

MAY 1998



NUMBER 63

THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER



*Drummer, 31st Huntingdonshire Regiment, Bandsman 70th Surrey Regiment,
Drum Major, The Queen's (Second) Royal Regiment of Foot*



Regimental and Association Events

1998



16th May	ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
17th May	Inauguration of new Regimental Flag to the town of Boston, Lincs by 6 Queen's OCA. Details from Major M R Nason TD - 64 Westfield Road, Barnehurst, Kent DA7 6LR (01322 - 527017).
19th May	Golf Society, Annual Golf Match versus The Royal Marines, Fleet.
20th May	1 PWRR Thanksgiving Service at Canterbury Cathedral. Details from RHQ PWRR.
22nd May	Presidents Reception for Freedom Town Mayors of Surrey, Clandon.
1st June	THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).
5th June	PWRR & Infantry Sailing week - IOW. Details from RHQ PWRR.
7th June	Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association Church Service, Guildford Cathedral. 11 am for 11.15 am Service.
7th June	First Surrey Rifles Parade of Homage starting from Luthbury EC1, 1030 am. Further details from T W Young BEM 38 Stanstead Manor, St James Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM12AZ. (0181 643 6189).
7th June	ABF Beating Retreat, Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex.
17th June	City and Inner London Branch (Queen's) PWRR Association Ypres Battlefield Tour. Details from J Manji Esq, Duke of York's HQ (0171 730 3131 ext 5560).
18th June	PWRR Annual Golf Meeting, Canterbury.
3rd July	PWRR Officers Cocktail Party and Beating Retreat, Officers Mess, HQ RAMC, Millbank, London.
18th July	Regimental Cricket at Winchester. Details from Lt Col Hugh Keatinge OBE (01962 863658).
1st August	MINDEN DAY (1759).
9th August	PWRR and Buffs Regimental tent at Canterbury Cricket week (Kent v Hampshire).
6th September	Dedication of new Altar Frontals, in the Regimental Chapel, The Queen's Royal Regiment, Holy Trinity, Guildford - Evensong. Further details will be circulated when firm.
9th September	SALERNO DAY (1943).
20th September	Museum Open Day - Meet your mates! Clandon.
23rd September	Queen's Surreys Museum Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
2nd October	Queen's Surreys Officers Club Ladies Lunch, Clandon.(Proforma enclosed)
7th October	Golf Society Autumn Meeting, Woking.
10th October	East Surrey OCA Reunion, Clapham Junction. Details from FAW Ramsey Esq MM, 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey. SM5 3EF. (0181 401 2070).
23rd October	5 Queen's and 3 Queen's Surreys Officers' Reunion, London. Details from Lt Col Desmond Wilson - 01737 244561
5th November	Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London.
6th November	Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club
8th November	Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Southwark - and the Cenotaph, London. First Surrey Rifles Remembrance Parade, St Giles Church, Camberwell.
27th November	PWRR Officers' Club Dinner - Cavalry and Guards Club, London (Details out later).
20th December	BRITISH BATTALION DAY (1941).

1999

5th March	Regimental Council Meeting - Clandon.
6th March	Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees Meetings - Clandon.
20th March	Queen's Surreys Association and Trustees Meetings - Clandon.
6th June	Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association Church Service, Guildford Cathedral. (TBC)
5th November	Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.

Editorial

Since publication of the November issue of the Newsletter the re-location of our museum has been uppermost in all our minds. Colonel Peter Durrant, the museum chairman has travelled many miles searching for a new site, viewing properties that may have made a suitable home for our regimental collection. The Association Affairs covers a full report and so I will confine any further remarks on the museum to simply say that the Association is so grateful to Colonel Peter for all his hard work and efforts on our behalf.

This year marks two important anniversaries, not only for our Regiments but mankind. I refer of course to the Berlin Air Lift fifty years ago. The Queen's Royal Regiment was stationed in Dortmund and moved to Berlin as the blockade commenced. There is an article on pages 38-39 covering this period.

Eighty years ago in November 1918, The First World War ended. I hope to publish an article covering our Regiments, Battalions and what was happening to them in 1918 in our November issue. If any of our readers have anecdotes either concerning the Air Lift or November 1918, I would, as always welcome their contributions.

It is the time of year to remind you of our annual church service at Guildford Cathedral on June 7th, so do try and come along - say a prayer, meet your mates and have a pint in the refectory or over at Clandon in the museum after the service, and **please don't forget to support the museum by your letters of support. (see page 30).**

Best Wishes to you all
Les Wilson

President's Notes

First the Regimental museum. Following a full financial appraisal the Regimental Council has decided that the plan to build a new museum next to the Cathedral with the help of a Lottery grant is not financially viable. The idea has, therefore, been abandoned and the Chairman of the Museum Trustees is actively looking at other more affordable options. A separate report on the museum is included in the Newsletter but we are very grateful for all the work Colonel Peter Durrant has done. He will retire on 30 June and we are actively seeking a new Chairman.

My second task is to say that Les Wilson has decided to retire finally in 2000, after the issue of the May Newsletter. This is sad but understandable news. We owe Les a huge debt of gratitude for all he has done for us. Indeed, we have come to rely heavily on him and latterly John Rogerson, to keep us together and look after the needs of our old soldiers. Les will be difficult to replace and I hope we will find a volunteer to take over his editorship of the Newsletter.

It was clear from the recent meeting of the Regimental Main Committee that in spite of some disappointment and concern over the museum the Association thrives. I would like to thank on your behalf, not only Les Wilson and John Rogerson for their work but also the Branch Secretaries who, between them enable the Association to continue actively.

Best Wishes
Bob Acworth

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The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

As these notes are written the Regiment awaits the details of the Government's Strategic Defence Review (SDR). Yet another review and yet another period of uncertainty. The Review (we have been assured!) will be strategically driven and not financially driven. (Many will say we have heard all this before!). It seems, from carefully leaked pieces in the Daily Press that the Regular Army will not be too much altered but the Territorial Army (TA) will suffer some form of drastic reshaping. This will of course affect our two TA Battalions. We do not know what will happen?

Ignoring all this uncertainty the four Battalions soldier on with the professional spirit that we all know exists within the Regiment.

The 1st Battalion having recovered from all the ceremonial activities of last year proceeded on a 6 month tour of Northern Ireland (Belfast). They departed on 14 November 1997 and return mid May 1998. On arrival they were involved in the Cease Fire that restricted the number of men on patrol at any one time and the graded scale of patrol dress. This of course has slowly disintegrated and the Cease Fire is in name only with all the usual nightly terrorist activities reverting to normal. The Battalion is in support of the RUC. A more detailed report will be given in the next journal - needless to say the Battalion is in very good heart and thoroughly enjoying the associated sense of excitement and professionalism that a tour like this produces.

The 2nd Battalion have settled well into Tidworth. They moved into a brand new Barracks. (Apparently a QM's dream!). Their new role is as a Mechanised Battalion (Saxon mounted) in 1 Mechanised Brigade. In January 98 the whole Battalion went on Exercise to Kenya (Ex Grand Prix). This was in effect a seven week exercise. They were unfortunate as on arrival the heavens opened and exceptionally heavy rain resulted in floods and impossible roads. This did not deter

them and much fun was had by everyone on exercise and on the many trips.

The two TA Battalions are strong and in good heart. The threat of the SDR to cut the TA has not yet materialised. The TA in true form carrying on "*business as usual*". They continue to support the Regular Battalions with manpower (of all ranks) for Northern Ireland, Bosnia and the Falkland Islands. Training continues at a pace with the latest report that B Company (The Queen's Regiment) The London Regiment have just won the Courage Trophy for the second year. This is a gruelling Military Skills Competition.

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A platoon commander reflects, Northern Ireland - 1998

Nighttime, as we emerge out of this building. A hardened shell, cocooning us from the outside world. I step out from the warmth and the smells of food and men packed in close proximity and am jolted into wakefulness. The cold bites into me and the smell of the city cuts through the fog attempting to cloud my senses. I can hear the traffic and smell the fumes and the wetness of the ground. As usual it is raining, a persistent drizzle, blowing in the wind, so typical of Ulster and almost symbolic. A dark land too often washed in misery. Dark shapes gather around me now, checking radios and weapons and tightening straps. The war for us at present is fought on the pages of the local papers and in the perception of those who watch our progress through the streets. Be smart, look alert professional.

A few cigarette tips burn brightly in the black, the smell of tobacco comforting, associated with camaraderie and how many other nights, spent in the cold, wishing you were elsewhere. Checks complete, we pick up the RUC constables and move down to our exit point. Especially vulnerable here, the point team doubles out, zigzagging across the road, aiming to throw off any watching sniper. The teams are all on the ground now, moving fast into position, covering each other and ready, ready for the split second it might take for a gunman or a bomber to cartwheel us into the chaos of a contact. That is our reality as we walk these streets, day in and day out. Normal, much like home, houses and streets no different to your own, but with an appalling potential and reputation to dissolve into violence. The kids and the dogs are out as usual. It has to be well below zero and hammering down with rain before they'll be inside. They're different these kids. Caught up in something they only half understand and filled with hatred.

The flanking call signs pick up the most abuse. Toddlers scream obscenities and then ask for sweets and pens. Bottles, bricks, eggs and spit all come our way on these patrols, every night in varying degrees. We pick our way as best we can, warily turning our backs and ducking our heads, now with only a cloth beret for protection, which proudly displays my regimental badge. That is the nature of this place. The persistent low level violence, that never reaches your TV screens. The boys turn their heads and hold their tongues. Never retaliate, don't bite, walk away, don't give offence. Symbol of a democracy. Principled and worthy or toothless and weak? In a couple of hours we're back in, task complete. Nothing unusual tonight, but always we wait. Despite the repetition no one switches off, too much has happened here in the past. As the news reports another sectarian murder it is only time before it will happen again.

Unloaded, we move back into the warmth and dry. Another environment and another challenge to me and my NCOs to keep them busy, trained, fit, and as happy as circumstances will allow.

The watchkeepers are out there manning the ramparts, never forget that in your cosy suburbs, never forget that.

The Trustees have therefore concluded, sadly, that we must withdraw from any further negotiation for a "new build" site at Stag Hill. This is particularly disappointing, since to have been so close to our Regimental Chapel would have been a happy solution. Nevertheless, we remain absolutely committed to financing an affordable new home for our museum. We are now in serious discussion with Guildford Borough Council, who are certainly kindly disposed towards us, and wish as much as we do, to see us stay within the Borough, we remain extremely positive about finding a building in the Guildford area, one which we can afford to fit out and run and which will be a credit to us and our forebears. Many bridges remain to be crossed, and we cannot be more specific as I write this in early April. However as soon as we have firm news we will let you all know.

Meantime, many of you have asked whether we shall be running an Appeal for the new museum. The answer is very simple - until we have a firm and viable site to which we can commit ourselves, it would be unfair to ask for your money. We hope to know in the next few months what our future will be, and then would be the right time to solicit your help. However we are extremely grateful to you all for your support and interest, during these difficult times.

Benevolence

During 1997 a total of 275 cases were investigated and 231 (increase of 4 on 1996) grants-in-aid were approved. In the majority of cases the grants were for debts, particularly gas, electricity, rent arrears, and travel. The Association helped provide 21 further wheelchairs or mobility scooters, 19 sets of orthopaedic furniture and contributed to 12 convalescent holidays.

We continue to administer 38 ABF Supplementary Allowances and the ABF generously contributed £12 per week per case. 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. We have one resident in Gifford House (Bill Roadnight).

Queen's Surrey Charity paid out £51,271 (up £4K on 1996) as grants-in-aid. Of the 44 cases not receiving a grant, 20 were assisted by local Councils/Charities or member and other Regimental Charities after we had contacted them. 16 cases were not receiving such allowances as Attendance, Mobility or Rent Rebate.

Association Branch Secretaries have the SSAFA and Forces Help half yearly Handbook, for them to deal direct with the local case workers.

We should again like to pay tribute to the Army Benevolent Fund who are always helpful with prompt action and advice. SSAFA/FHS and The Royal British Legion investigate the majority of our cases and to their case workers we are particularly grateful for all their assistance. During this last year we have also assisted St Dunstaners' and members who are being cared for by the Ex Service Mental Welfare Society, War Pensioners and Combat Stress.

Letters of Appreciation - We append below extracts from some of the letters your Secretary has received.

I would like to thank you and the Association for the generous donation of £250.00 towards my new 'second hand' car. This was brought about by the support of a local SSAFA Forces Help caseworker.

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Captain Frank Allen RN, a SSAFA and Forces Help caseworker writes:- I am writing on behalf of Mrs A to thank your Regimental Association for your much appreciated cheque for £500.00. She is unfortunately unable to write, as she is nearly blind, awaiting a cataract operation. Mrs A has been informed that the grant has been made by The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Charity and will be used as directed by you.



Harry Marchant - Mobile at last

Mrs B W Nipper SSAFA-FHS Divisional Secretary writes:- Mr Marchant wishes me to write on his behalf to express his most heartfelt thanks for your help towards the funding of his scooter. He has now been out under his own "steam" for the first time since May of this year. We did have to caution him regarding excessive speed! It is a great delight to see Harry so animated. His lips may be navy blue but his spirit is magnificent. He was most interested in the Association Newsletter. With the arrival of the scooter, reading matters were put aside, but he assures me he will digest it later. He will spend as long as one can spare relating his memories of his days with the Surreys and at sea. Thank you for helping us to help him.

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Mrs M Lowen a SSAFA worker writes:- Many thanks for your generous cheque to enable Mr B to purchase a cooker. We have managed to get a very good reconditioned one and he is literally over the moon and sends his sincere thanks. My thanks for all your help

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M A Goldup a SSAFA and FHS caseworker writes:- I have been asked by Mr C to express to you his thanks and appreciation for your very generous grant towards the purchase of the Legionnaire 4 motorised wheelchair which has now been supplied. I would also like to add my thanks for your assistance in this matter.

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Mr E Brendish a case worker for SSAFA and FHS writes:- As the SSAFA/Forces help caseworker involved please allow me to say 'thank you' for the financial support provided for Mr and Mrs D. I have been to see the stair-lift working. We found £1200 from service charities and Mr D paid £125 towards the total.

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T K Courtenay Devon County Field Officer, Royal British Legion writes:- Thank you so much for your grant of £150 towards a bath for Mr E. I am most grateful to you. I will inform Mr E of your involvement in his case and pass on the Newsletter to him.

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Mrs Diana Young a Divisional Secretary of SSAFA writes: Mrs F has asked me to tell you how thrilled she is to know that with the help of your generous grant, plus the added help of the three other charities involved, SSAFA Forces Help, Arundel will now be able to purchase a Celebrity Scooter from the Mobility Bureau, to whom we were recommended by the Royal British Legion. The Mobility Bureau have given her a full assessment as to suitability for the type of vehicle, carried out by their trained Occupational Therapist. This help will so improve the quality of life for this lively 84 year old, who is grateful for the chance to remain independent. I will be purchasing the scooter direct from the suppliers. Thank you for your help in this case and for the help in the past. Mrs F at least put your original scooter to some good use before it came to the end of it's active life.

o o o

Lt Col W E Glover, a SSAFA / FHS Secretary writes:- On behalf of Mr G, I am most grateful for the grant of £500 towards his electric scooter. our home has in fact purchased the scooter, and I can see that the quality of his life, and that of his wife, has already improved. Please pass on my grateful appreciation to your President and Trustees.

o o o

I would like to offer a most grateful thank you for enabling me to enjoy a most welcome holiday at Warners, Hayling Island for a week in October. My life is now beginning to settle down to a comfortable routine, to a degree where I can look forward to a brighter future, if the good Lord wishes it. Sorry I have been slow with my thank you letter, as when I returned, being as I do charity work at the Hospice shop, there was a large back log of work piled up for me, also the poppy appeal I was involved with and I had a stay in hospital. Once again gentlemen my heartfelt thanks.

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On behalf of my father Mr H, I am writing to express our thanks for the grant of £100, awarded to him recently towards the purchase of a recliner chair. This chair has made a significant difference to my mother who suffers considerable pain and discomfort from arthritis. It was encouraging to learn that these type of schemes are available to benefit people such as my parents. Our thanks once again.

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Mr I writes:- I have been informed by Mr Keith Robinson of SSAFA, that The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association has made a grant of £500 towards urgent repairs at my flat. It is extremely kind of the Association and I wish to say how grateful I am for this kindness. I would have written sooner but I have had my eyes badly affected by a virus that made it impossible to see properly, whilst not yet cured, I am able to write again. Whilst serving with the 2nd Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment in India and Germany I never imagined I would at a later date need assistance like this. Thank you so very much.

o o o

I wish to thank your charitable fund for contributing £40 towards installing a vent in my lounge. It has now been completed and I can use my gas boiler with safety. SSAFA has been so helpful to me, my husband died 18 months ago, aged 83. I feel sure he knows about how helpful you have been

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Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the £250 brought kindly by Col. Heffield of SSAFA. It will be a very big help towards my heating bills. I would also thank the Regiment for the help given on my husband's death, Col. Heffield was also very helpful and kind. Xmas won't be quite the same without him but I have very happy memories. Once again I would like to thank everyone concerned for the cheque and wish them a Happy Xmas and New Year and thank you all for caring.

o o o

May I have the pleasure of conveying to yourself and the Association, my sincere appreciation and thanks for the grant that you have so generously made through SSAFA, toward the cost of my electric scooter. I am now able to look forward to getting out and about after many weeks of being confined to house due to my arthritic state. May I also take this opportunity to wish the Association every success in the future and I, as a member, really look forward to receiving the Newsletter, so as to keep in touch, past and present.

o o o

I arrived home at my flat on Saturday evening, from the Craighaven registered respite home at Royal Leamington Spa, whilst still under medication for the termination of fluid caused by the reaction of pain killers to my metabolism and feeling up one day and down the next. I have been greatly sustained by the goodwill messages and visits from many of my old 5 Queen's and 3 Queen's Royal Surrey, officers and other ranks, and of course by the grant from the regimental fund which enabled me to spend recovering for two weeks more needed from the complications of a too hasty despatch from the Warwick Hospital after suffering a fractured pelvis caused by alighting from a bus in the rain. I had a visit from a Mrs Glynys Senge of the Leamington Spa SSAFA, who is a bit of a five wire, and later we had a happy telecom to conclude the work you had kindly asked her to undertake.

o o o

I am writing to you to thank yourself and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association for the kind donation of £500 towards the cost of my wheelchair.

