. It was so quiet in Minturno Cemetery that I don't remember the sound of a bird, in fact the silence was almost eerie. I think Jim would have felt at ease with the Italian countryside surrounding Minturno. It's not unlike the country around our village, Astwood Bank, and Jim loved his home and his life with me in Worcestershire.*

*We had a Service of Remembrance for the Fallen in the huge Cemetery at Monte Cassino. As the bugle sounded over the hundreds and hundreds of rows of graves of such brave young men, I could not help but think of the last line of a poem by Wilfred Owen when he talked about the 'bugles calling from sad shires'. I thought about 51 years without the best husband anyone could have had and, yes, I felt so very sad. But I'm so glad I saw his final resting place, it was so calm and peaceful there and I'm sure Jim did not die in vain. After all this time I never thought I would*

*be in a position to make my final farewells, and it seems so strange that all this has happened in the 50th year of the end of the War."*

Elsie has also visited Naples, Rome and Pompeii, met an Italian Count and saw another member of the pilgrimage awarded with a medal for being a survivor of the Battle of Monte Cassino. She thanks SSAFA, the Royal British Legion and particularly The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association for making the trip possible.



*In loving memory of my dear husband never will the one I love from my memory fade away  
Your loving Wife Elsie*

□□□

## Guildford Cathedral



## National Service a Corporal's story

Another interesting diary has been received by the editor - that of 22840453 Cpl Edwards R. No. 2 Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Joining the Regiment at Stoughton Barracks on 20th January 1953 at the age of 17 years 6 months, Edwards served with the Battalion in Germany and England before sailing for Malaya on the MV *Georgic* in January 1954 for what was to be a tour of anti-terrorist duties.

The outward voyage was obviously of interest to the young soldier who took several photographs with a camera he had thoughtfully purchased before leaving home. Meticulously minded, he recorded the daily and total mirages travelled by the ship, the figure (with some variations) usually being about 300-400 miles per day. He also employed his time profitably by enrolling in an Education Course. When passing through the Suez Canal the outward bound soldiers received the usual chorus of "Get your knees brown" from the more seasoned veterans on the banks. At Aden, where the locals were unfriendly and "getting a bit restless", the Battalion put on a show of force by undertaking a one hour route march with "bands playing, flags flying and bayonets fixed". More important to Edwards was the fact that he passed his education oral examination a day later. Further written examinations in the subjects of maths, general knowledge and English followed.

Dosage of anti-malarial Paludrin tablets heralded the steadily increasing approach to Malaya and on 11th February the ship docked at Singapore where the troops were welcomed by the Singapore Police Pipe Band. Disembarking, they arrived at Selarang Barracks in the evening and Edwards describes it as a "Very nice place". On the following day jungle kit, packs, matchettes and ground sheets were issued.

Enjoying the sights of Singapore over the next few days, Edwards sampled the delights of "Tiger" beer and also purchased some gifts to be sent to his people at home. A move to Kota Tinggi on 20th February, in very hot weather, was followed by intensive jungle training. On the 25th February the Royal West Kents, en route for home, handed over their dogs to the Battalion but Edwards does not seem to have been very impressed by these four footed friends.

In a mixture of excitement and nerves preparations were made for the first jungle patrol which took place on 6th March and lasted for two days without hostile event. But there was obviously activity within the area as it was reported that a Ghurka patrol had ambushed 16 Communist Terrorists and killed 6 including 3 District Committee members.

Fifty rounds of Battalion ammunition which had been lost on the way out to a patrol were thankfully found and recovered, doubtless preventing many awkward questions being asked. Mindful of home, Edwards records writing frequently when in camp. Something of a cinematograph fan, he mentions several films which he saw during off-duty breaks.

Transfer from Selarang to Tampin was effected by way of a hazardous road journey of 200 miles on 19th March. In continuous heavy rain there were several vehicular breakdowns and accidents. One saving grace was that local Malay troops and people were friendly and helpful and obviously appreciative of British presence.

In an impromptu shooting match Edwards won the competition for hitting most tin cans off a wall. Ironically the prize was 25 cigarettes-he was a non-smoker. Later he gave up his rifle on volunteering to carry the Bren gun - an action which brought derogatory comments from his colleagues who presumably followed the ancient service policy of "never volunteering for anything".

The beginning of April saw strict food control and curfew operations being carried out in co-operation with Ghurkas and Military and Malay Police. This later led to some socialising with the police when drinks were had at the local police station. On a Saturday morning in mid-April Edwards, unusually, blotted his copy-book in a serious manner. Seeing a strange rifle lying on his bed he picked it up and "took aim" on two Chinese ladies walking through the camp. Then, stupidly releasing the safety catch, he pointed the weapon into the air and squeezed the trigger. He "nearly died of fright when it actually fired a shot which had been left up the spout". The ensuing panic was followed by the speedy arrival of CSM Tommy Atkins, an even speedier placement on a charge and an instruction to appear on Company Orders the following morning. The loaded rifle had been negligently left by another soldier returning from a patrol. Edwards dismay at being placed on a charge was tempered by relief in the fact that he had not injured innocent passers-by. Appearing on Company Orders Edwards was remanded to Regimental Orders and then further remanded for District Court Martial. The soldier who had left the loaded rifle was stopped 28 days pay but Edwards was understandably aggrieved by the fact that the equally negligent NCO in charge of the patrol was not punished.

The remainder of the month was a mixture of guard duties and patrols and the young soldiers were beginning to feel somewhat frustrated by the lack of action and excitement, some shots fired at a truck taking soldiers on leave to Tampin are dismissively described as "not a real ambush". Guard duties were cheered up and lightened by the addition of a Malayan policewoman at the gates during the day. Edwards felt further cheered when his shooting misdemeanour was put back to Regimental Orders instead of District Court Martial and the punishment was only 14 days stoppage of pay which was less severe than he had expected.

