

MAY 1997



# 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  
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The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment  
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NUMBER 61

## NEWSLETTER

The Guard furnished by 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment  
Government House, Hong Kong, 1962



*Editors Note:*

*It was hoped to print an aerial photo of The Barracks, Kingston upon Thames, in this edition as a follow up to Stoughton Barracks. We are having technical problems beyond our control at present - but efforts are being made to have the photograph taken in the future.*



## Regimental and Association Events

1997



16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
20th May	Golf Society, Annual Golf Match versus The Royal Marines, North Hants GC. By invitation. Details from Secretary.
23rd May	Presidents Reception for Freedom Town Mayors of Surrey, Clandon.
1st June	THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).
1st June	The Royal British Legion Remembrance Service, Bonner Hill, Kingston upon Thames
8th June	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Church Service, Guildford Cathedral, 11 am for 11.15 am Service.
30th June	Presentation of New Colours to 1 PWRR by HM Queen Margrethe II of Denmark - Canterbury. Minden Band. Further details later.
18th July	Presentation of Colours to the London Regiment, London. Further details will be circulated when known.
1st August	MINDEN DAY (1759).
6th-10th August	Canterbury Cricket Week. (Saturday 9th Guests of Association).
22nd August	Liseaux Commemoration France. 1/5th, 1/6th and 1/7th Queens.
9th September	SALERNO DAY (1943).
12th September	Laying Up of 1 Queen's Colours, Guildford Cathedral. Normandy Band. Further details later.
13th September	Laying Up of 1 Royal Hampshire Colours, Winchester Cathedral. Further details later.
13th September	5 OMA Ladies Dinner. Details from D Mitchell Esq, 3 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guildford, Surrey GU3 5JE (01843 232043).
21st September	Museum Open Day - Meet your mates!Clandon.
1st October	Golf Society Autumn Meeting.
3rd October	Officers Club Ladies Lunch Clandon.
11th October	East Surrey Reunion, St Johns Hill, Clapham Junction. Details from FAW Ramsey MM, 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey. SM5 3EF. 0181 401 2070
25th October	6 Queen's OCA Annual Dinner Dance, Union Jack Club. Details from J T Brown, 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Est, London SW1P 4ED.
6th November	Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London. 10.30am for 11.00 am.
7th November	Annual Reunion - UK Club (Details with May Newsletter).
9th November	Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Southwark - Bermondsey, the Cenotaph, London.
15th November	Warrant Officers and Sergeants Past and Present Dinner, Depot Queen's Division, Bassingbourn.
28th November	PWRR Regimental Dinner - Guards and Cavalry Club.
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

### Editorial

During the last six months the deaths have occurred of a number of distinguished officers and soldiers of our Regiment. Brigadier Maurice MacWilliam was one of our most gallant officers of World War Two. CSM 'Ace' Shepherd MM who, under fire from the Japanese on Jail Hill successfully extricated all the wounded from the hill, CSM Bill Attewell who was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his leadership and gallantry whilst serving in N Africa. Major (QM) Keith Yonwin, known to hundreds of recruits who went through their training at Stoughton, later to his B Company of 1 Queen's Surreys in Aden and Hong Kong, we are all very much saddened by their passing, they all set, and maintained the high standards of our Regiments. We salute, and remember them and the others recorded in our Deaths column with love and much affection. Mrs Mary Ford whose passing is also recorded, would not have been known to all our members, but she supported her husband Richard, during his period as our Curator at Clandon so well, and in doing so, supported our Museum and this Association. This year see's the Laying up of Colours of 1 Queen's in Guildford Cathedral on Salerno Day and it is hoped that many members will support this occasion.

To mark Hong Kong's hand back to China, it was decided that a small display in the Museum at Clandon would be appropriate to mark our Regiments tours of duty in China and Hong Kong. The Supplement with this edition records some of the highlights of the service of our forebears which earned two Battle Honours carried forward to the Colours of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment today. We hope you enjoy this short account. On a personal note, I had a marvellous holiday thanks to your generosity and I was overwhelmed at some of the words in your letters and despite several remarks, that a 'one way ticket' would be more appropriate I am back! I hope to see many of you at our various functions in the coming months, particularly at our Annual Church Service on June 8th. Special prayers are always said for Quartermasters and Regimental Sergeant Majors on this day!

Take Care

Les Wilson

## President's Notes

This has been another active year for the Association and I am, indeed we all are, indebted to Les Wilson and John Rogerson for the considerable work they do in managing our affairs, dealing with the many cases of benevolence which take so much time and for this Newsletter.

Some of you will have heard that the National Trust have decided not to renew our lease at Clandon Park when it expires in September. This is a great blow as Clandon has become our Regimental Home. The Trust has however given us a period of grace to enable us to find a new home and the Museum Trustees are now actively searching for new premises. This is a daunting task not least because of the financial implications and the Association Trustees are now seriously considering how we finance the future.

As an Association we have two major responsibilities. The first must be to look after our old soldiers and their families and the second is to provide a focal point for the Regiment which until now has been the Regimental Museum at Clandon Park. Serious thought and debate has now begun to ensure we make best use of our not inconsiderable financial resources.

Best Wishes

Bob Aeworth



### The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

Since the last notes were published the Regiment has had a hectic and busy time. The four Battalions each extracting the maximum out of the time available.

A new piece of history commenced early this year. Detailed discussions between RHQ PWRR and The Royal Palace in Denmark and indeed Buckingham Palace resulted in the excellent news that Queen Margrethe II was to become the Regiments Colonel-in-Chief. An extract from the Colonel of the Regiments letter is below

*Your Majesty*

*We are all delighted, honoured and very privileged that Your Majesty has so graciously agreed to accept the appointment of Colonel-in-Chief of our Regiment. The Regiment's links with Your Royal House reach back to 1689 and were, as you will be aware, forged forever by the appointment of King Frederick VIII as Colonel-in-Chief The Buffs (The East Kent Regiment) on 9 November 1906. Since that date, through a series of amalgamations, we have been enormously proud to be able to carry forward this historic bond into The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.*

It was also fitting that this should happen in Queen Margrethe II Jubilee Year. On the 15 January 1997 the Regiment was greatly honoured to be invited to attend Her Majesty's Parade in Copenhagen to celebrate her Silver Jubilee. A contingent of 50 All Ranks plus the new Regimental Colour of the 2nd Battalion went on parade. The only 'foreign' troops on parade. It was through the generosity of the Royal Danish Air Force, who allocated one of their three Hercules Aircraft to fly the party over, (we assumed that the RAF would not allocate one of their 80 odd Hercules!?), that we were able to take part.

The 1st Bn who now have a Gurkha Company as part of their Orbat seems to have been on constant stand by as spearhead Battalion or heading TALO\* Group. They have also been on (what seems to be continuous) exercises. They were stood up and then down for Albania and now Zaire. Lt Col Mark Rayner the Commanding Officer is constantly on the move attending planning Conferences and Recce's

The 2nd Bn departs a 2 year Tour in Northern Ireland in Jul/Aug 97 and move to Tidworth. They will then re-role in the Saxon Armoured Car role. It will be a pleasure to have both Regular Battalions in England. They have maintained an excellent record in Northern Ireland. Lt Col Paul Newton has just handed over to Lt Col Richard Dennis after a successful tour as Commanding Officer.

\*TALO- Tactical Air Landed Operations)



*The Colonel-in Chief, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment  
Queen Margrethe II of Denmark*

The 5th Bn under the command of Lt Col Robert Knight MBE have recently been on a successful Annual Camp to Belgium (Arlon) It didn't rain once and attendance was high.

The 6/7th Bn under the command of Lt Col Rory Steevenson has also had a busy time. Their Adjt was whisked off to Bosnia at short notice to complete a tour of duty. Bn HQ has been rebuilt to enhance facilities. Annual Camp was at Otterburn. This was well attended and provided excellent training.

Both TA Bns are once again supporting the Regular Army with soldiers posted to Bosnia, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar and Cyprus. They also provided half the contingent that went to Copenhagen and at the moment will provide the best part of the team for an exchange visit with HMS Southampton. The Regiment is in good heart.

AJM

**Stop Press - B (Queen's) Company The London Regiment**  
won the Courage Trophy. Full details in November Newsletter.

## Association Affairs 1997

This article is to update our members on the Association affairs, future developments and lists of branch secretaries.

**Regimental Council.** The Council met in early March, and discussed a number of matters, which resulted in recommendations to the ensuing Trustees meeting on March 22nd. In particular the members of the council had concern for the future of the Museum, which was debated at length, and for our Regimental Chapels. Benevolence was a major topic for consideration, as were the current needs for our former Regiments' Chapels. Members of the council also wished to reinforce our links with Army Cadet Force and combined Cadet Force units in Surrey, and to this end recommended that efforts should be made to encourage these young people to visit the Clandon Museum.

The Council made several recommendations to the Trustees.

**Trustees Meeting.** The Trustees met for their annual meeting on March 22nd. The accounts for 1996 were considered and approved. At 31st December 1996 the Charity assets were £2,282,124 of which £2,184,212 represented the market value of investments. The income from our investments for the year was £186,617 of which £159,672 was expended on charitable grants and the administration of the Association. During the meeting, the Trustees approved on-going benevolence for 1997, and specific grants for the administration of the Association, salaries, the museum, Army Benevolent Fund, The Royal Star and Garter Home, St Dunstans, The Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, Gifford House at Worthing where we have one permanent resident, Bill Roadnight and several of our members have had holidays during 1996. Grants were also approved for the refurbishment of Holy Trinity, Guildford and a protective screen to combat vandalism at All Saints Church, Kingston to protect the beautiful stained glass windows in the Chapel.

**Association General Meeting,** the President welcomed all branch secretaries and thanked them for attending the annual meeting. The meeting were informed on the developments concerning the museum and forthcoming events for 1997.

### Benevolence

During 1996 a total of 257 cases were investigated and 217 grants-in-aid were approved. The Association helped provide 19 further wheelchairs or mobility scooters, six sets of orthopaedic furniture and contributed to 8 convalescent holidays. We continue to administer 36 Army Benevolent Fund Supplementary Allowances and the ABF generously contributed £8 per week per case (with an increase to £10 per week this year). During this period we have renewed or arranged for 19 Nursing Home Fees of £624 ABF, and £154 Association per case per year to be paid for our old soldiers or their widows to be looked after. The Queen's Surreys Charity paid out £43,604 as grants-in-aid.

We had an increase in welfare requests from our Association Branch Secretaries and in order to speed up these cases we have requested from HQ SSAFA and Forces Help Society that our Branch Secretaries receive their half yearly Handbook, for them to deal direct with the local case workers. We would again like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who are always helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA Forces Help Society and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and we are particularly grateful to their case workers for all their assistance. During this last year we have also assisted St Dunstaners and members who are being cared for by the Ex Services Mental Welfare Society, War Pensioners and Combat Stress.

### Letters of Appreciation - We append below some of the letters your Secretary has received

I write to say a very sincere thank you for the donation of £250 towards the purchase of a second-hand power scooter, which, thanks to your help, I should be able to receive in the very near future. The ability to get about will make a great difference, enabling me to move much further afield without having to rely on others and I look forward to many happy hours of motoring. Thank you again for your assistance.

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This letter is to thank you on behalf of my husband Mr A for your kind generosity in subscribing £130 towards the cost of a holiday in Conway. My husband cannot write himself unfortunately, and this will be the first much needed holiday since having his stroke four years ago.

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When I first applied to the Royal British Legion for assistance I never expected to receive help from another source. Therefore I cannot thank The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association enough for their generosity in assisting me financially since having an operation for cancer and my stroke. I felt very humble seeing as I was only a National Serviceman. But I was and still am proud to have been a 'Queensman'. Especially as I was the only member of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment to be stationed with the Allied Land Forces Central Europe in Fontainbleau, France in 1956 where I served my two years. My son-in-law also served twelve years with the Regiment. Thank you once again most gratefully.

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I am writing this on behalf of my wife and myself to thank you and the Association for the generous help you have recently allowed us. I am truly very grateful and still have fond memories of the glorious 2nd Queen's in which I served with General Wavell in Egypt then on to Syria, back to Tobruk, Ceylon, India and Burma.

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My wife and I want to thank you for the help you gave us to have our washing machine repaired, thank you, I never thought in a million years that I would have to call on the help of SSAFA. I did approach them to see if I could borrow or hire an electric scooter, but my old firm stepped in. At the moment I am waiting for a second heart transplant and its hard getting about. Are you the J C Rogerson that was with the MT PI in Hong Kong and Germany back in the 60s? If you are then I was with you, and if you remember Sandy, Billingham, Miller, Dedman. We are all still in touch through one another. Once again thank you

Just a few lines to say how grateful for the great help which you have given me to replace the loss of so many things which had to be destroyed owing to the water tank and ceilings falling down and making my carpets so wet which had to be renewed again. I'm thankful now that I'm nearly all straight and glad to be back home again, my son let me live with him until everything was dried out and fit for me to come home.

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On behalf of myself and my wife I would like to say many many thanks to you for what you did to help us, it cannot be put into words. The cheque I received via SSAFA was like a dream come true. We are sincerely grateful for the prompt response. We are both old age pensioners and have never been in debt before, it played hell with our health, but again and again we are forever in your debt. I am not a very good letter writer as you can see, but I hope it will say how much we appreciate what you did for us, Thank you, God bless you all.

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**Mrs Sally Hordern, SSAFA Suffolk writes:-** Thank you very much indeed for your letter of the 15th November, enclosing your Benevolence Committee's cheque for £200. I was absolutely delighted, and so grateful. I rang Mr B yesterday and explained the situation. He was, to put it mildly, overjoyed. He and his wife will sort out their pressing household expenses and I will call round, probably tomorrow and see what they need. I gather the gas bill is rather urgent. Do please thank your Benevolence Committee for the grant. I would also like to thank you all for my nice card - I have passed the message on to my colleagues. I will take the other card over with me tomorrow when I visit Mr and Mrs B. I will let you know how the grant was spent and will also keep an eye on the family with regards Mr B's unemployment. He is still doing his computer course at the moment.

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**Mrs Diana Young, a Divisional Secretary of SSAFA writes:-** On behalf of Mr C, we would like to thank you for your prompt response to this request for help, and in this matter the money will be paid direct to Southern Electric by me personally. Mr C was delighted to receive the Newsletter, and very touched that his old regiment should want to include him. As soon as I hear from the MOD I will send you verification of his service with you. Apparently he was a member of the Old Comrades Association in 1943/4.

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**Extract from a SSAFA lady helper:-** Many thanks to your Benevolence Committee for their generous grant of £100 for an Orthopaedic Chair for Mrs D. I have spoken to Mrs E. this morning and she is a very happy and grateful lady, and is aware that The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity has helped her.

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**Flt Lt A C Hallam, a SSAFA caseworker writes:-** Thank you for your very prompt letter and much appreciated cheque for solving the very real worries of Mr E. You will be pleased to know that I actioned the cheque through SSAFA the very next day. It is thanks to the immense generosity and extreme promptness of your kind self and your Association, that it has ended so well for a genuinely poor, sick but very nice man who is extremely grateful for all that has been done to assist him and his wife and put their mind's at rest. I gave him your Association Newsletter which he would like me to thank you for, it certainly was a very interesting magazine from the short glance I was able to take of it before handing it over. On behalf of SSAFA and Mr & Mrs E, I would like to express our sincere thanks to your President and Trustees for your generosity and promptness in respect of this request.

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**Mrs M Hunt a Divisional Secretary of SSAFA writes:-** Thank you for the very generous grant of £500 for debts and clothes for Mr F. The Friends of the Elderly & Gentlefolk's Help awarded a grant of £250 towards the cost of debts and the REME Benevolent Fund gave a grant of £100 towards the purchase of clothing. The "Not Forgotten" Association has agreed to pay for the client's TV license in the future. Our treasurer and I took Mr F for some warm clothing last week and the treasurer is sorting out the debts for payment. I have informed the client of the generous grants and their sources. Hopefully Mr F will thank you in the near future. He was delighted to receive the copy of the Association Newsletter which you sent to him. Many thanks for all your help and the speed of your response. I have received notification from the Royal British Legion that the regiment has kindly made a contribution towards necessary redecoration after storm damage to the above property. I would like to place on record my appreciation for this kind gesture.

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#### Benevolence Assistance

(Remember, if you as an ex-member of the Regiment, your dependants, or an old comrade you know 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).

## The Regimental Council

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

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

6th Bn OCA-Queens:

Mr J T Brown 6 Lawrence House, Millbank Estate, London SW1P 4ED

Tel: 0171 8210028

7th Bn OCA-Queens:

Maj J M A Tamplin TD 10 Hugh Street SW1

Tel: 0171 8340120

2/6th Bn OCA-Queens:

R Currie Esq 66 3rd Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex

Tel: 01255674761 Fax 01255 674565

2/7th Bn OCA-Queens:

S Messenger Esq 10 South Row, Blackheath, London SE3 0RY

Tel: 0181 8526183

East Surrey Reunion:

F A W Ramsey MM 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SMS 3EF

Tel: 0181 4012070

2/6th East Surrey

Maj A J Redfern MC TD Courtlands, 12 Kent House, Sheen Rd,

St Valery Assoc:

Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AV

Tel: 0181 9402191

WOs and Sgts Assoc:

P Henman 35 Downside Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5HR

Tel: 0181 6420585

Queen's Royal Surrey:

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Queen's Royal Surrey

D J Gardner 106 Oakes Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6QS

Tel: 01284 753160

Kent Branch:

Queen's Royal Surrey

Suffolk Branch:

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## Chairman's letter

At last year's Regimental Council, we were reminded that 1997 would mark the 50th anniversary of Colonel Les Wilson's joining The Queen's Royal Regiment, whose successor Regiment he still continues to serve now as Assistant Regimental Secretary and Editor of The Newsletter.

To mark this momentous date, we decided that we would invite all members of our Association to contribute a small sum towards a fund, to enable Les to fulfil his long held ambition to return to Hong Kong, before its return to China, and Singapore.

Over 800 of you responded to my letter and we collected in excess of £4,800, at no cost to the Association! Many of the accompanying letters were positively moving in their comments, paying tribute to all that Les has done so quietly and efficiently down the years, to help those members and widows who have needed advice and benevolence. The response was indeed indicative of the high regard and affection in which Colonel Les is held by all our members. Our President, Brigadier Bob Acworth made the presentation at the UJC last November, - for the first time ever, Les was stopped in his tracks, as he was totally unaware of what had been afoot!

Colonel Les has now made his trip, which he much enjoyed, and we have also been able to present him with a suitably engraved salver to commemorate his devotion to our Regiment. May I close by thanking you all on behalf of the Regimental Council who instigated this fund, for your startling response and generosity.

## Letter of thanks from Les Wilson

I write to thank all members who responded to the letter from our Chairman, Colonel Peter Thompson and sent money to mark my 50 years service this year. The secret was well kept, I had no idea that the Regimental Council had initiated an appeal to you, and I was truly shocked when the President started to speak about me at the Annual Reunion. I was amazed at your response and generosity. I went on my travels to Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia in January, retracing a few paths down memory lane. In time, I will write an article for the Newsletter on my trip, but in the meantime I should again like to say how touched I was and to thank you all. It was a marvellous holiday and I did consume the odd San Miguel, Anchor and Tiger beer along the way!

God Bless

Les Wilson

## Guildford Barracks 1794 - 1818

The first Guildford Barracks was built on the Friary Estate which lay in the north and western ends of the town in the vicinity of the present North Street, Woodbridge Road and the river. From the 13th to the 16th centuries it had been the site of a Dominican Friary but after the dissolution of the Friaries by Henry VIII a new house, aptly called The Friary was built there and was occupied by a series of tenants until it came into the hands of the Onslow family in 1736. Thereafter it was subjected to several alterations. In 1791, obviously of a very "refined" nature, part of it accommodated the Judges during the Assizes "*in the genteel manner*" while the other part was converted into a "*genteel boarding school where young gentlemen are grammatically educated under the care of Mr George Pottor*".

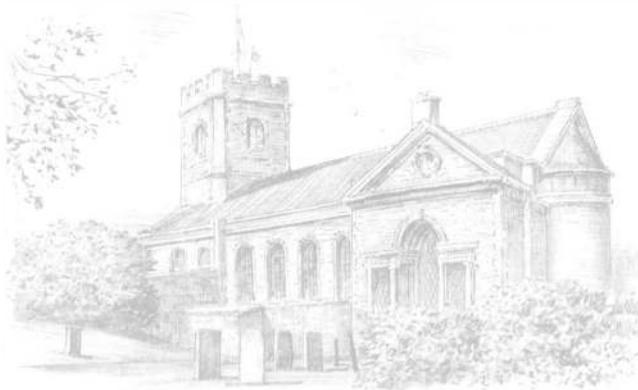
But with the outbreak of the French Revolutionary War in 1792 the Friary lost its peaceful civilian character and became the home of soldiers.



Friary House c 1739

Guildford had always had connections with the Army. Lying between London and Portsmouth it was a natural stopping place for travellers of all kinds and its inns had been requisitioned for the billeting of troops since the 17th century.

With accommodation in terms of 124 men and 129 horses it was only surpassed in Surrey by Kingston and Farnham. But troops were not popular with the innkeepers as they were less lucrative than the civilian customers who they crowded out. About 1779, during the American War of Independence the innkeepers became so desperate that they petitioned Guildford's two Members of Parliament to urge the erection of barracks, stating that "*no situation in Britain requires them more than Guildford*". To the petition was added a list of innkeepers who had gone bankrupt-13 out of a total of 27. But the idea of permanent barracks, like that of a standing Army, was not popular with Parliament and no barracks were built in Guildford within the next fifteen years. Billeting continued to be in inns or barns or under canvas whatever the time of year. Further petitions from such places as Reigate, Croydon, Carshalton, Haslemere and Godalming were no more successful than others which continued to be received from Guildford.



Holy Trinity Church, Guildford

But the French Revolutionary War altered the situation and in 1794 Pitt's government decided to adopt a barracks policy and set up a new department under a Barrack Master General to look round for suitable sites. News soon spread that he had his eye on the Friary Estate, Guildford for one. Ironically, this brought forth another petition from the townsfolk who were "*convinced that manifold evils and much mischief*" would arise from the scheme. The Government, however, continued with its plans and bought the Friary House and grounds. The house became the officers' quarters and new buildings were erected capable of holding 800 men and their horses.

The more permanent presence of troops in Guildford was soon reflected in the registers of Holy Trinity Church. Between 1795 and 1812 entries show marriages of soldiers from "*Guildford Barracks, or Barracks adjoining this town, or ..... adjoining this parish*".

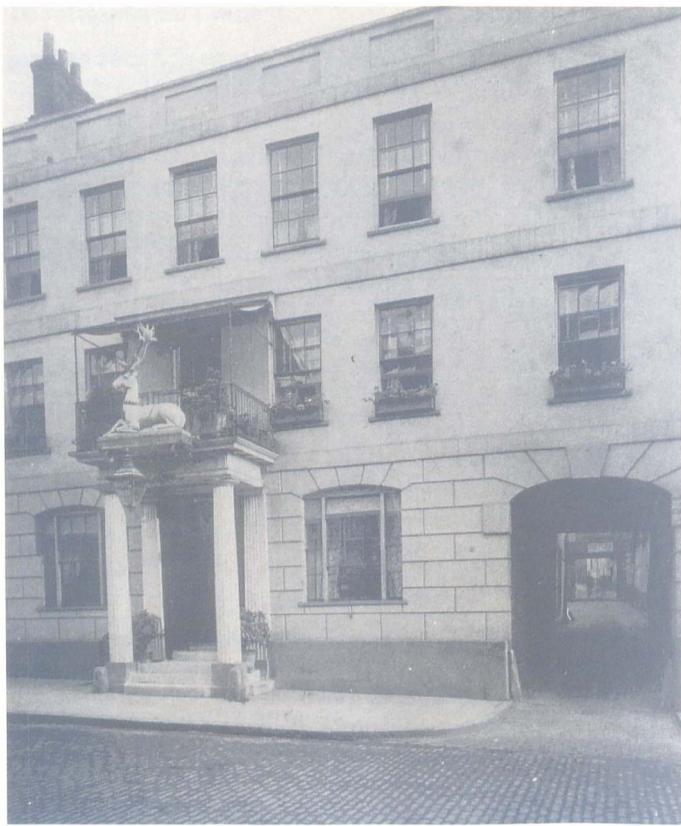
The Regiments were variously described as Light Dragoons,

Dragoon Guards or Regiments of Foot. Baptisms and burials were also recorded, there being 47 of the latter in the churchyards of St Mary and St Nicholas between 1794 and 1803 and this led to the Rectors suggesting that the Barracks supply their own burial ground. Letters in the Public Record Office refer to matters of purchase of coal and straw (for palliasses) for Guildford and other barracks.

The general state of barracks during the Napoleonic Wars was revolting. Rooms were overcrowded and often without fireplaces. Beds were arranged in tiers and men often slept two in a bed until the Duke of Wellington ordered separate beds. No special married quarters were provided and families had to live in the general rooms, obtaining a little privacy by hanging up blankets. Water supplies and sanitation were poor, as was the food, and it was not surprising that many of the inhabitants sought solace in drink in the local alehouses. Presenting a rather better and more glamorous picture to the outside world, the troops ceremoniously appeared in brightly coloured uniforms on well groomed horses with shining jingly saddlery and equipment.

Many distinguished visitors arrived including the Prince of Wales (later George IV) the Dukes of York, Cumberland and Cambridge, the Comte d'Artois and Elfi Bey, a Marmalure Chief with a large retinue in splendid costumes. Troops seem to have been well conducted and behaved as there are no records of the "*Manifold evils and much mischief*" which the townsfolk had initially feared. At some time during the Napoleonic Wars the barracks ceased to be used for cavalry and became a militia depot - the liability of "*every male between the ages of 16 and 60 to appear armed when called upon to defend the country against invasion*" being at the time a matter of urgency and high priority.

Organisation of the Militia was on a county basis, it being officered by local gentry and landowners and their relatives under the Lieutenant of the County. Up to 1812 there was no central headquarters for the 2nd Surrey Militia, the Officers' Mess being at the White Hart Hotel (now the site of a Sainsbury's store) and the rest quartered, when in Guildford and district, in public houses, inns and private residences. Between 1812 and 1814 most of the soldierly presence in Guildford would have been Militia, some of whom went to Ireland in 1813 to fight in the campaign being waged there.



*The White Hart Hotel, one time the officers mess of the 2nd Surrey Militia. The Hotel has now been demolished.*

cavalry and became a Militia Depot, the whole thing probably Parliament increasing the Militia.

A sign of increasing prestige was the fact that the Second Surreys had become 'Royal' in 1803 under Colonel George Holme Sumner. Of rather decorative appearance, the local Militia wore "scarlet coats faced with blue, and white leggings". With the apparent final defeat of Napoleon in 1814 the Royal Surrey Militia went into what would now be known as "suspended animation" and were only called out for training four times between 1814 and 1852. But threats of another war with France had alarmed the Government who from 1848 onwards had increased the Army, revived the Militia organisation and planned more barracks at various locations including Guildford.

In 1852 the Second Royal Surrey Militia was revived under the new Colonel, the Earl of Lovelace. The Officers' Mess was again established at the White Hart Hotel and the local Superintendent of Police was asked to find billets for 20 officers and about 1,000 men - a somewhat daunting task as the population was only about 8,000. The difficulties of having staff scattered about the town was emphasised in November of the same year when two serious riots occurred and the outnumbered police called for military assistance which had to be hastily assembled.

In 1853, consequent upon the Crimean War a large scale building programme of Army camps commenced in the Surrey and Hampshire areas. Initially Guildford was envisaged as the primary garrison town but due to opposition the choice finally fell on Aldershot. However, a new Militia Barracks was built at Guildford, close to the river Wey and bounding on to the old Friary Estate. The new buildings consisted of Adjutant's Quarters, Staff Quarters, Guard Room, Cells, Orderly Room, Store Room and Hospital grouped round three sides of the Parade Ground, the fourth side being bounded by the river where there was a powder magazine.

The Adjutant's Quarters and the Guard Room were connected by an archway, leading to the Parade Ground, and round which was the Latin inscription "Salvam Domine Fac Victoriae" O Lord Save Victoria.

That the premises were to act as a fort as well as a barracks if need be, is shown by the fact that the windows formed port-holes, with additional port-holes at the main gateway where there were two massive doors which were reinforced by a portcullis. Within the Wardrobe and Armoury were housed the clothing, equipment and arms for 1,000 men "arranged in true military order by Companies". The colours and drums ornamented the walls.

The Regimental strength was:-

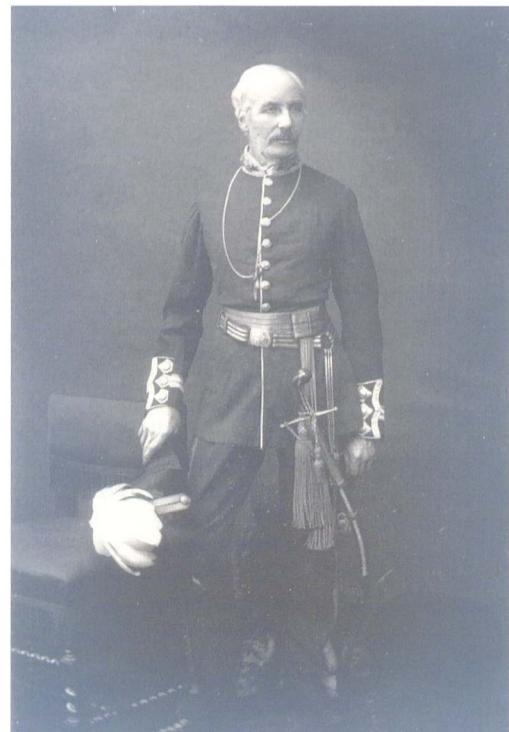
A Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, 10 Captains, 10 Lieutenants, 10 Ensigns, Captain and Adjutant, Surgeon, Assistant Surgeon, Sergeant-Major, 33 Sergeants, 33 Corporals, 10 Drummers and 990 Privates. A prominent member of the staff

In 1814, following the apparent defeat of Napoleon after his disastrous retreat from Moscow, the Militia were disbanded and their arms and ammunition surrendered to Government stores. Plans were then made to rebuild the barracks "in a handsome and substantial manner" but this was never done and by 1818 almost all the buildings had been demolished. On 7th December of that year "property at Guildford formerly used as a barracks" was leased by the Barrack Board to Mr William Elkins, a brewer, for 21 years unless the Government should want its return for its own use. Within that period parts of the grounds were variously used for a cricket pitch, a girl's school and a fairground and circus site. In 1840, after careful consideration of defence requirements, the Government finally sold the land for £4,500 to property developers and the military interest in it ceased. For the time being Guildford was to be without a barracks but the need for a replacement was to emerge in the not too distant future.

### **Guildford Militia Barracks 1854 - 1876**

The Militia, in various forms, dated back to Anglo-Saxon times when "every male between the ages of 16 and 60 was liable to appear armed when called upon to suppress internal disorders or to defend the country against invasion".

Controlled and regulated on a County basis under the Lieutenant of the County, it was officered by local gentry and landowners and their relatives. After going through a period of unpopularity and decline the Militia was re-organised in 1756 at the beginning of the Seven Years War. Under the re-organisation Surrey was to have two battalions, the first with headquarters at Richmond and the second with Headquarters at Guildford. At some time during the Napoleonic Wars the Guildford Barracks ceased to be used for being regularised in 1812 following the passage of a new Act of



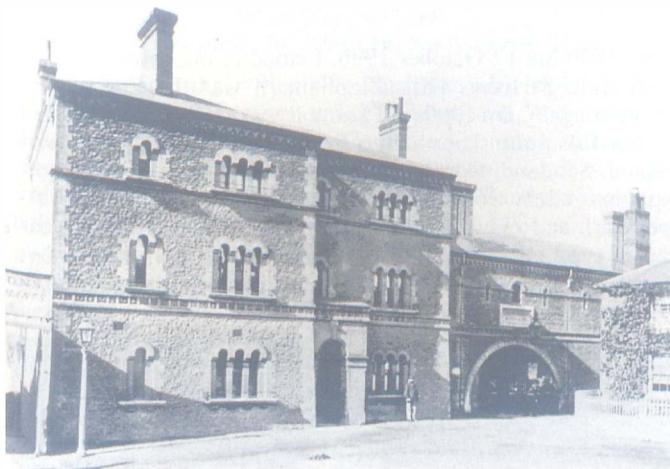
*Colonel The Right Honourable The Earl of Lovelace.*

from 1854 to 1862 was Sergeant John Walker Edgar. A native of Cork he had served in the Army since 1831 in the West Indies, America and Australia-a truly worldly wise man of his times.