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Museum Notes

Word may have percolated through that we have been obliged to withdraw from the plan to re-site the Museum on Stag Hill, alongside Guildford Cathedral. Circumstances had prevented us from submitting an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for 75% of the total cost and the change of policy on the amount of money that will be granted in future would have resulted in an unacceptable burden on Association funds.

We are very grateful to the Dean and Chapter for their generous offer in the first instance and the decision to decline their offer was a difficult one to make. However, all is not lost. We have high hopes of securing the lease of a Borough Council property in Guildford which would be ideal. I am unable to tell you more at present, negotiations are at a sensitive stage but we are hoping for a decision in principle by mid May. The Editor may be able to slip in an announcement before the newsletter is printed.

Since the last publication we have managed to obtain from the National Trust an additional years extension to our lease and we are very grateful to them for their generous consideration of our circumstances. We shall not now need to vacate Clandon until 1st October 2000 and this additional period gives us room for manoeuvre.

We continue to be grateful for the generosity of those who have served or their relatives in presenting medals to the museum. Recent gifts have included the medal groups of:

Colonel T A Buchanan DSO OBE MC ERD TD, 2/Lt W J Giles, CSM F Jode, Ptes H E Grant, G Hammond and W Tucker and a very fine donation of three groups of his family medals presented by Major R Moody RE.

Also The Regimental Association presented the museum with two 70th Regiment salvers from the estate of Colonel Buchanan.

We have made tremendous strides in both conserving our artefacts and improving conditions in their storage. All uniforms in storage have been packed in an acceptable manner, all personal and general documents are stored in archival standard material and the Tirah campaign map of 1896 has been expertly restored by Jack May. The Lieutenant Daniel mitre cap of 1757 is in need of considerable restoration (£1200+/-) and will go to Hampton Court in August for their expert attention. This is being made possible by a generous grant from the trustees of The Queen's Surreys (Territorials) Charitable Funds and Chattels.

We are grateful to Lt Col Wilson for finding the original 1920 watercolour painting by Margaret Dovaston for the re-supply party for Hill 60 led by CSM Reid DCM and arranging for its presentation by the Association to the Museum. It has been framed and is now on display alongside Case 17.

These will be my last Museum Notes. I gave notice to the President of the Association that I would resign as a Trustee and therefore as Chairman of the Museum Trustees as from the end of June. It has been a considerable but rewarding commitment in terms of job satisfaction and it closes a chapter in my life that started just over fifty-four years ago when I walked through the main entrance of Stoughton Barracks having enlisted in The Queen's Royal Regiment as an Indian Army cadet.

We have achieved a great deal in the museum but none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Mrs Penny James and Mr Roy Harding - we are extremely fortunate to have them. I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their constant support, members of our weekly working party plus Mr John Woodroff, our Honorary

Archivist, and not forgetting our volunteer stewards who play a most important role during museum opening hours. And, of course, Lt Col Leslie Wilson who has been a constant tower of strength.

All we need now is for someone to come forward and take my place - will anyone volunteer?

PAWGD

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30 Training Platoon Support Company 1st Bn Queen's Royal Regiment Kenya Camp, Malaya 1st March 1956



All rows are left to right. Back row: Ptes - Teather, Noden, Macher, Elwell, Leigh, Jackson, Ambrose, Worsfold, Grevelt, Fisher. Middle row: Ptes - Masters, Crake, Ellis, Griffiths, Luclow, Tidy, Davis, Birchmore, Watts, Tidey. Front row: Ptes - Norris, Maddern, Cpl MacDonald, Lt Redfern, Cpl Brownjohn, Ptes - Moffatt, Hughes.

A Fatal Prophecy

In the 1840's the Admiralty began to show belated interest in the subject of ironclad ships and commenced a programme of building thirty three of them. One of them, laid down in the yard of John Laird, was the frigate *Vulcan*, later named *Birkenhead* after the Merseyside port where she was built. The vessels were not a great success and many of them were relegated to auxiliary duties, *Birkenhead* later becoming a troop carrier. Speaking of her in the House of Commons, Sir Charles Napier said that if she was unfit to fight she was also unfit to carry troops. His words came fatally true on 26th February 1852 when she foundered on rocks off Point Danger some fifty miles from Simon's Bay, carrying many troops to a watery grave including thirty six Queen's men.

RF

Striking Times

Prominent in the background picture of Guildford in this year's well produced Association calendar is the Town Clock. This timepiece has always played an important part in the borough history, including even security.

In 1759 instructions to the Town Watchmen, predecessors of the present day police, they ordered them to "go their rounds every hour, setting out from the Town Hall as soon as the clock strikes eleven and to cry the hour and the weather loudly very often until they return from their rounds to the Hall again..... and to go till 5 o'clock in the morning".

RF

HMS Excellent - It's role for the future By Lt Commander Brian Witts MBE (Retd)

At the age of 42 Thomas Hastings, a Captain of two year's seniority, was appointed the first Captain of *Excellent* on the 17 April 1832, an appointment that was to last for thirteen years not unusual in those days. During that period the training ship evolved from an experiment into an acknowledged School of Naval Gunnery.

Hastings instilled four great principles: strict discipline, high morale, sound basic training, and technical curiosity. To this day these principles still apply, albeit the methods of introducing them have somewhat changed. Gone is the 'cat-o-nine-tails', and the ever present 'Gunnery Instructor' (gas and gaiters) who seemed to be moulded to the corner of every building, waiting for the unwary to relax the 'swing of the arms', or failing to salute a senior officer.

In 1980 HMS *Excellent*, along with other nominated Naval Establishments, was ordered to close and decommission as part of the Nott plan to save money. However, there seemed little heart to implement the closure plan, which continued to go right.. So it was that in 1985 HMS *Excellent* was reduced to a state of Care and Maintenance, the lead for gunnery training having transferred to HMS *Dryad*. With so many important training schools moving to the Island in the early 90's it was recommissioned in 1994 to provide a wide range of vital general training for the Fleet. The establishment is committed to training and developing its 400 staff in support of over 1500 who train or work there daily.

HMS *Excellent*, now commanded by a Commodore, is actively working in partnership with Flagship Training Ltd. This is a consortium of companies whereby the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency (NRTA) and Flagship share the benefits from selling spare capacity and where Flagship provide services to the establishment at lower cost, thus making more effective use of the high quality training resources and facilities within the Island.

The Training functions could not continue without an efficient administrative, security, property management, supply, medical and recreational infrastructure, all of which play a key part in ensuring that the fifteen thousand plus trainees passing through the establishment each year get the maximum benefit from their training. The following are the training schools located at Whale Island.

NBCDC School

The NBCD School opened for training in September 1993, and is the lead school for all surface ships' Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Defence and Damage Control training, firefighting, sea survival and first aid. The school is purpose built and is a major step forward in ensuring the best training is provided for all personnel who are about to go to sea. With a staff of 80, the school runs 32 courses, ranging in length from a day to 3 weeks. There is a comprehensive programme of visits to ships by the staff, both to teach and to learn. The annual student turnover throughout is over 12,000.

The Royal Naval School of Leadership & Management

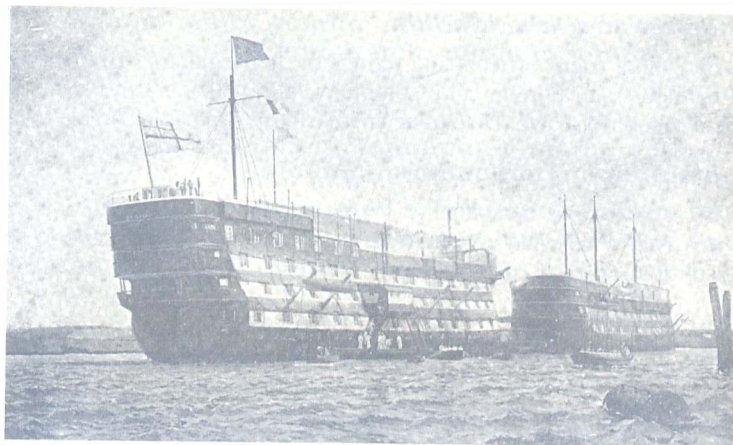
The Royal Naval School of Leadership and Management (RNSLAM) has been on Whale Island since January 1993. With its staff of 65, RNSLAM provides a wide range of courses in all aspects of personnel and general management training, for over 3,500 students each year. The staff also visit Naval ships and establishments throughout the world to bring up to date those who cannot attend the specialist courses.

As the Royal Navy's Lead School for Leadership, Divisional and Management matters within the Service, the RNSLAM is committed to:- delivering a comprehensive range of courses in the areas of Leadership, Divisional and Management training:-

- ensuring that comprehensive and consistent training in these subjects is achieved throughout the Royal Navy,

- providing professional advice on Leadership, Divisional and Management matters to all Royal Naval Authorities; and

- ensuring that the Royal Navy remains at the leading edge of Leadership and Management training.



Calcutta and Excellent



Recommissioning of HMS Excellent by Admiral Sir John Kerr GCB. ADC C in C Naval Home Command, 18th March 1994



Sailors in the damage control module, trying to stem the flow of water from shell damage

RN Regulating School (RNRS)

The School trains officers and ratings of the Regulating Branch, Submarine and Minor War Vessel coxswains, Naval Air Squadron Regulators and Foreign and Commonwealth personnel in Naval Discipline, Law, Security and Whole Ship Co-ordinating. It is the lead school for Naval Discipline and has been situated at Whale Island since 1949.

Naval Military Training School (NMTS)

The school trains personnel in Weapon Handling and the Ships' Protection Organisation, ensuring that students can handle small arms confidently and conduct safely all the activities required to secure ships and establishments against a terrorist threat. Trainees also use the advanced Small Arms Trainer to build confidence and drills before live firings at the Full Bore Rifle Range at Tipner.

HMS Bristol

HMS *Bristol*, a Type 82 destroyer, is the latest in a succession of warships to be employed in a training role as the Royal Navy's Harbour Training Ship (HTS) and Naval Cadet Forces (NCF) Accommodation Ship. Permanently moored alongside at HMS *Excellent* she provides cadets with the unparalleled opportunity to combine water borne activities, such as dinghy sailing, pulling, canoeing and power boating, with first hand experience of life in the RN by actually living and sleeping onboard ship.

Sea Cadets

HMS *Excellent* is home to a wide range of Sea Cadet and Combined Cadet Force activities. The National Sea Cadet School provides training for cadets and adult Sea Cadet Corps personnel, plus Leadership and Management courses for adults entering the SCC without previous experience.

Royal Navy Sailing Centre (RNSC)

RNSC instructs students from all 3 Services in all aspects of dinghy sailing and powerboat driving, to Royal Yachting Association standards, and is open 7 days a week for recreational sailing from Easter to October.

Defence Diving School

Based at Horsea Island since 1995, the DDS provides diver training for both the Royal Navy and Royal Engineers. The school now has a first class training facility that permits training of complex underwater tasks in a controlled environment, providing some of the best facilities in the world for training military divers.

Portsmouth Field Gun



A photo of a Sub Lieutenants group, 1885. Prince George later became King George V. Also included in the photo are :- F.C.H. Allenby, E.L.D. Boyle, T.B.S. Adair, P.M. Stewart, C.D. Glanville, HRH Prince George of Wales, Percy Scott, A.C. Lowry, R.E. Wemyss, E.H. Mowbray, "Dot"



Field gun crews under training, HMS *Excellent*, 1997

HMS *Excellent* is home to the Portsmouth Field Gun Crew. In a competition that has been a traditional high spot of the Royal Tournament, the Field Gun has become one of the most popular and publicly recognised traditions of the Royal Navy.

HMS King Alfred

King Alfred was the founding father of the Royal Navy and as the parent establishment for the Royal Naval Reserve in the South East, continues the tradition of preparing Volunteer Reserves for Service with the Royal Navy.

Headquarters Royal Marines (HQRN)

The Commandant General Royal Marines flies his flag on the west side of Whale Island from his Headquarters, which provides the necessary facilities for the command of the Corps and to direct the continued development of Amphibious Warfare.

At Whale Island today development continues with plans for a substantial Physical and Recreational Training Centre, a new state of the art enclosed Sea Survival Centre and major upgrades to junior Ratings' Accommodation, much of which dates from the 1890's. It is planned to achieve all this and more in sympathy with the traditional brick based architecture that makes Whale Island such an enjoyable place to work in or to visit.

Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum
(In peace prepare war)

Colours

The year 1997 saw impressive Colours ceremonies for the presentation of the New Colours to the 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment at Canterbury on 30th June and the laying up of the Colours of 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment at Guildford on 12th September.

Ceremonies like these mark important features in Regimental history and one such occasion of Territorial Army significance, was observed in the grounds of Whitgift School at Haling Park, Croydon on Saturday, 7th May, 1938 when Her Majesty Queen Mary, Colonel-in-Chief of The Queen's Royal Regiment, presented New Colours to the 4th Battalion. Amid scenes of great enthusiasm the Queen, described in the Croydon Times as being "a picture of regal beauty", drove from the Norbury boundary of the town through a cheering crowd of over 100,000 people. Croydon itself was en fete. Shops and houses were decorated and in the centre of the town "there was not a bare flagstaff" to be seen.

Her Majesty was received at the Borough boundary by the Mayor and Mayoress (Councillor and Mrs E C Stuart Baker). Preceded by the Mayoral party, Her Majesty then drove to Haling Park. The New Colours to be presented were to take the place of the 4th Battalion's first Colours received from Lord Roberts at Duppas Hill in 1910.

At the Park were many notable military and civilian guests, among them being Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable G K M Mason, Member of Parliament for North Croydon and Mr Herbert Williams, Member for South Croydon.

Military representatives included Colonel Lord Ashcombe and Lady Ashcombe, Brigadier L D Hickes, Brigadier R P Pakenham-Walsh and Mrs Pakenham-Walsh, Major General E A Osborne and Mrs Osborne, Brigadier J S Hughes and Mrs Hughes.

The Queen's were represented by - Major General Sir Wilkinson D Bird and Lady Bird, Lieutenant Colonel R K Ross and Mrs Ross, Lieutenant Colonel G V Palmer and Mrs Palmer, Lieutenant Colonel W R Darnell and Mrs Darnell, Lieutenant Colonel P Adams and Mrs Adams.

Lieutenant Commander S D Roper R N represented HMS *Excellent* and Brigadier General E Makins represented the Royal Dragoons who, with the Queen's, carried the Battle Honour 'Tangier 1662-80'.

Representing Territorial Army Units in Croydon were Lieutenant Colonel G N Morgan and Mrs Morgan, Major W A N Hammond and Mrs Hammond, Lieutenant Colonel G O Montgomery and Mrs Montgomery, and Lieutenant Colonel H Fletcher and Mrs Fletcher.

Age and youth were both represented by the presence of pensioners, Old Comrades (some of whom had been present at the presentation of the Colours in 1904), the National Defence Company and Members of the 1st and 3rd Cadet Battalions, together with Boy Scouts who carried out minor stewarding duties. Ambulance men were also present with a First Aid tent.

Music was provided by the Band of the 2nd Queen's conducted by Mr R Barsotti, ARCM Bandmaster.

The New Colours were the co-operative gift of 142 ladies so some of the ceremony had a definite touch of "Ladies' Day" background. Despite the rather cold weather, colourful light dresses and coats were in evidence. Men, it is reported, were "quietly unobtrusive" in black or grey top hats.

The Queen Mother, on arrival at the Park was seen to be "dressed in periwinkle blue with hat to match and wearing the badge of The Queen's Royal Regiment". She was received at the Pavilion by the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey (Lord Ashcombe), Sir Richard Meller, Colonel Ivor T P Hughes, Colonel The Honourable G K M Mason and Mr Herbert C

Williams. As the reception was taking place the standard of Her Majesty was broken at the masthead near the sports pavilion in the school grounds. As she stepped on to the balcony she was received with a Royal Salute.

To the tune of "Old Lang Syne" played by the Band and Drums, in slow time, the Old Colours were trooped while the Band played "Steadfast and True", the battalion drums were piled and the New Colours placed on them. There were loud cheers as Her Majesty descended from the balcony and took up her place in front of the drums.

Her Majesty listened with devout interest as the Reverend A E Wilkinson OBE MC TD Senior Chaplain to the Forces (TA) Eastern Command and assisting clergy performed the ceremony of consecration. She then walked to the piled drums and presented the Colours to two kneeling officers. Major J H F Johnson and Major S C Guilan were the Majors for the handing over of the Colours which had first been taken to the drums by CSM Townsend and CSM Hawkins.

Addressing the parade and assembly, Queen Mary said, "It gives me great pleasure to present New Colours - the gift of the ladies of the district - to your battalion. Mindful of the glorious traditions of the Queen's, I have every confidence in trusting to you these Colours and I wish the Battalion every success".

Replying the Commanding Officer, Colonel Hughes, said "Your Majesty, on behalf of the ladies who have given the New Colours and all ranks of the 4th battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, I thank you for the great honour you have conferred on us this day. It will be our earnest endeavour to justify the confidence placed in us and worthily to uphold the great traditions of The Queen's Royal Regiment".

The battalion gave three cheers for Her Majesty and then while the Band played "Sons of the Brave" the drums were unpiled and returned to the battalion. The Colours were then received with a general salute and marched to the centre of the Battalion while the Band and Drums played the National Anthem.

With Her Majesty taking the salute from the dais the battalion then marched past in fours with its New Colours at its head and the Old Colours, cased, in rear. Her Majesty was then photographed with the officers of the battalion, and the Warrant Officers and Sergeants. She had tea with the senior officers and their wives before departing through the streets of Croydon which, as on her arrival, were lined with cheering crowds.

It had truly been a "Right Royal Day" for Croydon in general and the 4th Queen's in particular. Colonel Hughes later received the following letter from Gerald Chichester, Private Secretary to Her Majesty Queen Mary.

Marlborough House SW1 May 9th 1938

Dear Colonel Hughes

I have received Queen Mary's commands to convey to you, and to everyone associated with Her Majesty's visit to the ceremony of the Presentation of New Colours to the 4th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment last Saturday, an expression of Her Majesty's grateful and sincere thanks for the splendid arrangements made in connection with this visit.

Queen Mary was more than pleased with the ceremony, and by the wonderful welcome accorded to her by all ranks of the Regiment, and by the inhabitants of Croydon.

Her Majesty will always look back with pleasure to the afternoon spent with her regiment, and Queen Mary would be glad if you would see that her message of appreciation is conveyed to one and all.