Following a patrol with an Iban tracker from the Sarawak Rangers an attempt was made to improve rations by a night-time sortie to "obtain" a pig from among the Chinese locals. The result of the ensuing noisy capture and slaughter proceedings was that welcome fresh pork appeared on the menu. Activity heightened on 10th May when B and D Companies between them killed one bandit and wounded and captured two others - news which obviously pleased Edwards who was undoubtedly hoping for similar successes in his own company.



Party of Iban trackers from The Sarawak Rangers.

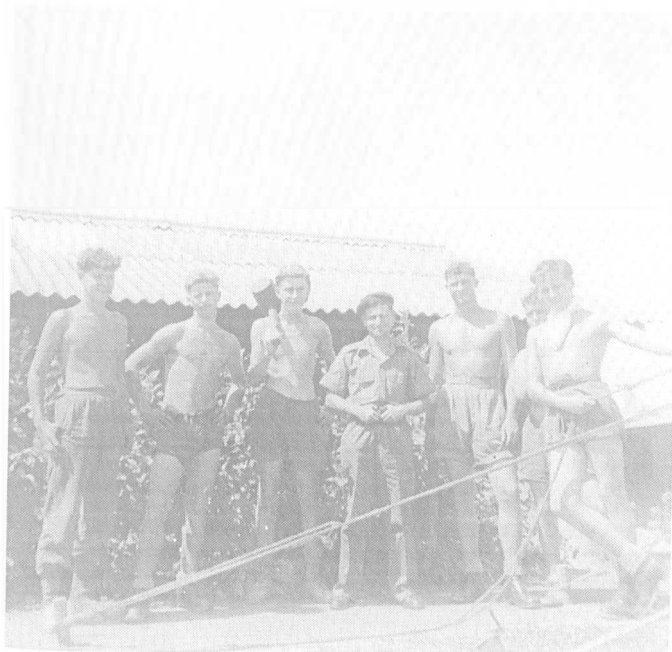
Letters from home were arriving by now, some soldiers regrettably receiving "Dear John" types which heralded the end of several love affairs.

The 31st May prompted the entry in Edward's diary of "one month less to do". Once more frustrated by another lapse in activity he was also feeling unwell. The following day the "Glorious 1st of June" was something of an anti-climax with



"no free beer or drinks and on short rations". The 2nd June was not much better as it was the Malay New Year (Ramadan) which meant the local police were on holiday so the troops had to perform extra guard duties.

A welcome visitor was the Battalion Chaplain, Captain Peter Mallett, who Edwards describes as *"a very good bloke"*. Seemingly not worried about any non-combatant status, the reverend gentleman went around armed with a Sterling sub-machine gun. Another arrival was the new Platoon Officer, Second Lieutenant Townsend, described as *"seems OK but a bit keen"*.



Working party plus the Padre. Cpl 'Punchy' Barnard is also in the picture.

For some days Edwards complains of feeling seriously unwell. Recovery was prompted, however, by the promise of action against terrorists when a big operation was planned involving the RAF, Cavalry Armoured Units, Queen's and Ghurkas. The plan was for the RAF to bomb the suspect area and then, while armoured cars blocked the roads, Ghurkas would make a sweep destined to drive terrorists towards the waiting Queen's. Regretfully, the ambush was not as successful as hoped for although Ghurkas killed one bandit. The whole operation was marred by heavy rain. Some days later, still in heavy rain, a move was made to a new camp at Kalang Selanger - a permanent site which met with Edward's approval. Some more patrols followed with no result other than Edwards *"wacked (his) leg - very painful"*. So ended June.

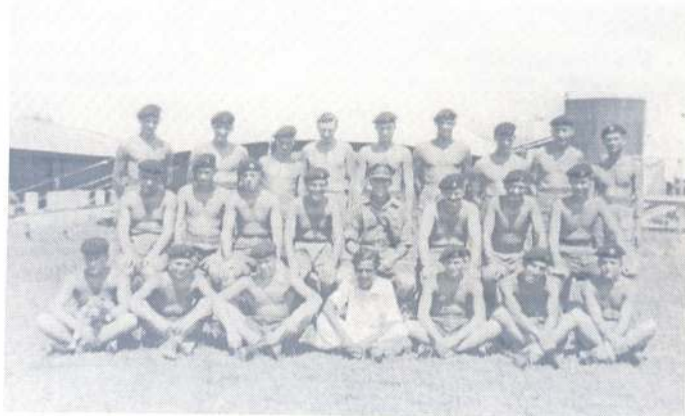
July saw increased patrol activity which Edwards, again feeling unwell at times, found exhausting as did his colleagues. Two men passed out. One more fortunate individual named Burrows left for demobilisation. By mid-July information was filtering through about bandit activity so an ambush was laid on but without result as far as Edward's Company was concerned. Shots which were heard nearby heralded 2 kills by C Company. The 20th July was Edward's 19th birthday on which he comments that he was again unwell and, significantly, *"18 months to do"*.

But tragedy was in the air. On 24th July Lieutenant Townsend, was fatally wounded while on patrol with another Company. Edwards, obviously genuinely saddened by the loss of a good officer, was a member of the funeral party which bore Townsend to his grave and was disgusted by the disrespectful attitude of a white civilian who rushed past the coffin, completely ignoring it.

Another member, Pte Eaves, was shot on 27th July, but not seriously, and was evacuated by helicopter. On the following

day Edwards reported sick and was hospitalised at Kinrara where he was diagnosed as suffering from malaria. By the 5th August his condition was obviously improving as he was asked to assist in keeping observations on a seriously wounded Gunner who had been run over by a truck. On the 19th August he left hospital and after a convalescing period at Tana Rata he returned to his Unit at the end of the month to find that a new officer and sergeant had arrived.