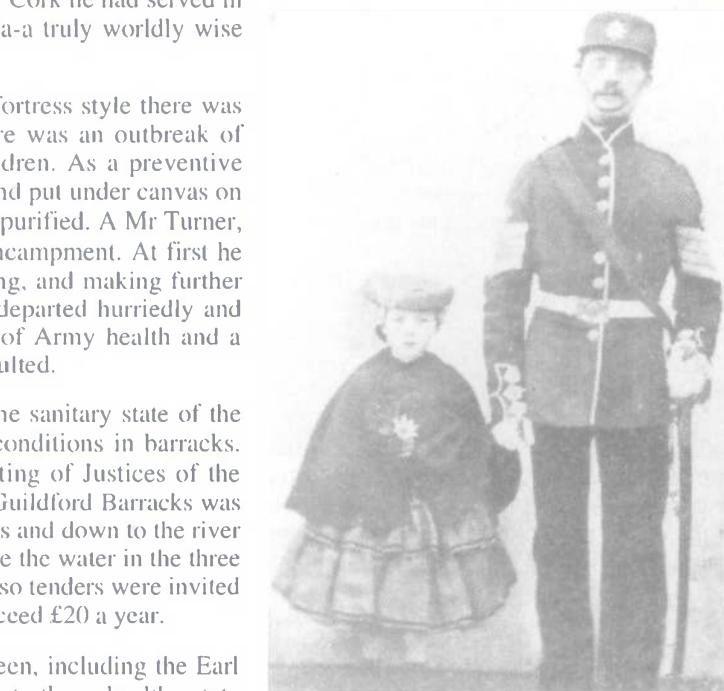
Although the buildings were up to date and handsome in their fortress style there was soon trouble with the sanitary arrangements and in 1854 there was an outbreak of cholera resulting in the deaths of two Sergeants and four children. As a preventive measure the rest of the staff and their families were moved out and put under canvas on the Hog's Back while the barracks were thoroughly cleaned and purified. A Mr Turner, out for a saunter and "*bounding merrily along*" came on the encampment. At first he thought it was a gipsy gathering but seeing the British flag flying, and making further enquiry, he learnt the true purpose of the camp and doubtless departed hurriedly and less merrily. The Crimean War revealed the shocking neglect of Army health and a number of reforms, largely initiated by Florence Nightingale, resulted.

As early as 1857 a Royal Commission was set up to examine the sanitary state of the Army and this was followed by commissions to enquire into conditions in barracks. Such a commission was set up in Surrey, the members consisting of Justices of the Peace for the County and others. A main item of concern at the Guildford Barracks was the main drain running under the Adjutant's and Sergeants' houses and down to the river causing "*a smell in the Adjutant's dining room*". At the same time the water in the three wells was analysed and found to be unfit for human consumption so tenders were invited from the Guildford Waterworks to lay on water at a cost not to exceed £20 a year.

In 1866, after an outbreak of typhoid, another committee of fifteen, including the Earl of Lovelace and the Hon W Brodrick was appointed to enquire into the unhealthy state of the Militia Barracks at Guildford. The Regimental Surgeon was satisfied as to health within the barracks and was of the opinion that the illness had been brought into the premises by a child who attended a school in Guildford where typhoid was prevalent. He reported that the Waterworks Company were now supplying water for household use.



*The Militia Depot, Guildford 1870*



*Sergeant Edgar at the Barracks 1852 to 1862 and his daughter Eliza.*

He reported that the Waterworks Company

In 1870, the year of the resignation of Lord Lovelace, an extensive training programme was undertaken and the experiment was made of putting men under canvas in the Chalk Pit in York Road instead of in billets. The experiment was considered a success, the encamped troops attracting much favourable publicity which, among other things, resulted in increased recruiting. In the same year, Cardwell, Secretary of State for War, who lived at Eashing, introduced his Army reforms one of which was the provision of better barracks. It was decided that the Guildford Barracks were too small and had no room for expansion so another site was looked for and eventually located at Stoughton where new barracks were erected in 1876. The old Barracks estate, like that of its predecessor, was procured by a brewer, Mr Trimmer of Farnham, and eventually made subject of development. History in the centre of the town had repeated itself and the residents now had to look to Stoughton for military activity and were to do so for many years to come. A new housing estate, attractively embodying parts of the old Stoughton Barracks, now stands there.

*Acknowledgments: The Editor gratefully records his thanks to Richard Ford and Mathew Alexander of Guildford Museum in the compilation of this article.*

## **Fire Power for the Civil Power**

A paragraph with accompanying photograph, on page 93 of the excellent publication "The Final Years 1938-1959" records that, "*An unusual sight was witnessed at the Depot on 23rd May 1951 when the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery paraded in full dress with their guns and 60 horses prior to firing a salute at the funeral of Field Marshal Lord Birdwood*".

Doubtless the troop created a fine and colourful impression as they clattered through the streets of Kingston-upon-Thames but an impression of a different nature must have been created forty years earlier in January 1911 when their predecessors, in black khaki service dress, thundered through the streets of Stepney at full gallop with horses, timbers and two field guns "*in aid to the civil power*".

Numbers of a gang of anarchists, who weeks earlier had murdered three City of London policemen and seriously wounded two others in a violent shooting incident at Houndsditch, had been cornered in a house in Sidney Street where they were besieged by armed police and a detachment of Scots Guards from the Tower of London.

After a fierce and sustained exchange of shots, during which another policeman was wounded, consideration was given to blasting the criminals out of their refuge by the use of artillery. Before this could be put into effect, however, the situation resolved itself when the house caught fire and the gunmen perished in the flames. The Royal Horse Artillery returned to their barracks at St John's Wood with their guns unfired.

## Museum on the move

The Museum is having to find a new home. The National Trust has said that regrettably they will not renew our lease when it expires in September this year. They will however, give us two years from September '97 in which to find an alternative location. The National Trust requires the accommodation that we occupy for their own use and we have not been able to persuade them to change their minds.

Having come to terms with this devastating news, the Trustees are actively seeking new premises and are determined to create, in due course, a worthy replacement for Clandon and provide a meeting centre for our Regimental Association. Should anyone hear of suitable premises, e.g. a former church or a local Council property that is, or due to become vacant then please let me or Mrs James know at the Museum. Such premises need to be near somewhere that already attracts visitors or adjacent to a main thoroughfare in a town.

If any of our readers has experience of relocating a business or making a lottery bid would they please let me know.

## Museum Notes

We have been busy during the "Closed Season" and there have been a number of changes in our presentations which we hope our visitors will appreciate. The Museum is looking pristine and we are grateful to our permanent staff and helpers for making it so.

We were delighted to receive recently a generous bequest of £500 from the estate of the late Brigadier MacWilliam. It is our intention to apply this money to the purchase of a specific object in his name and suitably to record the fact. We also were pleased to receive several groups of medals which will be shortly on display, together with some artefacts of the 21st London Regiment (First Surrey Rifles) from the collection of Bt Colonel L M Fordyce OBE TD DL.

One of our two Carlisle Figures has been very successfully restored as has, a particularly fine watercolour of Hong Kong Harbour painted by Captain R H Rocke, Queen's in 1860.

You will be pleased to learn that John Woodroff, our Hon Archivist, has made a remarkable recovery and it is good to see both him and Alma on a regular basis once again. We learnt with great sadness that Mary, the wife of Richard Ford, died on 19th March following a severe stroke. We offer him our sincerest condolences.

## Museum Presentation



Captain Gerald E Ellis, late 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment, presenting the Volunteer Long Service Medal of his ancestor, Corporal E Hancock, to Major Peter Hill in the Regimental Museum.

May I please remind you all that the **Museum Open Day is on Sunday 21st September from 12-5 pm**. Arrange to meet your friends and tell us about the one that got away. We re-opened on 30th March and complying with National Trust opening hours our revised timings are:

**Open: Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sun & Bank Holidays 12-5 pm  
Closed: Mon, Fri & Sat.**

A note appears elsewhere about our latest publication "North Africa and the Middle East" by one of our authors in residence - Major Bob Johnson.

Help will be needed when we move and I shall be asking you to assist once the future becomes clearer.

PAWGD

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## The Surreys Reunion



Surreys Reunion, Bill Warren, Maureen Rickman, Geoff Strong and Jack Chaffer

Time 1800 hrs 12 October 1996. I stood at the entrance of the Drill Hall, St Johns Hill, Clapham. It was the East Surrey Reunion again. By 1900hrs I knew it was well on the way to a successful night. They came from far and wide - Northern Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall and Wales. We had a grand night. Approximately 265 arrived. There were young (relatively speaking) and old and quite a few officers attended this year. We played the Regimental Marches of the 1st and 2nd Battalions and it's nice to see them all standing to attention and a tear in the eye.



Major Peter Bruckmann talking to the sons of the late Douglas Lewcock

We will be having a new President this year as Major Pepperall has finished his tour. We thank him for taking it on and serving us well. The new President will be Colonel W E McConnell TD. I think he is well known to all, as he has served as Chairman of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association and is also its legal adviser. We have to thank Kath Bedford for her work in sending out the ticket applications and running the raffle. Well done Kath and her family and also the Committee Fred Jenkins and Olly Whyman. I couldn't do without them. So once again thanks for a good attendance and hope to see you all on 11th October 1997.

Tony Ramsey

## 2/7th Queen's (1939-46) OCA

Our 51st Reunion on 22nd March was held as usual at the Ebury Arms, Victoria. The occasion was of course much saddened by the death on 30th December of our President, Brigadier MacWilliam, whose support and encouragement over these many years has been so inspirational to us all. Our annual attendance at Reunions has been well maintained greatly aided by "Mac's" expertise and diligence in the production of computerised address labels on his input of about 200 names. This year we are indebted to our Hon Sec., Sid Messenger, for covering the task on his word-processor, with a turn-out of 58 from 136 replies, a good response to his hard and dedicated work.



"Where's my drink gone"?  
Gus Leaney, Joe Wilcock and Reg Pemberton

It must be said that "Mac's" enthusiasm and leadership has been at the heart of our enduring comradeship, and following the traditional toast to Absent Comrades, coupled with fifteen names of deceased comrades since the last reunion, it was right that the Chairman for the day Alan Sanders (Sandy) should pay tribute to Brigadier "Mac" in a brief eulogy recalling his outstanding qualities of leadership during the seven year existence of the Battalion. His progress from his T.A. days is memorably recorded in Roy Bullen's excellent book (still on sale at Clandon) which tells of the uniqueness of our being in action under only four C.O.'s, Girling, Block, Baynes and then MacWilliam, at the age of 24, finally leading us from the Gothic Line to the Morgan Line with Yugoslavia.



An "I" Section "O" Group?  
Bert Bodman, Toby Sewell and Ginger Murray

For all of us, there had been something quite special about the 2/7th with four such valiant and efficient leaders. It had been "Mac's" last bequested wish (with donation) that we should stand and drink a toast to the Battalion in his dedicated words, "in memory of their achievements and loyal comradeship". It



*More recruits for The Italy Star Association?  
Alf Lovelady, Bert Bodman and Graham Swain*

was a moving moment with a brief and much appreciated response from Alistair MacWilliam, his son, as befitting the occasion. To mark the continuing spirit of the Battalion we finished with a rousing rendition of "The Good Old Seventh Queen's", ably led by Tedder and Stockwell and company.

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## The Queen's Royal Regiment (Southwark)

The annual reunion of The Queen's (Southwark) Old Comrades Association and the citizens of St Niklaas Belgium occurred on September 7th-11th 1996.

The usual parade and march through the city to the various War Memorials was carried out with the normal dignity and was attended by numerous representative bodies together with the Burgomaster and Aldermen of the city. Old Comrades laid wreaths at the memorials to the 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, the Polish War Memorial and the Monument to the Resistance.

The Old Comrades and Wives were entertained to dinner by both the City and the Patriotic Committee over the weekend. There were also various activities and entertainments in the Market Square:- these included Marching Bands, Hot Air Balloons and a Military Tattoo.

Sadly the weekend passed all too quickly and we were on our way home but determined to return in 1997.

ASP

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## Major J L A Fowler TD

*Thank you for your generous help in  
producing our Newsletter and the  
Hong Kong supplement.*

## A First for The Queen's Surreys

Tracked vehicles are now such a familiar part of the military scene that probably little thought is given by most people to the strenuous trials that have to be undergone, both by machinery and men, before the product of the drawing board finally enters into operational service.



On the start line

When in 1961 the FV 432 types were making their appearance and awaiting trials at the Fighting Vehicles and Research Development Establishment at Chobham, Surrey, Captain (later Major) Jeremy Warner-Johnson, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, was the officer in charge of the trials. One of his first tasks was to select drivers, all of whom had to be of height specifications between 5'6" and 6'2" - these factors being relevant to the interior space room of the vehicles. One of those selected was L/Cpl J C Rogerson also of the Queen's Surreys. The collective letters of Major Warner-Johnson and L/Cpl Rogerson make interesting reading.

The first vehicles at Chobham were only wooden mock-ups so more realistic experience had to be gained by use of American Army similar M133 APCs. Trials were "Top Secret" and after initial experimentation at Chobham were continued in Aden in the form of "Physiological and Comparative Hot Weather Trials", still under the command of Major Warner-Johnson. At various stages of development an RAF Photographic Unit was involved, taking both aerial and ground shots. The term "Hot Weather Trials" definitely had emphasis on the heat. Temperatures of 135° C in the shade, coupled with engine temperatures of 205° C had to be endured. Not surprisingly, there were weight losses among crew members.

Physical and psychological variations and reactions were measured and assessed by medical teams, some of whom



Driver Rogerson, Commander 'Lofty' Baker, giant Gregory and laid back 17/21st Lancer subaltern



Driver Rogerson beating the gradient vehicle comparison record

travelled inside the vehicles with the crews on long and exhausting drives. Mechanically, trials had to be carried out in fitting various internal equipments. Major Warner-Johnson recalls that very few "nuts and bolts" were aligned properly for these intricacies. As various types of the vehicle were developed more trials were devised and more faults and problems detected. Steep slope climbs, in comparison with other tracked and other wheeled vehicles, were on test and Rogerson recalls one "hairy" but successful attempt when accompanied by a "very laid back subaltern" from the 17/21 Lancers from whose base they were operating. Oil levels were a problem as no dip sticks were provided, but one member of the team, of allegedly large lung capacity, had developed a knack of literally sucking out surplus lubricant.



'All wired up for hours'. Can anyone name these C Coy members of 1 Queens Surreys, photo taken in August 1961. Second on left Mickey Lemar

Beach assault tactics were tried in both wet and dry sand, causing some difficulties through salt water corrosion of metal parts. Some assault course obstacles were removed by unorthodox means. Thieving Arabs stole the lot during the night. But the trials, sweat and labours of the Queen's Surreys teams were obviously not in vain as a visit by the then Minister for War, John Profumo, resulted in acceptance of the APCs and substantial contracts being placed with the firms of GKN and Rolls Royce. About a year later, when in Hong Kong, Major Warner-Johnson was told that the MOD had been "considerably impressed" by 1 Queen's Surreys APC Trials, although one cavalry officer could not understand a reference to "saddle sores" - a malady suffered by the Army's equine friends due to ill fitting equipment. It was explained to him that in this context the malady was suffered by human beings and was related to horse-power and not horses. Explanation accepted-honour satisfied. In 1985, by then Training Major with 6/7th Queen's, the former L/Cpl Rogerson met up with a collector of Army vehicles who had one of the relevant APCs in his collection. There were hints of a possible drive in it, but so far there is no information as to whether the venture materialised.

JVW-J, JCR & RF

Note: If anyone knows the whereabouts of the N.S. Trials drivers 'Stoker', Peck, 'Lofty' Baker, and Dave Maddagane please let the Editor know.

## Rupert nets a hostage

Dear Reader, you will no doubt be interested to know that these little tips and hints for the aspiring young officer, based on my own successful and varied career, are being taken seriously by those at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. It is rumoured that those making the biggest impression on their Tutors and Drill Instructors are those cadets who have been reading this very column. These Officer Cadets have a quality that distinguishes them from the run of the mill. I must say that I find it most surprising, that I did not get the recognition I deserved during my service and consequently never quite reached the dizzy ranks of high command. It was not for the want of effort or diligence.

Far from it. I always took every opportunity to impress my senior officers and give them the benefit of my thoughts. I found that cornering them at a Cocktail Party or sitting next to them at dinner was always a good ploy. For instance, it was I who presented a very well reasoned argument to the Regimental Dress Committee, suggesting that the Regiment should adopt a Scarlet Beret. It was my view that we had to do something to attract the public's imagination and notice. But no, all they could come up with were more and more images pasted together to form a cap badge. During a recent survey, only 1 in 612 people stopped in the street, could correctly answer the question - "What is the name of your County Regiment?" And that person was the RSM of the 2nd Battalion. He received a Regimental Ball Point pen for being the first to answer the question correctly and had his photograph published in the Surrey Comet. I expect you saw it; he looked very pleased with himself.

I also changed the sealed pattern of the officer's No 2 Dress Cap. Well I did not actually change the sealed pattern, because it is sealed. But I did change my version of it. If you have a look at old photographs, you will see that my cap was slightly taller at the front, with a shorter peak raked at a 2.5 degree angle more acute than the 'standard.' The first person to notice the difference was Giles Smith. "How do I get a cap like that one?" The next person to notice was the Colonel. "Where did you get that cap?" I told him the truth - "From the Regimental Hatters Sir, Herbert Johnson, in Bond Street." He harrumphed and strode off muttering something under his breath. I did not tell him that it had taken some severe arm twisting, to get old Mr Herbert to make the changes I had wanted. I also had to swear on HJ's oldest head measuring device that I would not let on. But slowly, several new versions of the cap began to appear.

With all this talent and initiative welling up inside me, you would think that Senior Officers would have taken note and marked me down for accelerated and rapid promotion. Maybe they did. Perhaps the information back from my CO got lost in the post. Maybe his words of recommendation had been misunderstood. I thought about those, surely apocryphal, stories where an officer had his confidential report marked "I would hesitate to breed from this Officer." But I knew that remarks like that could never be levelled at me. I could only assume that serving a tennis ball full bore into his daughter's bottom, at the last tennis party, had not improved my chances with the Commanding Officer. I had been so embarrassed, that without thinking, I had said "Would you like me to rub it better." Memsahib Mrs Colonel nearly choked to death on a small piece of cucumber sandwich. When she recovered her composure she looked as if she was about to strike me. I know it is far, far too late. But Caroline, if you are reading this, I am truly sorry. No partner of mine, ever again, advanced to the net whilst I was serving.

So it was a great surprise not to be going back to the battalion after my stint at the Depot. I was told that although there had

been a most pressing call for my presence back in the battalion, the Commanding Officer had been overruled by the Ministry of Defence. Instead there was a new challenging career opportunity in Whitehall. Now at this stage I must caution you, dear reader, that as far as I am aware this manuscript has not been submitted to the Ministry for their approval. The Editor has always exhibited a certain cavalier attitude to those who dwell there. Therefore it may contain information which could be of use to a Foreign Power. It is possible that I shall be letting slip the odd snippet of a security nature. But Mum's the word - and let's keep it all just between ourselves. I was to be working in something called Intelligence.

I was shown to my new office. It was quite large with a very high ceiling and big sash windows. A simple desk, chair and empty steel cupboard completed the picture. I had been told to stay where I was and someone would arrive with instructions. I expected Harry Palmer. After a very long wait, a scruffy, elderly man with a speech impediment, came in and introduced himself as 'Harold.' "I am sorry it has not arrived and until it does, you will have to stay here, we are waiting for your Hostage Netting." Now this sounded better. It was obviously going to be a real action job where my physical prowess was going to be at a premium. However, my thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of a severe faced woman with her hair scraped back into a bun at the back of her head, who simply huffed slightly as she put a box on my desk and said "Here's your starter kit." She left without another word. She was not quite my idea of Miss Moneypenny, more your Irma Klebb. I supposed that the starter kit must have been sent up from Q's Department. Probably things like: Cyanide capsules, snub nosed automatic, personal radio and Rolex, together with a few stun grenades. Exciting stuff. I opened the box to find a Teacup, Saucer, Teaspoon, Hand Towel and small bar of Soap. This was apparently accorded to all Civil Servants of a certain level. Below that level you did not get the soap - and so on down.

My first days were disappointingly boring. I had nothing to do, no work, no contacts, nothing. So I read the Newspaper, did the crossword puzzle and tried to keep my body honed with physical jerks and press ups, whilst waiting for the call to rescue hostages, wherever they might be held and however dangerous the situation. In my lunch hour I visited a local travel agent and under the cunning, careful guise of an innocent traveller I managed to get pictures of many different passenger aircraft. These I would study later to see the best way of effecting an entry and getting any hostages out. I also perfected the Rapid Entry Technique. (RET - a pamphlet I wrote at the time is available to interested readers who enclose £5 and a stamped, self addressed envelope.) I would pause outside my office. Then, without warning, I would fling open the door, leap inside, flatten myself against the right hand wall before adopting a menacing crouch and shouting "Freeze or I Fire". Unfortunately this gave the cleaner a nasty turn and later I was asked, very politely, if I could carry out my hostage evacuation training elsewhere or at least avoid Tuesdays, which was the day for the cleaner to disinfect the telephone mouthpieces and leave clean towels.

The sole excitement each day was listening out for the squeaky wheel of the Tea Trolley. This would stop at the end of the corridor and chattering bands of Civil Servants would sally forth with their cups and saucers for the morning's nectar and possibly a sticky bun. This particular day, I heard the squeaky wheel and reached into the bottom drawer of my desk, for cup and saucer. Oh Dear! I had been a slovenly little civil servant and not washed them out the day before. As a result the cup was stuck firmly to the saucer. The Tea Lady was never too accurate with the pouring. When you are on your own, unobserved, you do strange things. I suddenly found that I could turn the cup and saucer over, through 360 degrees and

the cup remained firmly stuck to the saucer, even when inverted for several seconds.

I came to with a jolt, it was time to wash the crockery. As I walked down the corridor I saw some of my would-be-colleagues coming towards me. Wanting to be a cheerful, amusing sort of chap I called out "Hey, have you seen this trick?" With that I twirled the inverted cup and saucer and held it above my head. The cup simply fell off, bruising my ear, before it smashed to the floor in a dozen pieces. My colleagues left me to pick up the bits. All I could hear was raucous laughter and comments like "You'd think they would give them some information about gravity, before they came here." There was no doubt I had made my presence felt and I looked forward to working with them.

Aged Harold returned and put a piece of paper in front of me - "Here you are, no more waiting, at last you can join the others, we have received your Hostage Netting." I read the note to learn that, now that I had been passed by the security Positive Vetting procedure, I would be moved into a different section. Shame, I had been looking forward to getting those people out of aircraft and other risky situations, maybe there would be another opportunity. I could not wait to see what the action would be.

I worked alongside an American exchange officer who was most charming and had an engaging sense of humour not to mention a very large and powerful sports car. But he had a huge secret that had not been discovered by the Pentagon. It came to light when I found him surrounded by large piles of files and maps. He was industriously scrabbling his way through them. Idly I looked over his shoulder to see what it was that was interesting him so much. I was surprised. "Ed, why are you looking at all this stuff?" "Well I have been told to take a special interest in all things to do with Nigeria." "Ed, I know that. But this has nothing to do with Nigeria - it is all about Nicaragua." His secret was out - he suffered advanced and untreatable Dyslexia. If you read about the Americans pouring troops into Nigeria to try and halt the drugs trade, pause for a moment and then find out whether Ed has made it to General, or better.

Between invasions of Latin American countries we played our own version of bowls or shuffle weight. The civil service kindly provided us with heavy, cast iron paper weights with green baize stuck on the underside. We slid these along the tops of the long metal map presses to see who could stop closest to the far edge, without the paperweight falling off. And good sport it was too, with many a daring wager. It all had to come to an end when the General's ADC came to investigate the thuds that were disturbing the great man, one floor below.

I had got to observe DSINT (Director of Service Intelligence) at close quarters. He had a fearsome reputation. Each morning I simply tacked myself on to the back of the crowd going into the briefing centre for 'Morning Prayers.' This was a briefing by the three services for DSINT. Most of the attendees were somewhat senior to me, but by looking the part of someone's assistant, I avoided any embarrassing questions or challenges. And very interesting it was too. As each presenter made his pitch, the key to how well he was doing, was The Foot. I would always keep my eye on General Willison's foot. If it stayed still or only flipped up and down a little, all was well. But woe on the man who talked on while the foot started to zap up and down with short jerky movements. A short life was about to end, a career was speeding towards the buffers. Many times I averted my eyes - it is not nice to watch an animal in distress.

In my new office I sat directly opposite the other occupant, a retired senior RAF officer. A large, very large, set of wooden

'In', 'Out', 'File', 'Pending', 'Immediate Action', file trays made a mini Berlin wall between us. He seldom spoke. But this morning he did - "I have just been promoted a grade. I am now entitled to a carpet. The fitters will be along later this morning, please allow them to get the task finished as soon as possible." With that he left. Later on the carpet men fitted a large carpet which stretched well over to my side of the desk. The head fitter then came back with an extra small square of carpet. "This is to stop him wearing out the carpet where his feet rest." I thought this a good idea and asked if a piece could be provided for my side of the desk. "You are not entitled." was the stern reply. However I was entitled to wear out the carpet on my side of the desk. I was beginning to understand the Civil Service, but like many before me, I still found the RAF a little difficult.

So to all those aspiring, young officers who are diligently studying this column; remember, if you want to:- Improve your chances of success, reduce the odds against you, get a better chance of accelerated promotion - then put your best ideas down on paper and send them without delay to your Brigade Commander. But do not forget to send a copy to your Commanding Officer. I am sure we will be hearing about you before long. Meanwhile, I must away, the Squeaky Wheel Tea Trolley calls.....

Rupert

## Congratulations and Best Wishes



### **Diamond Wedding congratulations to:-**

Mick and Annie Jenkins on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on the 12th December 1996.

### **Golden Wedding congratulations to:-**

Jack and Mary Ashcroft on the 21st December 1996.

Bob Brinkley and his wife on the 1st November 1996.

Doug and Margaret Mitchell on the 12th April 1997.

Bill and Mrs Goff on the 26th April 1997.

**Congratulations to** Vic and Alice Aukett who celebrated 52 years of marriage on 3rd November 1996. Rumour has it that Alice bought Vic a new 'Brooms Bass' for the occasion.

### **Birthday greetings to:-**

Arthur Scriven who was 93 on the 11th November 1996, may you see many more Arthur.

Colonel John Francis who was issued with his pension book on 20th April 1996.

### **Best Wishes to:-**

Brigadier Mike Doyle who has retired as Secretary General of the Commonwealth Ex-Services League on the 31st January 1997, and has also undergone another operation on his legs. Happily he is now well on the mend. We wish him and Ann a long, and healthy retirement.

## Poona first and last

The Queen's were stationed at Poona during the Regiment's first year in India in 1825, and it is from there that 2nd Queen's departed from India in 1947. It was and still is a city of considerable importance in Western India. In the early 19th century it was the capital of the Peshwa, the Ruler of the Maharatta Confederacy, and it was there that his army was finally defeated by the much smaller East India Company force at the Battle of Kirkee in 1817. The Queen's arrived there in December 1825 glad to be rid of the humidity of Bombay where they had suffered much sickness, and the Regiment soon returned to good health on the crisp upland plains of Poona. It was there that the Regiment maintained a depot for its families and the reception of drafts from England during its long absence during the First Afghan War, and it was from there that it took part in operations during the Southern Maharatta Campaign in 1844.

The Regiment returned there just over one hundred years later when 2nd Queen's arrived from Ranchi near Calcutta in June 1945 where the battalion had been re-forming after its Chindit operations in North East Burma. There were then a large number of units and installations in the Poona area including the depot of the Indian Army Bombay Sappers and Miners and the arsenal at Kirkee a couple of miles from the city, an RAF station, and the Southern Command Education Centre at the Deccan College which in the early years of World War Two had housed the Indian Army Tactical School for the teaching, mainly, of armoured warfare. The Tactical School moved to jungle country in North East India near Dehra Dun when its role changed after the entry of the Japanese into the war, for trees were in short supply around Poona. The nearest patch of jungle was at the hill station of Mahableshwar some eighty miles to the south.

2nd Queen's were stationed initially at Uruli, seventeen miles from Poona, before moving in September after the war with Japan was over to Pashan Camp which was a tented camp four miles from the city. They were at much reduced strength initially most of its Chindit veterans having returned to England on repatriation (Operation Python) but the battalion received reinforcing drafts in November and December. It was still part of the 72nd Brigade which also included the 2nd Leicesters, 1st Essex, 2nd Borders, 2nd Manchesters, 146 Regiment Royal Armoured Corps (Duke of Wellington's) and the Maharatta Light Infantry.

It had an artillery Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel H G de Jacobi Du Vallon DSO MC who had served with great distinction during the Chindit campaign. He had taken over when the battalion absorbed another Chindit unit, 60th Regiment RA., and it had been further made up to strength by Royal Welch Fusiliers and six Australian Forces officers.

In October 1945 the battalion moved temporarily to Bombay to quell communal riots, but was employed in guarding vital points and was not called into action. Internal security had again become the primary role of units, and military drills for crowd dispersal were much practiced. They were based on a platoon of some thirty men. The platoon formed up smartly with, if possible, a wire barrier between it and the mob. It had a diarist, and a photographer to record events, a banner party (the banner inscribed in English and the vernacular calling on the crowd to disperse) and a bugler to draw attention to it. First there was the formal signing over of responsibility for dealing with the situation to the military commander by the local magistrate or police officer, then there was the warning to disperse, and finally, if necessary, the opening of carefully controlled fire by specified marksmen at identified agitators followed by a pause to assess effect and provide the opportunity for them to disperse. The procedure was very different from the action at Amritsar in 1919.

In February 1946 the battalion returned to Bombay with the rest of 72nd Brigade. The occasion was the Royal Indian Navy mutiny and the subsequent rioting in the city. The battalion was heavily engaged and there were a lot of occasions when fire had to be opened. It returned to Poona on 12th March, 72nd Brigade then broke up, and the battalion said farewell to 2nd Leicesters which had been its companion throughout the war. The six Australian officers also completed their service with the battalion - they had made a great contribution, not least in the sporting and social field. In July Pashan Camp was taken over by the 4th Indian Division and 2nd Queen's moved to Kharakvasla South Camp on the shores of Lake Fife twelve miles from Poona. During the war the lake had been used for combined operations training. Kharakvasla is now the home of the Indian Military Academy. In 1946 the accommodation consisted of Nissen huts and bamboo bashas built on a series of levels on the hill side above the lake. Local facilities for entertainment were limited and petrol rationing precluded frequent visits to Poona. However each company was able to spend one week at the Poona Holiday Home, and some soldiers were able to take leave at the Colaba holiday camp outside Bombay. Moreover as the weather improved the advantage of a camp on the shores of the lake became more apparent and the excellent facilities for swimming and sailing were much enjoyed.



Lake Fife, Kharakvasla Camp - May '47

In November 1946 one company was detached to the Mahad area some hundred miles from Poona where communal rioting had broken out, but it was back in time for Christmas which was celebrated in style with the battalion concert party providing several first class shows.

The New Year dawned with the news that the battalion was to return to the UK and from there to the British Army of the Rhine. Prior to their departure the Warrant Officers and Sergeants received a present of a silver salver from their opposite numbers in the Bombay Sappers and Miners with whom they had established a close relationship. On the 17th January the battalion sailed from Bombay in the Highland Princess. On 4th February they arrived at Tilbury and moved into the huts at West Camp, Crowborough in Sussex, with two inches of snow on the ground. Poona was already a dream, and for many their only experience of India, but one to savour for many years to come!

MJAC

## India - A Memory, 1946

When I left for the war in the summer of 1943 Colonel Joe Bathgate, commanding 13th Queen's said to me "Well, Sewell, you're off to the Great Adventure" - I expect it was, but perhaps even more was going to India.

In the late summer of 1945 I returned to England as an officer of the 1st Bn The Royal Fusiliers, who were one of the British battalions of 8th Indian Division. We were due to go to the Far

East to fight the Japanese, but the nuclears were dropped and it was all over, and it seemed that some excitement and purpose had left life - not that in many ways one minded! Still India was there and as a very junior officer I wrote to my Colonel, General Sir George Gifford, and the Great Man wrote me a nice letter and said he would fix things with AG. So in January 1946 I reported to the London Assembly Centre in the deepest hole in London, Goodge Street Tube Station that was and is again, hopefully being sent to join the 2nd Queen's then stationed in Poona and, having recovered from the post-Chindit debility, part of 36th Division. I was very lucky because very few more British soldiers were to go out to follow that historic company lasting for nearly 200 years who served in the British Army in India, loved India and in many cases gave their lives and the lives of their wives and children to India.

Except that I was amongst the last my service in India had little distinction, other than the way of getting there. There was no beating round the Cape or troopship with the scoops out going down the Red Sea. I and the little draft I was given flew in Dakota's, flapping their wings all the way - it took us seven days. We were three Dakotas each with 26 or 27 troops sustained by boiled sweets and jungle juice. We stopped the first night in Sardinia, at El Adem outside Tobruk for the second night, and so to Lydda (now Lod). We had a day off in Palestine and then flew on via Habbanyah in Iraq, Bahrain and so through the night to Karachi. Eventually the RAF took us on to Poona with the bumpiest part of the ride as we came up over the Western Ghats - the line of mountains and escarpment between Poona and Bombay. We were still not finished as the system required a journey to the Infantry Re-inforcement Depot at Deolali while GHQ India decided one's final posting. Mine was confirmed and so I joined 2nd Queen's.

The battalion had little Queen's content, all those who had served in the Middle East and as Chindits having returned home. We had a Gunner Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henri de Jacobi Du Vallon, DSO, MC., who had led a column of his Regiment in the Chindit operations with great distinction and under him a whole mixture with a large number from the Royal Welch Fusiliers and six Australian officers. However all took pride in being Queen's and setting higher standards of smartness than others with the Commanding Officer leading by example. Arriving into this scene, as I had just been appointed to a Regular Commission I found myself as Adjutant at that stage I was the only Regular Queen's officer even though I was of only two months standing.