For the 4th Queen's men themselves there was an additional later pleasure when they saw themselves on film at a special showing of the event at the Davis cinema.

The ceremony of the Laying up The Old Colours took place at Croydon Parish Church on 9th October, the service was conducted by the Bishop of Croydon.

RF

Acknowledgments: Croydon Advertiser, Croydon Times.

Croydon's Regiment

In June 1944, two days after "D" Day, 131 (Queen's Brigade) fought their way ashore on to the Normandy beaches in the greatest sea-borne operation of all times. But while some Queen's men welcomed the feel of dry land there were others who literally remained "*all at sea*".

On board the Headquarters ship HMS *Despatch*, lying offshore at Juno Beach, the 4th Queen's were fighting in an anti-aircraft capacity manning Bofors guns. Their role on board a warship was nothing short of traditional.

Two hundred years before, at the battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794 their predecessors had fought in somewhat different form in a marine capacity in HM ships. The 4th Queen's as a Territorial and former Volunteer Battalion had a long history going back to 1859 when the 2nd Surrey Rifle Volunteers were raised at Croydon, forming part of the 1st Surrey Administration Battalion. Volunteers of those days had to be imbued with the true spirit of their purpose as a frugally minded Government only provided 25% of the rifles and the rest of the cost of arms, equipment, uniform and training had to be paid out of member's own pockets. Total cost was about £8, a considerable sum in those days.

In 1867 the 1st Surrey Administrative Battalion was re-organised and assumed the title of the 2nd Surrey Rifle Volunteers. The Corps grew rapidly after its formation, with further units being raised at Crystal Palace and Norwood and in 1881, when the new Territorial scheme came into being, the 1st Battalion was joined to the Queen's and became the 1st Volunteer Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment. In 1885 another Company was added at Caterham and further detachments were later formed at Merstham and Oxted.

Originally intended for Home Defence purposes the Volunteers, however, were soon to see prospects of overseas service. In the South African War the 1st Volunteer Battalion sent five officers and two hundred non-commissioned officers and men to the conflict to join the Service Corps attached to the 2nd Bn The Queen's. The Volunteers, commanded by Captain de la Mare, joined the Regulars, whose numbers had been depleted by casualties, on 12th April 1900. History was thus made as this was the first occasion in the history of the Regiment that Volunteers had been required to fight with the Regulars. They acquitted themselves nobly in all respects. After arduous duties in the veldt the 2nd Battalion returned to England in June 1904, to be stationed at Shorncliffe. On the 9th October war memorials were unveiled in Holy Trinity Church, Guildford and the Battalion, which included Regular Reservists and Volunteers, marched through cheering crowds in the streets to the ceremony.

In 1908 the Territorial Force was formed and the old Volunteer Battalion was renumbered and renamed the 4th Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Now no longer a Rifle Regiment, their traditional green uniforms were changed for the scarlet of Infantry of the Line. They became the first Territorial Unit to obtain permission to carry Colours and these were given by Lady Edridge and Mrs (later Lady) Watney and were presented to the Battalion at Duppas Hill, Croydon by

Field Marshal Earl Roberts on the 9th July 1910. The Battalion was obviously active in the sporting field as early photographs in an album belonging to one of their officers, Lt Col K A Oswald DSO show them with a football team. By 1912 they were in camp at Eastbourne, their bell tents being shown photographed in neat lines of formation. There seems to have been close connections with the Public Schools Battalion as several photographs in the same album are relative to the latter. Church Parade was very formal with marching troops headed by a band. Captions on photographs show that the Battalion was part of the "*Surrey Brigade*".

But the world of "*make believe*" soldiering was soon to end. On 3rd August 1914, while marching to camp on Salisbury Plain the Battalion was recalled to Croydon and mobilisation followed two days later. Scenes were hectic as arrangements were made for such things as inventories of kit, issue of identity discs and completion of forms for dependants' allowances. Wives and families were allowed into the barracks, which didn't improve the situation, and doubtless there were tearful scenes when the troops departed for Stood where they were placed in civilian billets. The Transport Officer was left behind at Croydon to follow later with a miscellaneous collection of impressed horses and wagons driven by men with little or no knowledge of their equine charges. Further training was continued at Maidstone.

Volunteering for overseas service, the Battalion was posted to India, to relieve regular troops. Before departure, as part of the Home Counties Division, they were inspected by King George V who wished them "*God Speed*" and assured them they would be fulfilling an important function in India. They arrived in Bombay on 2nd December 1914, and were soon engaged on internal security and garrison duties on the North West Frontier. Designated the 1/4th Queen's the Battalion fought on the Frontier in 1916 and 1917 and in the words of the Commander-in-Chief in India, "*by its conduct and bearing added to the reputation of the famous Regiment whose name it bore*". A small detachment was posted to Mesopotamia where they served with the 2nd Norfolks. The Battalion returned to England on 12th November 1919, and were in Croydon the next day. After a civic reception the Colours were marched to the Town Hall for safe keeping and the Battalion was stood down.

Back in England the war years called for speedy formation of more battalions to fill the needs for men for various battlefronts. Surrey was not lacking in efforts. Photographs show groups of Queen's officers variously in such places as Windsor, Canterbury and Reigate. The 2/4th (Croydon) Queen's formed a composite battalion with the 2/5th (Guildford) Queen's and with all its members having volunteered for overseas service they sailed, 1,000 strong, for Gallipoli where they landed at Suvla Bay on 8th August 1915. In the ensuing operations they fought a gallant action at Hill 63, which they held, but sickness and battle caused heavy casualties, eventually reducing the strength to five officers and 335 men.

Evacuation of the peninsula followed in December and the Queen's then travelled to Egypt where they were engaged in guard duties of the Suez Canal until January 1917. After heavy fighting at Gaza, Jerusalem was reached and surrendered on 9th December 1917. Bound for more active service, the Queen's were transferred via Italy to the Western Front in May 1918 whereafter fighting at the Marne, they took part in the final offensive. The 3/4th Battalion was formed at Windsor on 24th April 1915 and quickly reached full strength. Moved to Tunbridge Wells in June 1915 they soon experienced a new form of warfare although still on home ground. Part of their billet was wrecked by a bomb from a Zeppelin. It was during the time at Tunbridge that those who had elected for Home Service only were drafted to Lowestoft. The remainder were engaged in training in the London area and in carrying out defence works around the capital.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th, 1938

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4 p.m.
To-day, Tuesday

VAST CROWDS WELCOME QUEEN MARY TO CROYDON

Memorable Ceremony in History of the 4th Queen's

VIVID PAGEANTRY WHEN NEW COLOURS
WERE PRESENTED

Her Majesty Takes Salute As The
Troops March Past

DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE AND
LOYALTY



HISTORY was made in Croydon on Saturday afternoon when Her Majesty Queen Mary presented new colours to the 4th Battn., Queen's Royal Regt. The Queen, a picture of regal beauty and dignity, was cheered by over 100,000 people as she drove from the Norbury boundary of the town to the grounds of Whitgift School, Haling Park, where the ceremony took place.

The scene at Haling Park was one to leave memories of a great occasion, and even the spectacle of Her Majesty handing over the new colours did not surpass in drama that impressive moment when 7,000 pairs of eyes turned as one to see Queen Mary step out on to the balcony of the sports pavilion. There was a moment's pause, and then a volume of spontaneous cheering swept across the huge crowd from one end of the park to the other. Her Majesty inclined her head in acknowledgment and then gave Croydon people that smile which has endeared Queen Mary to the hearts of the nation.



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Croydon Times

And Surrey County Mail

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th, 1938

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QUEEN MARY PRESENTS NEW COLOURS TO THE 4th QUEEN'S

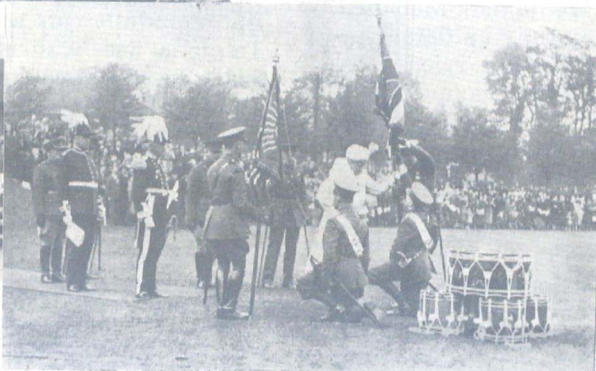


QUEEN MARY
Honoured Croydon with a welcome visit on Saturday. Her Majesty presented new colours to the 4th Queen's, "Croydon's Own." She is seen taking the salute at the March Past.

ACCOMPANIED by the Lord Lieutenant, the Queen walks out to perform the ceremony.



LORD ASHCORBE receives the Queen on her arrival by car at Haling Park, scene of the ceremony. Right: Her Majesty presents the new colours.



On the 30th May 1917 the Battalion left Southampton for service in France, their strength then being 33 officers and 973 non-commissioned officers and men. In October of the same year they were in action at the Third Battle of Ypres where they sustained heavy casualties. 3 officers and 61 NCOs and men were killed while a further 17 officers and 241 other ranks were wounded or missing. In return, however, the Battalion captured 200 prisoners and much equipment. Congratulations from the GOC, 21st Division stated, "*The offensive spirit of 3/4th Queen's in their first attack was beyond praise*".

The Battalion, the only Territorial unit in the 21st Division, was disbanded in February 1918 having remained in action until that time. A King's Colour was presented to them in recognition of their services. The Adjutant General of the Forces, obviously appreciative of their worth, sent a letter to the Secretary of the Surrey Territorial Force Association concluding with the words, "*Although the 3/4th Battalion has been disbanded the officers and men have not been lost to The Queen's Regiment, they have been drafted to other battalions of the Regiment and will continue to uphold the name and traditions of this Regiment with the same spirit, loyalty and esprit-de-corps as they have done in 3/4th Battalion*".

The 4/4th Battalion, as Depot Battalion at Croydon, were a training and drafting unit, sending men out to various theatres of war and operations including India, Egypt, Palestine, France and Flanders - truly indicative of the widespread and committed activities of the Regiment. Brigaded with others in 1916 the Battalion became known as the 4th Reserve Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment and was disbanded on 29th May 1919. Croydon had certainly made its contribution to the war effort, raising four Territorial Battalions who, wherever they fought or served, acquitted themselves with credit and distinction.

The post-war period was one of uncertainty with many people, understandably, being reluctant to become involved in military activities. But, overcoming all difficulties the 4th Queen's was reconstituted in February 1920 with Headquarters at Mitcham Road Barracks, Croydon, the title of the Regiment was changed on the following New Year's Day to The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey). On the 14th July 1921 the name of the Territorial Force was changed to Territorial Army. The general training programme for the newly constituted battalion consisted of drill nights, weaponry instruction, weekends at rifle ranges and fourteen days annual training in a tented camp. There were also opportunities for football, athletics and boxing and some notable performances in these sporting spheres were credited to the Battalion. In 1938 new Colours were presented by Her Majesty Queen Mary, Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment.

At the latter end of 1938, with the threat of war ever growing the Battalion, somewhat shocked and dismayed, was converted to a searchlight role, becoming the 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment (63 Searchlight Regiment) (Territorial). Mobilised during the 1938 Munich crisis, they took up defensive positions which were mainly in the East End of London. After being stood down they laid up their old Colours in Croydon Parish Church and marched past with a strength of 450. In August 1939 the Battalion was mobilised and left for their war stations at Avonmouth, Bramley and Hamble with Regimental Headquarters at Southampton. They were in their respective positions when war was declared on 3rd September.

Roles changed quickly in war-time conditions and the Battalion became successively the 63rd Searchlight Regiment and then the 127 LAA Regiment, Royal Artillery. The Lamb badge was changed for that of the gunners and there were also appropriate changes of insignia and rank titles. That the new gunners took their duties seriously is shown by the fact that when at Southampton Docks they even caused the liner

Aquitania to be moved "*to improve the line of fire*". Cost was £600 - there is no record of who paid for it.

After the fall of Dunkirk, and with invasion expected almost hourly, the Regiment was given the dual role of both AA and ground defence. Searchlight achievements during the ensuing "*blitz*" were disappointing so there were no regrets when a conversion was made to Bofors guns. Training and operations necessitated moves to various parts of the country on Home Service. The most important and surprising change of all came in the invasion period in June 1944 when the Bofors gunners were embarked, in an anti-aircraft capacity, on board the floating Mulberry Harbours and the cruiser HMS *Despatch* acting as a Headquarters ship off the Normandy beaches. One officer and ten other ranks were lost when one Mulberry Harbour unit was torpedoed while crossing the Channel.

By October the main Regiment was in Belgium being engaged, among other things, in port defence duties in the Scheldt area. New Year's Day 1945 was one of success for the AA gunners when they engaged a group of low flying FW 190s and a total of 37 enemy aircraft were destroyed. Guns were handed in on 21st April 1945 and the Regiment was then engaged on garrison duties guarding factories, mines and stores and endeavouring to bring some thousands of displaced persons into some form of discipline and control.

On 1st May 1947, on the re-formation of the Territorial Army, the Regiment found itself back in its old barracks at Mitcham Road, Croydon. The wheel, it seemed, had turned full circle. But once again its name was changed in 1955 to 565 LAA Regiment RA and later still when resuming an infantry role, to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. In succeeding years changes seemed to come apace with roles and weapons activities frequently altering. National Service Reservists trained Volunteers and there was difficulty in finding and recruiting suitable officer material. The numbers of personnel with actual war experience steadily dwindled.

On the 12th July 1963, the 3rd and 4th Battalions received their New Colours at a combined parade at Woking Football Ground. The Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, the Right Honourable Earl of Munster PC KBE presented them on behalf of the Queen. Ten Old Colours were marched off the parade for the last time and on the following day the Freedom of Reigate was presented to the Regiment. Regular training was maintained and later, indicative of the times, training in nuclear, biological and chemical warfare and Civil Defence was included in the programme. Many successes were gained in various spheres of activity and there were further changes in title and role when the Territorial Army Emergency Reserve (known as the "*Ever Readies*") was formed at the ending of National Service. Members could now be called up without proclamation and sent to reinforce the Regular Army as required. The annual training camp at Plasterdown on Dartmoor in 1966 was carried out in exceptionally bad weather.

But regretfully cuts were on the way. In 1966 the Surrey Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association was wound up and its functions transferred to the Greater London Association. In April 1967 the 4th Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA) ceased to exist after having given many years of honourable service to Sovereign and Country.

RF

Sources:- The Queen's Royal Regiment History (Foster). The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) (Haswell). Territorial Battalions of the Regiments of Surrey and Their Successors (Clandon Museum). Correspondence of the late Lt Col K A Oswald DSO.

The Colours of 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment

4th May 1974. A grey, dull day at Armoury House in the City of London. The dullness is pierced towards mid-day by the scarlet and blue of New Colours being presented to four battalions of The Queen's Regiment by their Allied Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe of Denmark.

11th September 1997. Another dull day, this time at Guildford. May 1974 seemed only a moment before. One stand of those Colours presented by The Queen of Denmark, those of the 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment, was to be laid up after twenty-five years service: the battalion they represented now only history. It was very much a day for reflection on what had passed as well as for re-unions with old friends, few of whom seemed to show much sign of the passing of those intervening twenty five years. It seemed but a moment since the last laying-up ceremony in June 1975 at Guildford Cathedral when the Old Colours of the 1st Battalion had been marched up the aisle to "Huntingdonshire Slow" by Captain Peter (Rocky) Hitchcock, Lieutenant Andrew Barrett, and CSM Max Maloney.

Those Old Colours had also been the Colours of the 1st Battalion under its former title, 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. Now the 1974 Colours were to take their place alongside those, and those of 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, and 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment in the Regimental Chapel. The old Queen's Surreys Colours had stayed with the 1st Battalion during its years in Münster, Lingfield, Bahrain, Londonderry, Berlin, Bulford and Belfast. The Commanding Officers of those years - Toby Sewell, Charles Millman, Tony Pielow and Mike Hayward - were all present at Guildford, joining every CO of 1 Queen's except the last, and every surviving Colonel of the Regiment. Mike Hayward, who commanded the parade on 4th May 1974, was joined by Malcolm McGill, the Ensign who had received the Queen's Colour from the Colonel-in-Chief's hands in May 1974.

After 1974 the Colours went with the 1st Battalion to Bulford and Belfast and then in 1975 to Werl in Germany where the battalion was to remain for the next four-and-a-half years. One of the highlights of those years was the Queen's Silver Jubilee parade at Sennelager in 1977: the Ensigns for the Colours that day were Lieutenant Nick Carter (now living in Australia); and 2nd Lieutenant Henry Eagan, now Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales. Eagan and the conducting Warrant Officer from that day, CSM Lofty Jamieson, were both present at Guildford. That Jubilee parade was also, coincidentally, the first appearance of a New Colonel's Colour - the Davidson Colour. Another highlight of Werl was the trooping ceremony in 1977, just before the battalion returned to Londonderry. The Ensign for the Regimental Colour was again Nick Carter. The years in Werl also saw the Colours accompany the battalion to Belfast. There were, too, annual Sobraon ceremonies: among the Sobraon Sergeants were Sgt PE "Scragger" Maye, who died last year; Sgt Arthur Stapleton, Sgt Jimmy Piper, Sgt D O'Shea and Sgt Mick Potts.

In 1980 the 1st Battalion moved to Canterbury, where except for six months in Belize it remained until 1982. Notable events included a Freedom March; the first Grand Reunion at which the Colours were carried by 2nd Lieutenant Martin Robertson and Lieutenant Garry Bourne; and The Queen of Denmark's visit for which the Ensigns were Lieutenant Alex Cooper, Lieutenant Ken Hames and, for the Colonel's Colour, Captain Tony Russell.

In 1982 the Colours accompanied the battalion to Omagh in Northern Ireland. There was little ceremonial for the next three years, however a notable event was the march through Belfast when all three regular battalions of the Regiment, serving together in the same theatre of operations, sent detachments with their Regimental Colours. The 1st Battalion's Ensign on that historic day was Lieutenant Andrew Wright. Sobraon

Sergeants in those years included Sgt Paul Tidey, later RSM and now commissioned.