The new officer did not create a good impression with Edwards. Understandably inexperienced, he caused confused movements on his first patrol through rubber plantations and Edwards and another man became separated and lost. Endeavouring to make their way back to base before dark they realised they were in possible danger from both hostile and *"friendly"* fire. Thankfully they arrived safely.



2 Pl. A Coy June 1955

Back row: ?, ?, Ron Bland, ACC Coy cook, ?, Ron Brett, ?, Young, Mickie Hills. Middle row: ?, ?, Cpl George 'Punchy' Barnard, Cpl Toothy Smith, 2nd Lt Peerless, Sgt Adams, Cpl Bob Edwards (me), ?. Front row: Johnnie Guy with dog, ?, ?, A Coy Char Wallah, ?, Micheal Michelidid, ?.

Pressure on the bandit forces was beginning to show. Two of them surrendered and later led a patrol into the rubber plantations in search of Communist Terrorist camps, some of which, in an abandoned state, were found. In a more relaxed moment Edwards and colleagues went swimming in the Muar at the village of Bukit Nanki. On further patrol some of nature's hazards in the form of not seen, red ants and razor edged vegetation were endured but were relieved once again by a swim in the Muar at Kuantung Ulu. Here it was reported that No.1 platoon had had a two bandit kill, an event which roused the Iban scout to such a pitch of excitement that, having killed one bandit, he wished to take his head off with his parang.

More patrols occurred throughout the month but without significant result. Nature was still an enemy and any cuts, scratches or bites were likely to turn septic because of the filthy terrain in which operations were being carried out, a situation made worse by shortage of fresh water.

One man cut his knee very badly with his machete and had to be evacuated (by undescribed means) while another who collapsed had to be carried out on an improvised stretcher by comrades.

Back at camp the departure of RSM Joe Simmons was noted with regret. Edwards comments, *"Good bloke old Joe Simmons, everybody likes him despite being the RSM"*.

From 1st to 12th October Edwards enjoyed a spell of well earned leave at the Malay Army Depot. Here he met a Regimental Policeman of previous acquaintance who, in stark contrast to Joe Simmons, is described as an *"obnoxious bastard"*. However, RP's or not, Edwards enjoyed his leave spell. Time was spent in such leisure activities as swimming, cinema going, occasional drinking and the companionship of a local Chinese lady named *"Big Rosie"* who stated her intention of hiding in his kit bag

when he returned to England. On returning to his Unit, Edwards found that a mortar platoon was in action in the area. Their accuracy was not of the best quality as two of Edward's colleagues were blown up by "friendly" bombs though thankfully not hurt. Meanwhile the mortar men continued their run of disasters by piling up a jeep and injuring two lads. Their departure from the area occasioned no comments of regret. More patrols brought no results although tracks of terrorists were found. On 2nd November a patrol missed some bandits by about ten minutes - a source of deep disappointment.

The 11th November was a day of importance for Edwards as he was interviewed for promotion to Lance Corporal and, at drill, had his first experience of giving orders. Disaster struck in an adjoining operational area on 15th November when a Fijian Regiment patrol was ambushed and had five men killed and six seriously wounded. Counter operations brought no results.

On 28th November Edwards was posted to Battalion HQ, Tampin for an NCO's training course. A new chapter in his Army life was about to begin.

To be continued.....

RE and RF

# **Tangier Platoon, Stoughton Barracks, October 1954 Passing Out Parade Group. Intake 54/16**



*Back Row L-R: Rod Coveny-Ree Hill-Jack Marsh-Mike (Jock) Cook  
Ron Bland-? Bunyon.*

*Middle Row: CSM Davics-Cpl Dave Brownjohn  
I/Cpl Tyler-Terry Gilbert-Jack Elliot-Ron Harper-Doug Cannon  
Joe Brett-Ted Bozzette-Charlie Helps-Cpl Chuck-Sgt Butcher.*

*Front Row: Alan (Curly) Bennett- Dennis Hayes-? Fowler-  
Capt Durrant-John Haas-Jack (Jock) McHardy-Charlie Hardingham.*

Ron Harper sent in the photo above, his address is 117 New Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3EG.

I have enclosed a photograph in the hope that it may be of some interest to your readers. Most of us were posted to the 1st Bn in Malaya with the exception of the two Jocks who were ex Aberdeen University students who, I believe went into the Pay Corps. Jack Marsh signed on and stayed at Stoughton as a driver. Ron Bland had returned to the Army and had to retrain for a short time. Alan Bennett, John Haas, Charlie Hardingham and myself joined the Signals under the guidance of Lt M E Girling, Sgt George Toomey and Sgt Les Wilson. Doug Cannon was our only casualty. He became a Dog Handler and was shot in the leg and chest by his own patrol column near the end of our time. Should any of the lads read this I would love to hear from them again. Thanks to everyone at RHQ for the work you all do for our benefit.

## **Museum Notes**

We have completed what we set out to do some three years ago and that was to computerise our records and make an audit of our artefacts. The comprehensive indexes are proving to be more useful and there seems to be no end to the permutation and combination of them that Mrs James can extract from the system.

Through the good offices of Major John Tamplin we have now taken over from the Cumin Museum the artefacts of the 24th London Regiment. We have yet to examine them in detail but selected items will go on display in the Museum in due course. Medal groups of Sgt L Wood (Surreys) and L/Cpl J Shea (Queens) together with those of Pte J Lewis (Queens) have also been received into the Museum.

A note appears elsewhere about the availability of "The Final Years" which will be of particular interest to former members of The East Surrey Regiment and to anyone who has an interest in military history.

Visitors to the Museum will I hope, enjoy the revised contents of Cases 26, 27 and 28, together with the display of Cpl Sayer's drawings in Room 2 arranged by Mrs Hill plus the artistic display by Mrs James of the Pte Green drawings on the board near the emergency exit in Room 3. Rare pouch belt plates and some cap badges have also been added to the Collection. It has been a hectic winter closure period and we are grateful as always to our band of willing helpers who press, clean or polish every artefact that requires such attention.