As Adjutant I should remember a lot, and perhaps particularly about the Bombay Riots of February 1946, which followed on from the Royal Indian Navy mutiny. However I don't - the battalion was despatched to the Naval Dockyard initially, but all was more or less resolved when we got there and then we moved into the City where the Companies were deployed dealing with the riots in the old fashioned way, with



Battalion Band playing the Battalion through Bombay

magistrates to read "The Act", banners and single shots to be fired "at the man in the red shirt" - however this was only after the Police had waded in wielding their lathis with maximum effect. Things lasted about three days and were then wrapped up by marching through the main trouble areas "to show the flag", and so back to Poona. Coming down to Bombay and back again the main movement was by train and one remembers that entraining and de-training was another thing the Queen's did better than other people!

Within the office I remember mainly the continual movements as Release Groups came up and the difficulty of pinning papers together with the violent thorns which were issued instead of pins - they could seemingly go straight through a finger - and the problem attendant on keeping scattered papers down on one's table when a dust devil whirled across the Pashan plain. Pashan Camp in which the battalion was located was on the wide open spaces to the west of Poona, where the battle took place in 1817, and accommodation was mainly tents, although there were some bungalow huts for messes, cookhouses and the contractor's amenities.

In July we moved from Pashan Camp to Kharakvasla Camp on the shores of Lake Fife - this was a hatted camp and opposite where the Indian Army Military Academy is now built. While the Camp was further out from Poona we got there just before the monsoon broke and so avoided getting too muddy and wet. For me it was a relief too as, with the arrival of Lieutenant Colonel A J A (James) Watson. I was able to escape from the office to command a company. The battalion was sorry to lose Lieutenant Colonel Du Vallon, who had led us with great dash, not least in sporting affairs in which he participated to the full, being a great runner and hockey player. The enthusiasm for games was continued naturally by James Watson, who still with Colonel John Kealy held the Army Shot Putting record, and indeed I recall my time in India as a wonderful games playing year, hockey, cricket, rugger, athletics and the battalion had a good soccer side too. Colonel D V also encouraged other pursuits and from this the Officers' Mess acquired a goat to eat our cigarettes and have the freedom of the Mess - the goat was originally destined to be tiger bait, but as no tiger came those who were to shoot the tiger insisted on keeping him and so he joined us, although whether he appreciated it on some Sunday mornings when he was encouraged to be pie-eyed and cross legged is another matter. The Mess also had two cats, Magnolia and Tim, who lived very well.

What else does one recall? The warm wonderful smell compounded of dung, of spices and betel juice perhaps, the great aroma of re-generated earth and vegetation as the first monsoon rains fell, the wheeling Kite Hawks in the sky, and outside Bombay the vultures over the Parsee burial ghats. Then the final scenes - the evident bewilderment of many, particularly of course the servants of the Army, the cha-wallahs, the dhobi-wallahs, the dhersis and all those others, that the British Army was actually going, and finally Bombay and the "Highland Princess" carrying ourselves and the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Carbineers, away into the ocean past the Gateway of India - I don't think we were oppressed by being the end of the line - perhaps we were too young - but it had been a wonderful experience.

Finally we docked at Tilbury on a cold damp evening in February, and there on the dockside were four straight figures lined up with caps square down and great coats buttoned to the neck - we were home to be converted into a proper Queen's Regular battalion, but even so we felt that what had been done in the Regiment's last year in India was not unworthy of our predecessors.

JWS



# Book Reviews

## Steel Inferno - I SS Panzer Corps in Normandy by Major General (Retd) Mike Reynolds CB

Only two divisions in the German Army bore Hitler's name - the 1st SS Panzer Division, Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler and the 12th SS Panzer Division, Hitlerjugend. Together they formed his I SS Panzer Corps and this is the story of their participation and destruction in the Battle for Normandy.

The 1st SS Panzer Division was formed from Hitler's Bodyguard Regiment and soon earned a fearsome reputation as the premier Division of the Waffen-SS. From its ranks came the leaders of a clone Division, raised mainly from Hitler youths born in the year 1926, which the Allies nicknamed 'The Baby Division'. But in Normandy the Hitlerjugend fought, as Chester Wilmot put it, 'with a tenacity and a ferocity seldom equalled and never excelled during the whole campaign'. "Steel Inferno" describes in a unique manner the extraordinary achievements of these men who have been equated to Attila's Huns or the scouring hordes of Ghengis Khan, and it gives a clear insight into their mentality and motivation. It concludes that we are unlikely to see their like again.

General Mike has researched meticulously the battles between these young Waffen-SS soldiers and their British, Canadian, American and Polish adversaries - including those of 131 (Queen's) Brigade! He brings a new balance to the overall picture and uniquely quantifies 'the enemy' and, often quite appalling, casualties in each action. His book dissects the British and Canadian battles in the bridgehead, and operations such as *Jupiter* - the fighting for Hill 112, and *Goodwood* when over 250 tanks were lost in two days; it describes the desperate attempts of the Americans to stem the German counter-attack at Mortain, when hundreds of RAF Typhoon sorties were flown in support of the ground troops; and it details the costly advances of the Canadians and Poles as they moved to trap the Germans in the killing grounds of the Falaise Pocket.

As the dedication indicates, this book is often penetrating in its study of some of the decision makers and senior commanders in the Normandy campaign - regardless of nationality. It will not please everyone who fought there. "Steel Inferno" is dedicated:

*"To all who fought with honour in Normandy in 1944 -  
many of them deserved better commanders"*

Available from all good bookshops at £20 from 14th July this year, or direct from the author at: 8 Grassington Road, Eastbourne, BN20 7BU, for £16 including post & packaging.

## The Queen's in the Middle East and North Africa 1939-43 by Bob Johnson

I highly commend this very well researched and readable little book. Although of specific interest to those in the Regimental Association who served with the Queen's in the Middle East in the early days of World War II it will make equally good and absorbing reading for those who wish to remind themselves of, or to study for the first time, a period of Regimental History which of late has been poorly covered by available annals.

The story covers the Arab Rebellion, the rising in Iraq, the Syrian and Cyrenaican campaigns and finally the long approach march beginning at El Alamein and ending with the capture of Tunis. The whole is well supported by some excellent maps and a series of engaging personal vignettes and character studies.

All in all Bob Johnson has produced a little gem of a volume for those with a deep penchant for Regimental History.

HCM

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## Iserlohn, re-visited

I myself have been back to Iserlohn in 67, 74, 84 and now in October 1996. On the first re-visit 1967, I had only just been demobbed and stayed a week with a friend and his family. On this visit the Schillerplatz had been built over with a supermarket.

For all Queen's men with a soft spot for Mons Barracks, fret no more: it no longer exists. It has gone the way of Stoughton Barracks, Guildford and has become a housing estate. As far as can be seen the only block retained is the old HQ block by the main gate and the gym by the square. These are being built out as far as can be seen. Building work is still going on at a great rate of knots. All the old company blocks are gone and attractive blocks of flats erected in their place. The Sgts Mess, NAAFI, MT and Officers Mess all down and out.

Although the flats were occupied, there was so much activity going on everywhere and us ex Queensmen were getting long stares, we thought it best to retreat. I did notice the statue of the naked athlete was gone, it would have looked good outside the Museum at Clandon! Perhaps it is there!

The barracks a mile up the road on the Menden Road has met the same fate and those two drinking haunts "The Buchenwaldchen" and "Dietsch" are now a Chinese Restaurant and Yugoslav Restaurant! The hairdresser with the two lovely daughters who had the "Black-Gang" queuing for haircuts daily, is now an estate agent. For former Queensmen who lived in "Overhoffstr", it's all been done up and sold off to locals. The little red train that used to hoot it's way from Hemer to Menden via Overhoff, has also gone. All the old Quarters in Schulestr and Pestalozzi are all in local hands. In fact, the nearest British soldiers are in Dortmund. It is not easy to recognize Iserlohn at all. We came off the Autobahn and were lost, it took ages to find Mons Barracks.

We were told by an old friend of the Regiment that the Flak Kaserne (Aldershot Bks) is still in use by German air cadets. If it's any consolation the beer is still wonderful and the food as good as ever. In conclusion it seemed to us fitting that Mons Barracks should now be used hopefully to bring children up in a peaceful and happy environment.

SL & LJ

## 2 months leave to Japan - May and June 1936.

*Before the 1939-45 war soldiers in India were entitled to two months leave a year. This is the account written by Lieutenant Bob Bruce and Peter Hill of The East Surrey Regiment of a two months trip to the Far East in May and June 1936.*

We left Bombay on a Saturday night in May in the P&O liner *Ranpura*. She was returning to China the Chinese art treasures which had been on loan to Great Britain. Throughout the voyage the *Ranpura* was escorted by the light cruiser HMS *Dauntless*. As the art treasures were valued at ten million pounds, an armed escort was an essential precaution.

Colombo, our first port of call, was reached on the third day out from Bombay. We took a taxi out to Mount Lavinia to bathe. It was quite a pleasant drive through groves of coconut palms. The bathing at Mount Lavinia was good but rather rough. We saw a number of catamarans there. They are very ungainly craft with their big outriggers, but are amazingly seaworthy. We called at the Galle Face Hotel on the way back for a drink. It had a good position right on the edge of the sea, but looked a bit decrepit from the outside. Like most well known hotels, we found it expensive.

After another two days at sea, we arrived at Penang in the evening. We repaired to the Eastern and Oriental Hotel, but soon left it for the Runnymede. The latter is a delightful place. The lawns extend to the Sea Wall, and the garden is decorated with coloured lights. It was very pleasant to sit out there at night with a long glass of beer. On the return voyage we saw Penang in the day. We went out to see the famous Snake Temple - a rather tame affair with a few sleepy looking snakes curled up about the place. The Chinese Paradise Temple was rather more interesting. We fed the sacred turtle of which there are an enormous number in a small concrete pond. The interior of the temple was dark and tawdry and smelt of joss-sticks. There were however some amusing statues of four Gods trampling underfoot various evil-doers. We also saw the Waterfall Gardens which were pretty well kept.

One clear day at sea separates Penang from Singapore, and on the way Malacca is passed. As so much of our time was spent at sea, this is how it was generally passed. The breakfast gong at 8.30 was the signal to get up, and we used to get into breakfast at about 9.15. The morning we generally passed in reading or writing letters. Between twelve and one we used to repair to the bar and there play Cameroon and other games with poker dice over a couple of beers. After lunch one usually fell into a heavy swound from which one was awakened by one of the ship's pests at tea time. Tea was the only poor meal in the P&O. The other meals were usually very good. Tea over, we would crawl up to the boat deck there to shake up the liver with deck tennis, usually followed by a bathe in the iron swimming bath. Later, clothed and in our right mind, we had our whiskies and sodas before a rather late dinner. After the coffee cups had been cleared away on A deck, the ship's band would appear, and there would be dancing until 11.15. The bar closed at 11.30 and after that it was up to individual tastes as to how one passed the time. At Singapore it was very sticky, but fortunately there are two good bathing places, Seaview Hotel and the Swimming Club. The latter is an exceptionally good place. It has an outside pool fenced round with stakes to keep the sharks out, and a big open air swimming bath set a little way back. The club buildings are up-to-date and comfortable. We went by car to Seletar the naval dockyard. The roads throughout the island are good. The Malay villages are built on stakes to keep them from damp. There are many rubber plantations and factories throughout the island. The rubber trees, which are very ordinary looking, are planted in rows, and the bark is cut spirally round the trunk to extract the rubber.

We had another rather similar drive when we went to Johore. We returned by a road through thick jungle. Johore itself is one of the Unfederated Malay States. It is on the mainland of Malaya and is connected to Singapore by a causeway. We saw the Sultan's Palace which is a fair-sized building standing in well-kept grounds, and also his private Zoo. We found Singapore a very expensive place. One can dance and see a cabaret show at Raffles, the main hotel. An amusing place to go to in the evening is the New World. This is a big amusement park. There are numerous European attractions, but most interesting were the open air theatres. These were mostly Chinese, although we thought we did find a Japanese show. There was also Malay dancing to be seen.

One has three whole days at sea between Singapore and Hong Kong. The entrance to the latter, which is also an island, is from the north. Kowloon where the ship docks is in the mainland and one goes across to Hong Kong by ferry. The town lies at the foot of a great hill, the top of which is known as the Peak. One can go up to the top in a funicular tramway and get a wonderful view from there. Hong Kong is a very good town for shopping, silk in particular being extraordinarily cheap. We went out to Repulse Bay twice for bathing. It is a few miles from the town and on the opposite of the island. One gets a good view from the top of the hill looking over the race course and the town in one direction, and over the creeks and islands around Repulse Bay in the other. Repulse Bay itself is an ideal bathing place. There is a big place called the Lido where one can bathe and also get meals. There is a sandy shore around the bay and the water is warm and very clear. It takes about two days to get to Shanghai from Hong Kong. There are many islands at the mouth of the Yangtse and navigation is difficult. Shanghai itself lies some way up the Woosung River, a tributary of the Yangtse.

On arrival at Shanghai, the Chinese art treasures were off-loaded. This took a considerable time and there was a strong force of police on duty in the docks. Eventually fifteen lorries were loaded up and each was escorted by four or five police, all armed to the teeth. The ship's officers were not sorry to see the last of it. Shanghai is an enormous town with skyscrapers and big hotels and night clubs, altogether very modern. We had a drink at the Shanghai club which is famed for having one of the longest bars in the World. One night we had dinner on the 14th floor of the Park Hotel, an enormous place which looks over the whole town. The Cathay is the biggest and best known hotel in Shanghai. It is a luxurious place, but its chief attraction for us was its oak panelled bar with the Russian barmaid. Nanking Road is the main shopping street, and there are some very good shops. Silk is supposed to be even cheaper than Hong Kong, while trunks and suit cases can also be got very cheaply. The great game in Shanghai is Hi-Eli which is very similar to Pelota. It draws enormous crowds every night, who go for the betting. It is fascinating for a time to watch, but most of the games are supposed to be squared, and neither the crowd nor the players seemed particularly sporting.



Bob, Sammy, Barbara and Peter

The chief attraction of Shanghai to visitors is the night life. There are many night clubs with excellent bands where one can dance most of the night. The dancing-partners, who are mostly Russians and easy to look at, sit at tables round the floor and get a ticket for each dance. The cost of these tickets varies in the different dance places. In the best places like the Paramount and the Casanova one gets two for one dollar (about 1/3d.) Another very good place is the Metropole, with its big circular floor, which is Chinese. All these night clubs were very well got up, and those we went to see were well patronized. Most of them were in the French Concession where it was interesting to see all the names of the roads in French and French gendarmes on duty. All these amusements we found were apt to run away with the money, and we were not sorry to leave the gay city and get to sea again.

It takes about a day and a half from Shanghai to get into the Inland Sea of Japan. We were fortunate in having fine days on both occasions that we passed through. The Inland Sea is studded with hundreds of islands and is very picturesque. At one part it is very narrow, and one can clearly see people moving about on the shore. We went ashore at Kobe where there is not much to do except shop. We found taxis there very alarming. They were all brand new Chevrolets and their drivers seem to have no nerves at all. The chief shopping street, is the Mota Machi, and it looks very attractive when it is lit up at night. Twenty-four hours at sea in the Pacific from Kobe brings one to Yokohama.

On the morning of May 23rd the *Ranpura* berthed at Yokohama; and after lunch on board we went ashore. It was impossible to get accommodation in Yokohama, as the hotels were full of other passengers who had booked their rooms earlier. We took a taxi to the electric station, and booked a second class fare to Tokyo. We discovered that 3rd class was quite good enough, and we never travelled 2nd class again. The electric train takes about 40 minutes between Yokohama and Tokyo. From the carriage window all one could see was slums, electric train wires and factories.



Lilli, Yokohama

We had hoped to put up at the Station Hotel but that also was full. We had not been there long when some more friends from the ship arrived. In the evening we took a stroll round some of the cafés of Tokyo. Nearly all of them were well got up, and their interior decoration and lighting effects were very good. Most of the girls were in Japanese dress, but in some places they wore European clothes. The noise in our hotel was hideous. It looked out onto a large thoroughfare where the noisiest trams in the

world maintained what seemed to be a non-stop twenty-four-hours service. The hotel provide cotton kimonos and slippers, and there was a telephone in every bedroom. There were European baths but the bathrooms had no locks on the doors.

We spent two whole days in Tokyo. It rained most of the time. One night we went to the pictures. The talkies were in English, but Japanese writing on the screen explained it to the audience. We had most of our meals at an American style cafeteria called

the Olympic. We could get an excellent meal for 50 sen (about 7d.) The Ginza is the main street in Tokyo, and it has some very good shops. The bigger department stores are interesting, and compare well with some of the big London shops. In the evenings, when it is fine, stalls are erected along the Ginza. They sell cheap mechanical toys, clothes, pictures, curios, tools and all sorts of cheap goods. It is amusing to walk around and although most of the goods are trash, it is possible to pick up an occasional bargain. One morning, we called on the British Embassy, which stands opposite the Imperial Palace. That afternoon we went out to Ueno Park, the playground for the people of Tokyo. We saw the Zoo which is rather after the style of the Zoologische Garten in Berlin.

On May the 26th, we decided we had had enough of the town, so we packed our bags, and took the train for Nikko. The countryside was quite pleasant, being highly cultivated in the plains, and very wild and picturesque as we got up into the hills. The manager of our Tokyo hotel had booked our rooms for us at the Lakeside Hotel, which we found was not in Nikko. We eventually discovered after a long hair-raising drive that our destination was Chuzenji-8 miles from Nikko and 4,400 feet high. We stayed two days in Chuzenji, and although it was raining most of the time and was very cold, we thoroughly enjoyed our stay there. The hotel, which was built in a semi-Japanese style, has a pleasant position overlooking the lake. We paid a visit to a Buddhist temple, and later had a look at the Kegon Falls which drop 330 feet into a deep gorge.

After an hour of train and taxi, we arrived at Nikko. Some of the shrines for which this place is noted were very fine, but having seen one you have seen the lot. The famous Lacquer Bridge is very ordinary and one can see no reason why it should be regarded as sacred. The country round Nikko is very pretty, but there is nothing to do when the weather is bad. After a meal at the Olympic we got a fast train to Tokyo and arrived at the Bund Hotel at midnight.

We had quite an amusing time looking round the shops in Yokohama. One shop had a great mound of live snakes in the window. We went to quite a good variety show. The chorus had come from the Paramount Night Club in Shanghai.

On the morning of the 30th we took a taxi out to Kamakura, to see the Daibutsu or Great Buddha, it stands about 45 feet high and one can go inside it. It has stood there about 700 years. We drove back a different way to Yokohama, where we had an orgy of kimono buying in the Benton Dori. After taking our purchases back to the ship we left Yokohama for the country again. An electric train, a motor bus and a taxi eventually got us to Hakone at 8 o'clock at night. The next day it rained solidly and we were unable to do much except go for walks. In the evening we had a Japanese dinner. We were taken along to the Japanese wing of the hotel, and had to remove our slippers before entering the room. The table stood about a foot high and we sat on cushions around it. The meal was cooked on a little charcoal brazier in front of us by the girl. We had sukiyaki

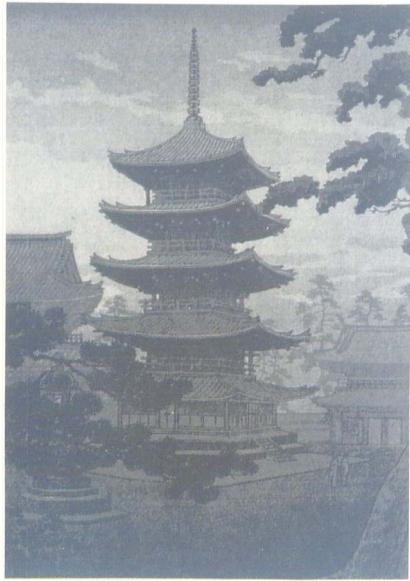


Bob Bruce and Peter Hill

which consists of strips of beef cooked in vegetables and eaten with rice. It did not take long to master the handling of chopsticks. We drank green tea which tastes and looks like cabbage water before the meal, and warmed sake with it. The latter is the national alcoholic drink, and it tastes like very diluted sherry with a touch of turpentine in it. It was quite a good meal, but there was not enough of it. We hoped to get more of the sukiyaki, but it appeared that they only went in for one course dinners.

The Glorious First of June was a grand day. We took a boat across Lake Hakone to a place called Umijiri, and from there a bus to Nagao Toga-Long Tail Pass. A tunnel goes through the hill, and on emerging at the other end one gets a magnificent view of Fujiyama. We had a picnic lunch there, before getting another bus for Miyanoshita. The scenery in this district is very fine. The chief attraction in Miyanoshita is the Fujiya Hotel. The garden is full of little streams and bridges, and the ponds are full of enormous goldfish. There is a swimming bath in the grounds where we bathed. They had white peacocks walking about in the garden, and the hotel itself is a grand place. There are natural hot spring baths called the Roman Bath and the Mermaid Bath. The best of all is called the Dream Pool and it is beautifully got up. They were just completing an indoor swimming bath. There are some good curio shops in

Miyanoshita where one can see the famous long-tailed fowls. We saw one with a tail 24 feet long. We returned to Hakone by bus in time for dinner.



The Five-storeyed Pagoda at Kyoto

there, before catching a bus to Atami. This is a small town lying in the bay and looks very much like a part of the Cornish Coast. We had tea in the Atami Hotel, and later looked round the town which is noted for its hot spring baths. These are well worth seeing. We also saw a first class Japanese Inn in Atami, it was much better than any European style hotel we had stayed in. Here our party split up, two of us going on to Kyoto and the remainder returning to Hakone. We had a very comfortable 3rd class sleeper on the night train, and arrived at Kyoto at 6.30 am the next morning, June 3rd.

After an expensive bath and breakfast at the Kyoto Hotel, we went to see the Imperial Palace and the Nijo Detached Palace. The latter is a moated castle, four hundred years old. In the afternoon we went to the Butokuden—"Hall of the Martial Virtues" and there watched Japanese fencing and ju-jitsu, the latter being very interesting. In a small shop we watched cloisonné work being made. The skill of the workers was amazing. That night, our last in Japan, we spent at the Hira-Giya-Ryokan a Japanese Inn. Before dinner we had a Japanese bath, it consists of a big square wooden tub with walls about two foot high, and it was generally heated from underneath. All the soap must be washed off before entering the bath. You have to do all your washing in little tubs of hot water provided

for the purpose. You can have a sansuké or back washer if you want one. It is only after all this has been carried out, that one is permitted to enjoy the hot water of the bath itself.

After our bath we had another Japanese dinner, clad in kimonos and sitting on the floor of our room. This meal was quite a good one although perhaps it was as well that we did not know what we were eating. A Japanese bed consists of cushions and pillows laid on the floor, and we found them very comfortable. Kimonos were provided for wear inside the Inn. The whole place was amazingly clean, and once one got used to these strange customs such as taking off slippers before entering a room, really very comfortable. The next day we made an expedition to Mount Hiei and Lake Biwa, the biggest lake in Japan. There is an aerial ropeway to the top. We returned to Kyoto by bus and train. After a certain amount of shopping, we got a fast train to Kobe, arriving back on board the *Rampura* about 9pm.



Bob, Peter, Barbara and Jock

There is not much of interest to record on the return trip. We visited the same ports of call which have already been described. When we were nine hours out from Colombo, the ship had to turn back to pick up the mails of the *SS Barrabool* which had broken down. It was between Colombo and Bombay that we struck the worst part of the monsoon. It was pretty rough, and there were a number of casualties. Partly owing to the weather and partly having to turn back to Colombo, the ship was 24 hours late in arriving at Bombay. It had been a delightful trip and we thoroughly enjoyed it; and when the *Rampura* sailed at 2 am the next morning, we were sorry to see the last of her.

RGDB

PGEH

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#### The Queen's Royal Regiment (Southwark)

The annual reunion of The Queen's (Southwark) Old Comrades Association and the citizens of St Niklaas Belgium occurred on September 7th-11th 1996.

The usual parade and march through the city to the various War Memorials was carried out with the normal dignity and was attended by numerous representative bodies together with the Burgomaster and Aldermen of the city. Old Comrades laid wreaths at the memorials to the 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, the Polish War Memorial and the Monument to the Resistance.

The Old Comrades and Wives were entertained to dinner by both the City and the Patriotic Committee over the weekend. There were also various activities and entertainments in the Market Square:- these included Marching Bands, Hot Air Balloons and a Military Tattoo. Sadly the weekend passed all too quickly and we were on our way home but determined to return in 1997.

ASP

## B Company 1 Queens Surreys (1960-61)

36 years after serving together in Mukeiras, Aden, twelve members of 'B' Company 1 Queens Surreys, held the sixth Company reunion at the TA Centre, Sandfield Terrace, Guildford on 1st February 1997.



'B' Company 1 Queens Surreys (1960-61) reunion dinner at Sandfield Terrace, Guildford, marking 36 years since they served together in Mukeiras, Aden.

The twelve were:

Geoffrey Mason (Coy Comd) - now living in Otley, Suffolk. Paul Gray (Coy 2i/c - now living in London. Eric Lockwood (6 Pl Sgt) - now living at Hastings, Sussex. Jim Matthews (6 Pl) - now living in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. Alan Cruise (4 Pl) - now living in Peacehaven, Sussex. Barry Pickford (4 Pl) - now living in Camberley, Surrey. Bob Beaven (6 Pl) - now living in Bromley, Kent. John West (5 Pl) - now living in Bracknell, Berks. Maurice Tyson (6 Pl) - now living in Worthing, Sussex. Ken Hone (5 Pl) - now living in Addlestone, Surrey. Dennis Maidment (6 Pl) - now living in Ewell, Surrey. Roger Mould (6 Pl) - now living in Cornwall.



Company Commander and his Second in Command,  
Geoffrey Mason and Paul Gray

Sadly three of our regular attenders at our three yearly reunions were unable to be with us on this occasion. They were: Keith Burnett (Coy 2i/c) - now living in Benhall, Suffolk, who was being commissioned as a church elder by his Bishop. Keith Yonwin (CSM) was unwell but tragically since these notes were written he has died. His death is recorded in this edition. Brian Johnson (6 Pl) - now living in France. Hopefully he will return.

The wives of members also attended and 23 sat down to an excellent dinner. The TA centre of the former Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment provided the perfect setting for such a reunion, with silver and property of the former Regiment to adorn the dinner table and mess. In such an environment our life together in Mukeiras and Aden 36 years ago was relived and greatly enjoyed to the early hours of the morning. Our



Organiser of the reunion, Jim Matthews, with his old Company Commander, Geoffrey Mason - both sporting their 'Naib Jarbel' seat sashes.

thanks for providing us with this ideal setting go to A Company 5 PWRR and Captain Brian Scripps their Administrative Officer and Mr Peter Door their caretaker, both of whom assisted with the running of this very happy reunion - not to mention a very fast flowing bar!



Sgt Eric Lockwood reminiscing with Geoffrey and Daphne Mason.

The next reunion will take place in three years on the first Saturday in February of the New Millennium (hopefully with the same venue) when we will celebrate not only the new Millennium, but also the forty years since we first served together. Any member of the former 'B' Coy 1 Queens Surreys (1960-1961) wishing to attend should contact Jim Matthews at 1 The Pines, Crossway, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. (Tel: 01932 221062

### The Chaps Still Love It

GM

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### WO's and Sgt's Association (Surbiton)

The traditional Christmas Draw took place on the 30th November 1996. Over the last ten years since records have been kept there has been a steady increase in support for this occasion. The records show that in 1986 from a subscription (ticket purchase) the prize money was £250 leading to 100 prizes; this year 1996 the figures were a little over £1,500 which produced 360 prizes.

A little background: our organiser, together with the treasurer, starts at the end of October to calculate the monies subscribed and purchase the prizes. The organiser searches out the best deals in town and then starts his negotiations with the suppliers. He tells us he learned his skills in bargaining in some of the best possible schools such as the market places of Tripoli, Derna and Tel el Kebir.

This year it took him four or five days to spend all the monies, resulting in a wide range of acceptable prizes (at least he has

never had a complaint!) These range from two large hampers through to wines, spirits, liqueurs, chocolates etc., etc., etc. We cannot detail every item or our Editor of the Newsletter will have to find more space.



W.O.'s and Sgt's Association 1996 Christmas Draw

Suffice to say the W.O.'s and Sgt's Association thank everyone concerned with the organisation of this event and, in particular, to our ladies who provide a magnificent buffet to complete the evening's event.

PLH

#### Signora Benincasa

When the North Africa campaign ended, in May 1943, some 250,000 German and Italian soldiers were milling around the Tunis area, waiting to be rounded up and made prisoners-of-war. This itself was a major task and priority was given to dealing with the Germans. The Italians had to be left to look after themselves, and it was in fact some time before things were sorted out for them. In the end I believe they were provided with coils of barbed wire, told to fence themselves in, and in due course would be given rations!

One day, wandering near our own tented camp (1st Bn East Surrey Regiment) outside Tunis, I came across a small group of dirty and dishevelled Italians, just hanging about. One of them, a young lad of about 19 or 20 came over to me and saluted. We "chatted" for a while in the way that soldiers of whatever nationality seem to be able to do. He seemed to want to make sure that I was an English officer. I gathered he lived in Rome and he asked if we were going there. A strange question for us at that time. Rome seemed a long way off. We had had a lot of casualties in Tunisia, and I was lucky to have made it even this far.

I had no idea what our future was, and, needless to say, no idea where we were going. Sicily, Corsica, Greece, it could be anywhere. He insisted that we were bound to go to Rome, and, sensing that it was important to him, I agreed that it might be possible. So would I please call on his mother when I got there! So that was what was on his mind. He produced a dirty scrap of paper and a pencil and slowly and painfully wrote out his mother's name - Signora Benincasa - and an address somewhere in the suburbs. I must look her up and tell her he was alive, well and out of the war. I would be sure to do it wouldn't I? I was an English officer, he said, and so he was sure I would keep my word. What could I do but accept? I assured him I would certainly try my hardest. I put the slip of paper in my wallet, we saluted and went our separate ways.

It was a long way to Rome but, as they say, all roads lead there. We had to slog through Sicily then fight our way up Italy, over the rivers Trigno and Sangro, and through the three battles for Cassino, all the time the little scrap of paper remained in my wallet. It was over a year before we were anywhere near Rome.

The Americans entered the city in June 1944, and at the same time our battalion moved up to an assembly area near Tivoli, a few miles to the east of the city. This was before we moved on north for the battles around Lake Trasimino. With nothing much to do I was able to get permission to go into the city and there one day I went with my driver, Pte Barrett. We wandered round the sights, the Coliseum, the Forum, St. Peters, but I was continually reminding myself that I must do something about that crumpled bit of paper in my wallet. I told Barrett that I had had enough of being a tourist and that there was something more important to do.

The local police were only too willing to help, as were the passing civilians whom we asked, and we eventually found the drab block of flats in a run-down part of the suburbs. This was it. People soon gathered round. We were probably the first British soldiers that they had seen and they wondered what was going on. Amid shouts for cigarettes or biscuits, I was pushed up some steps, through a door and into a dark and smelly hallway. The stairs went up several flights through the gloom. At the open doors I could make out faces, some alarmed, some just curious but soon all were calling out and pointing up the stairs to where I would find Signora Benincasa. I rang the bell and it was opened by an anxious looking middle-aged lady. I had no interpreter and though my Italian had improved during the past year, I had difficulty explaining who I was. I produced the scrap of paper, and when she realised it was her son's handwriting and why I had come her face broke into a beaming smile and she could not contain her tears. Whether she had heard from him in the intervening time I did not discover, but it seemed not. For some time she hung on to me, murmuring her gratitude over and over again. Then the Italian rules of hospitality were remembered: Would I like some coffee? Would I take some vino? Then apologies that in fact she had none but her husband was out on his bicycle at the moment looking for food and would be back soon. She was so overjoyed and so flustered she could hardly talk, while I could do little but smile and nod my head. In the worst of times, such as war, it is not easy to bring happiness to anyone but on this occasion at least I felt that I had done something of value. I only hoped her son had in fact come to no harm during the past year, but at least he had been out of the fighting, which was something. I returned down the smelly stairs, past the happy faces, out into the street, brushing through the crowd now besieging the unperturbed Barrett in the jeep. "Where now, sir?" he asked.

"Anywhere. Somewhere where we can get a large drink," I replied.

RCT

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#### Clandon Park



Officers' Club Luncheon, John Rogerson, Roger Jennings and Peter Durrant

## So there we were

**1667** The Tangier Regiment were wary of attacks from various sources. As well as preparing defences they were taking the initiative by sending out privateers. Sir Palms Fairborne, writing home, reported, "They are now at sea and great matters is expected of them....."

**1687** The Queen's were at Bristol at the beginning of the year but in March they moved to Pendennis where they seemed to come into conflict with ships' masters and seamen in the harbour. An order from the Secretary of War forbade such confrontations "upon pain of His Majesty's highest displeasure".

**1707** The Queen's were participating in the War in Spain their strength being given as 462 men. Disaster overtook English forces at Caudete where the Regiment suffered casualties with one officer being killed and others wounded or taken prisoner.