The battalion's next station was Gibraltar, quite a contrast to Omagh, and a station in which the Colours were regularly on parade: The Queen's Birthday Parade was one such occasion when Lieutenant James Cameron - present at Guildford - was the Ensign; there were also frequent Guards of Honour and an annual military tattoo. From 1987 to 1990 the battalion was stationed at Tidworth where again, Her Majesty the Queen of Denmark visited. Lieutenant Anthony Bolton was the Ensign that day, and he was once again on parade at Guildford. The battalion's final station was Minden in Germany, where it was disbanded. All three Colours made their final appearance with The Queen's Regiment on 29th May 1992.

In years gone by the Colours were the centre of the regiment in battle. The life of the Colours may be different in form now from what it was in those years, but the same in kind. The Colours still accompany the battalion on active service and are still, spiritually, the centre of the battalion. Only that could explain why Guildford Cathedral was filled to capacity on 11th September 1997. That is why every CO but one and every surviving Colonel was there. They came, with old friends of all ranks from Private to Major General, not just to renew old friendships and refight old battles, but also (although some of the more bashful might only have admitted it privately) to give honour to their Regiment. As the Reverend Tom Hiney put it in his address to salute:-

"The emblem of all that is best in our Infantry regiments and the British Army. We salute also those who went into battle and did not come back."

OVID

□ □ □

The Top 10 Rules to Keep You Alive in Combat

1. Never share a foxhole with anyone braver than you are.
2. If the attack is going really well, it's an ambush.
3. Try to look unimportant - the enemy may be low on ammunition.
4. When you have secured an area, don't forget to tell the enemy.
5. In coming fire has the right-of-way.
6. If the enemy is in range space - so are you.
7. In a combat situation, friendly fire - isn't.
8. The enemy diversion you are ignoring is the main attack.
9. When under fire, remember tracers work both ways.
10. Never do anything that draws fire - it irritates everyone around you.

Sent in by Major General Mike Reynolds on advice for American soldiers.

□ □ □



Peter Hill, Toby Taylor and Bill Caffyn resting!

Sobraon Day

1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment, 1938

Sixty years ago on March 7th 1938, the 1st Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment Trooped the Colour on Mosque Square, Omdurman to commemorate Sobraon Day. The location itself was significant in that it was the first time the square had been used for a parade of British troops since Lord Kitchener's Army bivouacked there on the night of the victory at Omdurman in 1898. The parade was watched by 10,000 spectators and the salute was taken by the Governor General of the Sudan, Sir Stewart Symes.

The Officer Commanding the Parade was Lieutenant Colonel G.R.P. Roupell VC, who was later to be the last Colonel of the Regiment. Among the officers forming the four Guards, and thankfully still living are Lieutenant P.G.E. Hill and 2nd Lieutenant B.K. Favelle (Both the Escort for the Colour), Lieutenant A.H. Newton (No 2 Guard), and 2nd Lieutenant E.A.F. Howard (No 3 Guard), others present were Regimental Sergeant Major C. Ricketts, CSM Cowie (later to become a Major and a founder member of Crown Imperial) and the Acting Bandmaster L/Sgt Attewell who later became a Company Sergeant Major and won the Distinguished Conduct Medal. The Drum Major was W. Wernham. The Colour which was trooped is now laid up in the Regimental Chapel at Guildford Cathedral.

The Mace carried by the Drum Major was one of three in the British Army to bear the cypher of King Edward VIII and is on display in the Regimental Museum at Clandon. The Silver Drums carried on the parade were presented at Hong Kong on Ypres Day, 23rd April 1926 in memory of Lieutenant Walker who died at Agra in 1894 while serving with the Battalion. The accompanying silver bugles were presented to the Battalion in India by all ranks serving with the Battalion at Rawalpindi on Ypres Day, 23 April, 1927 as a memorial to their comrades who fell during the Great War. The drums and bugles are now with The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The concluding paragraph of the programme commented that this would be the last occasion on which the Battalion would Troop the Colour as a Rifle Battalion as it was to be converted with twelve other Units, to a Machine Gun Regiment and completely mechanised. The prophecy proved erroneous, however as the proposed change did not take place, a piece of silver is on display in the museum to record this non event! The social aspect of the Sobraon Commemoration was obviously not neglected. The Warrant Officers and Sergeants, by formal invitation card, "*presented their compliments*" to Miss Stone and requested the pleasure of her company at the annual Sobraon Ball to be held in the Blue Nile Cinema on 23rd February, 1938. Dress for both military and civilians was formal. Though far from home, and in "*foreign fields*", the East Surreys obviously still knew how to parade and how to entertain.

1st and 2nd Battalions The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, 1998

The tradition of celebrating Sobraon Day continues in the modern Regiment. All of the battalions of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment now mark the Day, as it is a Regimental occasion, rather than a Battalion Day as it was in the Queen's Regiment.

This year, the 1st Battalion was able to celebrate Sobraon Day in the Musgrave Park Hospital Base in Belfast. As many members of the Battalion as possible lined the route between the Officers' and Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Messes. The Parade was at first light and the dress was combats, due to the operational situation. However, tradition was suitably maintained as Sergeant Dowle, the Sobraon Sergeant for 1998, carried the Regimental Colour, under escort and to the sound of fife and drum, to his Mess. The Regimental Colour joined the pre-positioned Queen's Colour and Colonel's Colour, which stayed in the Mess for the Day. A champagne breakfast (2 glasses only!) followed. Later in the Day there was the traditional dinner in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, where the Commanding Officer and LE officers were invited and the story of the Battle was recounted by Sergeant Dowle.

Whilst the 1st Battalion was in West Belfast, the 2nd Battalion was deployed on exercise in Kenya on Sobraon Day. The celebration was therefore delayed, but the traditions of the Day were maintained on 5 March at Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth. The Day started

with a champagne breakfast in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Again, the route between the Messes was lined by the Battalion and the Sobraon Sergeant for 1998, Sergeant Allison, had the honour of carrying the Regimental Colour to his Mess, where the Queen's Colour was pre-positioned. Dress for the Parade was ceremonial

and the Battalion was able to enjoy an inter-messes football match in the afternoon. A traditional dinner, similar to that held in the 1st Battalion occurred in the evening. It is the tradition in both battalions, that the junior officer recovers the Colours to the Officers' Mess at midnight.



Sgt Dowle 1 PWRR Sobraon Sgt 1998



Sgt Allison, 2 PWRR Sobraon Sgt 1998

Mind the doors

Blue sky, hot sun, barely a ripple on the water, the Denmark bound ferry 'Dana Anglia' whiter than white, and the quay as neat and as tidy as if ready for the Annual Administrative inspection - as I leant over the ship's rail, memories of nearly 50 years ago came flooding back. Difficult though to visualise as the same spot where once cutting winds seemed incessant, rain horizontal, skies overcast, and hawsers, gangplanks, and other marine impedimenta, hazards for the unwary. A depressing and scruffy place, if truth be told.

In those distant days, 'white' ships on North Sea routes let alone elsewhere, were a rarity, and for those moving to and from BAOR, BTA, MEDLOC and onwards, the troop transports 'Vienna' and 'Empire Parkeston' did the nightly crossing Harwich-Hook and vice-versa. Predominantly greyish and rust streaked or so they seemed in the glare of floodlights; small by today's standards, anything but stabilised, and reeking of 'hot engine' and other less savoury smells wafting from below. But yes, this was the same Parkeston Quay so many will remember - it's lines of waiting troops, shouted orders, kitbags, document checks, 'tin godowns', and probably above all, the whining wind as it rattled the corrugated iron sliding doors. Now all gone and seeming like the dark ages, but then just routine, and recalled with nostalgia.

Other than the sea-state, almost always unkind, the circumstances and detail of those long ago crossings are mostly beyond recall, but when I read in the November Newsletter, 'Bringing home the Colours - 1947', and mention of the Parade on Berlin's Olympische Platz, a minor but character-forming episode came vividly back to mind. The Glorious 1st June 1948..... I was among those celebrating at HMS *Excellent*, including HRH Prince Philip on a course there, when enjoying the sea breeze, possibly recovering from the night before, and quite off-guard, I was bearded by a senior officer of the Regiment; Brigadier A P Block, CB, CBE, DSO, comes to mind, and asked if I *would like* to take the 1st Battalion Colours (the 'new' ones) out to the 2nd Battalion about to become the 1st, in BAOR. An 'invitation', let alone an honour, a subaltern wouldn't lightly decline! My mention of training commitments at Shorncliffe, and the need for clearance with my Company Commander were quickly settled; he just happened to be Major Peter Kealy, of fond memory, and so the enterprise was 'on'.

A week or so later I was reporting to Major Jack Denton at Stoughton, left in no doubt of my responsibilities, and a Movement Order issued. The following morning under Mr Larcombe's close scrutiny and with his expert assistance, I lifted The King's and Regimental Colours from their respective wall brackets in the Officers' Mess, and with the greatest care rolled them, put them in their special black boxes, and screwed down the lids. Mid-afternoon, a Draft of 20 or so newly trained soldiers, fortunately with two excellent NCOs, paraded in full kit, were inspected, nominal roll checked, handed over to me, and briefed. I may have laid it on rather thick, but as this was to be my first time in Germany, I was taking no chances, and certainly not with the Colours! Four soldiers were detailed to carry the boxes, and then we were off. Regretfully though, unlike the return of the Old Colours from Singapore, no March Past, no Royal Navy escort, no bands, no spectators, just 3 tonners down to the Station! Reserved carriages, Colours under guard in the luggage van, no problems, and we were at Waterloo on schedule, detrained, and formed up on the 'concourse' all present and correct.

Movement Control were soon in evidence, checking and shepherding. "Where is our transport please?" "Sorry Sir there's no transport available" "But it's arranged" "Very sorry, but there's none available today. You are to go to Liverpool Street by Underground" "By Underground!" Lady

Bracknell had absolutely nothing on my disbelief. "We are escorting the Colours of The Queen's Royal Regiment; you can see there are 20 fully kitted Soldiers, and what's more don't you realise the rush hour's starting?" My exasperation, strongly expressed, was getting nowhere. Reality had to be faced - further argument meant delay. Delay could mean missing the boat-train; no crossing that night, and stuck in London with 20 men to accomodate, let alone the Colours to safeguard. It didn't bear thinking about. We'd have to take our chance. Another briefing - revised route, boarding drills, keep together, security of the Colours - and we were off.

Down in to the depths, brushing aside all 'opposition', heaving and pushing until we were lined up on the platform among a sea of commuters. Inhibition went by the board - orders shouted regardless of commotion; civilians aghast. As the first train clattered in, we held back, but as the doorways cleared, 'Board' was bellowed. I have to admit 'might was right', but we had to be on. No question of half the draft aboard and half shut out - I'd started with 20 and come what may I was finishing with 20!

No sooner had we sorted ourselves, crushed as we were, it was 'all change' at Charing Cross (old nomenclature), or nearly all. 'Mind the doors', and one or two only just made it, perhaps dreaming of where they'd rather be! Marshalled once again in trying circumstances as the stream of regular passengers jostled and squeezed past, we trekked up staircases, and along passages, forcing our way through to join the Circle Line. The same crowds only more so by this time, and an added complication, a choice of trains. More orders above the general hubbub: 'Not this one', 'Not the next', then 'Board now'. Was everyone on? No way of checking over the endless heads, nor of course in adjacent carriages. At least the Colours were there, even if each box displaced standing room for three or so disgruntled passengers! But now another problem one of 'the many' squashed against us had discovered an unmistakable webbing pattern on his suit.

Khaki Green No 3? Whatever, it was more than effective in transferring itself from soldier to civilian! With large packs, small packs, kit bags, and not least the Colours, we were in a phrase, 'anti-social travellers', and unkind remarks were soon bandied about. Fortunately it wasn't easy for those affected to pinpoint the Officer i/c stacked as we were like proverbial sardines, but something quite nasty was building up as passenger after passenger became 'blancoed'. To my great relief, at last Aldgate hove in sight. We were almost out of the wood, and minutes later, propelled on to the platform at Liverpool Street, with everyone accounted for, we'd made it! Were there any repercussions? I never knew. Perhaps Movements Control Staff at Waterloo, had a sleepless night, but I doubt it!

Onwards with the Boat Train. All out at Parkeston Quay. Embarked without incident and the Colours safely locked away in the ship's strong room. 'Rough crossing tonight' or so the Ship's Warrant Officer warned, but after the day's saga, of no consequence whatsoever! Early morning alongside at the Hook, and across to the BAOR train. The Colours safely stowed in the gepackwagen, and our Guards in situ. Rattling along, into Utrecht one way and reversing out the other, then the German Frontier markers slipping by, and a moment later at Bentheim and on to the platform for leg- stretching; the Dutch engine replaced by a German one, seemingly a mass of venting steam pipes, and off again veering round to the South, to complete our circuitous route, and avoiding the still unrestored bomb-damaged lines of the Ruhr.

At Dortmund. Battalion transport was waiting among the cleared rubble outside the Hauptbahnhof. A few minutes drive to the Barracks alongside the Ruhrschnellweg, and then I was reporting to the Adjutant, Captain John Hancocks, and

delivering the Colours safely into his hand. With the Draft fed, watered, and housed, my duty was done. Part of the Battalion was already in Berlin, but the Blockade had started, and the remainder were awaiting 'further instructions'. Among them, many good friends, who for the next few days ensured my feet didn't touch the ground, and that my eventual departure was a distinctly reluctant one. The journey back was of course, almost a holiday - no Draft, no Colours, no hassle. But who would have missed 'carrying' the Colours, even if they were boxed, and, looking now top right in that picture of the Chapel on the back of the Newsletter, what thoughts remain.....

MPY

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Rupert dresses to kill

By now you will know that this column is dedicated to those young officers who are trying to make their mark on the military world. It is to be hoped that some of these little tips will make their passage up the promotion ladder a matter of rapid acceleration. I am still not able to offer a definitive answer as to why it did not happen for me. I suppose some of us are just born instructors and of course it has to be said that there was nobody with the same perception available to offer me those invaluable hints that make promotion a certainty rather than an event that happens once a decade.

This time I would like to make you aware of a nasty trap. Take the latest edition of the journal published by The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (PWRR). Some of the younger readers will understand that there is rumoured to be some connection between that publication and our own quality journal. Older readers will find this difficult to understand. Now, in this PWRR journal, the editor writes a cry from the heart - he feels that nobody loves him. Apparently he wants his readers to write to him and tell him what they think. The man must be a fool. We all know that it is the act of a simpleton to write to the editor of this illustrious and learned journal. Nobody in their right mind would ever think of writing to Les Wilson. To write to him is to lumber yourself with a lifetime commitment to contribute articles for publication. It is to place a millstone of enormous circumference around the region of your epiglottis - you will never, ever, be able to rid yourself of this burden. I should know; I speak from experience. It is only the clamour of you young blades at Sandhurst begging for more tips and hints that keeps my morale high enough to continue with this Herculean task.

But back to the editor of the PWRR journal. Not only does he want people to write to him but he gives us a rare treat by raising the skirts of the Regimental Committee agenda and revealing to us some of the important issues that are taxing the minds of the hierarchy. Now this is where you young gentlemen can get an insight into the sort of things that you should be swatting up on, so that you can make intelligent conversation with any senior officer; should you be so lucky as to come across one. The first item shown is KAPE. Or Keep the Army in the Public Eye. Apparently the Army has an enormous recruiting shortfall and this is designed to put this right. But apparently nobody has had a new idea in the last 20 years apart from a Warrant Officer in The Parachute Regiment. But we are not told about this new idea. Mind you if somebody had amalgamated The Parachute Regiment half a dozen times then changed their name more times than Audie Murphy has been given medals and ended up calling them The Scottish Highland Heavy Dragoons (Lord Magillicuddy's Own); then he too might have a problem. Rather like Coca-Cola suddenly deciding to call themselves PoppyFizz and then wondering why sales have fallen off disastrously. Mind you, no senior officer, to date, has ever shown any hint of understanding this concept.

But of far greater significance are the matters concerned with dress. I will bet that not many of you knew that they were thinking of producing a new striped Boating Jacket. There, I bet that really set you back a pace or two. Sort of hits you straight in the solar plexus. That should certainly keep the army in the public eye. There may be some of you who are new to this column and have not had the benefit of the full course of 'what one should wear on what occasion'. To those, I will explain, a Boating Jacket is sometimes referred to as a Blazer by those who exhibit every indication of not being suitable to get right to the very top.

With the whole Battalion in striped Boating Jackets it should be possible to set up a 'strobe' effect when marching past any saluting dais, provided that there was a liberal changing of tempo from quick to slow time. But, if arms are not carried and both arms are swung by marching troops then a public warning would have to be issued to any epileptics in the thronging crowds, as the effect could be devastating to their equilibrium. Alternatively, Regimental Drill instructors could practice troops to obey the new drill command - "*Battalion will march unsynchronised.*" "*Unsynch!*" This would be akin to breaking step when marching over a suspension bridge. Only in this case it would be ordered on the approach of anyone known to be affected by the strobe effect caused by hundreds of striped arms swinging in unison. I am sure that there would be much interest expressed by the Stewards at Henley for such a marching display during Regatta week. That should be of interest to the KAPE Team, they could even have it classified as a new idea. Maybe next year the Committee could interest itself in some fetching designs for a Regimental Boater.

The other item under dress is that the Regimental Committee is recommending that a striped 'Blue, Yellow, Blue' patch is worn on the arm of combat jackets. This will, of course mean two things. Firstly, the youth of Britain seeing this patch will immediately drop everything and leg it to the nearest Recruiting centre clamouring to join the PWRR. It is a well documented fact, that such a patch of colour can have amazing results on minds that are not even thinking about the army. Secondly, this bright patch will give snipers an excellent aiming mark. Come on now, hands up, who was the bright spark who thought of putting Blue and Yellow patches on camouflaged combat gear. Why not go the whole hog and return to scarlet jackets with white belts and brass buttons. At least that would aid recruiting. Bring back the Home Counties Brigade, with its wonderful Home Counties crown, stuffed and scrolled - all is nearly forgiven. We will pause at this point for a two minute sob break, or as that well known tennis player, the one who has the tantrums, put it "*You can't be serious!.*"

I notice too that the PWRR editor is also miffed that the only response to a call for a Regimental 'City' tie came from an Italian taxi driver. Dear reader you will have to contain your comments - I am not making this up. Get a copy of the PWRR journal and see for yourself Luigi and his friends were apparently upset about the similarity between the proposed tie and their own Taxi Union Members tie. Well, imagine you are a Rome City Centre taxi driver and the fare turns up wearing your union tie. It is not just the fact that he has pinched your design but it is the clash of colours with the Boating Jacket that he is also sporting. By the way, I might be able to tell you that posh chaps wear Boating Jackets, whereas, us mortals just have Blazers, but what the heck is a Regimental 'City' tie and can you get the 'Country' version - perhaps Regimental Wellies. I think that the PWRR editor has touched on a rich vein of ideas and there will be many good solid recruiting ideas that will come out of all this. But you have been warned - do not write to the man. Do not fall for his sad, hard luck stories of loneliness and despondency. Just think what Les Wilson would do if you wrote to him - there, now you are beginning to understand. Put the pen down and extract the chips from the word processor. Do

not fall for these underhand deceitful ploys. If you still feel that only a suitably penned missive will get the leaden feeling off your chest, then send the letter in a plain brown envelope and mark it "Confidential For Rupert's Eyes Only."