In response to many enquiries we hope soon to stock the cap badges and collar badges of both our former regiments. We will include details on the Museum Shop order form.

To avoid disappointment may I remind you that Saturday opening times are now from 1200 to 1600 hours. There are weddings on most Saturdays and time is required to clear Clandon House of all visitors so that preparations for the wedding ceremony can take place.

We hope to mount a display of regimental memorabilia derived from service in Hong Kong and China to mark the reversion of Hong Kong to China in July 1997. If anyone has any artefacts, letters or documents that they would be prepared to lend or allow us to copy would they please contact Mrs James, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum Clandon Park, Guildford GU4 7RQ or telephone 01483 223419.

I was very sorry to learn recently of the death in California at the age of 86 years of Robert O Symon. Robert was a distinguished fighter pilot in WW2 and was awarded the DFC. He was the last surviving grandson of General Sir Edward Hamilton, Colonel of The Queen's Royal Regiment from 1914 to 1920.

Quite by chance I came across a letter from Robert in the Museum some three or more years ago. No one could decipher the signature and we only had an address so I wrote a "Dear Occupant" type of letter saying that I was sorry that I could not decipher the signature. A prompt reply came with the opening sentence "...and I cannot read your writing either."!

We had a frequent exchange of letters over the years. Through him the Museum acquired the General's diaries written by him from the age of 14 years to not long before he died at the age of 90 years in 1944, all his letters to his father written from India and South Africa, personal papers and so much else, with more to come. General Hamilton took part in both the Mohmand and Tirah campaigns in 1897-8, was a staff officer to General Kitchener and commanded 2 Queens in the South African War 1899-1902.

Do come and visit the Museum there is ample parking space and a good restaurant plus a new addition of "Tom Tit's Stable" serving lighter food adjoining the Museum,

PAWGD



## From Shorncliffe to Clandon

In view of our Regimental connections with the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines, many of our members will no doubt have been saddened by the decision to close down the Royal Marines School of Music at Deal and transfer it to Portsmouth. I share their feelings.

In the 1950s and 60s I was an Instructor at the Home Office Police Training Centre at Sandgate, Kent where the Royal Marines Band from Deal regularly provided the music for our monthly passing-out parades. In honour of such occasions one of their Bandmasters, Captain Neville, composed a special and individual march for us entitled "The Blue Lamp". But good as it was this wasn't the only tune to appear on the musical agenda.

In 1965, due to overflow accommodation problems at the main Centre, two classes with their Instructors, of whom I was one, were quartered at Shorncliffe Army Camp - a location no doubt familiar to many readers. The band for the passing-out parade on this occasion was that of The South Staffordshire Regiment. Drill and music arrangements were in the hands of a fellow Instructor, Sergeant Owen Allard. A pre-war Grenadier Guardsman, he had been commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment during the war. The Inspecting Officer, a serving soldier whose name unfortunately escapes me, was also known to have a Queen's background. So by choice of the former and in honour of the latter and our military hosts, we marched past to "Braganza", thus setting my footsteps on a long road which was eventually to lead me to the Curatorship of the Regimental Museum at Clandon.

I gratefully acknowledge that they pointed me in the right direction.



*Passing out Parade, Sandgate 1953, author - fourth from left, front row*

RF

## Neville Jackson

During a recent visit to Australia I was able to have a long telephone conversation with Neville Jackson. Because we were Tasmania bound we unfortunately were unable to go to Queensland and see Neville and Eileen in person. Neville is thoroughly enjoying retirement on their farm near Gympie. The rains of December brought hailstones as big as golf balls which battered their fruit crop - no peaches, mangoes, grapes or apples after 10 minutes devastation. However, the same rains have helped to establish his forestry plantations and they are growing well.

Eileen sounded in very good form They both look forward to receiving the Newsletter and Neville sent his warmest regards to all who know him.

PAWGD

## Rossano Revisited

At the end of April 1995 and after fifty years the name of Gordon Lett, a former East Surrey Regiment officer who fought with distinction with partisans in Italy, again echoed over the hills around Rossano north of La Spezia.

The British-Italian Society had, a few years after the war, entertained in London several of the partisans who had fought with Gordon Lett and his own International Partisan Battalion with its distinctive Robin Hood green scarf. Many of the Society's members will have copies of, or will have read, Rossano in which Gordon Lett recounts the hardships, the failures and the successes of his partisans and of the contadini on whose courage and brave generosity they depended. Three members of the British-Italian Society were privileged to be present at the 50th Anniversary Commemorations and to meet many whose names-or noms de guerre appear so frequently in the book. They were Christopher Woods, whose book S.O.E. in Italy is about to be published, and who knows so much about the background; Keith Hill, whose initiative and energies ensured that the monument originally set up by Gordon Lett to his partisans, was refurbished and a new plaque added in memory of Gordon Lett paid for by the Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Trust; and Keith Killby, who was also representing the Monte San Martino Trust and the S.A.S. Association for SAS parachutists which had reinforced Lett's partisans.

At the opening ceremony in Pontremoli various speakers paid eloquent tributes to Gordon Lett, but most welcome of all was Brian Lett, Gordon's son, who expressed his pleasure at meeting so many who had played such a vital part in his father's life. He then unveiled a bust of his father which will stand beside the plaque in the Municipio of Pontremoli placed there when Gordon Lett had been made an Honorary Citizen and in memory not only of his partisan years but also of his Governorship of the area when the Allies passed through.