Churchill's Marines (forerunners of The East Surrey Regiment) were also involved in the Spanish War and formed part of the army which attacked Toulon. It is also believed, though not confirmed, that some of them were serving in their traditional role aboard Admiral Shovell's ships when several vessels were lost on the rocks off the Scilly Islands.

**1737** The 31st Regiment were in Ireland where Colonel Hargrave was transferred to the 9th Foot and was succeeded by Colonel William Handasyd. The Queen's were in Bermuda and apparently in a poor state of arms as their storekeeper reported that "Bermuda has not been supplied with stores or ammunition since 1701 or thereabouts....."

**1757** The Bermuda Company were having further troubles in the territory. One of their officers became insane and was sent home, resulting in voluminous correspondence over the expense incurred. The 31st Regiment was at Glasgow. As a result of the seven years war, a second battalion was raised which later became the 70th Regiment.

**1777** The 31st were at Edinburgh Castle while The Queen's were at Durham from whence they were ordered to Sunderland where disturbances were taking place.

**1797** The Queen's, in traditional role, were on board ships of the Fleet, engaging a Spanish squadron off Port d'Espagne, before a landing was made prior to the capture of Trinidad. The 70th Regiment were at Gibraltar, their strength varying from 500-600 in addition to officers.

**1827** The 70th, after fourteen years' service in Canada embarked at Quebec for Ireland, taking up quarters at Fermoy. The Queen's, at Poonah, were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to proceed with a field force from the Bombay Army towards Kolapore where there were indications of hostilities on the part of some of the Rajahs.

**1847** The Queen's moved by rail, now a recognised form of transport, from Gosport to Birmingham via London. When passing through London they had the honour of marching past the Duke of Wellington near Apsley House. In the Sutlej campaign the 31st were with Sir Harry Smith's army at Badowal where the British forces suffered heavy losses through Sikh artillery fire.

**1867** On home service the 31st were firstly at Shorncliffe, later moving to Dover and finally to North Camp, Aldershot. The Queen's were in Ireland where the country was in a state of almost open rebellion. Companies were engaged in guarding railway lines against Fenians in the region of Limerick.

**1887** The Queen's, not for the last time in their history, were in Burma where jungle terrain made operations difficult. A mixture of forces were used including Infantry, Mounted Infantry, Cavalry and Baluchis. In India The East Surrey Regiment, as they were now titled, were at Allahabad - a station which they occupied for three years.

**1907** Travelling by rail, The Queen's in India left Sialkote for Agra. While there, Battalion orders published the following extract from Army Order No. 208 of 1907 - "His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the dates being added to the honorary distinctions already awarded as enumerated below:-

### "The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment-GHUZNEE 1839".

High standards were obviously being maintained in the East Surreys in India as Major General Stratford Collins CB, Inspector of Infantry in India, a very severe critic, reported in most favourable terms on their condition.

**1917** Both the East Surreys and the Queen's were in France and Flanders where battle conditions were made even worse by those of weather. Transport of supplies often had to be by mule, with the animals sometimes being unloaded under shellfire. RSM A Seymour of The East Surrey Regiment, who had been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal two months previously, was killed by shelling at Bouchavesnes. In an assault at St Eloi, preceded by explosion of mines, the Queen's suffered heavy casualties.

**1927** The Queen's, their strength increased by Reservists, sailed from Southampton for Hong Kong as the civil war in China was taking a sinister turn and strong anti-foreign feeling was appearing. At a memorable Birthday Parade in the territory in June all three Colours were carried. In Gibraltar the East Surreys maintained close associations with the Royal Navy and their parent Corps, The Royal Marines. Opportunities were given for officers and men to go out with the Fleet during gunnery and target practice.

**1947** The East Surreys were in Palestine engaged on anti-terrorist duties which were of a trying and dangerous nature. So called "peace-time" soldiering was proving to be not so peaceful as some people had visualised and hoped for.

The Queen's were at Singapore which they found to be a hard station with many guards and hard training. At a parade the 100 year old large Colours were trooped for the last time and new Colours presented.

But despite heavy commitments the spectres of "cuts" were beginning to show in both Regiments as reductions in strength were effected. Winds of change were blowing and would continue to do so for some time to come.

RF

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### 42nd Royal Tank Regiment c 1951



Regimental Standard Party for the Queen's Inspection of TA units in Hyde Park.

Major Jim Pickering flanked by Sergeant Taylor on his right and SSM Jenkins on his left. Both Mr Jenkins son and grandson served with the Regiment. They are standing outside the old main entrance to the Barracks at 27 St Johns Hill. For security reasons this is no longer used, entrance is now via the main gate leading to the Parade ground.

## Of later ships

In June 1944, two days after "D" Day, 131 (Queen's) Brigade landed on the Normandy beaches and established a footing before fighting their way inland.

Offshore, at Juno Beach members of the 4th Queen's were serving on board the Headquarters ship HMS *Despatch* in an anti-aircraft capacity and manning Bofors guns. They thus emulated, in modern form, the gallant feats of some of their ship-borne fighting predecessors. HMS *Despatch*, an elderly "D" class cruiser, had initially been launched at Fairfield shipyard in 1919 and then, like many of her forebears, completed at Chatham.

Once the troops were safely ashore the Royal Navy had the continuing task of keeping the supply routes to the Continent open - an operation which the enemy was understandably anxious to frustrate. I was involved in that particular aspect of the campaign, as a Telegraphist in the frigate HMS *Torrington* of the 16th Destroyer Flotilla, Home Fleet, operating from Harwich, Chatham and later Ostend.

Life afloat in those days was sometimes boring but sometimes exciting. Routine patrols were interspersed with sudden, and often violent, clashes with the enemy. Actions against E-boats usually took place at night and were fast "running fight" affairs, with destroyers, frigates, motor torpedo boats and E-boats tearing about among each other firing their main armament, secondary armament, torpedoes and virtually everything but the kitchen sink. It was sometimes difficult to know who was firing what and at whom. The sky was lit by the flashes of star shells and tracer bullets and occasional warning shouts from the look-outs of "torpedo on the port (or starboard) side" did much to enliven the proceedings.

Battle results were often dramatic. One brief encounter off the Scheldt Estuary left the Germans with two E-boats sunk, two probably sunk and five others badly damaged. Submarine action could take place at any time and anywhere as we in *Torrington* well knew. In an engagement off Ramsgate one morning in broad daylight we dropped a pattern of five depth charges and to our amazement and delight a midget submarine shot straight to the surface where she was immediately abandoned by her crew of two who were taken prisoner. The submarine sank as they left her.

Another midget was detected at sunset a few days later, lurking under the waves on a convoy route in the North Sea, and was only forced to the surface after determined and repeated depth charge attacks by ourselves. Once on the surface the submarine withstood some heavy gunfire from us but eventually sank, taking one of her crew with her and leaving the other in the water from which he was rescued and taken aboard our ship as a prisoner. When searched he had documents on him showing the movements of other enemy vessels and this information was hastily radioed to Admiralty where it was put to effective use.

Not all the losses were on the enemy side. We suffered as well with storm and battle taking steady toll of both ships and men. The frigates *Duff* and *Dakins* were irreparably damaged after striking mines off the coast of Belgium and a similar fate befell the veteran destroyer *Walpole* in the North Sea. Also in the North Sea the aggressive and determined little corvette *Puffin* was damaged when ramming a midget submarine whose torpedo exploded on impact and the French destroyer *La Combattante* was sunk, with the loss of sixty members of her crew, in circumstances which made it unclear as to whether she had been mined or torpedoed. Reference books still vary on the subject.

Once in *Torrington* our bow chaser gun was badly damaged in heavy seas as we made our stormy way home from Ostend to



HMS *Torrington*

Harwich and on another occasion I was the unwilling recipient of a head injury and was nearly carried overboard when I was struck by a heavy iron seat which had broken loose on deck.

Midst it all the supply lines to the troops were maintained and the convoys got through even though the occasional sight of a burning merchant vessel would show that they too were paying a price.

But for the battle-worn or damaged ships Chatham Dockyard was the haven of repair and recuperation or, in some cases, the final resting place. We in *Torrington* carried out our boiler cleans and refits there as did many of our sister ships. Sadly my last sight of the venerable old *Walpole* was of her wrecked form lying against the dockyard wall awaiting the breakers to whom she finally succumbed in March 1945. *Torrington* was returned to the United States Navy, from which she had been loaned, in June 1946. *Despatch* was scrapped at Troon in August of the same year. By then I too had left the Service and was "back in civvy street".

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## Under Fire

In Dover Town museum are the medals of a distinguished member of The Queen's Royal Regiment-Sergeant Henry A Tracey DCM MM, a former townsman who presented his medals to the museum. The medals, nine in number, consist of The Distinguished Conduct Medal, Military Medal, 1914 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal, Defence Medal, Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, London Fire Brigade Good Conduct Medal and the Albert I Veteran Cross.

The citation for the Distinguished Conduct Medal reads:-

10018 Sjt H A Tracey R.W. Surr. R. (Dover) (LG 6 Feb. 1918).

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He steadied his men by his example under continuous shell fire. When an ammunition dump was set on fire during an enemy barrage, he at once went to the spot in spite of several explosions, and with the help of another NCO extinguished the fire. His prompt and courageous action saved loss of life and ammunition.*

Details of the award of the Military Medal are not available. Tracey later joined the London Fire Brigade and his Long Service and Good Conduct Medals are clear indications that his service in the brigade was as honourable and exemplary as that in the Army.

## Wireless Intelligence (Observer) Screen 1939/40

In the November Newsletter, the Editor included a request from me for information on members of The Queen's Royal Regiment I served with as an RAF Wireless Operator in France 1939/40. He has invited me to write an article on the activities of the unit in which the Army and RAF worked so closely together.

On 5th September 1939, several hundred Territorial soldiers from the Queen's, East Surrey and Royal Artillery Regiments were joined by fifty RAF Civilian Wireless Reservists on the quayside at Southampton before sailing for Le Havre, France. It was difficult to believe we were now on active service and in a few weeks time would be working together although there was something unusual for Army and RAF to be sharing first a Convent at Amiens then a Chateau at Alanville and daily briefings on the future job were kept strictly to each contingent. On 10th October the complete unit arrived at Metz in NE France to take over the Caserne du Genie previously occupied by French troops and for the next seven months this was to be the HQ of the RAF WIS. Lt Farmer of The Queen's Royal Regiment was in command of the Army and F/Lt Goode was in command of the RAF. Field units or Posts were formed comprising an Army Corporal, six other ranks and two RAF Wireless Operators. After a short period of aircraft recognition and plotter training for the army and familiarisation with radio equipment for the RAF each post was deployed to specially selected locations in Northern France and were to be entirely self supporting apart from a regular visit every few days by a senior RAF NCO. Brought together in this way, close comradeship developed between Army and RAF lads although the contrast in working conditions was very marked with the W/Ops under cover and warm whereby the 'observers' had to spend their time on duty at the mercy of the elements but true to army tradition, conditions improved as shelters were constructed.

Fortunately, most posts were within a few miles of the nearest town and until the severe winter took toll of the Renault vans a 'liberty' run was made each day for stores and to give 'off duty' personnel some leisure activity. Over a period of several months many friends were made amongst the local community and also the French soldiers.

This was the scene during the so called "phoney war", Army and RAF called up at outbreak of war serving under entirely different conditions, early training had prepared for, but in spite of a minimum of supervision a high standard of efficiency and a smart turnout when visiting local towns was maintained.



Caserne du Genie, Metz, France 1940  
All personnel of RAF Wireless Intelligence Screen (observer)  
before leaving by train for Nantes

In early May 1940, the scene changed almost overnight. German aircraft were constantly being reported overhead and there was an air of tension amongst the French soldiers around us. Posts were recalled to HQ Metz and with some changes in personnel sent out to fresh locations.

At this point I will describe the events that led up to the loss of the post I was on and the disbanding of the complete WIS Unit. We opened up our post in Fort Charleroi, Givet, on the Belgian border, Cpl Brown(e) of The Queen's Royal Regiment was i/c with six soldiers from Queen's and other Regiments plus myself and a new W/Ops. Accommodation for off duty personnel was found in an unoccupied hotel in the town half a mile away but after a night interrupted by gunfire, Cpl Brown(e) decided all should assemble at the Fort to assess the situation. On arrival, we found the Fort Commandant highly agitated following a recent air attack and inferring it was due to our presence in the Fort! and he ordered us to leave straight away. I sent a pre-arranged signal to HQ to say we were evacuating. Radio equipment and stores were placed in a pile and burnt. With each man carrying rifle, haversack and basic kit we left the Fort faced with the 130 miles back to HQ on foot. Although I had the only map, such a large party would attract attention so it was decided we should split up into three parties of three and plan our own routes. Cpl Brown(e) took two possibly Queen's soldiers, a L/Cpl took two others and I took the other W/Ops with an RA soldier. For some reason we decided to cross into Belgium and arrived at Phileppenville market place at the peak of a strafing attack by German fighters. Our first experience and by no means the last of being on the receiving side of the German war machine. At this point, in order to keep this article as short as possible I can only briefly describe the many difficulties we encountered during the five days it took to reach our HQ at Metz. Our biggest problem was being taken by French soldiers and ordinary people as fifth column or spies. After crossing back to France we were put in the local jail at Signy le Petit. On obtaining our release we travelled mainly at night 'scrounging' food and 'dossing' down where we could and avoiding road blocks set up to stem the German advance. Two strokes of luck in the way of lifts on the last day, enabled us to travel the few remaining miles in comparative comfort. Five days later on 22nd May 1940, the complete WIS unit left by train for Nantes where it was disbanded and before my next posting all enquiries failed to establish if Cpl Brown(e) and the rest of the post at Givet had made it back as we had and this remains the case today.

VJF

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### The old Heave-Ho



To mark the re-launch of its Goldsworth Road branch, Woking Domino's Pizza organised a community charity fire engine pull and donated a £500 prize. Teams taking part were from Woking Fire and Rescue Service Red Watch, Guildford Territorial Army Centre, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment A Company and Woking Police. The winning team, who pulled the engine the greatest distance were the A Company SPWRR team consisting of C/Sgt Andy Stokes, L/Cpl Chris Evans, Cpl Chris Boxall, Pte Ben Roman, Pte Kirsty Andrews (coach) who donated their winnings of £200 to the Spinabifida Association. The Firemen were second and the Police third.

## Panheel Lock Revisited

On Tuesday 10 September 1996 a few old comrades of the 1/7th Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment revisited the Panheel Lock near Heel in Holland. It was the battalion's last action, before being disbanded and dispersed. Only 100 veterans were returned to England to train RASC, and Anti-Aircraft personnel, to become Infantry men for the last stage of the war.

The reason for the visit, was an invitation from the Burgomaster of the district, for some members of the battalion, to visit, and unveil a plaque, paid for by the local community, recording their gratitude for their liberation.

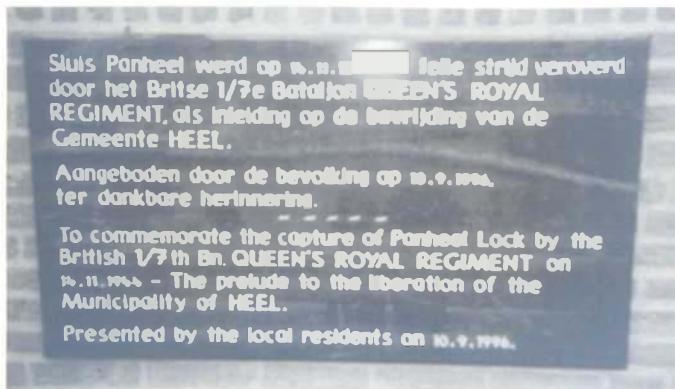


Left to Right: Dennis Somers, Ted Bussey, David Smith, Joe Wadge, Lieut John McArthur, Jimmy Allen, Joe Rowe, (chair) Walter Murfitt

The unveiling, was performed by Sgt Jimmy Allen, who - (it is recorded in the Regimental History 1924-1948) when all the Company Officers, were either killed or wounded, in the approaches, assumed command, and finally secured the Lock intact, thus making it possible for the 51st and 53rd Divisions to make successful attacks on both flanks to clear the area.

The very well attended, and moving ceremony, being over, speeches having been made by the Burgomaster, and a particular moving one, by a local resident, and a reply by a member of the Queen's party, Lieutenant John McArthur who had only been with the battalion two weeks and was wounded in the attack. He now lives in Hong Kong, and made the journey, especially to be with us. The rest of the day, and well into the night, was spent enjoying the wonderful hospitality of the Burgomaster, his councillors and the local residents. We retired tired and happy.

The next morning we made our way to a military cemetery in Leopoldsville to lay a wreath on the graves of Queen's men, who were killed in the attack on the Lock. It was then, homeward bound sincerely hoping that God willing we will be able to visit again.



Panheel Lock Memorial Plaque

## Editors Note:

*This is a copy of the address to members who attended the unveiling ceremony on the 10th September 1996. It was given by a Jo Peters, who lived in occupied Panheel, and was present in 1944 when the 1/7th Queens secured the lock. No attempt has been made to change the English in his address.*

### Gentlemen,

*At the time when you were fighting at the southern side of this canal-lock in the autumn of 1944, I was a boy of nearly 24 years old and I lived in Panheel, where I was born. And now, when I look to the upper outward of you all, the hair, it seems to me that the colour of your hair is the same as mine. So I think we are of the same age or about that; and in that case it perhaps allows me to call you: "Boys"!*

*But, as I said before, during your fightings in the surroundings, we, the inhabitants of Panheel lived almost all in the cellars of our houses or in shelters, secured with sacks of sand against war-forces, of which Panheel got quite considerable amount. But still, surrounded by German soldiers who were quartered in Panheel, some of us succeeded to listen regular to the secret radio of the BBC or Radio Orange from London, and heard that your Army came nearer and nearer. And every day the hope of liberation grew.*

*But then, on the 8th of October a number of Panheel men were deported to Germany for forced labour and afterwards, the Panheel people who stayed behind were all evacuated to other regions behind the front, and that happened during the time that you, members of the British, Queen's Royal Regiment, fought so heavy at the Panheel lock, that you lost many of your comrades and more of you were wounded. Till the 14th of November, when you succeeded to capture the lock and opened the way for other British troops to go on.*

*Not many people know what kind of heavy fighting took place here. But I dare say that, notwithstanding the miserable condition of life and the continual danger, the people of Panheel are thankful to you, for, with danger and risk for your own life and doing your duty, you fought here and liberated us. And therefore we, the people of Panheel and Heel are glad that now a permanent memorial is realised, which remembers of that time, so that everybody who will pass here and will read this, knows, that we are thankful to you and your comrades.*

*In the first place the people of Panheel thanks you. Boys, we are proud of you!*

Panheel 10 September 1996

Jo Peters.

## Quotes from the past

Our present army system was invented, and is maintained, in order to give the country an army. The system, as a matter of fact, has not produced, and cannot produce, an army. In theory, and according to the system, our Army in peace time is supposed to be equally distributed between home and foreign stations. As a matter of fact, the Army is not so distributed. Of the artillery, 20,423 men out of a total of 36,646 are shown in the last return as being abroad. Of the Cavalry, 7,824 were abroad, and 11,879 at home. Of the Infantry of the Line, 76 battalions were abroad, and 64 battalions at home. Since the date of the return the excess in the number of troops abroad has considerably increased.

Army Letters 1897-98. H.O. Arnold-Forster MP.

## AFGHANISTAN 1878-79

In the campaigns between 1878 and 1880, no less than thirty one regiments of cavalry, eighty battalions of infantry, and artillery, of both the British and Indian Army were employed during the course of the Second Afghan War. Large numbers of these regiments were employed keeping open the three main lines of communication with Afghanistan. That is the Khyber, Kuram and Bolan Passes. They were exposed to much hardship by the extreme changes of weather conditions in inhospitable terrain and suffered constant attack by the fanatical tribesmen of the borders between Hindustan and Afghanistan.

British relations with Russia and Turkey had become very strained and both had turned towards the Amir Shere Ali Khan of Afghanistan as the ruler who could assist them to indulge a policy of annoyance towards Britain. Both nations sent missions to Kabul with this end in view. The Amir, who was also in a dynastic feud with his cousin Abdul Rahman Khan, soon showed a change in his policy towards the British. In accepting a Russian Mission in Kabul he defied treaty rights, signed in 1863, and, in refusing to accept a British Mission, inflicted on us a deliberate snub. The British Government, always apprehensive of Russian dominance in the area, presented an ultimatum in October, 1878 and on 21 November the British Army crossed the frontier.

Afghanistan was invaded by three columns, operating respectively by the Khyber route from Peshawar, by the Kuram route from Kohat and by the Bolan Pass on Kandahar. Sher Ali was defeated at Peiwar Kotal on 2 December. Sher Ali fled and his son, Yakub Khan, was installed in his place to conclude a treaty with Britain in May, 1879. On 5 September the appointed British Resident at Kabul, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was assassinated. Major General F Roberts, VC, (later Field Marshall Earl Roberts), in command of the Kuram Valley Field Force, led a punitive force on Kabul from Kuram and Kandahar which met and defeated the Afghan Army in the Battle of Charasia on 6 October and went on to occupy Kabul. Yakub Khan promptly resigned and sought British protection.

Dis-satisfaction, incited by the mullahs resulted in the call for a holy war against the British. On 23 December over 100,000 Afghans surrounded Roberts' cantonments at Sherpur. The British forces broke out and, in a brilliant move, Roberts fell upon the Afghan flank and put the hostile army to rout. A new Amir, Abdul Rahman Khan, was installed in July 1880 and the British force was about to be withdrawn from Afghanistan when news arrived of a British defeat at Maiwand, there Ayub Khan, a brother of Yakub Khan had decimated a British battalion and its supporting artillery. Much encouraged by this success, Ayub Khan advanced on Kandahar. This was the cause of Roberts' celebrated march from Kabul to Kandahar. 313 miles across mountainous country with 10,000 men was achieved in just 22 days. He attacked the Afghan Army without delay. In this battle of Kandahar, Roberts' force totally defeated the enemy and captured all his artillery and equipment, thereby ending the campaign. The British force evacuated the country in 1881.

The 70th Surrey Regiment suffered greatly in the beginning, from cholera and other diseases. However, they had marched from Quetta to Kandahar in November 1878 and, although not engaged in any outstanding battle, had many skirmishes with the enemy and had helped maintain the lines of communication so vital to the expedition. At this time the 31st and 70th shared the Depot at Kingston and continued to do so until 1881 when they became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The East Surrey Regiment.

### Uniforms worn in Afghanistan, 1878

Special campaign dress for wear in foreign stations had not been continued after the Ashanti War. Regiments in India were still wearing scarlet and blue for winter dress and white drill in the summer with the white foreign service helmet being worn all through. The early undress frock had been tidied up and fitted a little better to the body and was being worn for parade duties as much as the tunic. The Afghan campaign caused other and more serviceable dress to be issued. The equipment was the Valise Pattern of 1872. The white helmets were given khaki covers and, for the summer months, the white drill was dyed khaki. A khaki frock in the style of the Norfolk jacket was worn by several regiments, made of a serge like material. This was worn over the scarlet serge frock for added warmth during the cold weather. Puttees were worn with the home service, blue trousers.

### Home service dress

The home service dress helmet, was issued in 1878 with a large star badge, with regimental numeral, worn on the front. The tunic for Other Ranks at this time was known as the 'patch' tunic as the facing colour on collar cuffs covering only part of the collar and cuff. The cuff facing was edged with white braid and trefoil. Officers' dress remained unchanged from the 1868 pattern with the helmet replacing the shako in 1878.

### Caption to the Afghanistan plate

*Top centre: The Martini Henry Rifle, 1872 Valise equipment waistbelt and pouches, haversack, waterbottle covered in buckram, socket bayonet and sergeants' sword bayonet.*

*Top left: Sergeant Major of the 31st at this time on home service.*

*Top right: Sergeant of the 70th, foreign service dress.*

*Bottom left: Private in scarlet serge frock, worn under the khaki frock in cold weather.*

*Bottom right: Private of the 31st in home service dress.*

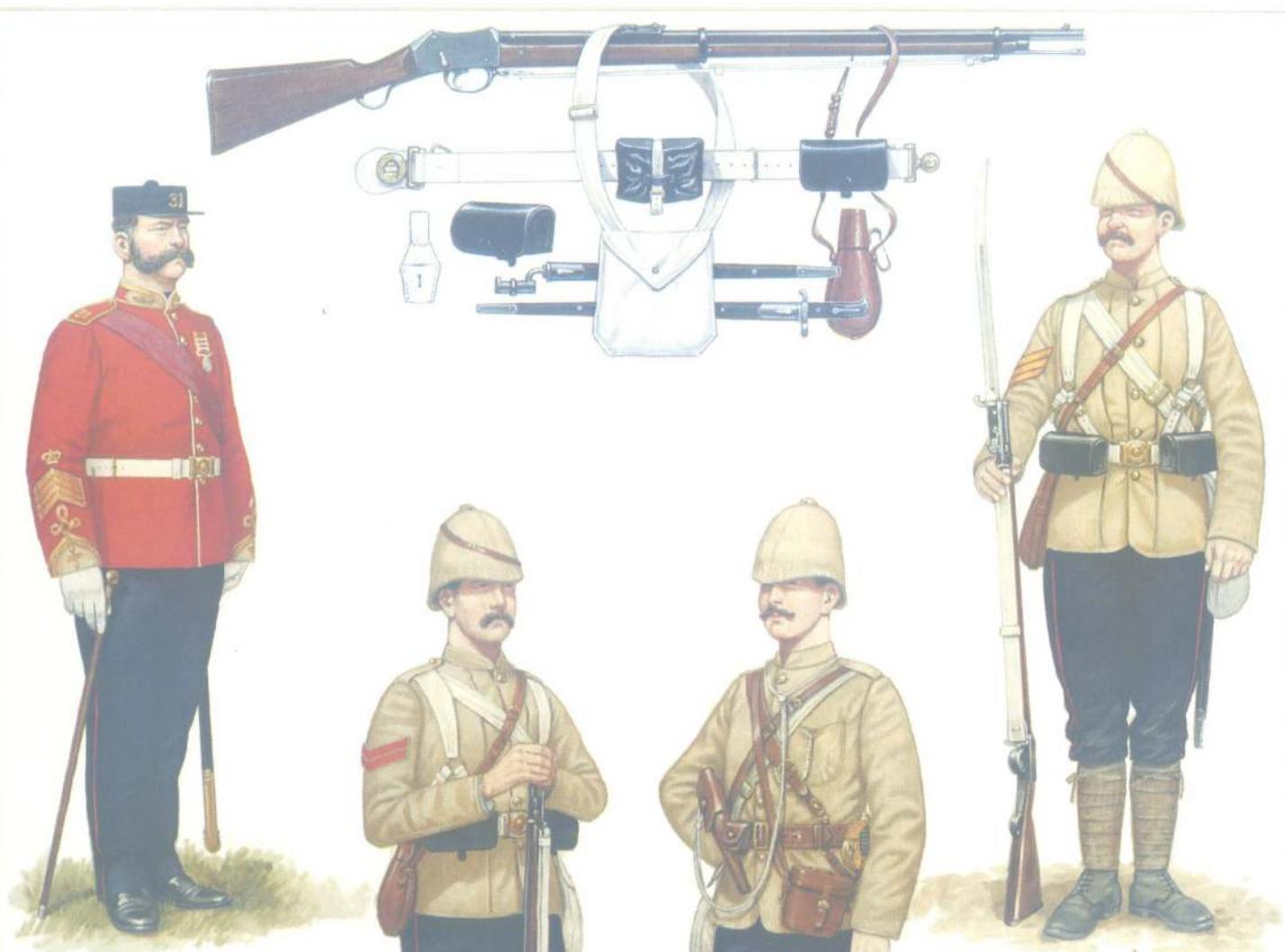
*Centre: Corporal and Company Officer in foreign service dress.*

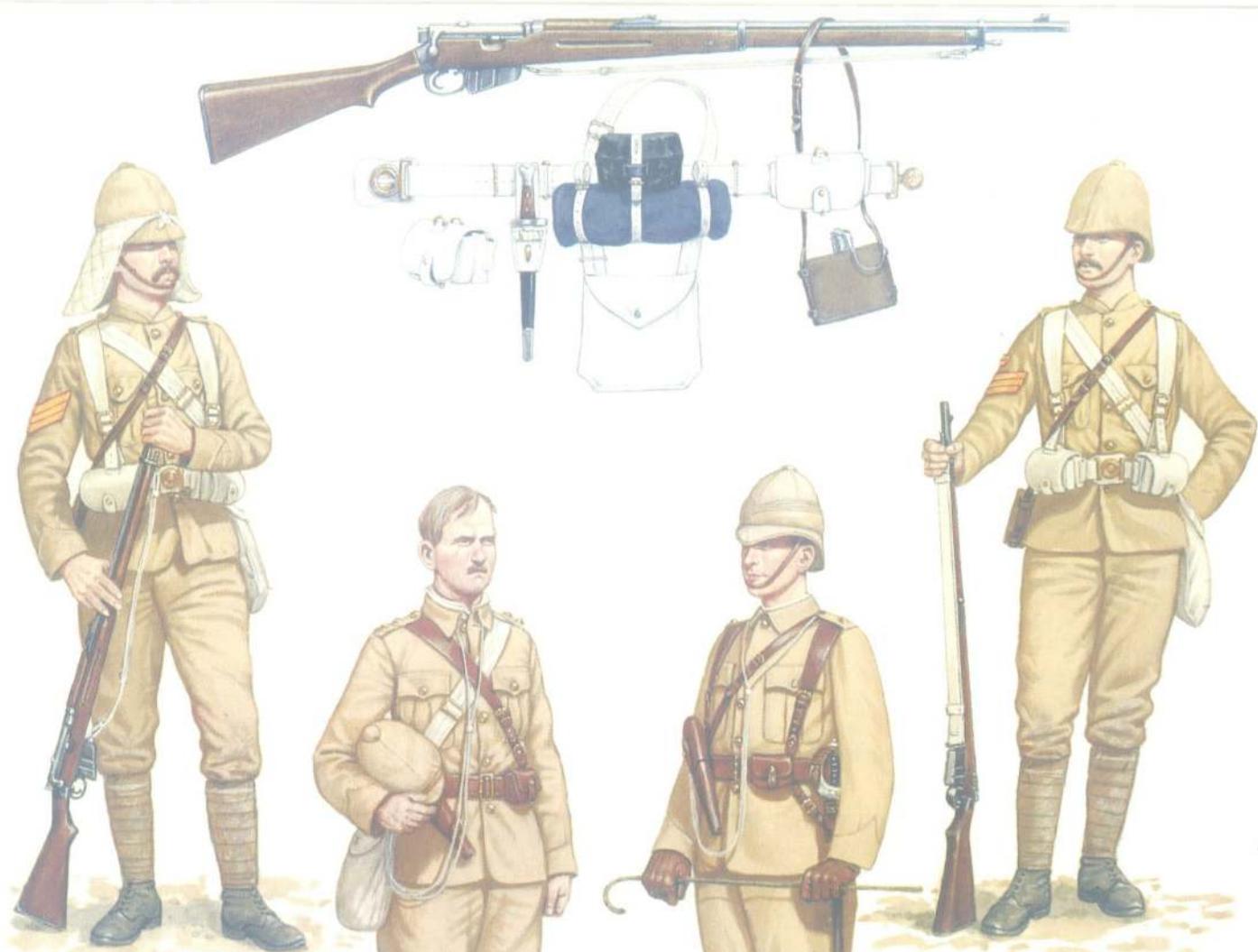
*Bottom: Glengarry badges of the 31st and 70th.*

## TIRAH 1897-1898

Tirah was one of the most arduous campaigns of the Indian Frontier. Our opponents were the tribe of Afridis, of the cantonment of Peshawar, and who furnished some of the best soldiers in the Punjab regiments of the time. Inter-tribal wars were of frequent occurrence and on many occasions we had been compelled to undertake punitive expeditions against them. At this time there was a great feeling of animosity against the British.

The Afridis were well armed and they counted some thousands of men who had been trained in the discipline of the British Army. Many of the best regiments of the Indian Army contained a large number of Afridis and although they had never hesitated to fight against their own in our border wars and in Afghanistan, there was always the possibility that their loyalty would be severely tried if we used them against their own fellow tribesmen.





TIRAH  
1897-98

General Sir William Lockhart was in overall command of the Tirah Field Force. It numbered 35,000 men of whom 10,900 were British, plus 20,000 followers. The 1st Queen's were part of the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Division under Major General W Penn Symons. The force was split into three columns. The second under Brigadier General A Hammond, VC and the third, under Colonel Hill, of the Indian Army was assembled in the Kuram Valley.

No white man had penetrated the upper valleys of the Tirah and knowledge of the area was based on the intelligence supplied by Afridi officers and men. The advance took place on 15th October and two days later the Dargal Heights, which commanded the entrance to the valley, were stormed, with a loss of 200 killed and wounded. The Afridis were too wise to risk a general confrontation. They had been well trained under our officers and had well learned their lesson. Instead of futile attacks on our troops when in the mass, they waged a ceaseless war against baggage columns, convoys and survey parties.

Sir William Lockhart remained in occupation of Afridi country until the middle of December when negotiations for peace were opened. It was not until the beginning of April in 1898 that the Afridi campaign ended. The Queen's casualties for the whole Tirah campaign were low, 10 killed and 30 wounded, due to the outstanding musketry training, unshakeable discipline and determination in the face of a fierce and gallant enemy.