Now let us return to our fledgling heroes from Sandhurst and remember the tests and problems that will challenge them. I think they will begin to see that there are many worthwhile opportunities now waiting for them in their future search for advancement. It should be obvious to them from the preceding paragraphs, just how important it is to be on a Committee. Committees have power and what is even better they have collective responsibility. When challenged on any decision, it is simplicity itself to lay the blame on the rest of the Committee. If, surprisingly, anyone should commend a Committee for its output then you can claim to have turned them away from some hideous pitfall on to this path of righteousness and wisdom. It was all down to your individual efforts.

Gentle Cadet, be not downcast at the thought of wandering through the streets, condemned to wearing a Regimental Boating Jacket with a Blue, Yellow, Blue 'Flash' on the right upper arm and a 'City' tie. It will be your version of the Bearskin worn by the Brigade of Guards or the Maroon Beret worn by The Parachute Regiment - it is by these things that men will know you, and laugh. And when people stop and stare and then question the mental competence of those who dressed you thus, you can hold your head up high, look them in the eyes and say "It was the bloody Committee".

Rupert

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Memories of a daughter of the Regiment

Born in Aldershot in 1943 and pushed in my pram along the straight mile to the sound of military bands and marching feet. I was too young to remember this, but I now play the cornet and walk for miles without tiring.

My Gran loved the regiment The Queen's, walls in her home were covered with regimental photographs. "Which one is Grandad" I would ask (he had died in the 30's). She would proudly point him out. There he is sitting straight backed, cross legged, unsmiling, moustache well trimmed. He was a very smart soldier. Gran's brother was killed at Ypres in 1918 and a large picture of him (uncle Charles Lewer) looked down on me as I slept. My Father (Dom) told of caring for this picture as the family travelled in India in the 20's from the plains to the hills and back again by donkey!!! I was told the story of the Residency at Lucknow. How it was besieged for months and finally relieved by a Scottish regiment and of the young girl who heard the bagpipes from a long way off and said "Dinna ye hear them, dinna ye hear them the Campbells are coming" and kept everyones spirits up until the relief came. There was another tale too of Grandad on the NW Frontier and more photographs of him as a POW in Mecklenburg, in The First World War.

My Father (Dom) told his stories in later years of infantry training, long quick marches, of friends lost in action in the 2nd World War, of travels in Egypt. I saw souvenirs and was given a beautiful Egyptian leather handbag but I always wondered, how did he obtain the bead from the skirt of a belly dancer!!

They are all dead now, Grandad who was in the Boer War and the hills in India, Gran with her stories, Dad who trained hard and fought hard and Mum who loved her soldier husband, who endured the partings and reunions on countless railway stations until he finally came home in 1946 to settle down and raise his family with many army traditions. My home is "Headquarters" now with the photographs, the army trunk

containing a Regimental Sergeant Majors red sash, canes, the greatcoat and leather belt worn at the presentation of the Queens Colours and parades in front of Royalty.

Both of my brothers and their families live abroad however when they come home to blighty "dear old blighty" as my Gran used to say, the trunks are opened the memories fly out, the stories are retold and I know that I am a daughter of the regiment. I teach my family respect and loyalty and I soldier on.....

AW

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The Colours - Another Story

The account of 'Bringing back the Colours 1947' in the November Newsletter reminded me of their penultimate journey in 1946 from Peshawar where they had been stored with 1 Queen's silver when the battalion joined 7th Indian Division in 1942. After a year in Bangkok 1 Queen's was destined for a peacetime barracks in Singapore after a short spell in Sungei Patani in North Malaya. I had an escort of two private soldiers and we travelled to Peshawar in Bombay.

The silver was loaded on to a goods wagon, but I felt that I must guard the Colours myself so I had the nine feet long box in my reserved compartment. In Bombay I had to report to Embarkation headquarters and was told that Lt Col X would see me. His unusual name struck a chord. Early in the war there had been frequent demands for our officers to augment the staff and 2/Lt X had left us in Razmak as the CO felt that embarkation would provide a suitable home for this square peg. So I took off my topce as I went into the office and was given the help I wanted.

We travelled in a goods van on the train from Singapore to Sungei Patani with the Colours and silver, as we heard stories of bandits looting trains, and arrived safely.

As Sungei Patani was a tented camp, the crates were stored in the guard room, but I was present when they were opened in Singapore. The long wooden box contained three poles, the Colours had been carefully packed in one of the crates.

ARCM

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Major J L A Fowler TD

*Thank you for your generous help
with the quality materials used
in our Newsletter*

Searching for Skinner

After the Napoleonic wars were over (1815) the prospects of an exciting life for a soldier seemed to be remote. Napoleon's plans for a united Europe under French domination faded away, leaving only garrison duties in India and other outposts of the Empire, available to an ambitious soldier. The 'Pax Britannica' was beginning and Queen Victoria's 'little wars' some years off. On foreign services a soldier was much more likely to die of some horrible disease, or be eaten by tiger in India, than be killed in action by the enemy.

In the 1820's military glory seemed far away. Nevertheless at this unexciting time the 31st Regiment of Foot (later 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment) produced a remarkable soldier, someone who was not only to be a gallant officer, but also an adventurer, scholar, explorer, and successful author. This man was Thomas Skinner, and his writings spread an interesting light on service in India in those days.

I first became interested in Skinner when reading about his exploits in Kabul (1842) and then, only a few years ago, I came across his name engraved on the 31st Regiment's memorial in the Garrison (Afghan) Church in Bombay. The result of my search needs far more space than can be allowed in the Newsletter, so I must be restricted to only a brief summary of his short and eventful life.

Searching for Skinner was not easy. His name crops up now and then in various books, but little about the man himself. He was probably born about 1800. His father was a general and he was educated at Eton. In 1817 he was ensign and luckily his CO who had been best scholar of his day at Westminster, amused his leisure with classical literature, and invited the young Etonian to share his studies, and thus making complete his education, fortunately imbued him with that taste for letters secured to him through life a most agreeable resource.

He is very much a man of his time and writes in that somewhat stilted, 'stiff-upper-lip' style expected of a man of his class and education. References to the ancient classics come easily to him, but he observes closely and in great detail all that he comes across. Native customs, festivals, weddings, and religious ceremonies are minutely observed but recorded in an extravagant, 'over-the-top' flamboyant way which today seems often more amusing than clearly he intended. His style in no way fires the imagination or opens up the wonders of India to the reader. About this time certain authors and romantic poets were beginning to 'loosen-up' and it is a pity that he was too hide-bound to let his real thoughts run free. Occasionally he can produce what is known as 'creative' writing, but he is soon back to his 'flowery' though in some ways down to earth formality. Below is an example to show that he had poetry in him, can 'let his hair down', and become quite lyrical.

'In these regions everything that is imposing and magnificent is united with the objects; while we gaze with wonder on the stupendous crags around, we roam over beds of pale blue violets, and strawberries in blossom thick as daisies meadow...'

Few modern writers could improve on that. It is taken from his 'Excursions in India' in which among other adventures he travelled to the sources of the Ganges and the Jumna. It was published in 1832. Clearly this book was a success because in 1837 he wrote a second book, about his overland journey to join his Regiment in India.

In all there are four volumes, no introductory chapters nor any mention as to who the author is, or why he is writing. Rarely does he mention army life and certainly never about his friends in the 31st. There are no maps which is a great pity, no indexes and no notes on sources, he just seems to have suddenly

decided to write oblivious as to who his readers would be.

In India at this time the country was still mostly being run by the East India Company and they had raised their own small units to protect their property and "factories", as their trading stores were called. There were both European and native units. Continuous small wars necessitated constant increases in the military strength

in the country. In 1754, almost a hundred years before Skinner's time an important change took place, when British regular troops were lent to the Company. One of these units was the 39th Foot, a Kings Regiment, which was sent to Madras. So there were, three distinct types of units, British regulars, on loan, Company raised mixed European / native units, and units of native soldiers (sepoys) usually officered by Europeans who may or may not have been British. These three types of troops continued in India until the Mutiny (1857-58). Two of the Company's units were the Bengal Native Infantry and Skinners Horse, of which more later.

Swarming around at the same time there were numerous independent native armies and regiments, often containing Europeans, many with French officers who had fought at Waterloo for example. By now (1820s) some of these were fighting with us, some against us, and some yet to be dealt with. Skinner mentions one of these in his first book 'Excursions in India'.

...At daylight, as usual, we were on horseback, and had the advantage of rainy ride to Muzeffernugger, which place we reach about seven o'clock. We found here an campment on the Begum Somroo's troops from Serdhana. She was not among them, but was expected in a few days, on an excursion through her province. Their tents were rather carelessly arranged; and their general slovenliness did not speak much in favour of their commander's discipline. He was an Italian by birth, Signor Raggolini, and he had married an adopted daughter of the Begum's; he had been some time in this country, and entered her service very soon after his arrival. He is not a very military looking person, and makes a poor picture by the side of his troops, who are generally fine, stout-looking men; his dress, too, is as opposite as possible to theirs: a sky blue jacket, looped in every direction with silver, decks his yellow little person;

The main body of the 31st (Kings Troops) sailed for India in 1825, but Skinner was not with them which was fortunate for him because they were in the East Indiaman 'Kent' which caught fire in the Bay of Biscay losing some 54 men and several women and children, out of the 484 who had set sail. The Regimental Colours were lost. Survivors were rescued by the 'Cambria' and some months later were re-embarked for Calcutta. We know Skinner was not on the 'Kent' because later in India he says he met one of the survivors.

Skinner had other plans. He was going there overland! What his CO (Lt Col Fearon) thought is not recorded, but in his book



Major Thomas Skinner, 31st Regiment

'Adventures During an Overland Journey to India' (1837), on page 1 without any introduction or preamble he is starting out from Algiers of all places! Straight away he is rescuing a nubian slave boy from a French merchant who had purchased him in a Cairo slave market! His posting order to India, ETA, etc, must have been somewhat vague?

On this outward journey to India he travels from Algiers to Cairo then spends many weeks in Palestine and Syria. The slave trade seems quite normal but clearly he does not approve of it. In Damascus he is surprised to find that some of the cloth in the market is 'made in Manchester'! He wears Eastern dress and usually travels by camel. He spends a long time in Baghdad, also visiting 'Babylon'. All is most informative but occasionally he is in a relaxed frame of mind. Spending the night in an Arab house he writes of his host's wife....

'While I who know enough now of the manners of the East never to venture beyond a furtive glance, stood as if the Veiled Prophet himself had bared his fatal brow.... When her charms were sufficiently secure. I retired to the recess I had occupied on my first arrival, determined to sit there and play at bo-peep with the muffled beauty for the rest of the day. I had ample opportunity of detecting her love of admiration in the little she could display of her glances. She was as accomplished a coquette as ever shot a glance through a veil, and I sat in my corner with the serenity of a bashaw while she placed her little airs before me. Her hands and feet were the prettiest possible, and were most delicately tinged with pink, and luthened with rings and bracelets innumerable. The elaborate grace of her action whenever she moved was evidently for my advantage... her black hair plaited and twined carelessly about her head, and she looked wildly, yet timidly round. I was as still as a mouse; down dropped the curtain, and as pretty a brunette was before me as I ever had the good fortune to gaze upon. she stood like a frightened deer, listening lest any person should approach, and find her in such a predicament... A stranger, and Christian too, had seen her face; and although it would have excited the admiration of an anchorite, the possessor, vain as it was possible to be, felt the deepest shame at the discovery.'

Some of the real Skinner is revealed in this account. Clearly he is keen on religion - all religions as shown in his wanderings in

the Holy Land. He is a confirmed bachelor but quite rightly he has an eye for the ladies, noting their charms whenever possible. He is no racist. Racism never enters his head, all men are equal regardless of their colour or social position. White superiority never occurs to him and maybe these feelings do not appear in India till after the Mutiny. If anything he is more disapproving of other Europeans that he meets than those in the local population. Maybe he is often

baffled and surprised at what he sees, but far too much a gentleman and too well mannered to be critical of some of the strange customs he comes across.

Eventually he sails down the Tigris and Euphrates and reaches Bushire, (Persia). From here he takes a boat to Calcutta, via Bombay. His overland journey to his posting in India is over.

On arrival there is no sign of the 31st in Calcutta but this does not seem to bother him, and he is in no hurry to find out where the Regiment is stationed. This is Agra, but no mention of what his CO (Lt Col Bolton) eventually had to say to him! The last few paragraphs of the book are about his parting from his faithful servant Hassan, who he returns to Egypt via Jedda.

India is now fairly quiet, the Mahratta wars almost settled and a treaty has been made with Nepal. He now writes his 'Excursions in India' (1833). Without maps he is impossible to follow, many places mentioned only being small villages. We know he went to the sources of the Ganges and Jumna in the Himalayas. In Agra there is no mention of the Taj Mahal which is surprising, but he does marvel at the wonderful gardens. He notes that many temples are falling into ruin, and quite correctly blames the Moghul emperor. (The Moghul emperors retain nominal power until the Mutiny. Lord Curzon eventually effected the necessary restoration and repairs to these wonderful buildings).

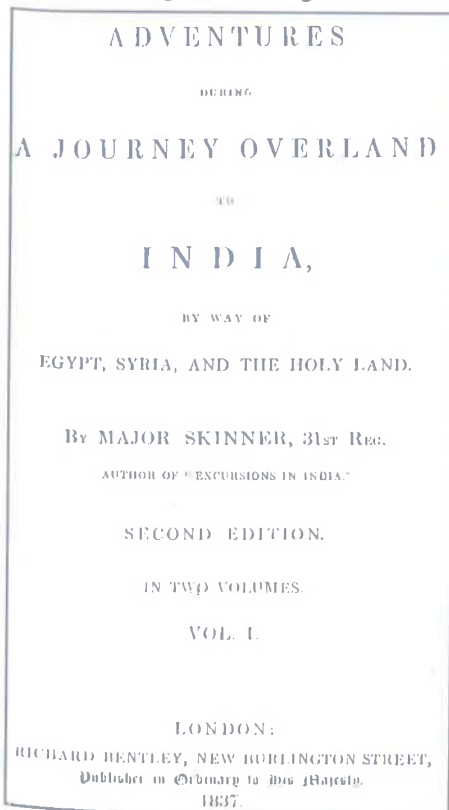
In the foothills of the Himalayas he sees the destruction caused by various Ghurka forays and how they frightened the people (He calls them Ghorkas), and when he comes across some of them serving with the Company he admires their military bearing and notes their 'strange swords'.

As mentioned earlier one of the Company's own regiments is called 'Skinner's Horse', but this is a red herring as far as our search for Skinner is concerned. Naturally Skinner himself wonders if he and the Colonel in charge are related in any way, but as can be seen he is far more interested in his military bearing rather than the colour of his skin which is only a minor surprise. He writes :

'The Commander-in-Chief, with his splendid array, on his way from Delhi into Rohilcund, I believe, passed through Meerut, and remained in it a short time: the days were all activity in consequence, and the nights all festivity. He was accompanied by Colonel Skinner and a large body of horse, and a greater tribe was collected at Meerut than I think ever could have appeared there before, merely for the purpose of pleasure. Skinner's horse is a remarkably fine body of men, and they added considerably to the pageantry of the scene. Their commander bears the character of a noble fellow, and has all the air of a brave man and good leader. He is remarkably handsome, although very black, and I regretted not being able to see more of one that does so much honour to the name we both bear. I should imagine, from the appearance, that he is two or three generations at least from his English ancestor if, indeed, he be derived from such a source. He has several sons, and one of them is adjutant of his father's corps'.

Our Skinner considers Colonel Skinner a noble fellow and good leader that he is halfcaste of no importance! He meets many missionaries wandering about, and being a religious type is interested in what they are attempting to achieve in that vast sub-continent, but he himself never suggests that Indians should be converted to Christianity. He witnesses some strange religious practices but never with any adverse comment. White officers in Indian units had strange problems to deal with .

'I was astonished the other day by a very handsome pioneer sepoy, who approached his officer in the most soldier-like style, and touching his cap, begged his permission to cut his wife's nose off. His respectful manner, joined to the singular



request made it almost impossible to attend to him gravely, however serious the application seemed to be. He did not appear to be very anxious to perform the operation, it was a sacrifice, I conceive, to his honour. His wife had been faithless with a man of low caste, a Chumar, as he scornfully confessed, for this gave him a deeper pang than the fact of the dame's frailty and he could not suffer her to carry the charms that caused his dishonour, uninjured, to draw him into fresh calamity... We accompanied him to his tent to endeavour to reconcile the parties, and save the nose of the offending wife. She was an extremely pretty woman, and seemed to be dismayed at our approach.. she had been weeping, and was now sitting in a disconsolate position, in a corner of the room....'

Once he is mistaken for a travelling parson and the conversation turns to marriage. The fact that some wives for British soldiers are selected in a 'beauty contest' is not commented on other than it usually all turns out satisfactorily:-

'On my ascent from Rajpore, I was overtaken by a fine young man, a European sergeant, superintending the roads, who "presuming", as he said, "that I was a reverend gentleman" had to beg my aid to joining his to the hand of some sable, or to speak more poetically, some nut-brown maid, whose charms had enlivened these bleak retreats, and whose heart "for stony limits cannot keep love out" had yielded even among the cold, flinty rocks of Landour. I must take this matter as a compliment to myself, although the church could scarcely have approved of such a son, a broad brimmed straw-hat with a pair of moustachios should not have suggested such an application to the sergeant.

Half-caste women are frequently chosen by the British soldiers for their wives, and I believe they make extremely good ones. In habits and morals, I am sorry to say, they are far before our own countrywomen of the same class in the East, and the domestic comfort of the two families are not to be compared. Soldiers are sometimes allowed to select them from the Government schools in Calcutta, without, I have understood, any previous acquaintance. The blushing maids are drawn out in a favourable light, and formed into a "line of beauty", when the Coelebs are introduced; and the tantalising position, I dare say, they find themselves in: they are not long, however, in fixing upon their mates, and the marriages turn out generally very well'.