After the usual excellent lunch all moved up into the hills for the re-dedication of the Monument which overlooks the hills and valleys in which the International Battalion operated and which had, in summer and winter, given them shelter. There were military and diplomatic representatives from Canada, South Africa, Poland and the U.S.A. besides Brigadier Thoyts, the British Defence Attache, supported by Major Mike Fallon, on exchange duty with the Italian Army, and 20 Gurkha soldiers whose drums and bagpipes reverberated around the hills and valleys where so many had died and where the constant attacks by the partisans and a troop of the SAS, parachuted in as reinforcements, had not only harassed the Germans and their supplies but had drawn forces away from the front line.

Vivid accounts of past partisan activities were recalled and related. Homage was suitably paid to the young men who had given their lives to destroy Nazism and Facism. The ceremonies ended with dignity leaving all convinced that Gordon Lett will always remain a part of history and legend in the hills that surround Rossano. While the Monte San Martino Trust can loan copies of Rossano it is most anxious to obtain copies to give to some of the characters, or their descendants, mentioned in it.

May we appeal to anyone owning a copy?

KWH & RF

# Regimental Deaths

**Alcock** - On 24th October 1995, Corporal Harold (Jock) Alcock, aged 89 years, The Queens Royal Regiment. Corporal Alcock served with the Queen's in Tiensin, China, India and at the Depot.

**Attwater** - On 27th January 1996, Private Albert John Attwater, aged 81 years, 1/6th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. His daughter writes:-

He trained at Lyme Regis and Scotland before embarking to France with the BEF. At the time of France's collapse, he was wounded in Belgium and travelled by train back to France (a journey taking eight days and left Calais by the last boat to leave which was shelled). He was admitted to Staines Emergency Hospital and whilst he was there visited by Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother). He took part in the North Africa and Italian Campaign (Salerno, Monte Cassino, Rome and the final 'push' to Florence.) In early 1945, he travelled to Greece.

My Father was very proud to have been a member of the East Surrey's and often spoke of his war-time memories and of the comradeship that the Regiment gave him. I will always be glad that he returned to Rome and Monte Cassino in the late 1980's together with attending the Review by Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales at Howe Barracks in June 1993.

**Baker** - In January 1996, Private A C E Baker, aged 78 years, 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Baker served in the Pioneers of the battalion. A member of 5 OMA.

**Broom** - On 21st January 1996, Regimental Sergeant Major Albert Victor (Brusher) Broom, The East Surrey Regiment. Broom retired on pension and then served with 1/6th Surreys as a Territorial for fifteen years.



**Browning** - On 29th November 1995, Lance Corporal Charles James Browning, aged 75 years, 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. "Jim" Browning served with 'C' Company in Shanghai, Tientsin and Peking. He was also a member of the British Battalion in Malaya and Singapore, and eventually a Prisoner of War of the Japanese for 3½ years.

**Chitty** - On 26th October 1995, Corporal Robert Chitty, The East Surrey Regiment. He served in the 1/6th Battalion in 1940 and in the Intelligence Section of the 1st Battalion from 1940-1945.

**Davis** - On 21st February 1996, Victor Davis, The East Surrey Regiment.

**De'Antiquis** - On 10th October 1995, Private Don De'Antiquis, aged 77 years, 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a member of the first militia men called forward in 1939. Served throughout the war as a fitter in the MT Platoon. A member of 5 OMA.

**Fake** - On 10th July 1995, Lance Corporal Harry Fake, aged 68 years, 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served in the Far East with the battalion from 1946 - 1948.

**Harcup** - On 10th March 1996, Regimental Sergeant Major Frederick George Harcup, aged 84 years, The Queens Royal Regiment.

**Hawkins** - On 25th December 1995, Private Charles Alexander Hawkins, aged 79 years, 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. Hawkins enlisted in 1939 and was a POW of the Japanese. He died in The Royal Star and Garter Home, Richmond.

**Lammas** - On 25th January 1996, Private Robert (Bob) Lammas 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

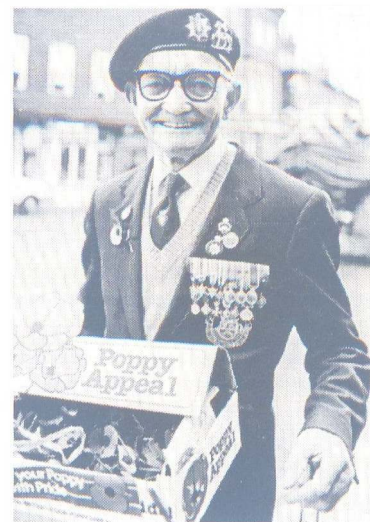
**Lucas** - On 4th January 1996, Lance Corporal Eric James Lucas, aged 75 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served with the 1/6th Battalion in the North African and Italian Campaigns.

**Moren** - On 6th February 1996, Private Albert Moren, aged 98 years, (a month from his 99th birthday) The Queen's Royal Regiment (see article on page 46).

**Peet** - On 6th March 1996, Lieutenant Colonel S William (Bill) Peet, MC TD., The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Pipe** - In October 1995, Sergeant Frederick Pipe, aged 80 years, 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Fred was a Territorial and was with the 1/5th in Belgium in 1940 and saw action at L'Escaut near Esquelmes, where the War Graves Cemetery contains many of the Queen's killed in that action. He was with the carrier platoon and rose to the rank of Sergeant. Badly wounded towards the end of the war he lost parts of his feet. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre and was twice mentioned in despatches. He was a very active member of the local Royal British Legion and was for many years their local standard bearer. For many years he worked at Reigate Priory as a gardener. On a visit to Ghent, with other friends of the battalion in 1985 he met a member of a family that he held in his arms, then a girl of four years. Married in 1947 Fred leaves a wife and a married daughter.



**Plunkett** - In November 1995, Captain Pelham Plunkett, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

**Simmons** - On 14th March 1996, Lance Corporal W Simmons, aged 84 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

**Spears** - On 15th August 1995, Private James Spears, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Spears enlisted in May 1938 at Stoughton Barracks and was posted to the 2nd Battalion. He served throughout the war with that battalion and was always very proud of being a Queensman and a Chindit.