## Uniforms worn on the North West Frontier.

Due to the earlier introduction of khaki in India there was a greater uniformity among the Army in India and on the North West Frontier than in other theatres. The kit consisted of a tunic with patch pockets and a five button front fastening, trousers of the same khaki material with puttees covering the lower part of the leg. These were now universally tied at the top. The helmet was the earlier foreign service helmet with khaki cover and usually worn with a neck cover in unrelenting sun. The Queen's had the 1888 Slade Wallace equipment although some regiments had a mixture of earlier pattern. Their waterbottle was of felt covered tin.

Officers' uniforms were also of a standard pattern although in the rough terrain and heat their appearance soon became similar to those of the men. Rank badges were worn on the shoulder straps.

## Home service uniforms.

After the Cardwell Reforms of 1881 many of the traditional facing colours were lost. However, Royal regiments retained their blue facings and these appeared on the collar and cuffs of the new tunic. The braid on the cuff had disappeared and the cuff was round and plain. The collar was rounded at the front and a white braid followed the seam at the bottom of the collar.

Officers uniforms remained the same as before except for the rank badges that were now worn on a twisted cord on the shoulder.

*Caption to the Tirah plate*

*Top centre: The Lee Metford Rifle, 1888 Slade Wallace equipment, haversack and Indian pattern waterbottle of tin covered in felt.*

Top right: Colour Sergeant in khaki drill

**Bottom left:** Private in 'grey back' shirt worn over woollen vest.

Bottom right: Corporal in khaki drill

*Bottom right: Corporal in khaki drill. Centre: Officer in khaki drill, the man on the right under command of a sergeant.*

## St Margarets of Antioch



The name of Lt Col C Bushell VC DSO, 7th Bn The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment is recorded in the Church at St Margarets-at-Cliffe, Kent. Lt Col Bushell was killed leading C Company of his battalion in April 1918.

## Dover Castle Visit



### *Chelsea Pensioners visit PWRR and Queen's Museum, Dover Castle*

## Lucky Orphan

An interesting biography under the above title has reached the Editor. In a thick four part manuscript Granville Bantock tells the story of his life from early days in an orphanage up to and including his time as a commissioned officer in The Queen's Royal Regiment.

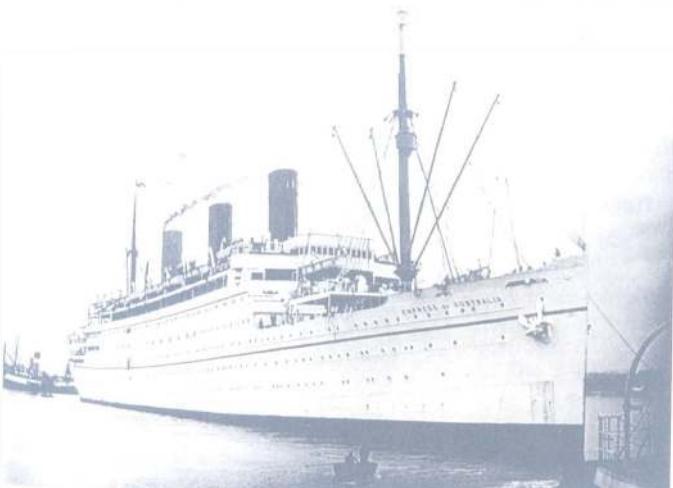
In 1930, two years after the death of their father, Granville Bantock aged four and a half years and his brother Paul, aged nine and a half years, were regrettably placed in the Actors' Orphanage, Langley, Bucks, by their mother who could no longer afford to maintain them at home.

Choice of that particular orphanage, which was funded by the acting fraternity, was due to the fact that Bantock's father had himself been an actor and playwright and eventually General Manager of the Lyceum Theatre.

The orphanage, which was under the Presidency of Gerald du Maurier until 1934 when Noel Coward assumed this responsibility for the next 24 years, accommodated about fifty boys and girls and was well run in pleasant surroundings. Bantock's time there seems to have been happy and both he and his brother were able to maintain contact with their mother who contributed towards their keep and clothing. Mutual visits at the orphanage and at home were possible.

Events moved rapidly throughout the 1930's and all too quickly the Second World War was upon the young Bantock and his contemporaries. It was to have far reaching effects in a most literary sense. With the advent of the blitz and the threat of invasion a decision was made by the management committee to evacuate all the orphans under fifteen to Hollywood, California - an appropriate destination in view of the connections with the theatrical world. Eventually embarking in the *Empress of Australia* at Greenock, the young evacuees were safely transported across the Atlantic to Halifax, Nova Scotia where they received the somewhat disappointing news that they were to go to New York instead of Hollywood. However, they soon settled into their new way of life in the country which was to be their home for some time to come - some of them becoming quite Americanised in the process (and some eventually becoming fully naturalised American citizens).

So in the vast USA Granville Bantock completed his growing up process. Happy in his adopted country, it was with some dismay and disappointment that he heard that he was to be repatriated to England in 1942 at the request of his mother who was probably influenced by the recent death of his brother Paul in the Royal Air Force. The seaward journey home was in the small Norwegian vessel *Thorstrand* not at all like the prestigious *Empress of Australia*, and resulting seasickness



*Empress of Australia*

was the lot of the returning Bantock. Adapting to the austere life of war-time Britain was a bit difficult but there were various compensations in home life and Bantock soon settled down - occasionally reliving his American experiences by chats with US servicemen he met.

Approaching his eighteenth birthday, and by then working in a factory, he realised that his country would soon be calling him - and calling in a most unpleasant and unglamorous way which he certainly did not relish. He was likely to become a "Bevin Boy" - one of those unfortunate lads destined for service in the coal mines instead of the Armed Forces. But, not for the first or last time, luck was on the side of the orphan and he managed to avoid the pits and the pitfalls of the mining industry.

In mid-winter 1943 he joined the Army, so commencing four years of military service. His introduction into military life was like that of so many young lads of his age. Reporting to a barracks in Kent, he straightaway found himself accommodated in sparse conditions in a dormitory with thirty other recruits.

With his background Bantock found the transition to Army life comparatively easy. Some others did not. The usual initial routines of kit issue, medical examinations, inoculations and aptitude tests followed. As part of one of his particular tests Bantock had to assemble various pieces of metal contained in a tin box. He quickly realised that these were parts of a mortice lock. Making the necessary construction quickly he obtained full marks for his efforts and then the Army, having noted his technical abilities, placed him in the infantry. But he had obviously pleased his assessors as he was selected for training as possible officer material. Posted to a special War Office battalion in Cheshire, and later to another in Glasgow, he underwent rigorous and intensive training before attending a War Office Selection Board in Edinburgh. After a successful interview, and seemingly still "upward bound", he was selected for further training in an Officer Cadet Training Unit in the Cairngorm Mountains in Scotland for three months.

But prior to this he had to join a fully operational battalion to await the posting. His selected battalion was in Suffolk where Bantock, promoted to the dizzy heights of Lance Corporal, took charge of a Bren gun section. Intensive training with dramatic incorporation of aircraft, tanks and artillery followed, with the pace quickening throughout the month of May 1944 as indications of the forthcoming invasion and the war in Europe became ever more apparent.

The great day broke on the 6th June and the Allied Armies, after a long absence, were back in France. But for Bantock it was not France but Scotland that now claimed him as he joined his course in the Cairngorms. Arriving at Kingussie railway station with other course colleagues he looked at the mountains and expressed the view that they were wonderful. An unusually smiling Sergeant told him that the opinion would soon be corrected. On the first day the Commanding Officer, Lord Rowallan, addressed the course and told them that their training in the Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre would last ten weeks and would be "very tough". Events were to prove that he hadn't understated the case.

In beautiful summer-time scenic surroundings the trainees struggled through assault courses, crossed ravines, climbed mountains and mastered the intricacies of travel by ordnance survey map and compass. They took turns to command platoons and were constantly under surveillance and assessment by their instructors and officers. An initiative course whereby in small groups they had to traverse 25-30 miles of unidentified country by any means, without money or other sophistications, took place towards the end of the course.

Bantock successfully accomplished it with a companion although the latter suffered from badly blistered feet.

The advent of autumn in the highlands brought wet weather and much discomfort to the trainees, the main difficulty being in drying their already inadequate clothing within their living quarters. Some light relief was obtainable by visits to the TOC-H canteen - a two mile trek away. But the weeks of training cum torture eventually passed and the "lucky orphan", still on an upward course, qualified for further advancement to the status of officer cadet. After a welcome spot of leave he reported to a pre-OCTU in Kent. Three weeks in this location preceded onward travel to an OCTU in the Isle of Man.

On his departure from home after leave Bantock felt concern for his mother and friends back in London as rocket attacks were developing. The Isle of Man formed a good first impression. Good billets and food accompanied a reasonably pleasant training course. Here the emphasis was on qualities of leadership more than actual physical stamina. There was also a certain amount of social activity, some of which, involving dancing with an amply proportioned female of senior ATS rank, did not appeal to the young Officer Cadet Bantock.

But fulfilment and reward were close to hand. Successfully completing his course, the "lucky orphan" blossomed forth as a brand new 2nd Lieutenant (Emergency Commissioned Officer). Still in Kent, he joined a holding battalion - revelling in the new found privilege of first class rail travel while in transit. Installed in his new surroundings of an officers' mess he found the shared provision of a batman a further bonus.

But things were literally soon to come down to earth. On his first guard mounting duty he dropped his unfamiliar swagger cane with a clatter. This brought forth an audible comment of, "Pick it up Sir" from the CSM who seemingly wasn't very impressed by the performance. Worse was to follow. In the Mess, in front of the CO of all things, Bantock's two false front teeth fell out. The CO, equally unimpressed and obviously aware of the earlier stick incident, rasped, "Pick it up Mister". An appropriate visit to the Dental Officer followed.

With the war in Europe coming to an end, training for jungle warfare became the norm, soon to take a more realistic and urgent, form in Bantock's career. Selected for duty as a replacement Pioneer Officer for service in Burma, he was sent for technical training, particularly with bombs and explosives, to a Royal Engineers' Training Unit in Yorkshire. His five week course there completed, and knowing how not to blow himself up, he went home again for leave and was fortunate to be there on VE Day and to take part in the celebrations.



Lieutenant Bantock

Back with his battalion further jungle warfare exercises were completed before he departed for Burma - complete with khaki drill uniform and a large named tin trunk bearing the legendary inscription "Not Wanted on Voyage". Prominent among his equipment, as far as he was concerned, was a good quality camera which had once been the property of his late brother and which he had found in the attic when on home leave. In wishing him farewell

from the holding battalion the CO, with obvious sense of humour, bade him, "Hold on to your teeth".

While awaiting embarkation at Folkestone, Bantock, with the nation generally, was overjoyed to hear that, following the dropping of the atom bombs Japan had surrendered. The war, at long last, was over. Outward embarkation was postponed. Ships were now needed for the more welcome task of bringing troops and released prisoners of war home. On notification of a new departure date, Second Lieutenant G R Bantock, complete with bag and baggage, travelled to Liverpool and was soon outward bound for the Far East. Conditions on board ship were comfortable, the food excellent and the company good. Among the passengers were members of an ENSA party who provided regular entertainment. Amusingly, use of cameras was forbidden in case films should be "useful to the enemy". Since the war was over the question of identity of the enemy remained a bit obscure. Bantock's only specialised duty was that of lifeboats officer which he reasoned shouldn't be difficult unless the ship sank which thankfully it didn't. Happy memories came back to him when in the Suez Canal they passed the *Empress of Australia* - the ship which had taken him and fellow evacuees across the Atlantic in what now seemed the distant past. Journey's end was at Bombay where disembarkation was followed by move to a transit camp at Kalyan thirty miles north of the city.

Bantock's first night in India was not pleasant. Sleeping under a mosquito net he was disturbed by the noises of jungle insects and scurrying lizards and, worst of all, by the presence of rats. The last problem was solved the next day by a visit from the rat catcher whose method was to release two large rat-eating snakes under the floorboards. Presumably the snakes were considered preferable company to the rats. Shoes had to be checked every morning for the possible presence of scorpions. The unwelcome sojourn at Kalyan was followed by a five day rail journey across India to Calcutta where accommodation was arranged in the palatial Grand Hotel. Here Bantock was able to obtain a supply of films for his camera which now apparently was free from restrictions. What could have been a pleasant stay was marred by outbreaks of rioting and disorder as Indian Nationalist activists were making their presence increasingly felt. It was with a sense of relief therefore that he found himself on board ship once more heading towards his final destination of Bangkok via Rangoon.

Following a somewhat confused night incident in which Bantock discharged his revolver, the CO sent him on an unusual mission to "bring back Private Smith". The latter was absent without leave and was living in the jungle with a native family. Bantock's instructions were that persuasion was to be used to bring back the "missing link" but not force. Smith was located but persuasion failed. All he wanted to do was to spend the rest of his days living happily in the jungle and as he was due for demob anyway the



Lieutenant Bantock



RSM J B Simmonds with the Quarter Guard

matter was allowed to rest. (Having regard to the eventual development of the post-war world it seems likely that Smith's decision was a wise one).

Although the war was over, danger was still present in the form of Indian Nationalist insurrectionists operating from the jungle. This was forcibly brought home to Bantock when on his way back from the Smith visit, his jeep was blown up and both he and his driver injured. A spell in hospital followed before he was flown out in an old DC3 aeroplane to Bangkok and in mid December 1945 he reached his ultimate destination - the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment with their Headquarters located in the Chulalongkorn University.

Greeted first by the RSM, Joe Simmons, he reported to the Adjutant, Vic Mosnicka, and met his brother officers who made him feel comfortably at home. From now on he was known as 'Joe' and the previous term of 'Mister' faded into the background. The other officers were experienced combatants having variously seen service in North Africa, the Pacific and

Burma. The Battalion CO was Lieutenant Colonel John Terry. The main task for the troops was the re-patriation of 150,000 Japanese officers and men who had to be screened with a view to locating and identifying war criminals. Sickness was also something of a problem among the British servicemen freshly returned from jungle combat conditions.

Bantock was immediately posted to 'D' Coy as a Platoon Commander where he was to remain for his entire service in the Battalion. The Company Commander was Major Bob Strand with whom Bantock established an enduring friendship which continues to this day. What good fortune for the young Subaltern.

In January 1946, a big Victory Parade was planned to take place in Bangkok with Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia taking the salute, and with music provided by the Royal Marine Band. The CO naturally wanted the Battalion to march past to Braganza. "*No problem*" said the Bandmaster departing with premature optimism. Within a short



RSM Joe Simmons

Commander was Major Bob Strand with whom Bantock established an enduring friendship which continues to this day. What good fortune for the young Subaltern.



Bob Strand, Tony Parkes

while he was back and looking worried. The band (Heaven forbid) didn't know the tune and had no copy of the score.

Resourceful as only Queensmen can be, the officers, conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Terry with a knife in his hand, hummed the tune which the Bandmaster, bolstered by a large gin and lime, translated into music in his notebook. As is thankfully

usually the case "*it was all alright on the day*". Screening of surrendered Japanese troops was by now well under way although sickness among their British counterparts was becoming an increasing problem. The fact that some of it was undoubtedly 'self inflicted' resulted in brothels being put out of bounds and anti-brothel patrols organised. One unexpected catch was the local Chief of Police in what can only be described as an embarrassing situation.

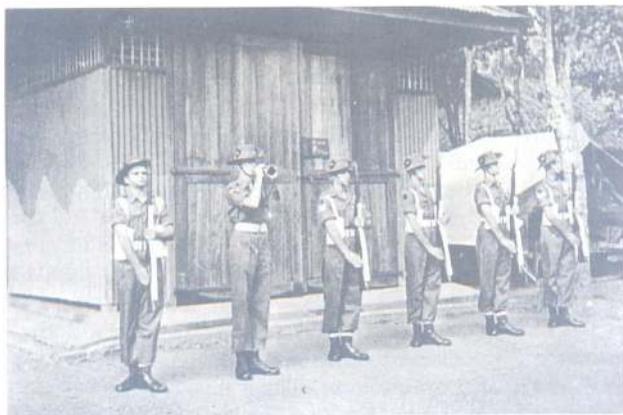
One mutually embarrassing incident occurred at a Japanese screening operation when Bantock asked for the services of an interpreter. A Japanese officer was found and on his appearance Bantock was shocked to recognise him as an old school friend of the now long distant days in America. They later had a private and somewhat emotional meeting together. Guard duties at Bangkwang Jail were boring and time consuming but the main difficulty was not with villains within the jail but with villains without. Thieving was a persistent problem and on one occasion the medical officer, asleep in his room at night, lost all his clothing and medical equipment. Eventually the screening operation finished. 145,000 Japanese had been processed so some welcome leave followed at a specially established camp on the coast at Sansuk. An unusual recreational activity was provided by the presence of some ex-Japanese cavalry horses and riding became very much the flavour of the day.



Korean and Japanese POWs

Bangkok itself was not lacking in entertainment, there being night clubs, a cinema showing the latest American films and a swimming pool. Shops were full of varied goods including silverware made by local craftsmen. A boxing match attracted a lot of attention, particularly when a Queensman knocked the reigning Siamese champion out of the ring. Some excitement was caused when intelligence information was received that an Indian Nationalist Army activist was in hiding in the area. Successfully located by Bantock and an armed party he was arrested but surprisingly proved to be a comparatively insignificant looking little man.

Various colonial troubles were by now becoming apparent, resulting in the Queen's soon finding themselves on a troopship bound for Malaya. After a short stop at Singapore they docked near Penang and from there went to a transit camp at Sungei Patani. Bantock describes the accommodation as "quite terrible", poorly thatched and leaky wooden buildings were infested with vermin. Using soldiers with building experience, he commenced an extensive maintenance improvement plan which was interrupted by instructions to make arrangements to receive an ENSA party and to provide them with a piano, notwithstanding the fact that such instruments were thin on the ground in that part of the world. One was eventually obtained but the subsequent entertainment was not a success, being entirely unsuited to the troops in question. The discovery of two very sick horses in the camp was another problem for Bantock but they were seen by a veterinary officer and put down.



Quarter Guard, Sungei Patani

A welcome move to Singapore took place in January 1947 and accommodation in Selarang Barracks at Changi proved to be a big improvement on that they had left behind. Food was excellent and guard duties for various premises, including Changi Jail, were not over strenuous. One blemish on the otherwise pleasant scene was the Court Martial of a Queen's soldier for being absent without leave. Bantock was the inexperienced defending officer and was not entirely surprised when his "client" was convicted.

With peace-time conditions returning to the Army, Emergency Commissioned Officers such as Bantock had to apply for permanency if they wished to pursue military careers. Some did, but Bantock decided otherwise. As a part of a general smartening up process in the Battalion, officers were required to purchase mess dress. Unwilling to do this by reason of his temporary status, and with demob in the offing, Bantock declined to do so. Without ill feelings he was transferred to GHQ, South Eastern Command, and a post in the Military Secretary's Office, thus bidding farewell to the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment in March 1947. At GHQ at Tanglin Barracks, within walking distance of Singapore city, Bantock found himself dealing with matters of awards and decorations and confidential reports on officers. The last named was the most problematical, being subject to quite complicated procedures.

Bantock's work was obviously found to be satisfactory as he was asked to consider prolonging his service beyond his normal demob date but after consideration he decided against it. Before leaving GHQ he was pleased to accept an invitation to a presentation of New Colours to the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Selarang Barracks. With some sadness he said goodbye to friends in Singapore in October 1947, as he left homeward bound for demob. A brief call at the port of Bombay by the returning troopship was marred by the presence of jostling and hostile crowds.

Arrived back in England he completed the usual demob routine and was more than pleased when he was invited to a party at Stoughton Barracks where he met several old friends and colleagues including Lieutenant Colonel John Terry. Not so welcome was a delayed bout of malaria. But a final enjoyable party was a reunion held at Silverlands, Chertsey, Surrey, one of the sites of the original Actors' Orphanage of childhood days. For Bantock the wheel had turned full circle. He was home from his travels and the war.

He was alive and in one piece. Without doubt THE ORPHAN HAD BEEN LUCKY.

GB & RF

## Golf Society

The Autumn meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday 20th October 1996 at the Woking Golf Club. In spite of major construction work being carried out on the clubhouse, we were as always made most welcome by the members and staff. The course also has been undergoing major surgery to improve the fairways, this is now starting to pay dividends.

We were delighted to welcome two new players at the meeting Colonel George Redfern and Captain Peter Dary. Jennifer Davidson, Adrian Cross, Richard Hill and David Robinson joined us for lunch. It is a pleasure to see old non playing members and friends of the society taking time to join us and renew old friendships over an excellent lunch! The numbers attending our meetings is once again on the increase with 21 attending. In addition it was good to have Michael Clarke and Hugh Harris for the afternoon round.

The prizes were presented by the Captain of the Society F.T.A. Mole Esq.

Results of the competitions were as follows:-

### Autumn Bowl

Major M Farrell	69 net
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### Glasgow Greys Cup

A W Fuller Esq	76 net
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### Petri Plate aggregate Spring and Autumn Meeting

Col J G W Davidson	69-72 = 141 net
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### Heale's Memorial Trophy Stableford

W J T Ross Esq	36 pts
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### Runner up

Senior Div	M J Power Esq	33 pts
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### Runner up

Junior Div	Maj L E Penn	32 pts
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### Veterans Halo

Maj W J F Sutton	44 pts
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### P M Greensomes 14 holes

M Howard Esq and W J T Ross Esq	34 pts
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### Runners up

Col H M W Harris and H P Mason Esq	28 pts
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Winners of the Society sweep run on the morning round:-

1st C M Howard Esq    2nd M Howard Esq    3rd C M Howard Esq

We look forward to 1997 and renewed support for our Spring meeting at Sudbrook Park on Thursday 8th May and the Autumn Meeting at Woking on Wednesday 1st October.

Why not join us for lunch at either meeting if you are unable to play.

## Golf Society Woking GC, October 1996



Standing L to R: Toby Sewell, Michael Clarke, Adrian Cross  
Seated L to R: Gordon Robertson, Mike Power, Richard Hill



# PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?

**F W Rollings writes from Bristol:**

I am indebted to Mr Ron Harper of 117 New Dover Road, Canterbury, for details of your Newsletter. I refer now to my late brother, Pte Henry James Rollings, killed in action 23 August 1944, whilst serving with 1/5th Bn Queen's Royal Regiment in Normandy, buried at Liseux.

Our family, that is to say, my parents, long since deceased, received very little information at the time, and so it was that my son offered to try and fulfil a family wish that someone should visit the graves at Liseux, in France. This Pilgrimage was carried out a few weeks ago, and two of my brothers and myself travelled over and made the visit. We found the cemetery at the Church of St Theresa at the top of a steep hill outside Liseux. A terribly wet day and with a combined age of 221 years between us, it was hard going but as I remarked at the time, it appeared on looking at the area, it was much harder for the infantry in the summer of 1944.

However, to continue, Ron Harper has sent me photocopies of the Regimental History covering the period 6.6.44-30.8.44, and I would like to know if any of your readers knew my brother personally, and I am interested to know if anyone remembers if he had any health problems whilst with the Battalion. Incidentally he was called up in 1940 and served for some considerable time as Royal Artillery. When did he join 1/5th Queen's? I would like to know if anyone of your surviving members remember him Henry James Rollings, a Bristolian, killed in action at or near Liseux 23.8.44.

Please write to Mr Rollings at:- 28 Hollis Avenue, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8PQ.

*PS: Also interred there and served with the 1/5th Queen's, Private Bigg Withers and Cpl Miller. I should also add that the graves are attended well and looked after immaculately.*

○ ○ ○

**B T Abbott**, 35 Sprules Rd, Brockley, London SE4 2NL 0171-652-5456 is trying to contact his old Drum Major of the 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment, D/M Fred Westrop - 1954 - 1956. Any member who can help is asked to contact Mr Abbott at the above address.

○ ○ ○

**The Son of the late Tom Dimsdale** wonders if any reader remembers his father. Sgt Dimsdale served with The Queen's in Malta, Tientsin and India with the 1st Battalion. He was also with the 1/6th Bn in Normandy. Please write to R J Dimsdale, 69 Ruskin Avenue, Wrenthorpe, Wakefield, WF1 2BG.

## Quotes from the past

The Old Duke of York (Commander in Chief 1798-1809) once found his footman turning a poor woman from the door. "only an old soldier's wife" was the explanation. "And pray" said the Duke, "what else is Her Royal Highness The Duchess of York?".

## Remembering

The poignancy of this single word "Remembering", which is in the motto of the Western Front Association, is vividly illustrated by an article written by Mrs Carole Henderson and forwarded to Tony Ramsey MM, Secretary of The East Surrey Reunion Association. In it she refers to her grandfather Percy Sellers of the 13th Wandsworth Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment who died on 8th April, 1918 in a military base hospital near Boulogne after the battle of Cambrai.

Her interest in him was first aroused when as a small child she had seen a named house plaque commemorating him on the mantelpiece in her grandmothers house. She was told that he had died in the first world war, two months before her father was born. Years later, after her fathers death, Mrs Henderson was given her grandfathers photograph and medals and her interest in the whole matter was renewed when she was watching a programme about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. By now determined to find further information she wrote to the Commission who supplied her with fulsome details about her grandfather and the location of his grave. On hearing about the British Legion Pilgrimage department, she arranged to go with them to visit the cemetery.

In the meantime she elicited more information about the Wandsworth Battalion, finding that it had been locally raised by the Mayor in 1915, had gone to France in 1916 and although missing the battle of the Somme had nevertheless been present at the battle of Cambrai in 1917.

Some idea of the casualty rate of the war can be gauged from the fact that at Etaples Cemetery, where Mrs Hendersons grandfather is buried, there are 11,000 graves, including those of Indians and Chinese.

She describes her visit to the cemetery in 1993, accompanied by her husband, mother and step-father, as a most moving experience. Beautifully laid out and maintained it is within sight of the English Channel. After a short and impressive service, wreaths were laid and a true spirit of remembrance was felt by all members of the party present. Mrs Henderson has since made further visits to the cemetery to take her daughter with her to visit her great grandfathers grave.

Larger scale remembrance has been affected by the borough of Wandsworth which has "adopted" the town of Villers Pluinch and as a result of the link, the only VC of the Battalion has been commemorated.

*Truly - "Remembering".*

○ ○ ○

## Corporal John Mc Namara VC

Association members and readers in the North may be interested to know that Lancashire County Council are to install a plaque acknowledging the fact that Cpl John McNamara VC of 9th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment lived and worked in the community. The plaque is to be installed in County Hall, Preston and will be unveiled on 3rd September, the 79th anniversary of Cpl McNamara's acts of bravery.

County Hall, Preston sought the advice of the Museum team as to the design and correct wording of the plaque which is to show the crest of The East Surrey Regiment as well as an image of the Victoria Cross. At the time of writing, I was not able to ascertain whether the dedication ceremony is to be open to the public but a call to County Hall would, no doubt, clarify this if there are likely to be any Regimental Association members who would like to be present.

PJ

# LETTERS



## **Lt Col Bob McGhie writes:-**

Like so many others I was saddened by the death of Major General Francis Piggott who taught me an early lesson in what in modern jargon might now be termed inter-personal relationships. In 1965 when I was a seventeen year old schoolboy he invited me to join him for lunch at the RAG Club. This was my 'interview' before going to Sandhurst to see if I measured up to the standards of the Queen's Royal Surreys. We lunched together across the vast expanse of a beautifully polished mahogany table. By the time the soup had come and gone he had put me reasonably at ease and my extreme nervousness had reduced a little. The main course then arrived in the shape of a large steak and kidney pie with glutinous gravy. I was just explaining why I wanted a commission in his Regiment when disaster struck.

I was trying to pierce an enormous piece of vulcanised kidney with my fork when to my horror it shot off the plate like a demented rocket, skidded across the polished table surface and came to rest almost exactly halfway between our two plates. Its momentum gone, it rested there, its gravy envelope congealing into a viscous puddle. Whilst the General didn't seem to have noticed I sat transfixed with horror and blushing confusion. What should I do? Pretend it wasn't my mealy missile and hope he might think it was his? Couldn't do that - there was no hiding its line of departure as a sticky trail of gravy led back unerringly to the edge of my plate. Should I call the waiter and task him peremptorily to dispose of it as if blaming the chef's culinary skills rather than my forkwork? That would have been the stylish way but you have to remember my age and the occasion.

Frozen into inactivity I did nothing and just hoped that my host wouldn't refer to it. General Francis had seen it all, of course, and as he carried on talking to me his gaze roved back and forth from this grotesque intruder to me. He didn't draw attention to it; he didn't need to as it lodged between us like some ghastly gargoyle. Unfortunately both of us had only just started into fairly massive helpings and no waiter appeared to wipe it away together with my embarrassment. So we continued eating for what seemed like a lifetime; not that I tasted much; extreme self-conscious nervousness had replaced any feelings of being at ease in the great man's company particularly when touching my plate. Finally, thankfully, we finished and the waiter whisked away the plates, the offending kidney and the glutinous trail. My relief was tangible and my shirt and palms started to dry out.

Lunch and the interview ended without mention of the incident or further mishap and in 1967 I was commissioned into 1 Queen's (The Queen's Royal Surrey title remained in brackets for a while). When we returned from Bahrain in late 1968 General Francis came to visit us in Lingfield. As we went in to lunch he took my elbow and said conspiritorially "I do hope for your sake, young Robert, that there are no kidneys on the menu today"! I blushed; he chuckled, and then added that he had watched my confusion and reactions with great interest. He had felt at the time that my ability to carry on regardless and without apparent embarrassment showed that I had something to offer! He didn't elaborate but I was the first last and potential officer he had selected on the strength of kidney confusion!

Whilst I didn't have the privilege of serving with him I shall always remember him with affection; and if ever kidneys are on the menu.....!

*Lt Col McGhie overcame problems of vulcanised kidneys and commanded 3rd Bn The Queen's Regiment; 1986-1988. During his very successful tour in command the battalion were awarded The Wilkinson Sword of Peace for their work in Belize. The Wilkinson Sword is now on display in The PWRR and Queen's Regiment Museum at Dover Castle. Lt Col R M McGhie OBE retired from the Army and is now employed as a retired officer. He is currently Inspector of Recruiting at the Ministry of Defence.*

## **J Fogerty writes:-**

It was a wonderful surprise to see the photo of the 10th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. I well remember them all. Captain (Whacker) Welch the MTO, Johnny Ryman who was in my company and was in the advance party that I took with me for billeting in Chaddlewell House, Plympton. Wyles was orderly in the medical room, 'Mog' Mahoney was always late for breakfast when we were under canvas at Whitchurch, and would always finish up any tea that was left on the tables!

I can remember a boxing show arranged in Plumer Barracks, Plymouth. Wyles the medical orderly was matched against Ritchie Bryant, the best boxer in the Battalion and lost narrowly on points when he quite easily could have won. After Dunkirk, I, with a large number of Officers, NCOs and storemen, left Kingston for Lincomb Camp, Ilfracombe, to form the 10th Battalion. I was then L/Cpl Fogerty 18 Platoon 'D' Coy. The Cpl was 'Granny' Webb and the Sgt Bill Winterford. I got promotion to Cpl, with Sgt Glynn taking over from Winterford. I eventually moved up to Sgt, taking over from Glynn.

In 18 Pln in the first formation we had ten Smiths, all being known by their last two numbers. Although this battalion disbanded at the end of 1943-4, I would like to state that I have never before worked with a finer bunch of men. I feel sure that Smith 05 would have been among the first entries to 18 Pln. Our Company Commander was Captain Jeffries. I would like to thank the Editor for printing this photo and bringing back a lot of memories.

## **Harold Hawkins writes:-**

Will you please convey to all concerned my sincere and grateful thanks for publishing my article in connection with The East Surrey Regiment (TA) at Wimbledon.

These thanks also include Mrs Sheila Roberts and yourself for sorting out the posting of these Newsletters. It's a good job you both have a sense of humour, but may I add, which I feel sure will please you both, your hard work is much appreciated, because I received my copy today, which made me a very happy man. As soon as I read my account, I noticed on page 33

a request for information was required regarding the 57th (East Surrey) Anti-Tank Regiment, which was formally the 5th Battalion The East Surrey Regiment (my old regiment). I immediately got in touch with the person concerned, and had quite a conversation, so much so, that I am sending him a full copy of my write-up today. He is waiting patiently to receive same, as we both recognise names.

I also contacted Wimbledon Museum (who had already had a copy from me). They also want a copy of article published, and I have arranged they will be sent a copy, all about the Anti-Tank Regiment as soon as possible. So there sirs, in a matter of a few hours, you and your staff have made at least three people very happy.

#### **Sgt K Boyd (608821) writes:-**

It was cheering to see the picture of the 1/5th Queen's anti-tank platoon taken at Spandau in 1945. Sgt Humphries (better known as 'Bonzo') was on the left of Captain V Dunn and I. Ken Boyd was on the right. I can name a few of the chaps - I know them by face but their names elude me - but here goes.

Front row: Platt, Kelly, Humphries, Captain Dunn, Boyd, Evans, Smith. 2nd row: Thursby, Meakins, Bowen, Pullinger. 3rd row: Kelly, Hearne, Watson. Back row: Jack Hadrell??

Hoping this will trigger off memories from the other chaps. I also have a copy of this photo taken at the same time, along with one or two others. I send my good wishes to all.