His two books were finished just before the outbreak of the 1st Afghan war, but he did not add to his output as he had only a few more years to live.

The 1st Afghan war (1839-42) was quite unnecessary. Peace in Europe at this time had enabled the Russians to cast their eyes eastwards, rather than westwards and soon they were slowly advancing into Asia. Visions of Russian armies descending on the plains of India began to haunt nervous minds. These fears were fantastic, the Russian armies being many hundreds of miles away, and the Afghans well able to look after themselves. Never was an enterprise launched on such a flimsy foundation or with so little excuse. Fifty years later the Russian occupation of Central Asia did become a problem, or a excuse for a problem known as the 'great game', to be played out beyond the Himalayas, and of course by Kipling's 'Kim'.

An army was dispatched to Afghanistan to forestall a possible Russian invasion.

Unfortunately for the Sikhs, their country, the Punjab, stood in the way of the British advance, and their hostility necessitated the advance on Kabul having to go a long way south via Quetta and the Bolan Pass. The British did not forget this act of defiance by the Sikhs who were to pay dearly for their lack of cooperation later in the Sutlej campaign (1846) - the Battle of

Sobraon, Sjt McCabe, all part of the East Surrey's history, when their 'empire' was taken from them.

The war was a complete disaster, the greatest military defeat in the east until Malaya in 1942. In the retreat the whole army was destroyed (except for one officer). The camp followers including the British women and children were killed or died of ill treatment. In those days all this was quite unacceptable and severe revenge became a priority. An 'Avenging Army' was soon ready and sent to release any remaining prisoners and to punish the Afghans once and for all so that never again would they cause any trouble. This time the army advanced by direct route through the Khaibur Pass, the Sikhs this time reluctantly allowing it to cross the Punjab. As already mentioned the Sikhs had earlier prevented the army using their territory, but this time they were more co-operative. One of their military leaders was a General Avitabile, an Italian who had fought for Napoleon. He was handsomely rewarded by Runjeet Singh, sovereign of the Punjab and was put in charge of his army. The Italian general 'hospitably entertained' the British officers and no doubt made the crossing of the Punjab much easier, but as I have said even this helpfulness did not prevent the complete destruction of the Sikh empire in 1846.

The 31st were part of this "Avenging Army". At the time Major Skinner was in charge of a Convalescent Depot at Landour as a reward for his outstanding ability. Hearing that his regiment was to go into action he gives up his 'lucrative and pleasant' post and hurriedly rejoins. During the advance he is always leading from the front particularly at the battle of Mazeena where he drove the enemy from their 'sungas'. Just before the fall of Kabul (at Tazeem) he was again in the thick of it, defeating Akbar Khan. "The enemy acknowledged to have lost 53 chiefs and persons of consequence, and 700 men". British sepoy casualties were 185. Once Kabul was taken revenge was quick and ruthless to ensure there would be no more trouble. The Great Bazaar was blown up as punishment, and the Colours of the 31st flown from the highest fortifications of the Bla Hissar (Upper Fort), before they were also destroyed by Major Skinner and his men. The Great Bazaar (Chahar Chuttah) "was where the remains of the British envoy had been exposed to public insult by the infuriated Afghans".

On the way to Kabul Major Skinner had become very sick, as had a large part of the army.

'From the fatigue and exposure in the action at Mazeena on the 25th of July 1842, Major Skinner was seized with the fever of that country, living to avoid the heat and dust, in a hole dug in the ground, the air being pestilent and the water corrupt, from the mortality of animals. His life was, however, spared for the service of his country. Though still suffering from the malignant disease, which rest might then have cured, he commenced his labours, being removed from the sick list on the very day the march back commenced'.

The withdrawal to India to Ferozepore was uneventful except for continuous sickness in the army. He never recovered his health.

"On the 23rd of December 1842, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army, and was three days afterwards made a Companion of the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath, and was presented by the government of India of with the silver medal of Cabool, beating on one side "Cabool 1842" and on the other "Victoria Vindex"...

... Unfortunately, Lieutenant-Colonel Skinner did not live long to enjoy the rewards of his useful services, for his decease occurred on the 5th of May 1843, at Mussoorie, in the Himalaya Mountains, from disease brought on by privation

and fatigue during the Afghan campaign.

Lieutenant Colonel Skinner was buried the next morning at Landour with military honours. The body was attended to the grave by the European civil and military, in the place, and by a very large proportion of the native population, to whom he had been previously known as Commandant, and by whom he was greatly loved and deeply lamented. His brother officers erected over his remains a tomb of Delhi stone, and his death was announced to the regiment by Colonel Bolton in a regimental order which did full justice to his merits "as a good and gallant officer.. He was devotedly attached to his profession, and that he was the warm advocate and steady friend of the well deserving soldier....."

Had he lived surely he would have stood, only three years later, on the ramparts at the Battle of Sobraon with Lieutenant Noel and Sjt McCabe. But that was not to be.

The 31st (Sutlej) Memorial is in Canterbury Cathedral.

RCT

Sources

1. 'Excursions in India' - Skinner 1832.
2. 'Adventures During a Journey Overland to India' - Skinner 1837
3. 'Historical Records of the 31st Foot' - R Cannon - 1850
4. 'History of The East Surrey Regt. Vol I - H W Pearce 1916.

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Queen's (Southwark) Old Comrades Association 1/7th Queen's.

The annual reunion lunch was held as usual as close as possible to 6th of March known as Medenine Day, of very special importance to 1/7th Queen's.

The guests which included an Alderman and representatives of Sint Niklaas Belgium, members of 1/6th Queen's, Royal British Legion and a number of wives, were welcomed by the President Major Stuart Playfoot MC.

He thanked them kindly for the generosity and assistance that they had given to the Old Comrades. Alderman Johan de-Crypher responded on behalf of the guests. He had earlier laid a wreath at the Regimental Memorial.

The guest of honour was Major John Tamplin MBE TD who was warmly congratulated on the honour that he had received in the New Years Honours. As he is well known as a military historian he related a number of facts about the Battalion from its formation to its amalgamation and concluded by proposing the toast of "The Regiment". The loyal toasts to HM Queen Elizabeth II and HM King Albert of the Belgians completed an enjoyable occasion.

SP

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Water Bottles

Water runs downhill. That's quite obvious when up in the hills. No matter how much descends from the heavens, the portion that avoids soaking one to the skin, heads for the valley. Simple logic also reveals that soldiers, up in the hills, need water brought up to them. This, despite the fact that vast quantities of it are going down, passing the weary carrying parties bringing it up.

Soldiers in carrying parties get killed, or wounded, dropping their cans of water. Other soldiers just drop them for all sorts of reasons. Shells, or mortar bombs, blow cans up into the air. When they come down they're full of holes. Consequently, the troops in the forward positions go short of drinking water,

despite the fact that it's descending on them. Small quantities salvaged from puddles, or clothing, taste of high explosives, or an old gas cape. This situation led to my Section Corporal handing me seven water bottles, and telling me to climb down from Monte Damiano to the valley below, and return with some drinking water. This was in January, 1944.

Climbing out of my stone built sangar, I slithered, and stumbled down the rocky hillside. There was little danger of being seen by Jerry as misty drizzle clouded the mountains. It also made the track slippery. My frozen feet several times lost control of my studded ammo boots. I lost control of me, and the bottles, losing height with great rapidity, loss of temper, and increasing use of expressive language. Gathering up my mud stained self, and accoutrements, I stumbled on. Eventually I arrived at a sheltered spot on the valley floor, where the Quartermaster had set up a base. A Corporal told me of a well near a farmhouse, about four hundred yards away.

As I moved towards the farm, the clouds lifted. I could see the upper ridges of the hills. Anyone up there could see me, and I quickly sought shelter behind the farm wall. Crouching, I moved towards the well. There were three khaki clad bodies slumped on the ground. The only hope of water was in the farmhouse. Keeping out of sight, I entered the damaged building. There was no sign of taps, a well, or any water. As I went to leave, I heard heavy breathing. I froze. Scared stiff, I unslung my rifle, and eased the safety catch forward. To use the weapon I would have to show myself, and I had no intention of doing that. I decided to use a Mills Bomb. Like all front line infantrymen, I carried two. There were no instructions as to how they should be carried. I had mine clipped behind my ammo pouches with the lever behind my belt. Quietly putting down my rifle, and the water bottles, I unshipped a grenade, and pulled the pin out. I listened again. The breathing continued. There was definitely someone there, and they must have heard me. "*Hande Hoch*" I called. Nothing "*Come out*". Still no reply. As I went to toss the grenade into the room, I heard snuffling, and snorting, and a large pig poked his head out. I was so surprised, I dropped the pin. Trampling about, looking for it, still clutching the live grenade, I must have stood on it. Crouching down, watched by the pig, I scabbled about the muddy floor. Total relief as I found it, half buried in the mud.

Can you imagine holding a live grenade in one hand while attempting to clean and straighten the muddy pin with the other? All the time watched intently by a curious pig. At last the pin slid in, and the grenade was friendly once more. Well, at least not dangerous. I was in a muck sweat. I made my rifle safe, and picked up the water bottles. Cautiously, under cover, I made my way back to the foot of the track.

"No movement until after dark" called the Q.M. "*You can go back up with the carrying party*" I told him about the bodies by the well. He nodded "*There's a sniper up there somewhere. He's been covering the well. We'll try and get them in tonight. No point in taking chances. They won't go away.*" I didn't tell him about the pig! I got some bread, and bully beef from one of the cooks, and dozed in a corner. It was dark when someone kicked my boots. "*On your feet, son. Collect a can, and join the carrying party*" It had started to rain again. The can wasn't heavy, just awkward. The water bottles bumped about, and kept slipping. In the rain and darkness, I climbed the rocky, muddy track. Flares occasionally lit up the scene, as we cursed and struggled our way upwards. Nearly exhausted I eventually handed over the can, and the empty water bottles to the Corporal. "*Where the hell have you bin all day*" he grunted. I eventually got a pint of water. It didn't taste of explosives, or an old gas cape, or a rusty bully beef tin. It tasted of petrol!

DD

So there we were

1668 The Queen's were at Tangier where work was being carried out on the move though there were complaints and uncertainty about its progress. The Earl of Sandwich, with the help of Mr Shere, surveyed the work and submitted a report which showed among other things that it had been carried out to a length of 380 yards.

1688 The Queen's were at Salisbury where the troops of King James were assembled to meet the threat of the invading armies of the Prince of Orange who was advancing from the direction of Exeter.

1708 The Queen's were fighting in the war in Spain which resulted in activities at home to raise recruits and to forward supplies. Thirteen wagons of clothing were forwarded from London to Portsmouth for onward shipment to Spain. The cost of the wagon transport was £26. Also involved in the Spanish War, Churchill's Marines (forerunners of The East Surrey Regiment) were part of the combined force which landed and captured Cagliari the capital of Sardinia.

1728 The 31st Regiment seem to have been in Ireland although their history for this period has been lost. Lord John Kerr, commanding the Regiment, died on August 1st and was succeeded by Colonel the Honourable Charles Cathcart.

In Bristol The Queen's do not seem to have been very popular. The officers complained of the conduct of the civil magistrates, alleging that they were obstructing recruiting. There were several desertions and one deserter, Richard Bent, having been found guilty by court martial at Salisbury, was sentenced to death and shot.

1748 Riots in Bermuda were keeping the Queen's busy in August but thankfully their handling of situations restored order without bloodshed. Possibly fearing a more violent resumption of such activities, a medicine chest costing £50.3s.9d was ordered for the independent company at Bermuda and was shipped on board the *Diana* lying in the Thames.

The 31st Regiment withdrawn to England from Flanders with other Regiments, was retained near London for the defence of the capital following the alarms occasioned by the Highland rising under Prince Charles.

1768 The 70th Regiment were in the West Indies where the matter of their uniforms was exercising the minds of the authorities as by Royal Warrant the facings were changed from grey to black.

The Queen's were at Gibraltar where again uniform was a matter of importance. Foot soldiers were to have "a good cloth coat, well lined looped with worsted lace....." and *patterns of the lace were to be left at the Comptroller's office "in order that it might be shown to His Majesty"*.

1788 A generally unhappy state of affairs seems to have existed at Gibraltar where the Queen's were stationed with other Regiments. There were disputes with authorities over matters of leave, pay and wrongful mustering of children, other than drummer boys, on to Regimental strengths. The 31st were on stations following service in North America.

1808 Napoleon was causing fear and disruption throughout Europe. Denmark was drawn into the international quarrels and a state of war arose with Great Britain.

An expedition of 2500 men, including a portion of the 70th Regiment, was sent against the Danish West Indian islands of St Thomas and St John, both of which surrendered without a fight.

The Queen's left Guernsey for England on 25th May in the transports *Rialto*, *Charlotte*, *Nelson*, *Smallbridge*, *Grace* and *Catherine*. After disembarking at Harwich they marched to Ipswich. Later they re-embarked at Harwich, destined for foreign service in Portugal.

1828 The Queen's were in India where their commanding officer became ill and subsequently died while en route to England. Temporary command passed to Lieutenant Colonel T Willshire.

The 31st were also in India at Meerut and as establishments were in process of being reduced no recruits were required for a considerable time.

1848 On Irish service, the Queen's were inspected by Queen Victoria on 9th August and on the 27th they were again inspected by Major General HRH Prince George of Cambridge. Earlier in the year, on 19th May, Prince George had presented new Colours to the 31st Regiment, also in Dublin.

1868 The 31st were in England, serving both at Aldershot and in the Northern District in the early part of the year but in October they embarked at Liverpool for service in Ireland. Landing at Cork, they established Headquarters at Kinsale. A reversal of the procedure was carried out by the Queen's who left Ireland in July for Aldershot.

1888 The Queen's left Burma for Calcutta in HMS *Clive*. General Lockhart expressed his regret at losing the Queen's from his Burma command.

The East Surreys were at Allamad, a station, they occupied for three years between 1886 and 1889.

1908 The Queen's were in India and in Aden. Army reorganisation was taking place under the Haldane schemes. The East Surreys in India were reported to be in good health.

1918 The end of the first world war saw a gradual return to peace-time routines.

1928 In India the East Surreys were at the hill station of Gharial in the Murree Hills. In October they made a five day march with mule and camel transport to Jhelum for Northern Command manoeuvres.

Under a summer sun reputed to be the hottest for forty years, the Queen's were in Hong Kong where training and sports were carried out. Not surprisingly, sailing and rowing flourished.

1948 The last parade of the 2nd Battalion the Queen's took place in Berlin. There was a continuous drone of aircraft overhead, flying in supplies to defeat the blockade of West Berlin by the Russians. Also under reforms and reductions, the two battalions of The East Surrey Regiment were amalgamated while on service in Greece. The process of amalgamations had definitely come to the Army - and it had come to stay.

RF

Address Details

Please check your name, initials and address details including the POSTCODE on the envelope in which your Newsletter was sent. If incorrect please notify The Hon Secretary - TODAY!

CSM Reid at Hill 60

As our readers know Hill 60 is a memorable Battle Honour in the history of The East Surrey Regiment. Three members of the 1st Battalion were awarded the Victoria Cross, Lts Roupell and Geary and Pte Dwyer for their conspicuous bravery at this battle. The history of the Surreys relate several other awards for that terrible battle. The Military Cross to Lts Darwell and Clarke and the Distinguished Conduct Medal to CSM A J Reid, Sgts Griggs, Packhard, Cpl Harding, L/Cpl Martin and Pte's Hotz and Grimwood. Other members of the battalion were Mentioned in Despatches.

The Association has recently purchased for our museum at Clandon, the original water colour painted by Margaret Dovaston in 1915, depicting CSM Reid bringing up reserves to the front line under heavy fire. Margaret Dovaston was a well known artist of the period, and she was specially commissioned to paint many water colours of battles of The First World War. Many of her original paintings were used to illustrate "Deeds that Thrill the Empire" - published by the Standard Art Book Company during the war - their popular format was to illustrate the many thousands of deeds of heroism recognised by the award of medals, together with a complete description of the act of valour.

With the painting of CSM Reid at 'Hill 60', the artist has cleverly captured the feeling of the long line of grim men led by CSM Reid, ascending the crater strewn ground at night with shells bursting all round them. The citation for Company Sergeant Major A J Reid in the London Gazette records:-

"For conspicuous gallantry and valuable service at 'Hill 60' on 20th April 1915, when he went out of his trench across the open and brought up ammunition and reinforcements on three occasions. Company Sergeant Major Reid was constantly swept by very severe machine gun and shell fire."



Memories of a Queen

In the American borough of Queen's, opposite the UN's New York Headquarters, plans to erect a huge bronze statue honouring Charles II's Queen, Catherine of Braganza, have fallen victim to political correctness that has led to the \$2.4 million (£1.4 million) scheme being put on hold according to a report in the Daily Telegraph. Black Americans, backed by some academics and church leaders, embarked on a campaign to stop the erection of the 50ft monument because they say both the King and Queen's families supported the African slave trade more than three hundred years ago.

Catherine, from whom The Queen's Royal Regiment took their title, is remembered by The Friends of Catherine, a charitable organisation which promotes her links with the borough. It seems that as well as friends there are now "enemies within".

RF

Journey's end

Journey's end. The First World War play written by former East Surrey officer R C Sheriff and produced at the King's Head Theatre, Islington in January and February, received an excellent review in the Daily Telegraph by critic Charles Spencer.

Describing the scenes where British soldiers in the trenches are waiting for a major German attack, he says that the public school ethos among officers is manifest and dominant, while focus is also put on the men in their dug-outs. Courage, stoicism, nerves and the various traits of human character are all apparently accurately portrayed and it is pleasing to know that this play, written by a regimental officer from personal war-time experience, can still command attention and draw audiences.

RF

Surrey Villagers At War.

Eighty three years ago in May 1915, the Editor of the Committee of Management in the village of Bookham, Surrey published his second edition of the Memorial Hall Gazette. This interesting booklet, its full title, "*The Memorial Hall Gazette of Bookham Men with His Majesty's Forces, May 1915*" has recently come into the Editor's possession. It summarises the activities of all local men then serving in various branches of the Armed Forces. Commencing with the Royal Navy it mentions fifteen personages ranging from Flag Captain the Hon. D'arcy Lambton, "*of whom no further intelligence has been obtainable*" to Stoker Thomas Stratton who "*is in the Dardanelles and was well when last heard of*" and Stoker Douglas Edser of whom "*there is no fresh news*".