**Rickman** - On 21st March 1996, Sergeant Frederick Rickman, aged 67 years, The East Surrey and Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

**Rosoman** - On 18th January 1996, Company Sergeant Major Charles George Rosoman, aged 75 years, The East Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

**Thompson** - On 23rd November 1995, Private Fred Thompson, 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Thompson became a POW at Dunkirk.

**Tomkins** - aged 84 years, The Cape Town Highlanders and 2/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Tomkins was educated at Whitgift School and was very proud that he had worn The Queen's Royal Regiment badge as a schoolboy. He joined the Standard Bank in 1929 and was later transferred to South Africa. He enlisted as a private soldier in The Cape Town Highlanders and served with them in the Middle East. Selected for OCTU after the battles of El Alamein he was commissioned and posted to the 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He joined them in Italy. He served throughout the period of the R. Garigliano and Anzio battles. Later served as a liaison officer at 56 Division Headquarters. He was mentioned in despatches in 1942 for gallant services in North Africa.



**Turpin** - On 24th December 1995, Private William Roy Turpin, aged 95 years, 2/4th Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment.

**Waldron** - On 8th November 1995, Company Sergeant Major Sidney George Waldron, aged 82 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. CSM Waldron enlisted into The Coldstream Guards in 1932 and served with them until 1936 when he went on to the Reserve. In August 1937 he joined The Queens Royal Regiment and served with the Regiment until his discharge in 1955. In his day a very good boxer and represented both Regiments in which he served.

After his discharge from the Army he joined the Ministry of Defence Police. He was a regular attender for many years at the annual reunion held at the UJ Club.

**Wood** - On 12th January 1996, Sergeant L (Lakri) Wood, aged 73 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

**Lt Col Anson Squire MC, writes:-** "Lakri Wood was a Yorkshire man who enlisted in a Yorkshire Regiment but later was transferred to 1 Surreys. He served with 1 Surreys in Sicily and Italy. As a L/Cpl in the Battle Patrol he was awarded the MM for gallantry during a patrol at the River Sangro. Later he was promoted and posted to C Company and as a sergeant took part in the night attack on Monte La Pieve (point 508). In 1947 he was appointed a Permanent Staff Instructor in the 6th Battalion".

**Colonel John Woodhouse MC writes:-** I knew Len Wood for just five months in 1943-44 when he was one of fifteen soldiers in the Battle Patrol commanded at that time by me. The Battle Patrol was a sub unit formed in each Infantry battalion under direct command of battalion headquarters and specialised in patrolling. It could be split into four patrols each of four men or, all operate together. We had a high proportion of automatic weapons and a basic knowledge of explosives.

Len Wood was then a junior NCO in the Battle Patrol with the rank of L/Cpl. Among raids on the Germans in Italy on the night 13/14 November 1943 when the Battle Patrol was guided through the German lines by an Italian, Guido Farno, was noteworthy for the courage and determination of Len Wood. Attacking a German HQ of 16 Panzer Division explosives were placed by Len Wood on an enemy occupied house and an armoured car. The Battle Patrol withdrew without casualties and with a German prisoner.

He was awarded the Military Medal for his leadership and gallantry. Len Wood was an outstanding young soldier when I knew him in the war and was a most cheerful and likeable man. I lost touch with him in the fifties but he located me fifty years on and we had a little reunion with six of us in 1994.

## Regimental Families

**Polkinhorne** - On 9th January 1996, Mildred, beloved wife of Major Graham Polkinhorne.

**Pott** - On 10th January 1996, Eileen, beloved wife of WO1 Ernie Pott, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

**Wyers** - On 31st January 1996, Mrs Gladys Wyers, widow of A J Weyers, 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. A loyal regimental supporter, Gladys was one of the band of stalwarts who worked so hard to lay on the annual Surreys reunion.

## Obituaries

### CSM Charles George Rosoman

Charles Rosoman joined the 10th London Regiment (TA) in January, 1929 and five months later enlisted for regular service in The East Surrey Regiment. After initial training he was posted to India and remained there until returning to England just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. By then an experienced and competent soldier, he embarked for France with the 1st

Battalion in October, 1939 and served there until the evacuation from Dunkirk in the following year. Overseas service in North West Africa, Sicily and Italy followed in 1942 and '43 and by the time of the Monte Cassino battle Charles had reached the rank of Company Sergeant Major having been promoted in the field for "constantly demonstrating quiet bravery throughout the campaign". Seriously wounded in both legs at Monte Pieve, his active service was effectively ended for some time, but in 1944 he was awarded a mention in dispatches for his service with the battalion.

Following a spell in civilian life after the war he re-joined the Army in 1946 and served with the Middle East Land Forces and in Malaya.

On retiring he joined a London based insurance firm.

### R Lammas

I first met Bob early in 1943. I was having a quiet doze on the beach at Septis Magna N. Africa. When he arrived as a reinforcement for A Coy. Our platoon sergeant decided that Bob and I should 'dig in' together.

He was a quiet Norfolk man but we got along like a 'house on fire'. He was by nature a staunch Christian in all senses of the word. I can't recall any in the company who would say a word against him in fact he was the only man who could make me apologise for swearing in front of him and that included all the officers. When they decided to make me a Coy runner he wasn't concerned for himself his words to me was "*don't be a fool, at least one of us has been given a chance of surviving*".

Through the early years of civilian life we lost touch but about nine years ago another comrade gave me his address. His smile as my wife and I walked up his garden path was most gratifying. For the last years of his life he suffered much pain, but his wife Doris cared for him almost to the end.

I know what his friendship meant to me, and that is what I shall always remember in my life. "Rest Well Bob" "you did us all proud".