#### **R C Tamplin writes from Horley:-**

I was very disappointed as you will understand at missing this year's reunion, due to being admitted into hospital for surgery on a prolapsed disc. I am now well on the way to recovery hopefully returning to work at the end of the month. Will you please extend my thanks to all concerned for the wonderful bouquet of flowers sent to me by the Association.

One very nice thing to evolve from my operation was that I made the acquaintance of Dr Nigel Digges (i/c MIR Scanner Dept) East Surrey Hospital, Redhill, Surrey, who informed me that he joined 1st Queen's Royal Surreys in 1967 as MO. Nigel described to me his first meeting with Les Wilson then RSM, which had me in fits of laughter severely adding to my pain but so very worthwhile.

#### **P J Remnant writes from Godalming:-**

Many thanks for the Newsletter (60), I do so look forward to its arrival and have a good nose through to see if any of my old colleagues are mentioned, normally to no avail. I have also been to many 5 OMA dinners etc and Church Parades, but no joy. Then to my surprise on page 31 the picture from R G Baker says it all. They are all there and I can name them, I also have a photo of embarkation at Shorncliffe of all these guys, 2nd Lt Mott, Sgt Bradock, Cpl Jackman. This picture is available if required but it is 9" x 11" as the picture states B Coy Iserlohn. I then went into the 3" mortar platoon. (Sgt Doug Shaw, Cpl Foulgar etc).

I have also tried to find the whereabouts of others. To name a few; Pte Exeler from Devon, George Whaley, London. George and I were placed on the Korea draft crisis. I had six months tacked on and someone decided that was not enough time to go to Korea and back so George got made up yet again in charge of detachments and the last I heard that they had 'copped it'? But only hearsay.

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

I was sorry to read of the passing of Lt Col S W Peet. MC TD. He was my Company Commander at Anzio, and I was near

him when he was wounded. The last time I saw him was at the Union Jack Club a few years ago. At this visit we arrived in the foyer at the same time and his wife asked me if I would take him down to the Gascoigne room where 2/6th Queen's was holding their annual re-union. This was his last visit to the battalion meeting of Old Comrades.

#### **From Second Achilles Housing Association Ltd:-**

Re: H. Hawkins - Newsletter Number 60 November 1996

Our Housing Association owns and manages sheltered accommodation for the elderly in Woking. Many of our tenants come from the Surrey area, and have association with The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, either personally or through members of their families having served with the Regiment over the years. Several of our tenants were very interested to read, in the November Newsletter, the article written by one of their fellow tenants, Harry Hawkins (HWH & RF Page 23). They found it informative and fascinating to have even more insight to Harry's life with the Regiment, and that of his father who served before him with distinction.

I would therefore like to pass on the thanks of many of our tenants, who I am sure will read further issues with interest, should they be made available to them. As we have five developments, perhaps you could graciously supply five copies of each issue for our tenants to peruse.

#### **Letter from the Middle East - 18 May 1943**

*Major Charles Elverson writes:- I found the enclosed letter the other day which I wrote home to my mother just after the North Africa Campaign. I thought it might be of interest to readers of the Newsletter.*

I will try and give you as much of the dope as I can on this AMLC. Censorship has been raised for the time being. When we were in Iraq we were just north of Kirkuk. I never managed to get in to Persia. We left Kirkuk about the middle of March and went to Baghdad and then across the Syrian Desert travelling about 150 miles a day. Across the northern part of Trans Jordan and then across the Jordan in to Palestine. Up to now it had just been desert and lava boulders. It was lovely getting in to Palestine and seeing some white people for a change. Tons of oranges, lemons and grapefruit. The oranges were monstrous. We stopped at a place called Tul-Calm and then went through Gaza in to Egypt across the Sinai desert and across the Suez Canal, to a place called Tahag near Ismailia.

There was an Officer's Club there that was where I went to a dance and saw my old doctor. I went into Cairo for one evening and went to the Shepherds hotel. We stayed at Tahag for about four days and then went by train to Tobruk where we ran in to a sandstorm. On the journey we saw the Alamein battlefield. We passed through Sollum and Caputzo by night. We went from Tobruk by MT and went through Gazala, Derna and stopped for a day at Benghazi or just outside it. I went into Benghazi but it was completely empty. No civilians at all. Between Derna and Benghazi is lovely and fertile with trees, big valleys and gorges. Then we went through Jedabia, Agaila, Sirte and Homs.

We had three days rest just south of Tripoli. Then up in to Tunisia through Mareth, Gabes, Stax and Sousse - getting greener all the time and finally stopped about 10 miles south of Enfidaville and joined the 8th Army. Enfidaville had just been captured the day before. We went up to Enfidaville the next day and went in to the Front Line two days later. We did some attacks and suffered some casualties including the CO, who was killed. We all miss him. We have got a new

fellow now called Kealy. Can't say I enjoyed it, but it wasn't too bad. We sent about 100 shells to one of his. His mortars were nasty and he had some lovely positions in the hills dug right in to the rock. We were in the plain below. He completely overlooked us.

We were about six or seven miles north of Enfidaville for about three weeks when the 1st Army came round from behind and cut them off. It was finally finished by a big bombing attack in the afternoon and then the white flags started to appear. I was in one of our OPs and we got a very good view of it. We stood up in our trenches and waved to them to come over, but I think they were scared of the minefields as they all went along the coast road in their thousands. I took a patrol out that evening to look for some of our wounded in no man's land and ran in to a platoon of Jerry's coming in. I went in to Tunis the day before yesterday for 24 hours. Things haven't quite settled down yet, but I should think it would be a very nice place in peace time. There is no light and no food and not much to get in the shops. But I enjoyed myself and paid a short trip to Carthage. I didn't see any ancient ruins. When I was coming back there was a veritable cloudburst and it poured with rain. I was lucky as I heard the road had been washed away just after I got through. The sun is out with a vengeance again. I had a lovely swim in the Med the other day.

CRCE

#### H Wellbelove writes:-

Thanks again for the Newsletter which I enjoy reading very much. I noticed, with regret, the paragraph concerning the death of Captain S H W Drage. I was his platoon Sgt and got to know him well, together with his friend Lieut Arundel. I'm afraid that after I was wounded at Castelforte we lost touch. Again, thanks for the Newsletter, it is one of the few things that can be relied on these days.

#### R K Swan writes from Woking:

In Aug 1940 I was commissioned and joined the 1/6th Bn The Queen's at Boston, Lincs. (I had been in the TA with 1/5th and then 2/5th Bns).

Early Oct 1940 they collected anyone who could drive or was a motor mechanic into a unit (I think they all came from within the 1/6th Bn) and we moved to Sussex (the whole Bn did). This unit of drivers took out some 12-15 armoured cars, (called Campbell cars) because Sir Malcolm had designed them, from the Anti Tank Regiment of 45th Div (Drakes Drum) at Mayfield, Sussex. We were supposed to be in an anti-parachute role but spent our time picking up airmen, (British and German) who had been shot down.

We were the envy of the rest of the Bn who spent most of their time guarding shot down aircraft (British and German)! I left this unit early Dec 1940 to go to 164 OCTU at Barmouth as an Instructor. 12 months later I was posted from the OCTU to the 14th Bn at Caterham. This unit in Jan 42 became the 99th Lt AA Regt so my days with the Queen's ended. Are there any members who were with this Unit or remember it and if so what happened to it. The OC was Major Don Godfrey and the 2 i/c was Captain Harry Minguard. There were 3 subalterns. I was one of them. The names of the other two I cannot remember. I was the MTO. My only qualification being I could drive.

#### A W Butler writes from Telford:-

I enclose two photographs taken at Shorncliffe in 1936. One of the boxing team and one of the Horse Transport section. I remember the faces as if it were yesterday but I am afraid the names with the exception of the officers eludes me. For a short



2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment Boxing Team, Shorncliffe 1936. The officers are believed to be Captain Dowling and Lt C O N Wallace.

time I looked after Lt Wallace together with Lt Anthony Holmes, Lt Holmes was tragically killed shortly after, when he ran into the back of an unlit timber wagon whilst on a MMG course at Netheravon. Lt Roberts who was badly injured at the same time recovered and I believe later returned to the regiment. On one occasion Mr Wallace asked me to cut out a bad boil on his leg. We sterilised an ordinary pin in a candle flame and then dipped it in iodine, with this I cut out the boil core and all, and then bandaged the leg. It was a complete success. After Mr Wallace said you would make a damn good surgeon but you are a bloody sadist. I had the sad job of taking a note to Mr Wreford Browns house in either Hythe or Sandgate informing him and his wife of the accident to Mr Holmes. The reason for this was that Mr Holmes's young lady was staying at the time with Mr Wreford Brown and his wife.



2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment, Horse Transport Section, Shorncliffe 1936. The officers are believed to be Captain Magee, Lt Col Atkins and Lt P Wreford-Brown

I remember some months earlier Mr Holmes had asked me to take his car down to Martin Walters for maintenance. As I proceeded out of barracks I had to pass the Orderly room. The late RSM Estall (affectionately known to the lads as Bully) had all the warrant officers lined up ready for CO's orders. There was CSM Pike C Coy and my Coy CSM, CSM Cowie, Buck Adams, CQMS Carver, Holland and the rest. Seeing the car coming the RSM called them all to attention turned and swung me a beautiful salute. I will never forget the look on his face when he saw who it was. I being young and green, grinned my head off. Later that day CSM Pike said to me, "If I were you I would keep out of the RSM's way for a few days, he is going to kill you". He did tear me off a strip eventually but he had a twinkle in his eye at the same time.

Can any of our readers identify the men in the photo? Names to the Editor please.

#### Major Logan Brown writes regarding The Carrier Platoon, 1/6th Surreys, 1943

In "Algiers to Tunis" Page 47, there is a photo of "Carrier Platoon 1/6th Surreys", which, I feel sure must have been taken much later than the campaign in Tunisia since all are in

battle-dress and wearing Caps GS — which were issued in 1944-45.

I commanded the Carrier Platoon of 1/6th Surreys in UK in 1942, and throughout the Tunisian campaign, and I can recognise only two of those in the "Algiers to Tunis" photo. — Sgt Basting, extreme left 2nd row, and Pte Mills, 2nd row sixth from left — maybe someone can identify the others.

#### Carrier Platoon 1/6th Surreys, Carronbridge, Scotland 1943



Top row: Cpl Bashford, Brent, Daws, Norman, Murrie, Chant, Jeeves, Mills H.  
2nd row: Fink, Pickett, Whitehurst, Twohey, Chambers, Cooke, Marks, Mills J., Hewitt, Dance, Tibbett, Elliott, Stiles, Phipps, Hathaway, Payne, King, L/Cpl Campbell, McCormick.

3rd row: Cpl Jenkins, Cpl Fox, L/Sgt Jones, Sgt Jenkins, L/Sgt Basting, Capt Brown, Lt Sloan, Sgt Edmonds, Sgt Snelling, Sgt Bacon, Cpl Chalkley, Cpl Arthur.

Front row: Sawyer, Webster, Dunster, Cooper, Damsell, Coppins, Lawrence.

However, before leaving Scotland for North Africa in 1943 I took photos of the platoon (at Carronbridge) and after the campaign took more photos of the platoon at Keliba in Cap Bon in May 1943.

#### Carrier Platoon 1/6th Surreys, Kelibia, Cap Bon, Tunisia, May 1943



Top row: L/Cpl Phipps, Sgt Edmonds, Sgt Snelling, Sgt Adams, Sgt Jenkins  
2nd row: Whittaker, Hewitt, Cpl Sibley, Cpl Bashford, Cpl Horsup, Mills, Greetham, L/Sgt Basting, Cpl Whitehurst, Wicks.

3rd row: Norman, Cooper, Damsell, Jeeves, Anscomb, Payne, McCallum, L/Cpl Campbell, Brent, McCormick.

4th row: Stiles, Marks, Cpl Arthur, Cpl Jenkins, Daws, Atkinson, Hull, Dunster, Coppins, Fink, Lenton.

5th row: (in front) Cpl Tibbett, Caine, Webster, Lt Sloan.

I am enclosing copies of these, and hope that you, may be able to print them — so that the survivors of the platoon can see how they looked 53 years ago!

In September last year I was in Tunis and able to visit the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery at Borj El Amri about 20 miles West of Tunis, where there are several Surreys graves. I

enclose some photos of these, and if anyone would like copies of any of these photos, including the 1942-43 ones, I can get more made.

#### Jack Chaffer writes:-

Many thanks for ever welcome Newsletter. On page 33, Sgts Mess photo 1926. I have identified another ten members. I remember them well as I was a young 'Barrack Rat' at that time:

Front row: No 1 CSM Bill Dersett, No 10 CSM Bill Parkes, No 11 ORQMS 'Nappy' Wright.

Second row: No 10 Sgt Bill Kerslake, No 11 Sgt 'Peachy' Oram, Provost Sgt, No 12 Sgt Charlie Prosser MM, No 17 C/Sgt Alec Stripp.

Third row: No 8 Sgt Ernie Miles, No 11 Sgt Harry Chaffer, No 13 George Birdsall, Sgt, later Major QM. I think No 9 Front row is RQMS Skilton.

#### A F Chambers writes from Norwich:

Another year round since I last wrote to you so I hope you are still keeping well and are able to continue with your good work of putting the Regimental Newsletter together. You do an excellent job with it, and daresay you sometimes have to scratch your head and wonder how to fill it up. As I have said before I thoroughly enjoy reading it and now have quite a collection of back numbers. Since I last wrote to you I had a letter from a chap who had seen one of my letters published in a newsletter who was in the MT section during our spell in Bangkok. He lives in Cambridgeshire. He was on the photo published in one of the Newsletters of the MT section in Bangkok.

So far we have exchanged a couple of letters, what a pleasant surprise. He asked me what I can remember about our leaving Bangkok on a ship called *Corfu*, I can remember seeing the name on a ship but can't remember getting on it or our getting off at Penang. My memory fails me on this particular issue. I can remember being at Penang and having a look around in a very large Pagoda, it was full of I suppose squatters and the Buddhist idols with joss sticks burning and a terrible pong!

I have got to the stage now where I have to carry an inhaler about with me for the odd puff. I have enclosed my subscription for this years Newsletters and thank you once again Sir.

#### Bill Hill writes from Cippenham:-

After over fifty years of enquiries and searches I finally managed to trace my old friend L/Cpl Jack Johnson of B Coy 2/6th Queen's. The last I heard of Jack was that he had been shot in both knees at Enfidaville, and so I lost all trace of him. In late 1943 I was in Convalescent Depot No.2 at El Ballah, Egypt, and during a conversation with another Queensman, I was told Jack had left No.2 Convalescent Depot some time ago, and was in another hospital just down the road.

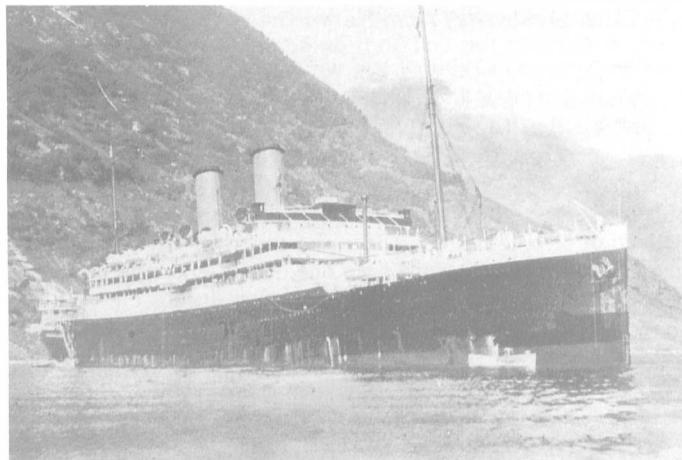
So off to the hospital I went. When I got there, I found Jack watching a football match, but to my dismay he had an arm missing. He had changed completely. No longer the happy go lucky Jack we all knew. He told me he had been discharged from the Convalescent Depot, and was waiting for a train at El Ballah railway station, when he either fell or was pushed under the incoming train. He was in a real state. He said he wasn't going home and didn't care about anything anymore. Of course things changed. I finally traced him to Haywards Heath where he is happily married with children. Jack loved his football and with Eddie Rundle we all played for "B" Coy.

I also traced Eddie Rundle's son, who told me Eddie died following the death of his wife in 1980. I also managed to make contact with Sgt Aldridge, Cpl Bob Levy and Ted Moggs

of "B" Coy and Bob Nicholson of "D" Coy who lives quite close. We are all corresponding and keeping 2/6th Queen's alive. Bob Nicholson and myself often meet in the village, and you don't have to guess what the topic of our conversation is? Best wishes to all.

#### O Rivers writes from Felixstowe:-

I enclose my cheque for my subscriptions to the Newsletter and a little extra for the Benevolent Fund. When reading the letters of thanks for help given to those who need it, it saddens me to know that some of our comrades who served their country well, have fallen on hard times. I hope this modest amount will help towards those who are less fortunate than myself. I also enclose a photograph of the troopship SS *Otranto* on which I arrived in Salonika in February 1948. I was among the 170 reinforcements to the 1st East Surrey's that FWM mentioned in his article "Soldiering in Salonika" Nov '95 issue.



As this vessel was not mentioned in a previous article "Troopships and Trooping" I thought it might be of some interest to our readers.

#### Major Frank Oram writes:-

I would like to let all East Surrey Regiment members know a little bit of sad news about Major 'Bill' Woolley, who recently suffered a stroke. Bill took over RSM 1 Surreys during the North African campaign and served with The East Surrey Regiment throughout the war and afterwards until his commission in 1953/4. On retirement he moved to Dorset.

*The Association send their best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to Bill Woolley.*

#### The following is an extract from a letter received by Colonel Toby Sewell from the outgoing Mayor of Guildford, Councillor J D Woodhatch:-



"I have very much enjoyed my term of office as Mayor, and especially my associations with the Regiment - the Borough very much values the relationship it has with you".

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#### Midst Mud and Malaria

Among the stories which reach the Editor's desk from time to time is one of service by a young soldier in two different Regiments in differing theatres of the First World War.

George Thomas Nevell, born in Lambeth in 1897, joined the 11th Queen's Royal West Surreys (Lambeth) Battalion on 5th July, 1915 at the age of seventeen. The battalion was being raised at the Town Hall by the then Mayor of Lambeth, Sir Charles Gibbs, at a time when voluntary enlistment still

existed. After a period of training at Aldershot in January 1916, during which Nevell became a machine gunner, the Battalion went to France in May and into the front line near Armentieres in June to relieve the 10th Battalion Royal West Kents. Nevell soon became used to being under fire but the most disastrous incident of this type of hazard occurred when the Battalion was actually out of the line near Le Bizet. Two large shells hit their billet and Nevell was one of about the only ten who were not killed or wounded.

On 11th September, 1916 the Battalion went to the appalling and muddied conditions of the Somme where Nevell recounts that they were literally walking on dead bodies and were under constant artillery fire. Not surprisingly he was eventually wounded by receiving a shell splinter in his right shoulder. Returned to "Blighty" he was saddened to hear, while in hospital, that his friends in the Battalion had suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Flers. (The use of tanks had probably saved the infantry from even greater punishment).

Temporarily joining the 3rd Queen's in December, he was pronounced fit for service in January, 1917 and drafted with about 100 others to the 7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Salonika. Malaria was rampant in the Battalion and Nevell soon fell victim but that does not seem to have relieved him from active service. Climate played an important part in operations. In the cold of winter the British troops occupied the warmer lowlands near the River Struma, thus forcing their Bulgarian enemies into the colder hills, but in the warmer weather they retired to higher ground to try and avoid the plagues of mosquitoes. Nevell, in the meantime, qualified as a signaller. It was during a withdrawal to the hills that a memorable incident occurred. Contrary to instructions, a Corporal Curtis remained behind, concealed in long grass, until the Bulgarians were almost on top of him and then opened fire with his machine gun and inflicted heavy casualties. Miraculously surviving, he rejoined the Battalion where he was reprimanded for not carrying out orders.

In the latter part of 1917 the Battalion left for Palestine where Nevell was hospitalised with malaria but rejoined the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment in the summer of 1918, again destined for France. After what must have been a welcome spell of leave in England, the Battalion were in position near Le Cateau where the Germans were retreating but nevertheless inflicting heavy damage and casualties by artillery and machine gun fire. The Fusiliers moved forward under a creeping barrage and Nevell, as a signaller, recounts that maintenance of communications was a problem. As before at the Somme - "bodies were everywhere".

The redoubtable Curtis, by now a Sergeant, inflicted devastation on the enemy by infiltrating their positions and bombing them with Mills bombs. Coming on a troop carrying train he shot the driver and (according to his citation) captured over 100 occupants. His exploits gained him a well deserved Victoria Cross. An interesting point, mentioned by Nevell in this connection, is that in 1919 another Fusilier VC, name forgotten but described as "a Scotsman", joined the platoon thus creating the unusual situation of two VC's in one platoon. (This second VC would seem to be Sergeant Robert Downie, MM, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a native of Glasgow, who had won his award at Lesboeufs in 1916).

Despite his time spent in the Fusiliers, Nevell always primarily regarded himself as a Queensman and was an active member of the 11th Battalion Old Comrades Association until its disbandment in 1970. Describing the continuing connection with Lambeth he states that the Borough "will never forget its very own 11th Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment."

## Introduction to The Mule

We were told at the outset of our training that we must get used to the idea of moving around without wheeled transport, for most of the time anyway. What we could not carry ourselves would be carried by animals, and what they could not carry would be brought by air and either dropped to us or brought down to airstrips which we would build.

The animals provided to help us were mules, ponies and bullocks, but mostly mules; I think we had about 60 mules, 7 or 8 ponies and 2 or 3 bullocks for our column. The mules were for carrying loads, the ponies for riding and carrying a little (including casualties), and the bullocks carried small loads but were primarily emergency rations on the hoof! We also ate mule and pony meat, but only when these animals were killed in action or we had to kill them for some other reason than hunger.

My introduction to the mule was sudden; the first contingent arrived one morning and the troops were being given instruction in loading them. At this stage the animals were very fresh and frisky and did not take kindly to such attention. I was sitting at a table in the Column office tent when a mule charged in through the opening, dragging a load behind it, went straight past me and through the back of the tent, which then collapsed slowly on top of me. My second meeting was almost as unexpected but more painful; as we were all new to animals it was quite common for several of them to get free - I was quietly minding my own business when a spare mule trotted towards me. I took hold of its rope with the idea of holding the mule until someone arrived to take over; but in a flash it turned round, lifted its hind legs and gave me a knockout blow in the solar plexus!

We had mules of various sizes - little chaps not much bigger than an old English sheepdog up to enormous animals almost the size of a shire horse; the small one trotted along carrying about 150lbs, whilst the largest carried almost twice that weight.

A certain amount of injury and a whole lot of frustration was suffered during our introduction to the mule, but as time went on our relationship with them changed into what was virtually a mutual admiration society. We came to realise what a marvellous animal the mule is, with tremendous powers of endurance and the will to go on until he drops; sometimes a mule would go too near the edge of a steep slope, miss his footing and roll down the steep side, load clattering, until brought to a halt by a tree. The sweating soldier would clamber down, remove the loads and persuade the animal to stand up. With the loads replaced the mule would struggle back up the hill and resume its place in the order of march as if nothing had happened.

I understand that mules cannot reproduce themselves but are the issue of mating a male donkey and a female horse. This may well be so, but we found that they certainly had some of the feelings of male and female and we had a number of couples who paired off together. We could not separate them and woe betide anyone who tried to! We were told that a mule could go anywhere a man could go without using his hands. This perhaps was not quite true, as a mule could not balance like a man. We passed through an area covered with huge blocks of rock, often so close together that a mule could not pass between them, and whereas a man could leap from rock to rock maintaining his balance (with some difficulty!), a mule could not. However, a man tends to use his arms to help maintain balance, so perhaps the statement was true after all.

We were told also that all mules could swim, and this too perhaps is true but we found many mules would not swim when we wanted them to. On early river crossing exercises we

had tremendous difficulties getting some of them into the water. Many readers who watch racing on television will have seen the trouble that handlers sometimes experience getting a horse into the starting gate - this is nothing to the problem of persuading a reluctant mule into the water. The mule is so strong and determined that the combined efforts of ten men were required to pull and push him in. Then after swimming a few yards he would sometimes spot a piece of bank jutting out into the river and in no time at all he would be back on the near side again! Another endearing trick of the mule was to wait until we had exhausted ourselves and collapsed on the river bank, when he would quietly walk in and cross to the other side.

The ATO (Animal Transport Officer) of our column found the answer to this problem. He got permission to take all the mules away to a suitable riverside location for a week. He kept all the animals on one bank until they were very hungry, and then with the aid of a lead mule who he had found was always eager for a swim, and a lot of effort by the muleteers, he got all the mules to swim across. On reaching the other side they were given a good feed, but then starved again until they followed the lead mule back across the river. By the end of the week the mules had acquired the habit of following the lead mule into the water, even without the necessity of a starving and feeding routine.

The men who were allotted to the job of caring for the mules, the muleteers, became very fond of their charges and the mules in turn seemed to have a special regard for the particular two legged creature who looked after them. Later when we were in Burma, and some of the mules died or were killed, their muleteers were heartbroken. Our Brigadier was one who believed that all officers should have experience of the jobs their men had to do, so that part of our training was in the care of mules. This usually took place very early in the morning. It was said that this was the only time that mules and officers could be spared; the mules were still fresh and frisky and we approached our task with some trepidation. At 6.30 on a cold morning, and it is cold in central India at that time in December, it is no fun for those inexperienced in such work to endeavour to groom a recalcitrant mule, especially the rear end of the animal.

*Acknowledgments to C S Phillips, 2 Queen's. Extract from 'Hannibal Eclipsed'.*

## Lassie and I

The phone rang a few nights ago, and when I answered it, a voice said; "this is 608 something or other"; do you know of any funny things that happened in Burma with the Chindits?. Now that's funny for a start! Burma funny! There was nothing funny about that operation, but I told Tommy Atkins, the caller, that I would try to put down on paper a few things which you won't find in the books about The Chindits.

I have always believed that many things in one's life are predestined - ordained even. So that when I found myself on a 'God forsaken' railway siding somewhere in India, I was not all that surprised, after what the war had dished up for us since 1939. Most of us had driven vehicles up to that time; now we were told that we would not need them anymore. There were no roads where we were going; no paths even, only plenty of mountains. That is why I stood there that day, waiting for a train to come in with a load of Mules. Why mules? we soon found out during the next months. It was only mules-and men-that could have climbed the Pakta Hills. We were to give 'Them There Hills' different names as time went on. Not repeatable here!

The train came in, and we stood in line. As the mules were led off, the first chap would take the next mule. There were many

ribald remarks as the unloading continued. A six foot chap would find himself with a mule the size of a seaside donkey, and a small chap would find himself leading away an animal as big as a horse. My moment came, and there was this wild eyed mule, ears laid back, frothing at the mouth. She was big, and dirty after the train journey-I called her Lassie and I learned to love and respect her and cried when she was put down, before we were flown out from the Broadway stronghold, in Burma.

It was a two day march back to the battalion in bivouac, so on the first night we stopped by the roadside where shackle lines had been laid out. I think the RSM had lined them with his pace stick, they were so straight! Grabbing hold of the rear hoof to put the shackle on, was not a good idea, We learnt to slide the hand down the leg gently. We learnt that a mule has a powerful kick.

The distribution of loads proceeded, and training began. Lassie was privileged to be given the very responsible task of carrying the '22' radio set and the engine to charge the batteries, a sack of mule feed on the side with the engine, balanced her load. Training over, we moved to the starting point on the Ledo Road by train. Mules were loaded six to a rail car, three facing forward, and three back. They were held in position by three stout bamboo poles. In the space between the six mules, were the pack saddles and the rest of the harness; hay and feed for the journey, and two muleteers, of which I was one. The journey took about six days, and by the end of the journey the mules had gnawed almost through the bamboo poles. The reason that the journey took so long was, we were shunted into sidings for long periods, for other trains to pass. The mules were watered in the rail car by carrying buckets from a water source. They were then fed, in position, with their nose bags. The job of mucking out was a bit scary in such a restricted space.

The journey ended and we de-trained. It was a three night walk to the Battalion. The road had no surface and at times we were over our ankles in gluey mud. The reason we walked by night was that Wingate wanted an element of surprise. At one point on this Ledo Road we stayed in an American Base Camp for the road builders. Now here was luxury such as we had not experienced for many moons, and were not to have for many more. Food cooked in a real kitchen. Served on plates at a real table with a cloth on! After a meal, a cinema, those Yanks certainly knew how to rough it, and a bed to sleep in! Only a groundsheet for us for many nights.

Lassie was given VIP treatment by the Yanks who could not make out why we needed mules when there were trucks. They should have joined us, they would have found out. The territory was uncharted and there were no paths even.

On the march into Burma I came to respect Lassie more and more. Her sure-footedness, at times when her invaluable load could have finished thousands of feet down a ravine; as we walked a narrow path along the hillside, I held her tail as we crossed the Chindwin River; sheltered under her when hailstones as big as sugar lumps, rained from the sky. I shared my meagre rations with her, she loved most of all the dextrose tablets in the 'K' ration, and would lift her lip, and try to bray when I opened one of the three a day packets. I say tried to bray; she could not because she had been operated on, and silenced for the operation behind the Japanese lines. Silence was essential. Sometimes we would walk through swollen rivers for most of the day, hiding tracks, but when bivouac came we would be rationed for water, but I always found a little to spare to wash Lassie's eyes and mouth, and nostrils. When it came time to wash her 'dock' she would lift her tail expectantly.

Going into bivouac was a well trained exercise, the column would stop. Each man was then responsible for his own area to sleep. Mules were off loaded and were then watered, fed and

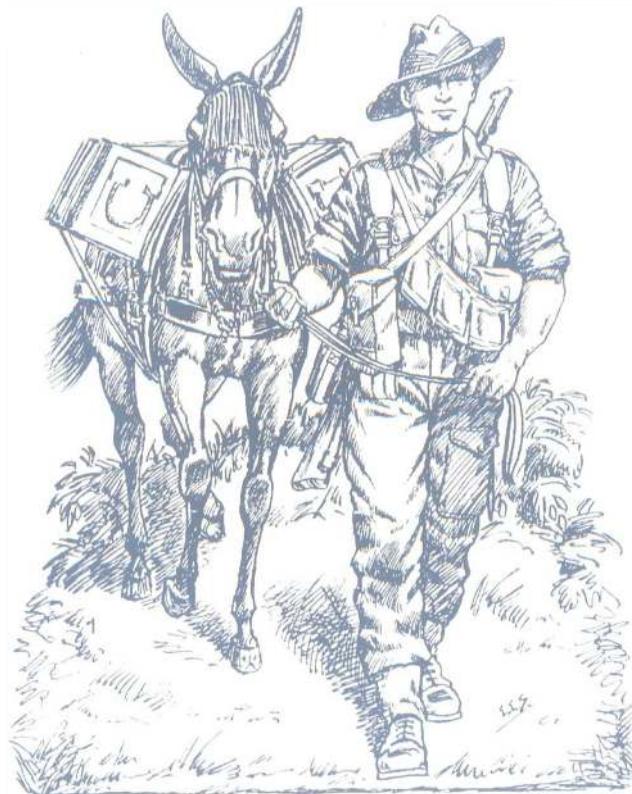
groomed. Bamboo was cut if it was present, (a mule could eat almost their own weight of bamboo shoots). Then when this was done the muleteer could tend to his own needs. Whether it was dusk or not, the loads, harness, and one's personal belongings had to be placed exactly where one knew they were. The order to march the next day might come before daylight, and the dressing, saddling and loading was almost done by touch. Girths were tightened, and after a few minutes the column would stop, and girths tightened perhaps another three holes. The mule had a habit of blowing itself out first thing.

So you see there was not anything funny about Burma. There were strange things, like the leeches, mosquitoes, and ticks, the monsoon rain, the almost endless jungle, rivers and hills, and more and more. No nothing funny at all! I did see a muleteer finish up a few feet from his mule's hind legs when he forgot to run his hand down the mule's leg before applying the shackle. That was funny, but then I don't laugh at other peoples downfalls so I did not find anything funny about the Chindit operation at all. Years later I stood on parade at a Chindit Reunion. We were being inspected by Prince Charles. He spoke to every fourth man. He passed me and spoke to a chap further along. *"How did you get on in Burma"* he said. *"I liked it"*, the chap said! Now I did laugh at that, as did everyone in earshot.

There was a funny chap in Whitehall though because when we arrived in 'Aberdeen' stronghold in April, some newspapers were in the supply drop. An article read *"All British Troops with 4½ years overseas will be home by Easter"*. Easter had gone, we had been abroad five and a half years and we were still there. That wasn't funny at all.

The fly out from Broadway to Commilla was welcome, but I could not enjoy that even. Lassie had had to be shot a few days before, rather than fly her out. I still wonder why, and every time I enter my front door and see her shoe above it I think of her and the hundreds of nights we spent together and the miles we walked together, side by side mostly.