Under the varying titles of West Surreys, Royal West Surreys and West Surreys (Queen's) our twenty six members of whom fifteen are in training or on Home Service, two are in France, two are prisoners of war, one is in hospital and six are either missing or with no information available.



Photo taken at Gustrow, Mecklenburg Germany 20th June 1915, Sgt Domoney is standing extreme left rear. Also in the picture are three members of The London Scottish, L/Cpl Fargherson, Pte's Johnson and Anderson, four Frenchmen, Sgt Durand, Donnes, Frehard and Milleguy and some members of Russian Infantry.

A prisoner of war, Sergeant Albert John Dent Domoney, is reported as being at Mecklenburg and "*quiet well and receiving the parcels of food and money sent out to him*". Private Oliver Jurd, at Colchester, "*has had an attack of influenza but has now recovered*". Lance Corporal E W Lewer, at Caen Hill Hospital, Weybridge "*is gradually recovering from his severe wounds sustained on October 28th and is now able to walk about*". Private Alfred Smith (obviously a determined and enthusiastic individual) "*After having been rejected three times on account of his height, has now been enlisted in the Queen's —*". Of Sergeant Major Arthur Stemp, "*nothing has been heard of this soldier who has been missing since October 31st*". Lance Corporal John Whiten is

The Memorial Hall Gazette

Of Bookham Men with
His Majesty's Forces. .

MAY, 1915.

similarly reported as missing since October 31st, while Private Wyber is reported as being a prisoner in Germany.

The Territorial Army are not forgotten. Twenty two members are shown as serving in the 5th East Surrey Regiment. Apart from Second Lieutenant Clement H. Crutwell, stationed at Windsor, the remainder are in India and stationed at Cawnpore where some "*are feeling the excessive heat very much*", and also "*seem to find it difficult to make ends meet on account of the costs of provisions*".

An interesting excursion described in a letter home is a trip to Benares, "*a most wonderful city, situated on the River Ganges, where there are over 3,000 temples, some of them with domes of solid gold*".

At the time of the booklet's publication (May 1915) the war seems to have dealt kindly with Bookham, only one man Sergeant Thomas Reid, having been recorded as killed, although two, Stemp and Whiten, were missing. But such benevolence was not to last.

The present day War Memorial, in the village churchyard, shows a total of forty-six men lost in the conflict. Among them are the names of Edser, Penfold, Thomsett (spelt Tomsett), Stemp and Earl, all of whom are mentioned in the 1915 booklet.

The succeeding years obviously took their toll. Despite the ravages of war the people of Bookham and district must have been a patriotic crowd. A nearby pub in the adjoining village of Effingham is named Sir Douglas Haig.

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Archives and photos

The Regimental Museum holds a very large collection of photographs, dating from 1850, relating to all the Battalions of The Queen's Royal Regiment, The East Surrey Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, contained in albums. In addition there are a number of mounted photographs. However there are some gaps, especially during WWII and in the post-war period. If anyone has photographs he does not wish to retain they will be most welcome as additions to the Museum's collection. It helps if individuals in photographs can be named.

The Museum is also fortunate in having a large number of original documents, reports and reminiscences of events and individuals which are contained in boxes relating to the various Battalions. These are all indexed.

Although no Battalion of The Queen's or The Surreys took part in the Korean War, fairly large detachments from both Regiments did, and photographs and reminiscences of that War would be an excellent addition to the Museum's collection.

Please note that all the records, photographs and official histories are available for inspection and research at the Museum.

Our man in the archives



Lt Col Anson Squire checking details prior to filing. Colonel Squire has spent many hours collating and sorting valuable photo's and documents.

LW

1900-1914 The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment. and The East Surrey Regiment

The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment)

The 1st Battalion, Queen's left India in 1909 and stopped off at Aden before returning home where they remained until the outbreak of WWI.

The 2nd Battalion, returned home from South Africa in 1904 and left again for Gibraltar and thence, in 1912, to the West Indies. In January 1914, the Battalion returned to South Africa before returning home in August at the outbreak of war.

Whilst in India the 1st Battalion had seen active service on the North West Frontier and had endured considerable discomfort in the actions at Nawagai and Tirah. After the campaign was successfully concluded the Battalion was reviewed at Rawalpindi by the commander of the Khyber Force. He told them they were the "*smartest and best Regiment*" he knew.

After 4 years at Rawalpindi the Battalion moved to Peshawar and then to Sialkote in 1904. There, in 1905, they won the Kitchener Cup for Infantry Efficiency. The conditions for the competition were so exacting that it was never repeated. Lord Kitchener presented statuettes of an Officer and Warrant Officer to the respective messes to commemorate the short lived competition. The cup and statuettes are now with The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

Later in 1905 the Battalion took part in manoeuvres before the Prince of Wales (later George V) and provided the Guard of Honour at the camp of the C-in-C during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. After the manoeuvres and review the Battalion entrained for Sialkote where they remained until 1907 when they left for Agra less a detachment of two companies earlier sent to Delhi. During the summer of 1908 three companies were sent to Kailana. The Battalion came under orders to leave India for Aden in the summer of 1908 leaving two companies at Deolali. By 1910 the two detached companies had rejoined the Battalion and they arrived in England in February. Earlier, at Gibraltar, the 1st and 2nd Battalions met for the first time since 1894 and one officer and 206 other ranks transferred to the 2nd Battalion.

For the next few years the Battalion served at home. They attended the funeral of Edward VII and the Coronation of George V. In 1913 the Battalion were taken to Guildford to take part in the ceremony unveiling the commemorative window in Holy Trinity church dedicated to the Regiment on the 250th anniversary of its formation. On 4 August, 1914 war was declared and the Battalion left for France.

The 2nd Battalion, meanwhile, had remained in South Africa, where it remained under canvas for two years before returning to England in June 1904. The Battalion took station at Shorncliffe. One of their first duties, in October, 1904, was to attend the unveiling of the war memorials at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford and a grand reception and presentation of a silver cup for the Officers' Mess. The Battalion was joined by Reservists of the Regular and Militia Battalions, and by those Volunteers who had served with the Queen's in South Africa, the whole marching through a High Street bedecked with flags and bunting and lined with cheering crowds. In 1910 the Battalion left England for Gibraltar and in 1912 they sailed to Bermuda in the West Indies. By January 1914 they were once again in South Africa. On the outbreak of war they returned to England and by the 19th September, they had joined the 7th Division in Belgium during the first week of October. They remained with the 7th Division throughout the war.

Lieutenant W Wright, VC, Queen's

Lieutenant Wallace Wright was attached to the Northern Nigeria Regiment in 1903. He was far away from either the 1st or 2nd Battalions when he, together with another officer and 44 men, repelled repeated attacks by 1000 horsemen and 2000 foot. After two hours of continuous action the enemy withdrew in full retreat. The Citation was gazetted on 11 September, 1903.

□ □ □

The East Surrey Regiment

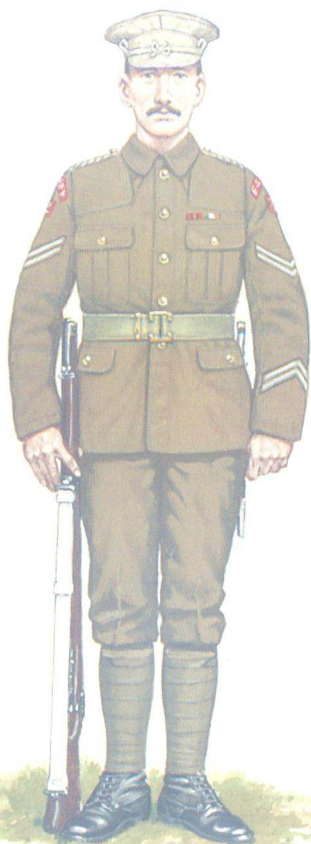
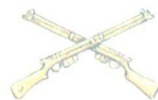
The 1st Battalion had remained in India for 19 years. During this time they had not shared in any campaign but had maintained a very high standard of efficiency. Many officers and men had volunteered for service in minor campaigns on the North West Frontier. A draft of officers, NCO's and men joined the 2nd Battalion on active service in South Africa. When the Battalion returned to England in 1903 they proceeded to Salamanca Barracks, Aldershot. In July the old Colours of the 31st Foot/1st (Bn The East Surrey Regiment) were laid up in the Parish Church at Kingston. In 1905 the Battalion left Aldershot for Jersey where it remained until 1908. It moved to Plymouth and remained there until August, 1909. After periods of Brigade training on Salisbury Plain and Divisional training at Charlton and manoeuvres near Swindon the Battalion returned to Plymouth.

By the end of September, 1910, after many periods of training, the Battalion left Plymouth for Ireland. The right half-Battalion disembarked at Queenstown and the left half-Battalion at Cork for entraining to Kinsale. In December, 1910 a draft of four NCO's and 151 men was furnished for the 2nd Battalion in Burma. In 1911 a detachment of three officers and fifty NCO's and men represented the Regiment at the Coronation of King George V. They were encamped in Regents Park for the duration of their stay in London. During the summer of 1911 108 recruits joined the Battalion. During the 1911-12 winter a draft of 99 NCO's and men were sent to the 2nd Battalion and another 94 recruits arrived in the Battalion. The Battalion remained in Ireland until the outbreak of war.

The 2nd Battalion arrived at Bombay in January, 1908 and reached Lucknow on 1 February, relieving the 1st Battalion. A large number of NCO's and men, with a few officers, had been left at Lucknow by the departing 1st Battalion and these soldiers, well versed in the rigours of service in India proved a valuable asset. The Battalion remained at Lucknow for only two years before being moved to Sitapur in 1905 where they arrived on 12 January. In February four companies marched to the hill station at Ranikhet where they remained until October. In November of the same year the Battalion moved to Mhow.

Most of the time since their arrival in India the Battalion had been engaged in continuous field training and exercise. This resulted in a high state of efficiency. 1909 saw further exercises and in February saw the Battalion taking part in 5th Divisional manoeuvres. The remainder of the year was uneventful. In September 1910 the Battalion took the train to Bombay and on the 13th embarked for Rangoon. Thence by river, in the monsoon season, to Thyetmyo with detachments at Mandalay and Meiktila. The journey was taken in great discomfort because of the incessant rain.





In February, 1911 a change of station took the HQ and two companies to Shwebo. One company was left at Thyetmyo and a further two companies were moved to Bhamo. The Battalion was then widely dispersed into four separate detachments. In 1912 and 1913 the Bhamo detachment was removed to Shwemo during the hot and monsoon seasons. In February, 1913 the detachments were reduced and six hundred of the Battalion moved to Myothit for manoeuvres on the Yunnanese frontier.

By Christmas, 1913 the Burmese service was completed and the Battalion concentrated from its deployed stations for passage to Chaubattia and Bareilly. By January, 1914 all detachments were at Rangoon where, on the 4th the Battalion embarked for Eastern Bengal. They disembarked at Chittagong on the 8th. Once again they took part in manoeuvres and winter drills. At the end of which period they left Dacca, by river, for Digha Ghat where it entrained for Katgodam. After a double march in poor weather they arrived at Chauthattia where it served until August. Thence to England, France and war.

Captions to the colour plates

The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment

Top: The greyback shirt (on issue for over 70 years) with, to the left the embroidered rank distinction of the RSM and, on the right the badge awarded to the best shot of sergeants of a regiment or battalion. **Top left:** The Regimental Sergeant Major, Home Service Drill Order, 1903. **Top right:** Private in Marching Order, Khaki Service Dress, with bandolier equipment 1904. The first issue service dress had detachable shoulder boards. **Bottom left:** Sergeant, Home Service Walking Out Dress, 1904 with the Brodrick cap. **Bottom right:** Corporal in Shirt Sleeve Order, Foreign Service Dress, 1908. **Centre:** On the left a Lieutenant and Adjutant in Home Service, 1910 and a Lieutenant in Khaki Service Dress, 1914. **Bottom centre:** Left to right, rank and file shoulder strap 1907 to 1913, shoulder board with arm of service braid for infantry, 1902 and a Staff Sergeant's dress tunic shoulder strap with gold braid and embroidery. **Bottom:** Officer's bronze Service Dress cap badge.

The East Surrey Regiment

Top: Rank and file khaki drill Foreign Service Dress tunic, 1902-1914. Officers' rank distinction badges in brass for Foreign Service Dress. The badge for best shot in each company. (After 1909 for marksmen. Appears in gold embroidery, white worsted and brass for various grades and type of dress). **Top left:** Colour Sergeant, Home Service, Drill Order, 1907. **Top right:** Regimental Sergeant Major in Khaki Service Dress, 1912. **Bottom left:** Corporal in Khaki Service Dress, 1908 wearing a cover to his Brodrick Cap. **Bottom right:** Sergeant in frock, in India (2nd Battalion Review for the Prince of Wales, 1904). **Centre:** 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Battalion, Foreign Service Dress, India, 1902. Lieutenant Colonel, Home Service, 1908. **Bottom centre:** Left to right. Rank and file shoulder strap up to 1907. The khaki shoulder board in khaki was soon replaced by a twisted shoulder cord before the more popular shoulder strap was introduced, and the facing colour shoulder strap introduced for the dress tunic in 1913. **Bottom:** Officers' bronze Service Dress cap badge.

□ □ □

Frontspiece

On the left is a drummer of the 31st Foot, 1812. He is dressed in the regulation reversed clothing for drummers, in this case buff jacket with red collar and cuffs. The jacket is decorated with regimental lace. As the 31st was a buff faced regiment the breeches and cross belts were also of this colour. The fur cap was, by this time, worn only for parade, the shako being worn at other times.

The bandsman of the 70th, in the centre, of the same date, is more flamboyantly dressed. His jacket is decorated with black frogging and gold lace and he is carrying a curved sword. Bandsmen's dress was very much at the whim of the Colonel and at times became rather overdone. Often blackamores, dressed in exotic clothing, were employed to play the cymbals, bass drum and 'Jingling Johnny' or bell tree.

By comparison the Drum Major, on the right, looks very regimental. He is wearing a coat cut in the officer's style laced in silver. The hat is also laced in silver with a feather plume. As the 2nd was a Royal Regiment his clothing is not reversed as is the drummer of the 31st.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR MUSEUM

As part of the Museum's application for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant that will be submitted later this year, the Museum will need to show that there is local support within the community for the Museum.

It would be helpful if readers of the Newsletter who live within 50 miles of Guildford would write to:-

Mrs P. James, The Curator, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Clandon Park, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7RQ to the effect that they consider it important that the Museum continues since it:-

1. Reflects the history of the Infantry Regiments of Surrey.
2. Is part of our national Heritage.
3. The history of the Regiment is inextricably interwoven with the social structure of the County of Surrey and is a memorial to all ranks who served in the Regiments and those who gave their lives in the service of their Country.

or words of your choice

PLEASE DON'T DELAY -

WRITE TODAY

LETTERS



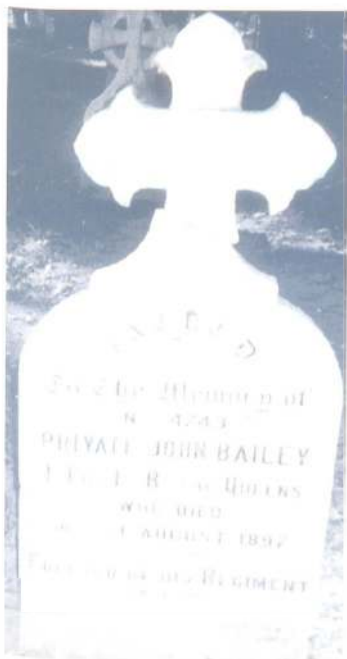
Lt Col Mike Martin writes:-

I returned from Pakistan late last Sunday evening - it was a very successful tour which had 37 travellers ranging in age from 26 to 83. The 83 year old was a distinct bonus as he had served on the NW Frontier 1935-1938 as a Gunner Officer with the Nowshera Brigade. He had many amusing stories and memories of Frontier life. The Pakistan Army allowed us into the Staff College at Quetta, the Punjab Regimental Centre at Mardan and the Frontier Force Headquarters at Peshawar. In all these locations we were made especially welcome.

The most exciting day was when we journeyed up the fabled Khyber Pass on the recently re-opened steam train via Jamrud, Fort Shagai to Landi Kotal. From there we went forward to Michni Post overlooking Afghanistan and received a briefing from the Operations Officer before moving to the great colonial style Officers Mess of the Khyber Rifles. Here we were greeted by sword dancers(40) and the Pipes and Drums of the Regiment. After lunch, we drove down the pass stopping to photo the cap badges on the mountain side - they included the Royal Sussex. It was an incredibly exciting day - probably one of the best that Holts has produced anywhere in the world.

I am very grateful for the numerous Newsletters that you let me have in preparation for the tour. I used very much of this information for homilies on life for the Army in India, especially the East Surreys 1926-32 and 1 Queen's on NW Frontier 1940, Life of a wife and the Quetta incident. Once again Les, thank you very much. I feel I know more about the Queen's during that period than I do about the Hampshires.

I enclose a photograph I took of the grave of Private John Bailey of 1st Queen's who died 100 years ago. He is buried in the Guides Cemetery at Mardan, near Nowshera, Pakistan. The



thought that Private Baileys grave would be interesting 100 years on!

Mrs D H Stokes writes:-

Thank you so much for your letter and the beautiful Regimental Collect. I shall treasure it always. I must admit I shed a few tears when I saw it. I have it standing on the sideboard by our wedding photo, but when I go to Rugby I shall buy a frame. I am sorry I do not know which battalion Colin served with as he did his national service when he was living in Guildford many years before he moved to the Rugby area.

I have taken his army number and dates of service from the particulars of service which he applied for when he took a job as security officer after being made redundant from his job as a van driver - which he loved.

Peter Rose writes from Swanley,

Please find enclosed cheque for £5, subs for the Association Newsletter, again gratefully received today, and as usual full of interest. It was through the Newsletter pages some years back that I resumed contact with George Thornton of Mytchett in Surrey who reported to the 70th Batt The East Surrey Regiment at Milton Barracks, Gravesend, Kent on May 29th 1940, the same time as I did. Needless to say, many happy meetings have followed. Many thanks to all concerned.