BL

### RSM F G Harcup

I first met Fred Harcup when I was a very young soldier at Albany Barracks, Isle of Wight, in September 1937. He was of course by then a Sergeant, and if I remember rightly, was the Pioneer Sergeant of the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Naturally, because he was of senior rank, and I was an insignificant young pup I and my likes could only know him and others like him in that rank from a distance, but even so, he came across as a very understanding and kindly Sergeant to us younger ones.

When War broke out, there were a number of accelerated promotions, we were in Palestine then, and Fred was promoted to WOII Rank. and eventually became CSM of Headquarter Company. Also by this time I too had begun to climb the promotion ladder, and after becoming MT Sgt in December 1940, I came into closer contact with him. He was always very approachable, a bit of a fatherly figure, and always available if one wanted help or advice. In 1943 after we had arrived in India from Ceylon, he became the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 2nd Battalion, and remained so throughout our tour in India and Burma, until being repatriated home in June 1944 together with those of us who had been abroad more than five years. He took over the duties of RSM, firstly at Maidstone in 1944/45 and then to the Holding Battalion at Gravesend.

In 1946 he was the Regimental Sergeant Major at Stoughton Barracks and remained as such until his retirement in 1949 when he went to the Tower of London as a Yeoman Warder.

During his time as RSM he had some difficult periods but throughout all he remained a very calm and much respected

RSM, one who could be approached for advice or help at any time. Saturday night in the Sergeants Mess was always a joy when Fred was present, he could entertain with a variety of songs and ditties. I am sure I speak for those of my vintage, when I say we send our deepest sympathy to his wife Beth, and his family in their sad loss, he was indeed a good old Queen's man.

TA

### Sergeant Fred Rickman

Fred Rickman started his military life at 17 with the Guards but after a few years transferred to The East Surrey Regiment. His travels with the Surreys and Queen's Royal Surreys reflected the wide variety of regimental postings in the 50s and 60s - Germany, Benghazi, Tripoli, Cyprus, Aden and Hong Kong. He left the Army after 23 years service and settled in New Addington near Croydon in 1970. He then worked in security for Shell until retirement eight years ago.

Fred was a quiet, dignified man whose personal qualities made him much liked and respected in the regiment. He and Maureen his wife particularly valued the strong family spirit of the regiment and the many continuing friendships that followed, many of which were maintained through their regular attendance at the East Surrey annual reunions at Clapham. Fred's quiet enjoyment of life continued after he left the Army. When not pottering in his garden or listening to music, he and Maureen had many holidays in Ireland, staying with Maureen's family, and in the Far East (helped by the fact that daughter Tricia worked for a Hong Kong based airline).

Fred's family, Maureen and his two daughters Tricia and Terry, were very close-knit, and Fred's sudden death was a great blow to them. He will be sorely missed by them and by his wide circle of friends.

DRB

### Lieutenant Colonel S W Peet MC



My lasting impression of Colonel Bill Peet is that of a true Infantry Soldier. I first met him when I joined 2/6th Queens from OCTU in July 1942. By then he already had a wealth of experience including service with the Battalion in France and Belgium in 1940. He joined the Regiment in 1935 and served continuously with 6th later 2/6th Battalion for the next 9 years. There are few who can equal that record. He was granted a regular commission in 1939.

In August 1942 169 Queens Brigade, together with the rest of 56 London Division, sailed from Liverpool into the unknown. Eventually we arrived in Northern Iraq where we remained until March 1943 before moving to join 8th Army. But Bill Peet left in February with a party of key personnel of the Division to gain battle experience, and was wounded while serving with a battalion of 4th Indian Division at Wadi Akarit. So in the event he missed the first action with his own Battalion at Enfidaville.

In September 1943 56 London Division was one of the assault divisions for the invasion of Italy at Salerno and Bill was back with 2/6th Queens commanding B Company. The Battalion's D Day objective was to capture the Airfield and to cut the

Salerno-Battipaglia road. By mid-afternoon A and B Companies were astride the road and, as Bill described it, "having a lot of fun shooting up unwary enemy traffic". On D + 2. B and D Companies took point 210, a vital feature which provided excellent observation across the divisional front. But we were in a salient 2 or 3 miles beyond the Airfield and the following day the Germans made a determined effort to dislodge us. The forward platoons of B Company were pushed back, and in D Company on their left the forward sections of my platoon were overrun and part of the rest of the company was forced to withdraw, leaving me with the FOO in a very isolated situation. *"Major Peet immediately rallied his men and personally led a counter-attack against heavy enemy fire to restore the position. This officer was wounded during the attack but continued to carry out his duties until the situation was normal again....."*. So read the citation for his immediate MC. And what a very welcome sight he was coming up on my right. Later he was evacuated to a hospital ship lying out in the bay.

He was back again by January and commanding A Company for the crossing of the Garigliano and the subsequent battles for the formidable Monte Damiaro. We were now deep into the Gustav Line. But in February 169 Queens Brigade was switched to the Anzio Beachhead where the situation had become critical, and Bill Peet was wounded for the third time during the heaviest enemy shelling that the Battalion had ever encountered. He thus became eligible for return to the United Kingdom. He was posted to be the Chief Instructor of 163 Infantry OCTU, at that time in Heysham Camp near Morecombe, and he immediately set about getting battle experienced officers or instructors. For the second time I had much to thank Bill for as he asked for me to join him. Not only did I leave the Battalion in battle on the River Senio, but within two months I met my Mary at Morecombe. Not long after, together with Peter Taylor, we received our Military Crosses from the King and had a whale of a party afterwards at The Dorchester.

In 1946 he attended the Staff College Haifa from which he was appointed DAA & QMG 8 Brigade in the Middle East. In 1949 he returned to regimental duty and when I joined 1 Queens in Iserlohn in 1950 I became his company second in command. I remember that as a particularly happy time with Bill and his wife Frances our near neighbours. Like all good infantrymen he could "sleep on a clothes line", but Bill perfected the art so that it was not unusual for him to nod off in a dinner party if he was getting bored. He next became Brigade Major 26 Gurkha Brigade and in 1955 he was back again with 1 Queen's commanding a company in the jungle in Malaya. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1957, and his final appointment was Permanent President Courts Martial at Hanover. It was here that sadly Frances died. He retired from the Army in 1968 and that year he married Pamela a nursing officer in QARANC.