The day after my arrival at Commilla, my beard of several months was shaved off, and my hair was cut. I looked in the



Drawing by kind permission of Charles C Stadden

mirror, now that was a funny sight, I laughed at that! Forty years after that I read in the 'Dekko' (the Journal of The Burma Star Association), an article written by a specialist in Manchester University. He was advising all Far East POW's and Chindits, to see their GP's if they suffered from an itchy rash, which came and went. It was caused by a tiny worm which entered a person's foot, and made its way to the intestine, where it flourished and bred. It was at this time when the rash appeared. It was called 'Strongyloides Stercoralis'. I went to my GP, and he sent me to Woolwich Hospital where I stayed for a week for tests. It was confirmed that I had had these worms, for all those years. After a course of treatment they sent me home. I don't think I was completely cured, but a few years later, when I had problems with my lungs, and had a litre of fluid withdrawn from them, it seemed to clear up my rash completely. So I carried those worms around in my upper intestine for all those years, that wasn't funny. But it was very strange.

If anyone reading this, has this itchy rash, with diarrhoea, it might well be Strongyloides Stercoralis. This can cause death if the person's immune system is reduced by a long illness. That's not funny at all! So you see I could not write anything funny about Burma, but I hope that I have raised a laugh.

CB

## War Memorials

If members, gathering in silence at their local war memorials on Remembrance Sundays, should feel that the commemorative symbols are not being maintained as well as they should be, the remedy may be closer to hand than some people may think. In many cases local Councils are directly responsible for the maintenance of memorials and in any case can often provide assistance for such purposes.

At the village of Horsell, Surrey, the Woking Borough Council, in co-operation with the Horsell Residents Association, have recently carried out extensive refurbishment and improvement of the local memorial which has now become a notable central feature of the village and is greatly appreciated by residents and visitors. Council officials together with members of the Residents Association, other interested parties and members of the public gathered at the monument to mark the occasion of completion of the programme on Wednesday 24th July.

In recent years a register of memorials has been compiled at the Imperial War Museum under the direction of Dr A C N Borg FSA. Many local Record Offices also preserve details.

RF

## Belgian Monument to 1/6th Queen's

A monument to the 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment now stands in the Belgian National Shrine at Oestakker near Ghent. The Shrine marks the spot where members of the Belgian Resistance captured by the Nazis were taken for execution. Under the patronage of the King of the Belgians it contains statues representing political and resistance prisoners together with samples of earth from concentration camps in ten European countries.

In September 1944, some 70 or more members of the Resistance who were due to be executed were saved by the quick and timely arrival of the 7th Armoured Division who caused the Germans to withdraw. After the Shrine was completed it was considered appropriate to erect the monument to the 1/6th Queen's who were the first to reach the Oestakker area. The monument takes the form of a rough edged stone with a bronze plaque bearing the Paschal Lamb, the name of the Battalion and the date of liberation-6th September 1944.

Also on the stone is the date of the unveiling and, in Latin, the inscription "Bravery strives to the highest limits". It was unveiled by The late Colonel Nick Nice who served with the 1/6th Queen's in the 1944 liberations operations and who was the last Commanding Officer of the Battalion before amalgamation.

The impressive ceremony took place in the presence of civic and military dignitaries and representatives of both Britain and Belgium. Buglers played the Last Post and Reveille and the band played the British and Belgium National Anthems.

After the ceremony the Parade marched through Oestakker where they were welcomed at a Civic Reception in which M Poelman, a former Belgian Army Officer and member of the Resistance, said that the monument to the 1/6th Queen's would be a permanent thanksgiving to the British nation and its people. A casket containing soil from Oestakker was presented to the late Lieutenant Colonel Llewellyn, then Commanding the 3rd Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment TA.

Oestakker symbolises what the Second World War was fought for - freedom from tyranny and oppression - and it also commemorates those, both British and Belgian, who fought it.

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## 'The Rag' 1996



*Mrs Stephen (Rusty) Petzing and Lt Col 'Oscar' Palmer outside 'The Rag', taken during the Petzing UK visit from Canada*

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## Union Jack Club, 1996



*Captain Sid Messenger talking to his old boss, General Rowley Mans. Colonel Toby Sewell listens attentively*

## A posting to Italy

Whilst on leave from 13th Queen's I received a letter from the C.O. (Colonel Paul Adams) to the effect that I was to be posted to 2/7th Queen's in Italy as it was considered that I should see service with a front line battalion for the future of my career. This came as no surprise to me.

I returned to Ramsbottom and got kitted out for overseas, attended my last guest night at Pilsworth and then proceeded to Birkenhead to sail on Friday 13th December 1943 for North Africa. As senior army officer aboard I was appointed 'O.C. Troops'. This gave me the privilege of dining at the Captain's table and having a drink in the wardroom in a supposedly 'dry' ship. I was never quite sure how many service personnel were aboard; I do know that E and F decks were below the propeller shaft. Conditions on board were pretty foul, the troops suffered from seasickness and were not keen to leave their hammocks. Thank goodness I was a good sailor as I had to visit each deck daily. It was essential that all personnel should spend a period on the open deck for fresh air and exercise. To this end PT drill, games and lifeboat drill were put in hand. The British Tommy is a versatile chap and soon organised games and entertainment were enjoyed by all ranks.

We were continually shadowed by the Luftwaffe and one ship was torpedoed and sunk. Our ship was deputed to pick up survivors. This was a grim task, but willingly undertaken for who knows who could be the next victim. On arrival at Oran, Movement Control directed us in lorries to a staging area in the desert. The only things there were Arabs, scrub and water stand pipes. Imagine 5,000 troops being dumped with no accommodation, food or cooking facilities! I left senior officers in charge and motored back to Oran. I raised hell with Movement Control, which was under American control and they were not very co-operative. Finally I asked to see the person in charge, who happened to be Major McKule who had served under me on a battle patrol in 1941. He was very sympathetic and when the Americans got into action they move very fast. Lorries were soon loaded with tentage, rations, bedding and cooking requirements. They were delivered and the camp was a working unit 12 hours later.

Security was a priority for not only were there Arabs but French Ghoums - redoubtable fighters, but knife carrying thieves, acquiring anything they could lay their hands on. Hygiene standards had to be instilled in the 90% of personnel who had never been overseas before. Latrines were dug and night buckets made available. Twenty per cent of the unit were allowed into Oran each day, ensuring that every man was made aware of the necessity to use adequate contraceptives, that local wines and food could lead to 'Gippy Tummy' and that thuggery was rife. The American police did return some men to camp the 'Worse for wear.'

Gradually batches of troops were dispersed to local units and 2,500 were entrained to Philipville. The train journey was for 4 days with a daily stop at a staging post for a hot meal, usually stew. The American PX had equipped the draft with ample 'K' rations. The officers' coach was well stocked - courtesy of Major McKule with a varied diet of fruit, tinned fruit juice, cigarettes, 'K' rations and wine. A weekly ration of 50 cigarettes had been doled out to each man.

The train trip was nightmarish. At every stop, and there were many, Arabs appeared as if by magic to barter eggs, fruit and curios for tea, cigarettes or cash. It was necessary to appoint an officer or senior NCO to each truck (8 horses or 40 men) to maintain discipline and to ensure that the full complement was in each truck before moving off. A first aid post was set up midway down the train and police were appointed to prevent the Arabs stealing rifles or equipment. An Arab would sell his grandmother for a rifle.

Arriving at Philipville I was relieved of command and entered Camp APO 735, once again under canvas but this one was organised by the British and much better facilities existed, I bumped into a contingent of Queensmen who had been collected from hospitals, convalescent depots and redundant establishments which had been set up originally for the Desert Campaign. I shared a tent with Lieutenant Prosser and another Queen's officer who were with me in 15th Queen's at Dover. Two days later we embarked on a landing ship (Infantry) bound for Italy and again I was appointed O.C. Troops of a mixed bag going to join their units in Italy. There was an unfortunate incident on board when a Bofors gun self fired (it transpired at a later enquiry that its trigger mechanism was badly worn) and blew the top off an officer's head splattering brains and blood on those in front of him.

Germany might have been on the retreat in Italy, but that did not stop the Luftwaffe trying to prevent reinforcements reaching the British. To those who hadn't previously experienced air attacks it must have been frightening. We supplemented the ship's armament with Bren gun and rifle. Two aircraft were shot down by the convoy.

On arrival at Naples we proceeded to 159 Transit Camp in the grounds of the Duke of Aosta's Palace. It had rained incessantly for the previous week and the camp was a quagmire. Visiting the Army Welfare Centre in Naples, it was a pleasant surprise to meet John Slowman who was one of my platoon commanders in 50th Queen's. He had been wounded at Salerno and now had a Welfare Staff job. A few days later I was summoned to the transit camp office to be confronted by Major Reg Wynn D.C.M. I recalled our last night together at Dover, I was his bridge partner. He opened 2 spades'. I replied 3 no trumps and he said, "4 spades. I'm off to bed and if you don't get 'em you can foot the bill." I got 'em!

Major Wynn had been sent to collect Captain David Rossiter, Lieutenant Gordon Prosser, myself and several 2/7th Queensmen. We travelled to Lorenzo where I was introduced to the C.O. of the 2/7th Queen's, Lieutenant Colonel Dave Baynes and QMS Manners and RSM Gary Lockwood. The latter two had been Depot instructors, as I was. Then I was appointed to command 'B' Company whose previous commander, Major Brodhurst Hill, had been killed in action. Thus I became a company commander in 2/7th Queen's.

Dom.

## A Job at The Commons

In 1945, with the war recently over, CSM Sam Dickason, East Surrey Regiment, on demob leave but still in uniform, was quietly travelling on a train with his mind a mixture of thoughts both of the past and the future. Seated opposite him was a man he thought he knew and the feeling was obviously reciprocated as mutual introduction soon followed. The fellow passenger turned out to be Gordon Jackman, a former company clerk with whom Dickason had served at Kingston in 1940.

In further conversation Jackman revealed that, discharged medically from the Army some years previously, he now held a post in the library at the House of Commons. Showing interest in the subject, Dickason was invited by his friend to visit the seat of Government, once a dignified and prestigious building but at that time mainly a heap of rubble due to bomb damage. It was on that visit that Dickason was introduced to Stanley Able, the Head Office Keeper, who controlled a fair number of junior staff such as cleaners, messengers and attendants. As a result of the meeting Dickason applied for, and later obtained, an appointment as an attendant at the House. The pay was poor but nevertheless the job held out the prospects of security and a pension.

On his first day, arriving at the main gates at Old Palace Yard, he asked for directions from a police constable who was helpful - in contrast to a later uniformed petty official who was not and who was later described by other staff members by the nickname of "the Rat". Arrived at his destination, however, Dickason found his new colleagues to be more friendly - the friendship quickly cemented with a traditional cup of tea.

The first day's duties consisted of cleaning three committee rooms, a task that did not come hard to an ex-soldier. Later jobs, usually on a temporary basis, which came Dickason's way and which he willingly undertook, were of a more clerical and administrative nature. Anxious to improve his lot, he applied for a post as a Badge Messenger (Doorkeeper) but was unsuccessful with this effort largely, he thinks, because the interviewing officer, was an ex cavalry man and seemingly not well disposed to foot slogging infantrymen.

But better prospects were ahead. A Select Committee, set up by the Attlee government, had issued two reports recommending re-organisation and improvements in the Commons Library, including an increase of staff. In this connection an attendant's post became available and, ever willing, Dickason applied for it. After a quite informal interview with the Librarian, who was an ex Welsh Guardsman and better disposed to infantrymen than the former cavalry counterpart, Dickason was accepted and entered into the life of his new department.

At first his task was supposed to be of a "menial" nature but they soon developed into things more appealing. As work went ahead with getting the library up to standard there was much movement of books and shelving to be undertaken and particular interest was aroused by the Map Room. As its name implied it housed maps of various sizes and types from local ordnance surveys to large wall maps of the whole world. The work there brought contact with many interesting people, including Members of Parliament. Even more interesting was a trip with the Librarian to the television studios at Alexandra Palace with some priceless old Parliamentary Journals for an interview programme. Dickason, together with a police constable, was responsible for the security of the documents. But most interesting and prestigious of all was a trip to Buckingham Palace when the Librarian and Dickason personally showed the journals to Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret.

Mixing further with the great and famous Dickason was sent one day to deliver a letter to Winston Churchill who he found in the Chess Room smoking a cigar in the manner in which he was so frequently typified. Mr Attlee, the Prime Minister, occasionally came into the library although there is no mention of him being any great conversationalist. Other visitors were Lady Megan Lloyd George and the redoubtable Liverpool MP Mrs Bessie Braddock who was found to be really a kind and delightful person by the staff.

Work was obviously developing apace for another attendant was appointed, resulting in advancement for Dickason to the grade of "office clerk" with the possibility of further promotion to come. This occurred when the next senior grade retired and Dickason, taking his place, found himself with the privilege of a desk of his own.

Another Buckingham Palace trip was soon on the cards for Dickason who was required to deliver the Commons Library's wedding gift for Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten RN. Entry to the Palace, carrying a parcel, was relatively easy especially when compared with the security checks which would have to take place in today's atmosphere of terrorism.

As time passed Dickason's upward path to promotion favourably continued as he reached the grade of Senior Office

Clerk, responsible for the lending system which was an important task as most of the MPs were avid readers. About two million books were held and this figure did not include statistics or the bound volumes of Hansard. Asked one day to get a book for a certain Colonel Cuthbert, Dickason was interested enough to look up the recipient's details in Who's Who. Surprisingly it was revealed that in the First World War Colonel Cuthbert had commanded the 9th Battalion of the East Surreys in which Dickason's brother had been killed at the Somme. In conversation, Colonel Cuthbert sadly related that his own son, a young subaltern, had been killed in the same offensive.

It was not long after this that the Librarian, Hilary Saunders, retired on health grounds and went to live in the Bahamas, dying later at Nassau. He was succeeded by Strathan Gordon, a former Highland Light Infantry officer who maintained a steadily progressive policy of administration which included further increases in staff, particularly in the cleaning and restoration spheres.



Hilary St George Saunders and S E Dickason, BBC Television  
"Picture Page", October 1946.

Important personages still visited the library. Baroness Summerskill was one and Chuter Ede another. It was with some pleasure that Dickason learned that the latter had been a sergeant in The East Surreys in the First World War. Harold Wilson, when Prime Minister, used the Library a lot but relationships with him seem to have been merely of the "nodding" variety. Surprise was occasioned when Dickason, with a message for a Member, looked for a Badge Messenger. Locating one, he was delighted to find that it was a former acquaintance of his - one Charlie Cronk, a former Queensman.

Further promotion followed for Dickason in 1968 when he became Chief Office Clerk and two years later, in 1970, he had the distinction of being awarded the MBE. In 1972 he retired with the Civil Service rank of Higher Executive Officer after twenty-seven years in the service of the House of Commons. In those years he had seen many changes. Governments had come and gone, Ministers had changed and so had the Speakers. There had been nationalizations and denationalizations. He had made personal contacts with many Members of Parliament.

But in retirement Dickason's connection with his earlier military style of life was not completely severed. At the age of seventy-nine, regrettably a widower, he became an In Pensioner of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, where twelve years later, at the age of ninety, he showed himself to be as happy in his current surroundings as he had been in his "Job at The Commons".

SD & RF

# Regimental Deaths

*Attewell* - On 22nd January 1997, Company Sergeant Major Bill Attewell DCM, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Bracey* - On 31st December 1996, Private Sidney Charles Bracey, aged 74 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Bridgland* - On 23rd November 1996, Major Peter C A Bridgland, The East Surrey Regiment and The Royal Army Pay Corps.

*Burgess* - On 12th April 1997, Private Len Burgess aged 65 years, 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment. Burgess was a National Service soldier who served in the Anti-Tank Platoon in Tripoli. After leaving the Army he followed a family tradition and joined the Fire Service.

*Carney* - On 2nd March 1997, Captain Leonard Carney, aged 81 years, 2/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and 12th Bn The Kings Regiment. He had a pre-war degree at Liverpool University and he returned to teaching. Became Headmaster at Chadderton Grammer School. A keen and talented footballer, played for the 8th Army in Italy in 1945, later played as an amateur for Liverpool for some years.

*Dibley* - On 12th January 1997, Major George Dibley, aged 78 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Royal Corps of Signals.

*Dimsdale* - On 30th March 1997, Sergeant Tom G Dimsdale, aged 84 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Tom joined the Army Cadet Force in 1926 then in 1930 enlisted in the 22nd London Regiment (The Queen's). The following year he joined the Regular Army and until February 1946 served with The Queen's Royal Regiment in China, India, Palestine, Ceylon, Egypt, North Africa, France, Belgium and Holland (wounded at Hertogenbosch).

In 1946 he transferred to the Reserve and then in 1948 he re-enlisted in the Territorial Army in which he served in a full time capacity as Quartermaster for several London Units. In 1966 the Unit he was serving with was disbanded so he moved to Blackheath to take over responsibility for some of the drill halls and married quarters in the London area. Another part of his responsibility was Quartermaster for the City of London Cadet Force, a job he carried out until his retirement at 65. He was mentioned in despatches while serving with the 2nd Battalion in Palestine.

*Farley* - On 28th December 1996, Private W (Bill) Farley, aged 79 years, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. Farley joined the Cranleigh Company in 1938. During the war he was the Padre's driver. An active member of 5 OMA The Queen's.

*Harris* - On 22nd January 1997, Major Sydney Frank Harris, aged 80 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and MPSC. In 1935 Harris was posted to India and served for two tours on the North West Frontier. He was commissioned in 1942. In 1945, Harris was seconded to the MPSC and was posted to the Military Prison and Detention Barracks at Northallerton in Yorkshire. A year later he became assistant commandant at Shepton Mallet.

After this he moved to Suez in Egypt as commandant, and then was posted to Germany, Kenya and Cyprus before eventually ending up at MCTC Colchester in 1960, where he was officer commanding the Depot and Training Establishment. He was awarded the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct while at Northallerton in 1946 and was later Mentioned in Despatches whilst in Cyprus in 1959.

Harris retired from active service in 1966 and assumed the appointment of Regimental Secretary to the MPSC, where he stayed until his final retirement in 1983. During this period as Secretary the Association flourished and firm foundations were laid for the future, and he will be very much remembered for the excellent way he ran the Association, his editorship of the Journal and his work in the recruitment of new members to the Corps. Major Harris served with the MPSC for 37 years, 20 years in uniform and 17 as a civilian.

*Hughes* - On 17th January 1997, Private Bill Hughes, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Jarman* - On 9th November 1996, Private 'Clarrie' Jarman, aged 100 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Served on the Somme losing a leg, Jarman was our oldest known survivor of the First World War, Battle of the Somme.

*Jeffreys* - On 25th February 1997, Sergeant Norman Jeffreys, 1/5th and 1/6th Bn's The Queen's Royal Regiment. Jeffreys served with the 1/6th until 1942 when he was transferred to the 1/5th and served with them in N Africa, Italy and Normandy. A great supporter of 5 OMA reunions at Guildford.

*Jennings* - On 12th March 1997, Private John K. Jennings, The Queen's Royal Regiment. He enlisted in the General Service Corps at Beverley in 1943, before being posted to 15th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Bury and later at Lancaster, to serve in HQ Company (MT). In March 1944, he transferred to REME at Woolwich and later moved on to the Tank Workshops at Mill Hill. Posted to 2 Base Workshops REME at Tel el Kebir in January 1946, he was eventually discharged from the Army in July 1947.

*Kensington* - On 23rd February 1997, Captain Richard Frederick Kensington, aged 84 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Kidd* - On 12th October 1996, Private E Kidd, aged 78 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Kienzle* - On 22nd December 1996, Private Tom R Kienzle, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*King* - On 5th December 1996, Major Charles King, aged 91 years, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*MacWilliam* - On 30th December 1996, Brigadier Maurice MacWilliam DSO MC, aged 76 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Madigan* - Recently, Major W J Madigan OBE, aged 84 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Marshall* - Private Tommy Marshall, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*McCarthy* - On 12th February 1997, Regimental Sergeant Major James William McCarthy, aged 81 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Moxon* - On 5th November 1996, Lieutenant (QM) Leslie Charles Ash Moxon BEM, aged 89 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Parkin* - On 20th October 1996, Private Albert Harold Parkin, aged 76 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Phillips* - On 27th February 1997, Private Albert Phillips, aged 79 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment. Phillips was taken prisoner at Dunkirk.

*Purnell* - On 8th September 1996, Captain A H (Tony) Purnell MC, TD, aged 76 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Reddington* - On 28th September 1996, J J Reddington, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

*Roberts* - On 8th December 1996, Private Frederick Roberts, aged 77 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Rodger* - On 27th October 1996, Major Charles B Rodger, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Royal West Kent Regiment.

*Sellars* - On 5th February 1997, Sergeant Colin Sellars, aged 72 years. Sellars completed his training at Invicta Lines, Maidstone and then served in 13th Queen's and was with the 1/6th Queen's in the carrier platoon. On the disbandment of 1/6th in Normandy he was posted to the 1/5th Queen's and continued to serve in the carrier platoon. After the Victory Parade in Berlin he was employed in the Orderly Room. He completed his service with 2 Essex in 1947 and returned to teaching in the York area.

*Sheppard* - On 20th March 1997, Company Sergeant Major John James (Ace) Sheppard MM, aged 78 years, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. CSM Sheppard was awarded an immediate Military Medal at Jail Hill, Burma for his magnificent leadership and work in clearing all the wounded from the hill. No wounded were left on the hill.

*Smith* - On 9th October 1996, Private W (Bill) Smith, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. A staunch supporter of the Association.

*Smyth* - On 5th November 1996, Private Herbert William "Hector" Smyth, aged 79 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Stafford* - On 5th November 1996, Captain Richard John Milburn Stafford, aged 82 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Strutt* - On 29th December 1996, Captain R W Strutt MM, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA).

*Tidy* - On 17th November 1996, Private Charles Tidy, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. A member of the Cranleigh Company.

*Wharmby* - In March 1996, Colour Sergeant Peter Wharmby BEM, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Regiment.

*Whittington* - On 26th March 1997, Private James Whittington, 1/5th and 2/5th Queen's. He was one of the original Territorials from Cranleigh.

*Wisden* - On 31st January 1997, Warrant Officer Class One Ray Wisden, aged 49 years, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and 22nd Special Air Service.

*Yonwin* - On 28th March 1997, Major (QM) Keith Yonwin, aged 67 years, The Queen's Royal, Queen's Royal Surrey and The Queen's Regiment.

## Regimental Families

*Finch White* - On 4th October 1996, Mrs Irene Eviline Finch White, beloved wife of Major B du B Finch White MC, The East Surrey Regiment.

*Ford* - On 19th March 1997, Mrs Mary Ford, beloved wife of Richard Ford, latterly Curator at the Regimental Museum, Clandon.

## Obituaries

### Brigadier M E M MacWilliam CBE DSO++ MC TD



Maurice MacWilliam was the youngest of a number of highly decorated young officers who commanded Battalions of The Queen's Royal Regiment during the 1939-1945 War. He was awarded three DSOs and an MC all while serving with the 2/7th Battalion of the Regiment, and in command of the Battalion, at the age of 24, throughout the Gothic

Line Battles and in the final defeat of the German Army in Italy.

Maurice MacWilliam was born on 7th February 1920 the son of Edgar MacWilliam of Dulwich. He was educated at St Pauls. He joined the Artists Rifles in April 1939 and was commissioned into the 2/7th Battalion of The Queen's in August. This Battalion was one of the doubled-up TA battalions which had to be trained from scratch, but were sent to France in April 1940 as lines of communication troops as part of 12th Division. The Division was only half equipped and had no artillery or anti-tank guns, but with the German Army's break through it was thrown into action east of Abbeville. The Company in which 2nd Lieutenant MacWilliam was serving had already been detached to guard an important Supply Depot at Saleux, just to the south of Amiens, and this came under attack by infantry and armoured vehicles on the morning of 20th May. MacWilliam's platoon was holding the forward covering position and throughout the day he held his position with complete control and then extricated his platoon under heavy fire. The Company subsequently had to make its way back across country for three days before being reunited with the Battalion at Rouen. For his fine example of leadership on 20th May and subsequently MacWilliam was awarded the MC.

The 12th Division was evacuated from Cherbourg in early June, and in late 1940 the three Queen's second TA battalions became 169 Brigade of 56th (London) Division. This Division went overseas in August 1942 to be positioned in Iraq as defence against the possibility of the German Armies breaking through the Caucasus. From there the Division was redeployed direct by road to come into action in April 1943 at Enfidaville at the end of the North African campaign. 56th Division was then selected as one of the assault Divisions for the invasion of Italy at Salerno. By this time MacWilliam was Commander of 'C' Company 2/7th Queen's, and his Company was the left assault company of the Battalion and indeed of the Division. He had the task of clearing the area of a bridge across the River Asa about one mile inland. This was strongly defended by infantry with tanks in support. His Company had to fight stubbornly forward to the area of the bridge and three separate attacks had to be made before the objective was reached. These actions materially helped also in preventing a serious tank threat developing against the left flank of the Division. Throughout the day MacWilliam personally led the operations and directed fire, and success was achieved in spite of losing two of his platoon commanders killed. His very high leadership and gallantry throughout the day resulted in the award of his first DSO.

Major MacWilliam continued to lead his Company with distinction until he was injured during the final stages of a successful night attack towards the end of October. On recovery from injury he was posted as an instructor at the

Middle East Training Centre and did not return to 2/7th Queen's until its move to Egypt in March 1944, to re-establish itself along with the rest of 56th Division after the intense fighting over the winter in Italy. MacWilliam shortly became Second-in-Command of the Battalion, and had a major responsibility in the re-training as infantrymen of the reinforcing Royal Artillerymen who were transferred into all battalions of the Division. That these officers and men so quickly settled down, and subsequently did so well and so gallantly owed much to the standard of training set.

In July 1944 56th Division returned to Italy and was deployed to the 8th Army for the assault on the Gothic Line. 2/7th Queen's advanced into action on 2nd September, and that night the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel D C Baynes, who had served continuously with the Battalion throughout the War, was wounded by shell fire. MacWilliam thus found himself in command at the age of 24, and within five days the Battalion was ordered into a major assault on the high ridge of Gemmano. An attempt by 7th Battalion, Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry to take the feature had already failed, and a Brigade attack was laid on with 2/7th Queen's leading the assault. This started during the afternoon of 8th September, and it wasn't until next morning that the village of Gemmano was finally cleared. The Battalion had achieved its objective but at a cost of 96 casualties, and to these had to be added another 53 from the Battalion's echelons, including the Quartermaster killed, who had been unlucky enough to have received a full load of "butterfly" bombs from a German intruding aircraft. In spite of these casualties MacWilliam's coolness and decisiveness kept the Battalion well in hand, and on 11th September it again moved forward in preparation for a major Army attack on the 13th. The Battalion was deployed on the reverse of the San Savino ridge, and in conjunction with 2nd Royal Tanks, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H A Lascelles, was ordered to seize the Casa Fabbri ridge about a mile forward. There was very heavy German counterfire throughout the night, and this intensified as the attack started with the forward companies coming under intense machine gun fire from the front and right flanks. Within 15 minutes one company had lost all its officers wounded while in the other two platoon commanders had been killed in addition to heavy casualties amongst the men. MacWilliam who was operating from a "Honey" recce tank immediately moved forward and personally re-organized the two leading companies on the ground and re-directed their line of attack. He also brought forward the reserve company on the left flank. In spite of this Company losing its commander killed almost immediately, these actions re-generated the attack, and the tanks of 2nd RTR were able to sweep through the broken enemy positions and by a brilliant action seize the Casa Fabbri ridge. The infantry soon joined them, but were too depleted to make further progress, and while there were two weak counter-attacks a major gap seemed to have been created: at least 50 German dead were later counted and over 350 prisoners were taken. 2/7th Queen's had however suffered another 96 casualties, of whom nearly 40 had been killed, but in spite of this the Battalion continued to achieve success in the further major actions, which took the Division forward to the flat lands of vineyards and the embanked rivers of the Po plain. The emaciated 169 (Queen's) Brigade came out of action in early October, MacWilliam's Battalion having lost nearly 400 men, and it had been much due to his outstandingly high standard of personal bravery and inspiring leadership that the Battalion had been carried through. For all this he was awarded his second DSO.

Soon after this Lieutenant Colonel Baynes returned, but just before Christmas when the Battalion was again in action, on the River Lamone opposite Faenza his tour was completed, and Maurice MacWilliam was appointed formally to succeed him. The early months of 1945 were spent in a series of attacks as the Germans were driven back to the River Senio and cleared from its floodbanks, and then in April the final Army Group

assault was mounted. After crossing Lake Commachio in armoured amphibian "Fantails" 169 Brigade forced its way up through the Argenta gap, and after crossing the River Po, an assault over the River Adige, and to Venice. 2/7th Queen's took its full part in the attacks and whenever at all practicable MacWilliam pressed the advance forward. Again his personal gallantry, initiative and dash were outstanding and were described as "the inspiration for several remarkable feat of arms", while finally he pushed on the advance to 15 miles beyond the Adige to the astonishment of Brigade Headquarters who were only expecting patrols to be operating forward of the river. He was awarded the second Bar to his DSO.

With the end of the War, there was confrontation with the Yugoslav Partisan Army to be dealt with, during which for some weeks he was Acting Brigadier but there was the question of how he would spend his life. While normally he might have returned to a life in the City, which he had briefly started before the War, he was persuaded, largely by the Brigade Commander, later Lieutenant General Sir William H Stratton, to apply for a Regular Commission to which he was duly appointed in August 1946. There would be problems over this though as he was still only 26, but as a War Substantive Major at that age he was inevitably difficult to place and did not serve again as a regimental officer in his Regiment. He was an instructor at RMA Sandhurst, attended the Staff College in 1949, returning there as directing staff in 1955, having filled various staff appointments at the War Office and served in the Sudan Defence Force from 1952 to 1954. He was then in 1958 appointed to command the Somaliland Scouts for the final two years before independence, thus becoming a Lieutenant-Colonel again nearly 14 years after he had first achieved this rank in 1944. As Commander Somaliland Scouts he had some 1,000 Somali soldiers as well as British detachments of RE, Royal Signals, REME and the RAF. The situation in Somaliland was volatile as preparations for elections and independence were made, with local factions vying for position and threatening intimidation. MacWilliam throughout the two years of his command again demonstrated his leadership qualities. He set a fine personal example and demanded and achieved the best, even though at times his strong principles led him into disagreements with the civil authorities. Without doubt his forethought and the steadiness of his Somali soldiers helped considerably in ensuring smooth elections and the hand over to independence.

After returning from Somaliland MacWilliam was appointed GSO I at HQ1 British Corps in Germany, and then in April was appointed to command the Federal Regular Army in Aden. His arrival to command coincided with the Radfan operations and the situation was excited and difficult, MacWilliam's assessment of things and recommendations would appear not to have been considered acceptable, and within the week he was sent home. He never openly commented himself on what had happened, and perhaps his uncomplicated and forthright views on military problems and a refusal to compromise were not appropriate to the politico/military scene at that time. The incident however was a tragedy for his career and for the Army.

Back in the United Kingdom MacWilliam was appointed Colonel A/Q at HQ 54th Division/Eastern District, then commanded 161 TA Infantry Brigade from 1965 to 1967, finally becoming Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander in Hong Kong from 1968 to 1971. During this last appointment he was made CBE and on its completion retired from the Army to live at Dedham near Colchester. For two years he worked for the Crown Agents, but from then on concentrated on more local activities running the Eastern Electricity Board Consultative Council, while voluntarily he became Secretary and then Chairman of the Dedham Vale Society and was an active member of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. In the military field he served for many years on the Board of Visitors for the Military Corrective Training Centre at

Colchester, was Chairman of the 56th (London) Division Officers Club and continued to supervise the affairs of the 2/7th Queen's Association, taking a close positive interest in all matters affecting any of his soldiers.

Maurice MacWilliam was a man who set himself high standards and expected them from others, raising their achievements on many occasions by his personal example. He had a strong sense of duty, and of his responsibility for his men, being never afraid to state his concerns if matters were unsound. He combined this with a great organising ability, a modesty of manner and a cheerful sociable nature.

He married in 1941 Norah Young, who was a Nursing Sister, and they had two sons and four daughters. One of the sons John served in The Queen's Regiment retiring as a Major to become a Priest: he is now serving in Algeria as a member of the White Fathers.

JWS

*Mrs Norah MacWilliam writes:-*

*Mrs Norah MacWilliam is very grateful for the very many letters of sympathy and condolences she received after the death of her husband Brigadier Maurice MacWilliam. She hopes that she has been able to thank you for most of them, but regrettably there were some neither she, nor the family could identify. To the writers of these letters and any others which may have been missed, she sends her gratitude and her appreciation for them having been sent.*

#### **Major C King**

We have lost a most unusual character who died on 5th December 1996, aged 91. As an orphan he was taken to a foster parent in Weybridge where he remained for five years, then moving to the Coram Foundation School in Brunswick Square, London. When released at 16 he joined The 9th Lancers as a Band Boy and was posted to Northern Ireland. Later he took the full course at Kneller Hall and remained with 9th Lancers for nine years. He then became a Nurse (Bandsmen stretcher-bearer trained).

When war was declared he volunteered for an emergency infantry commission and came to 2/6th Queen's late in 1940 and reached the rank of Major commanding HQ Company in 1943 (Italy) via India, Iraq and the desert. We lost touch with him in 1944 but picked him up again at a battalion reunion after the war. He was of the greatest value to we rather raw emergency volunteers, particularly in the area of overseas administration. He was always used on advance parties and as baggage officer, being conversant with the natives (various) habits. He was a ready wit with remarks such as "*Funny to find myself in the Battalion as a temporary gent*" and when KD shorts were ordered to be worn, certain officers were jibed "*Your legs look like matchsticks with the wood scraped off*" and when a Bandsman in India, his squadron sergeant major's orders when about to embark on a troop ship for UK "*Get fell in, facing the ship, monkeys and parrots on your shoulders*" and many another laugh. On demob he continued to nurse at various London hospitals and, of course, was always the Hospital Entertainments Officer.

His many interests were, though mainly music (classical and military), military literature; he wrote a book about the cavalry at Tidworth and though never published various sections were sold to military historians. For many years he also ran a 9th Lancers reunion at Hampton Court and, as an above average long distance runner, he won many a race for various units.

Though neither a drinker nor a smoker, he was a likeable rascal in several other ways and was generally known as "the best

jacked up officer in the Battalion". A dear friend and a great character. I shall miss him.

PMAT

#### **Major W J Madigan OBE**

Bill Madigan was born on the 6th of January 1913. He left school in 1929 at the age of 16 and joined the Civil Service. He worked in the Ministry of Transport. At the beginning of 1939 his job was considered a reserved occupation but he joined the Home Guard. In October 1945 he volunteered for the army and joined the DCLI as a private. Within a year he was sent to OCTU at Aldershot and was commissioned and posted to the 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. The Battalion were in 6th Airborne Division which was due to fly via the United States of America and land by glider in Japan. The Atom bomb was dropped and so the battalion went to Palestine instead.

Bill commanded D Company and it was his company that gave such a bloody nose to the Stern Gang in June 1946 when they blew up the railway workshops in Haifa. The workshops were guarded by Arab Militia. When the explosions occurred road blocks were immediately set up and the terrorists ran into one set up by Major Madigan. There were no Surrey casualties but the terrorists suffered seven killed instantly, two wounded dying in hospital, eleven more wounded and twenty four taken prisoner.

Bill was a keen footballer and captained the battalion team. He left the Surreys on 21/1/47, was demobilised and went back to the Civil Service. As a Principal in the Ministry of Transport he worked at an international level on Safety of Life at sea. For this work he was awarded the OBE in December 1963. In June 1967 he was promoted Assistant Secretary in the Board of Trade Marine Division. In 1972 he undertook an assignment for the International Maritime Consultative Organisation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

He retired in January 1974 and worked part time for the Chamber of Shipping in the UK. In 1975 he undertook consultative work for the British Government for the Maritime Services in Panama. He was a very happy family man and had two sons and a daughter and several grandchildren but his wife predeceased him. He was a keen church goer and worked for the Catholic Church, in particular the St Vincent de Paul Society.

TAB

#### **Major G Dibley**

George Dibley died of cancer aged 78 on January 12, 1997. He devoted himself to a lifetime of military service, building up in later years a fine collection of pre-1914 military prints. The son of a bricklayer journeyman, he was born in Cobham Surrey, on the 25th February 1918. On 23 March 1936, at the age of 18 he left his job as a butcher's assistant and enlisted with The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served on the Northwest Frontier in India from 1937 until 1943 with 1 Queen's when he transferred to The Royal Corps of Signals. Returning to Europe in March 1944 he joined The Glider Pilot Regiment where he remained until July 1947 when he returned to the Signals. He also fought in Burma, the Korean war of 1950 - 52 and was active during the Malaya insurgency of 1954-56. On 27 January 1959, George was commissioned and in 1963 he resigned and left the Army.

He joined Barclays Bank in December 1963 as a cashier. In 1966 he joined Barclaycard at their inception in Northampton. In February 1970, he was appointed Assistant Manager of Barclaycard Centre and Manager in December 1971. In July 1973 he moved to Liverpool and spent nine very happy years running the Dale Street and Kirkby centres. Following his

retirement from the bank in July 1982, he continued to take an interest in many of his former staff, keeping in touch with a number of them over the years.

During his time with the bank he continued to serve in the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve (TAVR) in Liverpool, Sheffield, Leicester and London and was a regional secretary with SSAFA for a number of years. Advancing years forced his retirement in 1973 but he continued to take an interest in his regimental associations and joined the Victorian Military Society for whom he served as treasurer for some 8 years until he was forced to relinquish his tasks a few months before his death. George was cremated and his ashes scattered along with those of his dog, Flare, who died 5 days after he did. He lived a full and active life and will be missed by his family. He married once and is survived by his widow, Peggy, a son and two daughters.

#### WOI R Wisden

Many readers will be shocked by the news of Ray Wisden's death on Friday 31st January 1997 at the age of 49 and although efforts were made by Regimental Headquarters and others to circulate this sad news, there will be I am sure many who served with him who unfortunately were not aware.

Ray Wisden enlisted into the Army in 1963 as a boy soldier and joined the Infantry Junior Leader's Battalion in Oswestry. In late 1965 he was posted to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment stationed in Münster, Germany. He served with The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment soon to become the 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment until 1974 when he joined The Special Air Service Regiment. He remained with the Special Air Service until the end of his service in 1988. Ray's last employment was with the Group 4 Security as a Personnel Manager.

Ray Wisden was an exceptional individual, not only was he a professional soldier of the highest calibre but a man with a zest and enthusiasm for all things in life, which became contagious for those around him. He was a proud and courageous man whose many acts of bravery will never be told and yet remembered by those who served with him. I am often reminded of the infamous boxing match in Berlin between Sgt Ray Wisden and 2 Lt Peter Swanson (now Lt Col) only those who were present would bear witness to the overwhelming courage displayed by the two participants. Both were winners but Wisden got the decision. Although Ray served with the Special Air Service for the majority of his service he kept in contact with his friends from the Regiment and whenever possible attended functions, in particular the Sgts Mess Past and Present Dinner and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment annual reunion.

The funeral service was held at St Martin's Church, Hereford and it was a tribute to Ray that the church was filled to capacity. Many of the Queen's Royal Surrey contingent made the journey to pay their last respects, Jack Chaffer, Bill Warren, Bill Soffe, Eric Brown, Bluey Hedges, Wally Sharman, Nigel Reed, Max Maloney Alec Howard, Terry Kamille, Tom Brown and many others. There was a massive turnout as you would expect from his comrades from 22 Special Air Service Regiment. It was not common knowledge that Ray Wisden had a keen interest in words and a particular love of poetry, and as part of the service his young daughter Jessica paid tribute to her late father by reading his favourite verse of Gunga Din by Rudyard Kipling, a most touching moment. The memory of Ray will conjure up different thoughts to many people but one thing is certain, those who knew him will always be affected by him in some way. Ray Wisden lived in the fast lane and will always be remembered as a true friend and an outstanding soldier.

VDE

#### Major P C A Bridgland

Major Peter Bridgland joined The East Surrey Regiment on 28th February, 1939 at the Depot Kingston-upon-Thames, commissioned in the Supplementary Reserve and was embodied for war service on 3rd September.

In January 1941 he left the ITC Kingston and joined the 2/6th Surreys with whom he served until July 1940 when he joined the 4th Dorsets but was wounded in France after 3 weeks. After recovery he served in a variety of places between 1945 and 1953, including the War Office, GHQ Middle East Land Forces and Headquarters, Cyrenaica District.

Following Regimental and Staff duties in England and Brunswick he went to the 13th/18th Hussars as their Pay Master in 1958, serving with them until 1961 when he retired from the Army and went into the hotel business in this country and overseas. A strong member of the Hussars Regimental Association, he also acted as accountant to the British Commonwealth Ex-Servicemen League.

It was while at ITC Kingston that he met Pam Nicolls, eldest daughter of Lieutenant Colonel E H J Nicolls, The East Surrey Regiment, and they were married on 7th March, 1942. They had three daughters and a son. Major Bridgland died on 23rd November, 1996 and his funeral was attended by a number of ex officers from both Regiments and friends together with a trumpeter from the Cavalry Band, Bovington.

#### Lieutenant L C Moxon BEM

Lieutenant Leslie Charles Moxon BEM., who died on 6th November, 1996 was a dedicated soldier in every way and under every condition. Enlisting in the 4th Buffs at Canterbury in 1927 he later moved to Camberley where he transferred to the 5th Queen's in 1939 and was mobilised with them in August shortly before the outbreak of war. By April 1940 he was in France where he was taken prisoner near Abbeville in May. Even as a prisoner of war he maintained his Army enthusiasm and organised courses of military studies for senior NCOs.

Returning to England in April, 1945 and demobilised in August, he rejoined the 5th Queen's in May, 1947 in his old rank of Company Quartermaster Sergeant and took part in the Victory Parade. In 1950, as a Colour Sergeant, he was awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition of his services to the Territorial Army. His citation comments "*His example and enthusiasm during these very difficult years has been an inspiration to all ranks*".

Keen on shooting activities, he had been Assistant Secretary of the Battalion shooting team and had twice been champion Bren Shot. Commissioned in 1956, he retired in 1961 after long and honourable service. He is survived by his wife Margaret (Peggy) to whom deepest sympathy is extended.

LW

#### CSM W G Attewell DCM

In early February I attended the funeral of CSM W G Attewell DCM at St Peters Church Molesey, Surrey. He was known to most of us as 'Bill'. Besides pre-war and wartime members of The East Surrey Regiment there was a strong contingent from the local British Legion who participated in the service. Tony Ramsey MM, who served with Bill in Italy, acted as Standard Bearer.

I first met Bill in 1935 when I enlisted and was posted to 1 Surreys serving in India. At this time Bill was a close friend of my brother and a Lance Corporal in the Band. Like me he also had a brother serving in the battalion who was the Band

Sergeant and known to most of us as 'Uncle'. Bill was a first class musician and an outstanding NCO. Had War not intervened I, like many others, felt that he would have eventually made Bandmaster.

In 1939 1 Surreys returned to England. War was already in the air and when mobilisation was declared the Band was temporarily suspended and members took up their wartime role as battalion stretcher bearers and the manning of the RAP.

It wasn't long before the 1st Battalion moved overseas to France, and war. During this period Bill was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. After Dunkirk came the North Africa, Sicilian and Italian campaigns where Bill showed himself to be a natural leader and a brave NCO. He was promoted to CSM of C Coy in early 1944. During the battle of Citta-della-Pieve his Coy Commander, Major Bird was killed. He took over command of the company until the end of the battle. For this he was awarded the DCM.

In October 1944 Bill was wounded during the attack on Monte Pieve. He was away from the battalion for a short while recovering from his wound, and returned to the War serving with the Surreys in Austria. After his retirement Bill became an active Old Comrades Associate attending most functions and supporting Regimental events

FBO

#### Major R F Kensington

Dick Kensington died in February 1997. After serving in the Territorial Army he received an Emergency Commission in 1940 and joined the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1941, then serving some 7,000 feet up on the North West Frontier Province of India, mostly based in Razmak Camp.

Here he was almost immediately thrown into operations when Razcol went off to relieve the Fort at Datta khel, which was being besieged by the tribal leader, the Faqir of Ipi. At the end of this two months operation in the unhealthy and stifling heat of the Tochi valley, as with many of the Battalion, Dick succumbed to malaria, for which at that time there were no adequate precautions available.

In March 1942 he moved with the Battalion to that frontier city, Peshawar, and then up the Khyber Pass to Landi Kotal on the Afghan border, here to dig but mostly to blast holes in the granite with gelignite. The object being to deter the Russians from breaking through to India and so to continue the "Great Game". Hitler had other ideas! From here, Captain Dick Kensington went with the Battalion to join the 7th Indian Division, for intensive jungle warfare training which was carried out in the Seoni forests of Central India, the scene of Kipling's Jungle Books. During this time Dick commanded "A" Company before taking over as Adjutant of the Battalion in 1943 as it set off for Arakan in Burma.

It was in the capacity of Adjutant that he excelled. The successes the Queen's had in Arakan, Kohima and afterwards, were largely due to having a first class C.O. and 2ic, but it was in no small measure due to Dick Kensington. Dick had the rare combination of being a strict disciplinarian with a meticulous eye for detail and the logical mind of a staff officer. His leadership qualities earned the respect of all and kept all ranks up to the mark.

These qualities were put to the utmost tests on occasions against a tenacious enemy; not least on the occasion when the Japanese mounted a dawn attack against the Battalion in December 1943, during which two platoons of them assaulted Battalion Headquarters, which suffered a number of casualties but the enemy were driven back by the accuracy of the grenades thrown by Dick, (and the CO, 2ic and many others). Dick

Kensington's all-round efficiency was enhanced by a great warmth stirred by a twinkle in the eye and a sense of humour which would have lifted the morale of anyone short of it.

He was awarded a Mention in Dispatches in 1944 and was promoted to Major during that year.

On his return to England he became Garrison Adjutant, Chatham, until being demobilised in November 1945. And then back to work once again with the National Provincial Bank, retiring as the Personnel Manager of a London Branch of the merged National Westminster bank in 1973. In his retirement he had many years of enjoyment with the Hill Head Sailing club on the Solent, becoming its Treasurer; he was also Treasurer of the South East Hampshire Motor Neurone Disease Association and Chairman of the National Westminster bank Pensioner's, Solent Area.

For over forty years, Dick along with one or two others, kept alive the comradeship and memories of the Burma days by organising the annual dinners and lunches, first in London and then in each other's houses. We shall very much miss his cheerful enthusiasm and our sympathy goes to his daughters Jill and Sarah.

MAL

#### Major (QM) K Yonwin



Keith Yonwin who died on 28th March, eleven days before his 67th birthday, completed his basic training with the Royal Sussex Regiment in Chichester, and was then posted to 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in Dortmund in 1948. He moved with the battalion to Berlin and served throughout the Berlin Air Lift.

After the battalion's move to Iserlohn Keith, by now promoted Sergeant, was selected for a tour at the Depot in Guildford as a Training Sergeant. He excelled in training young recruits, an outstanding instructor at drill and weapons he always obtained the best results from the young National Servicemen passing through the Depot. He rejoined the battalion on its move to Malaya for operations during the Emergency against the Communist Terrorists. Posted to C Company, he was a platoon commander for two years operating for long periods in the jungle. He was later the Intelligence Sergeant. For his work in Malaya he was Mentioned in Despatches.

After the battalion's return to Iserlohn, BAOR he was promoted Colour Sergeant and very shortly after Warrant Officer. On amalgamation he was appointed Company Sergeant Major of B Company 1 Queen's Surreys. He moved to Aden and Hong Kong. When RSM Floyd was medically evacuated home he was acting RSM of 1 Queen's Surreys until relieved by RSM Wildgoose. He was then confirmed as WOI and posted to The Royal Hong Kong Regiment. After this appointment he was RSM of The Home Counties Brigade Depot at Canterbury.

Commissioned in 1969, he was posted to 1 Queen's and served a further tour in Berlin as Families Officer and MTO. He was appointed to a Quartermasters Commission and posted to 3 Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, as Tech QM. After tours in Northern Ireland and Cyprus he was appointed Quartermaster of 2 Queen's with tours in Belfast and Gibraltar. His last

regimental appointment was as Quartermaster to 5 Queen's at Canterbury. In 1980 he moved to the AAC as Quartermaster and served at Netheravon with 7 Regiment AAC. He retired from the Army in 1983 and worked as a Permanent Staff Administrative Officer with 6/7 Queen's at Farnham. Sadly in 1984 he suffered a major heart attack which forced him to resign. Happily he recovered and he worked for eight years as the practice manager for a firm of opticians in the South of England, finally retiring in 1994.

Keith Yonwin was an extremely smart soldier, good in barracks and in the field, he excelled working with soldiers and had a complete understanding of the modern soldier.

It was my privilege to have known him for fifty years and I count myself lucky to have been a personal and close friend during that period. We shared many laughs, giggles and jokes, not to mention many gallons of ale. He was utterly loyal to his Regiment and to his many friends. His passing is a tremendous loss to us all. He married Rosemary in 1951, their son Graham was born in 1952 and daughter Elizabeth (my God Daughter) was born in 1956 in Singapore. To Rosemary, Graham, Elizabeth, his seven Grandchildren and two Great-Grandchildren we send our very sincere condolences.

LMBW

#### **Lt Col Geoffrey Mason who was OC B Company writes:-**

As CSM of B Coy 1 Queen's Surreys (1959-1962), Keith Yonwin was greatly admired and respected by all ranks of the Company. In addition to having the build, smartness and bearing of a Guards Sergeant Major, he was in fact ahead of his time and a forerunner of the modern Sergeant Major - patient, understanding, considerate, kind, fair and always very approachable. That is not to say that he was in any way soft or easy to get round. Far from it. He could quickly become what was then recognised as the conventional Sergeant Major and put the fear of God into any soldier when required; but in his case it was seldom required as all ranks below him responded well to being treated civilly and as sensible men - particularly the National Servicemen. In short, he was a gentleman and a good leader who inspired those around him to behave likewise and to produce their best. Many so called 'bad soldiers' who have been shunted around the battalion ended in his Company and miraculously changed themselves into first class soldiers, thanks to his influence. He also had a great sense of fun and could defuse a potentially tense situation into laughter with a funny witty remark. As a result he had a very happy Company. The same wit and humour was often used very effectively to guide his Officers - in the nicest possible way - when it was felt necessary.

It is indicative of the esteem in which he was held by all ranks that many members of the Company who served with him when he was their Company Sergeant Major were still holding Company reunions with him some thirty five years later. There is no doubt that he was the main draw for such reunions and at any future Company reunion he will be very sadly missed.

#### **Major R W Strutt MM**

Major R W Strutt MM died on 29th December 1996. He enlisted in the Territorial Army with The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in May 1930, serving in the Horse Transport Section. In 1934, he transferred to the Regular Army to serve with The Queen's Bays, 2nd Royal Dragoon Guards. War service took him to the Western Desert and it was in 1944 that he was commissioned.

He rejoined the Territorial Army in the 1960s to serve with 3rd Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment as TA Quartermaster,

a position he held until retiring in 1967, when the Battalion was disbanded.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to his Regiment was his service to the Queen's Bays and Queen's Dragoon Guards Association and to the Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association. He joined the Bays committee in 1947 and remained with the Queen's Dragoon committee after amalgamation in 1959, becoming Chairman in 1968. Joining the Combined Cavalry OCA committee in 1975, he became their Secretary in 1977, a post he held until November 1996.

Married for 56 years, he is survived by his wife and only daughter.

MRN

#### **Major C B Rodger**

It seemed appropriate that Les Wilson should ask me to write an obituary for Charles Rodger whilst I was driving in posts for a fence I could have done with Charles beside me for he was a big, strong, generous man who loved helping people.

Born in Alberta, Canada, he came to England in 1934 to complete his education. He was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment in 1940, joining 1/5th Queen's. During the war he served with HQ 44 Div and HQ 131 Brigade and was a platoon Commander with 1/6th Queen's at their Salerno landing.

Later he served with 1 Queen's as Anti-Tank and Mortar Platoon Commander before being seconded to The Royal West African Frontier Force in 1941 and to the 3rd Bn The Nigeria Regiment. Following two years as an instructor at Eaton Hall he rejoined 1 Queen's in Iserlohn which is where I first met him.

We served together in Malaya, although Charles spent about a year away from the battalion at GHQ in Singapore, before retiring as a Company Commander. I recall spending some happy times with him and his wife "Winks", whom he had married in 1947, at the Malacca swimming club, where we consumed curry and Anchor in generous quantities!

We were both posted to the Depot at Stoughton Barracks in 1956 - Charles as Training Company Commander. He was a fine leader, much respected by his National Service recruits and a tower of strength to myself at more and more ambitious "At Home Days".

He retired from the Army in the Spring of 1958, spending two years with Steel Company of Wales at Port Talbot followed by twenty five years employed with the Fortygory Bay Caravan Park.

He was a great supporter of The Queen's, he and his wife attending almost all regimental functions. I well remember happy and humorous meetings with them, particularly at the Cathedral Service and at the Clandon Park lunches.

His sudden death on 28th October 1996 came as a great shock to us all. My wife and I attended his funeral at Bonviston near Cardiff. It was a truly fitting tribute to him that the little church was packed to overflowing - a tannoy had to be used for those outside. I talked with many who came from all walks of life and without exception, all spoke of his kindness, practicality, unselfishness, sense of humour and down to earth common sense. Our sympathy goes to his widow, "Winks", recovering from a recent hip replacement and to his son Peter and his family.

AGJ

## 47th (London) Division Memorial

The 12th and 13th of October 1996 will remain in my memory for many a long year. This was the weekend of the re-dedication of the 47th (London) Division Memorial at High Wood on the Somme and as I had been very involved with the fund raising to enable the work of rebuilding to be undertaken, it was the culmination of a great endeavour for all concerned.

The late afternoon of Saturday saw the groups from the Federation, the 1st Surrey Rifles and other interested parties foregather in front of the Marie in Albert for Beating the Retreat by the musicians of the London Regiment and the Somme Pipe Band. The lowering sun was still warm enough to take the edge off the stiff breeze that lifted the tartans and ruffled the feathers of the bandsmen's headgear. The local French took a great interest in proceedings and were generous in their appreciation of the music. That evening the various groups attended dinners in several locations hosted by both English and French - I was fortunate enough to attend that of the 1st Surrey Rifles and was greatly honoured to be made an honorary member of their Association and to receive a Regimental plaque.

The following morning dawned a little misty but this soon cleared and the sun shone brightly and warmed the ever-present breeze. After a small ceremony of wreath laying at the Divisional Memorial in Martinpuich (the next in line for repair and refurbishment funds permitting!!!) by the 1st Surrey Rifles group we all congregated at the London Road Cemetery to form up. The Regimental Band led off, the Commanding Officer in hot pursuit followed by the Standards and the Federation contingent, next came the 1st Surrey Rifles (with me concentrating like mad to ensure I was in step and not letting the side down) then the lads of the London Irish with the Reverend (Capt) J. Jennings and their musicians and the Somme Pipe Band brought up the rear.

The Service started with a Blessing and we all sang "Abide with Me" then the Commanding Officer read a passage from Pilgrim's Progress (this had been intended to be read by Col. Sir Greville Spratt but his health did not permit) and prayers followed. The act of remembrance and dedication were solemnly joined and Col Bursford spoke the Exhortation. The Last Post was sounded by a lone representative of The Royal

Green Jackets on a hundred and thirty year old bugle loaned by the 1st Surrey Rifles which had been used in the original dedication ceremony - with a strange instrument he upheld the standards of his unit beautifully. Wreaths were laid, both civil and military, and the congregation sang 'I vow to thee, my country'. At this point I read the poem 'In Flanders Fields' - I did not honestly know which emotion was uppermost, pride or fear but with hindsight I am sure it was pride. After the Blessing came the National Anthem followed by a lone piper playing the Lament and the Parade was given the command "Stand at Ease". A moving, solemn and yet joyous occasion for we had succeeded in rescuing a Memorial symbolising the sacrifice of men who had such pride in nation, regiment, comradeship and love and this achievement brought with it a little of all these feelings to all those involved.

After everyone had had time to inspect and photograph the Memorial we moved to the nearby village of Longueval to parade and lay a wreath on the French Memorial before adjourning to the Salle de Fete to partake of wine and cake. I was told how much the village appreciated the commemoration of the men of the village who gave their lives in the Great War and this act was only right

as many of the inhabitants had joined us at our act of remembrance earlier.

Although a struggle to raise the funds in these days of diminishing Regiments and increasing demands on limited resources, the commitment to "Remember" was shown over those two days to be as strong as ever. It is just that, sometimes, a little encouragement is needed to bring people out of their hectic daily round and once this is done they give of time, effort, money and enthusiasm and share in the fulfilment of such an act of Remembrance as we were privileged to attend.

SC

### Editors note:-

*Sue Cox, a long-time obsessive on the Great War, became involved with the fund raising to enable the Memorial to be rescued when told at the re-dedication of the replaced 20th (Light) Division Memorial at Guilemort "Right! you've done the 20th - now you'd better start on the 47th!"*

## Distinguished Volunteer

The late Mary Ford, who was a voluntary helper at Clandon Museum from 1988-94 while her husband Richard was the Curator, was awarded the Surrey County Council Award for Achievement for 1996 "in recognition of outstanding personal contribution to the life of the Surrey Community". The award, consisting of an engraved cut glass decanter with an accompanying certificate, was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Mr Richard Thornton OBE JP, in the presence of other civic dignitaries at a ceremony at County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames on the 26th November.

The citation reads:

### Mary Ford

*Mary was a member of Horsell Residents' Association for 24 years, eight of which were spent as its Vice-President. As an ex-Police Officer and Road Safety Officer, she was well placed to tackle local accident and crime prevention issues.*

*For the last 11 years, Mary had involved herself in the Woking Association of Voluntary Services, providing administrative support and was a Member of the Executive Committee. She was active in War Memorial restorations, pavement repairs, protecting trees, helping the elderly and providing a garden for the blind. She was truly aware of every person's differing needs.*

Mary was a "niece of the Regiment". Her uncle was Sergeant Herbert William Hunt, a distinguished member of The East Surrey Regiment who, with his brother Sergeant Richard Henry Hunt, also of the Regiment, was killed on the same day at the battle of the Marne in 1914. Herbert's gallantry won him the French Medaille Militaire. Continuing military tradition, Mary's father, Larry Cummins, later won the Military Medal while serving with The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in France.

LW

## Clarrie Jarman

The funeral of Clarrie Jarman, centenarian ex Queen's man who lost a leg at the battle of the Somme in 1916, took place at the Trinity Methodist Church, Woking on Monday, 18th November. The Service attended by a packed congregation, was conducted by the Reverend Barrie Tabraham who spoke of Clarrie's sterling qualities shown in life as a soldier and in the church and community and in his devotion to sport, particularly cricket and football. In none of his activities had clarrie ever shown bitterness or complaint despite his disability.

Covered by the Union Flag, the coffin, with wreaths, carried Clarrie's war medals. A Drummer from the 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment sounded the bugle calls of Last Post and Reveille. The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association Banner was carried by ex (Sergeant) Tony Ramsey MM, The East Surrey Regiment.

Representing the Regimental Association were Colonel Peter Thompson, Chairman, Major John Rogerson, Honorary Secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Les Wilson, Assistant Secretary, together with Lieutenant Colonel Foster Herd, Ron May, Doug Mitchell, Peter Henman and other members of the Association. The service was followed by cremation at Woking Crematorium.

### *Farewell Clarrie Jarman*

*No more the rumbling of the guns.  
Or painful call of duty.  
Rest Clarrie now, old soldier friend,  
In death's quiet peace and beauty.*

Richard Ford

## Farewell

Dunkeswell lies a few miles north of Honiton in the beautiful county of Devon, it is rural England at its best. The funeral of Richard John Milburn Stafford was held on the 11th November 1996 at 1430hrs at the Church of Saint Nicholas in the village. The service was conducted by The Reverend Nicholas Wall. The afternoon was bitterly cold as befits these occasions and the east wind swept through the village. The watery sun outlined the church with the Union flag fluttering bravely over it. The date (11th November) brought memories of 'At the going down of the sun'. If there had to be a funeral a better place for an Englishman would have been hard to find.

There was a distinct feeling of peace within the church, which was filled with relatives and friends. The service was simple and quite moving with participation by the close relations.

The readings were by Mr Nigel Steele Mortimore, Tania Haycocks (Daughter) and Susannah Haycocks (Grand Daughter). Susannah read a poem named "Dawn to Dusk" which she had written herself and Tania recited the beautiful "I am not there".

The casket bore a magnificent wreath of red roses and it was noticed that relatives wore the badges of The East Surrey Regiment. Richard's medals were displayed by the wreath as for a soldier's farewell. A military presence was in evidence with a privileged and honoured soldier representing the Association. Wearing beret and medals he was able to give the final salute at the graveside and say "Farewell Soldier".

It was goodbye to a soldier whose family were quiet, dignified and composed as only English people can be; the friends who by their very presence, provided a strong tribute for a life well led and duty well done.

## Into Captivity

Captain Richard John Milburn Stafford who died on 5th November 1996 was a former East Surrey Regiment officer who was taken prisoner at St Valery En Caux in 1940 when fighting with the 51st Highland Division endeavouring to halt the rapid German advance through France and the Low Countries. Although shot in the foot, Stafford managed to evade capture for several days, at one stage being hidden by a young nurse in a house near Abbeville. Captured eventually, he commenced a long journey by various forms of transport into prisoners of war camps. His painful route was the same as that described in the book "The Prisoner's Progress" by another East Surrey officer 2nd Lieutenant Leslie C Hunt. Surprisingly the material for this book, which is in illustrated diary form, reached England from a British prisoner of war camp in Germany, by a route unknown, and was passed for publication by the Press and Censorship Bureau in July 1941.

Lieutenant Hunt recounts that after capture the various prisoners were mustered into groups to start their march towards Germany. The main route was to be via Domart, St Pol, Bethune, Seclin (France), Tournai, Renaix, Ninove, St Nicholas (Belgium), Hulse, Walsoorden (Holland), Wesel, Hemer, "Oflag VII" (Germany). Deprived of their arms, they had to carry all their items of clothing and personal equipment on their backs. Food, for escorts as well as prisoners, was often a problem. Thankfully relief was often supplied by well meaning civilians in the towns and villages through which the captives passed.

Nightly accommodation varied, sometimes being non-existent when camps were made in the open air, sometimes being in barns, churches or civilian prisons and, on occasions in the comparative luxury of a racecourse grandstand complete with running water and showers. War damage in territory through which passage was made seemed light, in fact to some veterans who had seen the ravages of the First World War it was minimal. Farms had suffered, some of their animals being seen running wild and some, particularly cows, in distress.

Leaving France, the column journeyed through Belgium, where the populace seemed hostile and sullen, into Holland where things were much more welcoming, and finally, after a trying river journey on the Rhine, into Germany itself.

Interned first of all in OFLAG 7B, Stafford made several attempts at escape and because of this he was moved around a lot. At some time he was in STALAG LUFT III and was involved in the famous "Wooden Horse" escape, although not escaping himself. After the war he was for many years a member of the Wooden Horse Club.

A standing joke of his over the years was to say, when someone well known was mentioned, "I was in prison with him". His daughter, Tania E M Haycocks, humorously comments that this was "quite a conversation stopper".

On return to peacetime activities Captain Stafford re-joined the London Stock Exchange, of which he had been a pre-war member, and doubtless brought to it the same skills and determination which had been required of him as an East Surrey Regiment officer in time of war both in action and in captivity.

## Re-dedication of the Cranleigh Memorial Chair

On Saturday March 1st 1997, the Association was invited by the Dean of Guildford to attend Evensong at the Cathedral, at which service he was to re-dedicate the Cranleigh Territorial Chair, which has been refurbished by your Association.

The chair was made in 1946 by Mann's of Cranleigh as a memorial to those men of the Cranleigh platoon of 1/5th Queen's who lost their lives in the Second World War. It is used in The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Chapel, and after the recent work graces our chapel splendidly.



A gratifying number of members, wives and relatives, led by your Chairman and our past President, Colonel Toby Sewell, attended the service, which was particularly enhanced by the remarkable Cathedral choir. After the service the Dean and his staff kindly provided us all with suitable refreshments. It was good to see so many take the trouble to turn out for this simple yet moving occasion.

PRHT

## Dedication of a Memorial Plaque

On 5th November 1996 family, friends and Association members gathered at Holy Trinity Church Guildford to dedicate a plaque in memory of Major General Fergus Ling CB CBE DSO DL, The Queen's Royal Regiment, Colonel of The Queen's Regiment, and President of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association 1969 - 1973.



Left to right: Virginia Knapp, Philip Ling, Julia Ling, Elizabeth Ling, Anthony Ling, Charmian Ling, Martin Knapp, Didi Aeworth (Johnny was in Ghana). The Vicar, Henry Freeland.

The Reverend Robert Cotton, Rector of Holy Trinity Church conducted the Service, Lt Col Foster Herd TD DL read the lesson, the Reverend Jocelyn Gundy MA led the prayers and Major General Michael Forrester CB CBE DSO MC gave a moving account of General Ling's distinguished life. The Ling family were most grateful to A Company PWRR and Captain Brian Scripps for all the arrangements after the Service in Sandfield Terrace including an excellent buffet lunch and to the Reverend Robert Cotton and Lt Col Les Wilson for persevering with the 'mountain' of bureaucracy required in obtaining the 'faculty' to install the plaque.

JCR

## Taku Forts

During the period of the advance to the Taku Forts the route was reconnoitred and two men of the Regiment were wounded by bullets from a Jingal, a weapon new to them. This was an enormous musket, managed by a team of three men, two of whom supported the barrel of the weapon on their shoulders while the third aimed and fired. Provided it did not explode, with distressing results to its team, it threw a ball weighing about a pound for a distance proportionate to the amount of powder the team had the courage to insert.

Acknowledgments (Famous Regiments, The Queen's Royal Regiment by Jock Haswell)

Regimental History as seen by G. Robinson



## Annual Reunion Union Jack Club, 1996



Annual Reunion Union Jack Club, 1996  
The President, Brigadier Bob Acworth with Les Wilson  
and Peter Aitkens in the background



Mick Sibley and Jack Chaffer listen to one of General Mike Reynolds jokes!



Max Maloney organising the proceedings!



Joe Gooden explaining to Les Wilson and Del Gardner  
the delights of the Black and White club in Iserlohn!



A happy group of Queen's Surreys at midnight, listening to Max Maloney



What the hell have they to laugh at?



Toby Taylor, Peter Hill, Harold Ruoff and another old Surrey  
put the world to rights



Vic Aukett and Tommy Atkins - "We never had a drop to drink"!?