Bill will be remembered by his old chums in the Regiment as a down to earth person with a good sense of fun. He enjoyed his pint at the local, wherever that happened to be, and he always had a keen interest in rugby football. We offer our sincere sympathy to Pamela, who looked after him devotedly in his latter years, and to his son Timothy and daughter Sally.

GBC

### Michael Forrester remembers Colonel CH (Nick) Nice - "Kim",

Having known Nick Nice for more than fifty years, I would like to offer a post-script to the two obituaries printed in the last Newsletter which said much of Nick and his achievements.

Our first meeting was in April 1943 when we joined 1/6th Queens within a short time of each other, a week or so before the final attack on Tunis. And it was during the following year, which included Salerno and the advance across the Plain of Naples, our return to England, and the landing in Normandy, that we



got to know each other. Then followed the post-war years during which our friendship matured and I met Rosalind and members of their wonderful family.

Amongst my many memories I recall him proudly relating that he was born in Chelsea Barracks when his father was serving as Drum Major in the Coldstream Guards ; his father being one of four brothers, all of whom served with distinction in the Army. And equally well I remember his adored and adoring Rosalind, to whom he was always "Kim", telling of her falling in love when she first saw him "beating the big drum" in the local Boys' Brigade Band - thus began a romance that was to continue throughout their very many happy years together. Janet and Maureen had been born by the time Nick left for the Middle East where he was to join 1/6th Queens ; Paul, Christopher and Andrew followed after his return to England from Italy in early 1944, before their house where Rosalind and the girls were

living, was severely damaged by a VI bomb. The strength and unity of this remarkable family was manifest at the very moving service on 10th August last year and afterwards at 12 The Ridings.

Of the numerous qualities which Nick possessed, and which were apparent throughout his life, his deeply ingrained sense of duty, coupled with his readiness to assist the needs of others, shone out like beacons and were recognised by his many appointments, well recorded in Maurice Nason's splendid tribute. But lest what has been written presents too serious a picture of the man, his delightful sense of humour was never absent, while his marked ability to laugh at himself comes out most clearly in his graphic contributions to "Salerno Remembered" by Geoffrey Curtis. To this I would only add that he was one of the very few men I have met about whom I never heard an unkind word. He was loved, respected and will be remembered by all who knew him.

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# **1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Malaya 1954-56 and BAOR 1957-58 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment in Munster in 1967, Bahrain in 1968 and Werl in 1976-77**

Colonel John Davidson has recently shown me two videos films that he has made from old 8mm cine films that he took whilst serving with the Battalions at these times. I found the films fascinating. They really brought back memories of those bygone days. I think that there may be members of the Association who served with the Battalions at any of these times who might be interested in having a copy of one or both.

The films last for approximately 1½ and 1 hours repectively. They have been enhanced with background music, background noises (e.g. in the jungle) and where appropriate synchronised military band music. They include subtitles where appropriate and a scrolled listing of 39 officers and 93 men who are recognised in the Malaya/BAOR film and 20 officers and 61 men in the Munster/Bahrain/Werl film. There are others whose names have gone from memory.

John Davidson is happy to make copies for anyone interested. The cost to include top grade VHS tape, packing and postage, will be £12 per film or £20 for both. This less P & P, will be refunded to anyone who doesn't like it and returns the tape undamaged. Anyone interested should write to him, enclosing a cheque made out to JGW Davidson, at "Waveney", West Harting, Petersfield, Hants GU31 0NY. He is also happy to send a copy of the programme of either film, if you send him a stamped and addressed envelope. These list all the scenes, the music and names of participants.

He is anxious to point out that the film has been made up from his amateur 8mm cine films which were never designed for 'public showing' and that some parts are of poor quality as a result of deterioration of the original film over such a long time. Also that there are parts, such as leave in the Cameron Highlands, Penang and Hong Kong, and his troopship journey home away from the Battalion, which may be of little interest. But you can always 'fast forward' through these parts or simply enjoy the music! For obvious reasons the films mainly, but certainly not exclusively, feature D Company, 10 Platoon and the MMG Platoon in Malaya and C Company in Bahrain. Unfortunately a large reel of cine film covering his two tours in Ireland has gone AWOL, so there is not much of his time as Commanding Officer - if anyone has it please return it to him.

Editor

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Side drum of 2nd Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment with the Regimental Colour belt. A 1st Bn The East Surrey silver bugle on top of the drum. The two figures one in silver the other bronze form part of the Indian Infantry Efficiency Trophy, sometimes referred to as The Kitchener Trophy. The silver figure was normally in the officers mess and the sergeants mess held the bronze.



Victorian Centrepiece, 2nd Royal Surrey Militia c1882, now on loan to 5 PWRR at Canterbury from The Queen's Royal Territorial Trustees.



'The Halt in the Desert' and two silver tankards, 4th Bn The East Surrey Regiment and 7th Surrey Rifles c1887. Also on display is an East Surrey side drum and the 'Dettingen Cup'.



A Queen's Royal Regiment silver drum, which can be seen in the museum at Clandon and a replica silver Paschal Lamb currently on display in the Museum. The original Lamb was presented by Colonel Frank Watney TD, to 4th Bn The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment. It is now on loan to The London Regiment courtesy of The Queen's Royal Surrey Territorial Trustees.



Earl Howes desk which was in service at the Battle of the Glorious First of June. Shown too are the original Freedom Scrolls from Guildford, Kingston upon Thames and Reigate and Banstead, all can be seen at the Museum at Clandon.