Also enclosed, two photos of the grave of an old East Surrey that I came across while walking in the Churchyard at Swanley Village, which is part of the area where I live. As you can see the headstone is well looked after. Private Murlesse's sister-in-law still lives in Swanley and is in the local branch of the Royal British Legion with me. As you can see the grave lies in a very peaceful spot at the side of the churchyard, I wonder if there is anyone still around who knew our East Surrey, who knows?



50299 Private J R Murless
East Surrey Regiment
5th August 1920 Age 20

Captain G H Courchee writes:-

I was saddened to read of the death of Major General Desmond Gordon. I served with 1/7th Queen's from Alamein to the borders of Germany and during the Normandy campaign was Adjutant of the Bn. As the CO's personal staff officer in matters of A & G, I was particularly close to Desmond and got to know him well. He was a fine commander who led the Bn well. Although he was a Green Howard, Desmond was good for the Queen's. I send my condolences to his family.

Colonel P B Hewlett-Smith OBE writes:-

You very kindly sent a copy of the latest Association Newsletter to the patients and staff here at the Queen Alexandra Hospital Home, better known as Gifford House. Prior to putting the Newsletter in the library I glanced through it. I have a particular interest as I spent the first eight months of my army career at The East Surrey Regiment Depot, my fathers old regiment in Kingston. Much to my surprise I found the interesting article about the barracks by RCT. What was an even greater surprise was to see the photograph taken nearly forty years ago of the members of the Corporals Mess taken in the Spring of 1958! There I am sitting in the front row next to, if I remember rightly, Corporal Mott.

I was commissioned in the Buffs and later transferred to the Royal Military Police. I left the service in 1993 and am now the Chief Executive of the Queen Alexandra Hospital Home for Disabled Ex-Servicemen at Gifford House in Worthing. We have a number of patients both permanent and respite from the Regiment and indeed the Association have been very generous in their financial support to the Hospital Home over the years. If there are any ex-servicemen who would like to know more about the care and facilities that we provide here do please contact me.

L Wellbelove writes:-

The last time I saw Ernie Jacobs was at Castelforte on March 18th 1944 when I was carried into BHQ on a stretcher and he came over to commiserate. He was a good friend of mine in the battalion and I have regretted ever since that we lost touch.

However thanks to The East Surrey Reunion advert in Saga magazine and through your good offices we have been able to get in touch and I hope to visit him and his wife in the near future. Thank you for this and the care you took in ensuring that his was a genuine enquiry.

R L Bellamy writes:-

I am writing to ask you for a copy of the 1/5th Queen's men who were lost on the *SS Scillin* in November 1943. I had an interest in the story in the Newsletter, as myself and another Queensman were last in a queue of prisoners waiting to go aboard. When it came to our turn the guards stopped us and told us to go round the harbour to another ship as the *SS Scillin* was full. They did not know at the time, but they probably saved our lives. When we did get to the other ship we were locked in the hold for almost five days, the time it took to get to Sicily, but as it turned out we were the lucky ones!

Mrs D Mason writes:-

My sincere thanks for the proud tribute to my husband at his funeral last Friday. It was a very sad occasion but he rests in an English Country Churchyard after a traditional service during which the Regimental Collect was read.

Harry (Bonzo) fought hard for life through so many disabilities and illnesses for many years with great bravery, to the admiration of surgeons, doctors and all his many friends. I am glad the flowers of his comrades rest on his grave.

G V T Church writes:-

Enclosed please find cheque for subscription for the latest Newsletter. A modest indeed name, I always think, for such a brilliantly produced publication containing so much of interest concerning the regiments historic and present activities and personalities. Once again congratulations and many thanks.

N Kearslake writes:-

Thank you for the Newsletter, it makes very interesting reading, and it appears to be more in demand. It is amazing how the amount of history of the Regiment, and the personal stories of past soldiers of different units comes to light. I am looking forward to our 2/7th reunion come March for a few hours of chit-chat.



H. M. DRONNINGENS ADJUDANTSTAB
PRINS JØRGENS GAARD 1
CHRISTIANSBORG SLOT, 1218 KØBENHAVN K
TELEFON: 33 40 26 93
FAX: 33 33 98 85

To Lieutenant Colonel L.M. Wilson MBE
Editor The Queen's Surrey Newsletter

Dear Colonel Wilson

Thank you very much for your kind letter and the Association Newsletter.

First let me apologise for not responding at an earlier time which is due to the retirement of Colonel Peter Lauritzen and the change over between the Colonel and me as Head of Her Majesty the Queen's Military Household.

On 12th November I have shown the copy to Her Majesty. After reviewing the Newsletter with great interest and recalling the very memorable day at the Presentation of Colours to the 1st Battalion The PWRR. Her Majesty asked me to thank you very much for sending her a copy.

May I use this opportunity to wish you and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association the best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours Sincerely

K Bache

Kenneth Carr writes:-

Herewith my subscription for the Newsletter for 1998, also a small donation. We both find the Newsletter so full of interest and when the months of May and November arrive we look forward to receiving the Newsletter and all its news.

Owen Yeo writes:-

I have pleasure in enclosing my sub for the Newsletter which is always a superb production and we hope it will long continue. While my sight is failing I manage with my magnifying glass! Best Wishes to all for 1998

W J Webb writes:-

I enclose my subs for the coming year. I was very interested in the item about the East Surrey barracks in Kingston as my father joined the Regiment in 1911 serving with the 1st Battalion from then until 1918 when he was invalided out.

My wife and I were sorry to miss the Open Day at Clandon on 21st Sept last but this years date is already in the diary. As usual thanks for an excellent magazine. I served with the Queen's such a long time ago!

Michael Clamp writes:-

I wondered if you might be able to use the enclosed photograph in the Newsletter - it may jog a few memories among your readers! It was taken on 28th Jan 1953 at Tobruk, Libya. It shows some members of 'A' Company, 1st Bn The East Surreys relaxing prior to embarking on HM Troopship *Devonshire* for the 'cruise' to Port Said, whilst en route from Derna to Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt.

Two poignant memories of Tobruk, at that time, still remain in my mind. The military cemetery of course which lay on the outskirts of the town and the hundreds of wrecked tanks, ordnance, and vehicles that still littered the desert surrounding the port over ten years after the last battle there. Libya's second largest export at that time was scrap metal - no need to enquire about the source!!



Back row (standing) left to right: L/Cpl Brown, Ptes Brown, Archer, Gaymer, Camfield, Meader, Harding, Simpson, Hardy, Jones.
Front row (kneeling) left to right: Ptes Johnson, Millward, Turner, Norris, Higgins, L/Cpl Jackson, Pte Clamp

Mrs Thackeray writes:-

I thank you for your letter of the 8th January - which I hasten to apologise for not replying sooner, with your most kind thoughts and condolences following the death of my late father Bert Bloxham - also those of the President and Association members. It was most thoughtful of you to enclose the Regimental Collect, that the Priest (who was an ex-Serviceman albeit Royal Air Force) received with sincere conviction that moved the Funeral Party. I arranged with a musician friend for a Bugler to play the "Last Post" and that caused a stir in the hearts of his comrades from the Old Hendon Ex-Servicemens Club.

Thank you once again for your kind thoughts and also for the beautiful wreath - I know my father would have been so proud of his service and his Regiment.

John Woodroff writes:-

During one of my weekly visits to the museum, I received a telephone call from a Mr. Reid of Milford who asked if the museum would care to have a pair of epaulettes that had belonged to an ancestor who served with the 2nd (Queen's Royal) Regiment of Foot as a surgeon during the years 1830 to 1841. A meeting was arranged for me to view this item, which proved to be in mint condition, but, alas, were the pattern worn by the Army Medical Services and therefore, of no use to the museum. I suggested they be presented to the R.A.M.C. Museum at Ash Vale and volunteered to deliver them. This was agreed and the "Medics" were delighted with them.

During my visit, the Curator, Captain Peter Starling, said they had a photograph of this officer, taken just after he retired in

1852 and generously offered to let me have a copy. In those early days, the medical service was mainly regimental and officers wore the uniform of the regiment with whom they were serving, but with the rank of Staff Surgeon. I had by this time, discovered that he had served at the capture of Ghuznee and the chance of a picture depicting a Queen's officer wearing the Ghuznee Medal, 1839, was, to say the least, exciting. The officer, Robert Hope Alston Hunter, was born in 1805 and was commissioned as Hospital Assistant Staff, in 1827. He joined The Queen's in 1830, as Asst. Surgeon, became a Staff Surgeon, 2nd Class, in 1841, transferring to the 57th Foot in 1843. He retired as a Surgeon Major and died at Dollar, near Stirling, on the 22nd June, 1867.



The medal he is wearing in the picture is the Guznee Medal, 21st July, 1839. This was struck in silver; the obverse showed the Fortress of Ghuznee, with the word "Ghuznee" below. The reverse has, within two laurel branches tied at the base, a mural crown. Above the date, "23rd July" and below 1839. The suspender is a non swivel plain straight pattern and the ribbon is half-crimson, half-green. No official bars were issued.

The photograph must be one of the oldest we have in our archives and is a unique record of a Queen's officer who served in those far off days.

R A Searle writes from Farnham:-

To continue events of the 2/6th Queens, after leaving Venice for Trieste, at the end of the hostilities. Major P G Thompson OC D Company, thought of the idea that members of his Company who had at some time been engaged in printing should take the opportunity of re-training, so the Dog Press (D Company) was formed and five or six of us moved into part of a printing works in Via San Francesco, Trieste. From there we produced amongst other things a Bulletin Newspaper. WEF (with effect from). This was edited by Sgt Blomley who was our intelligence sergeant, a first class writer, who also wrote a history of the 2/6 Queen's in the Italian Campaign, and we produced a booklet which was given to every member of the Battalion. The WEF newspaper included Sports Reports, Battalion gossip and items of general interest.



We managed to obtain some printing plates of Hollywood pin ups and the one page of the WEF was prominent throughout the barracks of the 2/6th.



Gloria de Haven, WEF's pin up for January 17th 1946, co-incidentally satellite TV recently screened one of her films

After our spell in Trieste the Dog Press moved with the Battalion to Pola and continued until most members were de-mobbed. My Platoon Commander of 16 Platoon D Company was Lt D S Playfoot and it was interesting to see that Major Stuart Playfoot MC was still going strong as reported in Newsletter No 62.

Best wishes to him and any other members of Dog Press, 16 Platoon and 2/6th Queens. I enclose a copy of WEF and 16 Platoon in Trieste



16th Platoon, D Company, 2/6th Queen's, Trieste 1945

Captain Stanley Bruinvels writes:-

First and foremost I would like to congratulate you on the content and especially the quality of the images contained in the November Newsletter. It really made interesting reading especially to one who has only really a nodding association with the East Surrey Regiment.

I am writing really because I thought it was time that an error in David Scott Daniells' book **"History of The East Surrey Regiment - Volume IV"** is shewn strictly a personal matter.

Originally, I joined the 10th Hussars, I spent two and a half years with them, chasing up and down the desert, had a couple of problems, and was to be transferred to the Infantry. Had at that time an Armoured Corps commissioning, did not know anything about fixing bayonets or more importantly Infantry tactics so it was decided that I, and some others in like situation should *"Do a course on Infantry training"* at the OCTU in Italy. Anyway, having done this course, we were allowed to select our units, I selected The East Surrey Regiment. I was then posted to the 1/6th Battalion.

I saw active service with them on several occasions and finally came to the Battle for Forli airdrome. Here we refer to the book and I quote *"The casualties in B and C Companies were four killed and eight wounded with Lieutenants S. Bruinvels and T.M. Glendinning M.C., of The Union Defence Force both seriously wounded."* To me that sounds as if I was in the UDF. I was not, I was proud of being with The East Surreys and after a spell in hospital I was ERE for a while and then eventually came home with more hospitalization and was finally discharged. The last time I wore my East Surrey uniform was during my last couple of months of service for, my marriage at St Georges Church, Hanover Square, September 1947.

My saga does not quite end there. Having left the Army having been down graded, I was approached by a Brigadier of the Queen's and asked if I could help restart the Territorials in

Dorking. The Drill Hall was at the bottom of our garden. We actually gave them their small bore range, of course I said 'Yes'. There was a company commander and about half a dozen chaps. Anyway, we started with nightly appeals on the cinema stage, people were more polite then and would listen to what one had to say. I was kitted out in my Queens regalia and I remember I even organised a boxing match.

We really had quite a lot of fun and suppose it must have been about six or eight months later when the same Brigadier came round to see me with the Commanding Officer to tactfully let me know that they had just heard from Records that my medical grade was not up to standard and would I please be kind enough to resign. I was then asked by a Colonel Pike if I would take on the Cadets which were just starting but felt that the time had come for me to do some serious studying so I retired from anything to do with the Army and now, the medals come out once a year when all the family attend at the local War Memorial. Incidentally, I would just add that my name can be traced back in Holland to 1725. Not a touch of South Africa. I went there once with the 10th Hussars during the War and liked the hospitality but did not like the attitude in the street. No doubt it is different now.

Thank you for wading through all this, it was intended to be just a short note, but as one gets older short notes seem an impossibility - Sorry !!

Frank Beville writes:-

I have just received No 62 of the Newsletter and once again must congratulate you on a magnificent effort in producing such an excellent edition. I still do not know how you manage to do it at the price and never cease telling my military acquaintances it must be one of the best military Newsletters going. I'm sure other Associations must envy us. I found the colour plates, as always, most impressive. I am taking the opportunity to renew my annual subscription and that for Major Dennis Savill and my brother, plus a little extra to help with the postage charges.

I was sorry to see the passing of CSM Albert Paine of the 2/6th Bn. He shared my cabin when we sailed abroad in August 1942. I still have the Boarding Card showing his name and that of Sgts Bell, Showler, White and Eaves.

I have recently bought a book - "War Memories" by one Ian Billingsley (with a foreword by Norman Wisdom). It contains personal accounts of wartime experience of all sorts of men with some good photos too. There on page 117 was a picture of the RMS *Franconia*, the ship 2/6th Bn and HQ 56 Div sailed to India on. You may recall I sent you the photo of the ship some time ago and you reproduced it in a Newsletter. The book costs £7.95, but I got a copy for just £4.00 through some book people. I have a feeling it would appeal to several of our readers.

C E Smith writes from Dorking:-

Thank you very much for the reply to my application for membership to The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association and also for the enclosures. Congratulations on the excellence of Newsletter No.62. It brings back treasured memories of my service with the Regiment.

You will re-call my mention of Roger Sawtell, a past officer and also a member of the Association, whom I see frequently, in fact by coincidence we were assisting our local Church at the Remembrance Service a week or so ago, and I mentioned that I had applied for membership. I am very pleased to regain contact with the Association and send my best wishes to you all, together with my thanks for all you are doing to keep the Association going.

Stan Blay writes:-

I felt I must write to you after receiving the November issue of the Regimental Newsletter. The photographs on the first page were a wonderful reminder of the great day we had at Canterbury on the occasion of the Presentation of Colours. A day we shall all remember. As you know I worked at the Depot at Stoughton for many years. I saw the photograph which appears on Page 18 being taken, and well remember the Colours being marched through the guard room gateway. During the time of my employment there the film "Carry On" was made at the Depot and I met many of the "Stars" in the film, and of course I got to know RSM Tommy Atkins very well. He always called me Curly, I never knew why as my hair was always straight.

On page 34 two other "Old Queens men" I knew were Sgts Bruce Dunkeld and Eric Lockwood. Eric's father, Gary Lockwood was my first RSM when I joined 2/7th Bn The Queens at Shrublands Park, Nr. Ipswich on January 15th 1942. Lt Col Block was the Commanding Officer, our Coy Commander was Captain - later Lt Col O C Baines MC. I enjoyed reading the article by GBC concerning the 56 London Div and 169 Bde, much of which I recall. I note with regret that several 2/7th men are no longer with us. One in particular was Sgt Bill Doich of the APTC who put us through our paces at Shrublands when we first joined 2/7th.

Also I see the names of Major Domoney, Jack Barter and Gerald Duffy whom I knew. A really interesting issue. Thank you very much. Keep up the good work Sir.

S Houghton writes:-

On page 43 of The History of The 2/6th Queen's in Italy there is an account of a patrol on the night of 17/18 Dec. 44. As a member of that ill fated patrol I was sad to see that the names of Sgt. Reg Pontin and Cpl. Stan Means were not given. Both were killed and a Lance Corporal was wounded in both legs. Cpl. Means had only recently been posted to 2/6th. from the R.A. and was in command of this patrol although he had little infantry training. I had been with the Battle Patrol for some time and did my best to guide him. Having crossed the river by boat safely we came under heavy fire from the enemy whom, it would seem, were expecting us. I missed the boat back to our bank of the river but was able to swim back where we found Sgt. Pontin half in the water, killed by enemy mortar fire, and the L/Cpl wounded. I buried Sgt. Pontin on our bank and the Germans buried Cpl. Means. Pte. Les Cairnes, who was wounded on the enemy bank, was rescued by the Bates brothers next day.

Both Sgt. Pontin and Cpl. Means are now in the War Cemetery at Forli and over the years I have been able to visit them when driving to see my son in Greece. I now have to fly and so, sadly, I shall not see them again. However their names will never be forgotten by those of us who are still alive, and if you are kind enough to publish this letter they will live on in the Regimental History.

R Rosado writes:-

Does anybody in the Association remember a Major W. Brown MC who commanded 'D' Company, 1/6th East Surrey's from Cassino to Faenza in Italy and also in Greece until our break up. He was an officer and a gentleman In every sense and I often wondered what became of him in later years. I don't suppose he would remember me but I certainly remember him and can still see him leading us in attacks with his helmet pushed forward over his eyes and striding along as cool as a cucumber.

I hear that 'Tony' Ramsey MM our standard bearer, has been having a bit of trouble with his health lately and I wish him and his wife Elsie all the best for the future.

H R Tilbury writes:-

Dear Sir, I have read with interest the Queen's in the Middle East and North Africa. I joined the 5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment in March 1933, and served in the battalion throughout the war. The reason why I am writing to you is to put on record the correct events leading up to the death of Major R E Clarke, the second in command of the battalion, at the battle of El Alamein. I was Major Clarke's batman at the time, and was with him and by his side during the attack and advance in the February minefield under our own artillery barrage. Whilst waiting for the barrage to lift several shells from enemy artillery lines fell on the area of BHQ, and several personnel were wounded. Major Clarke received serious wounds, I was fortunate and suffered only blast effect. I quickly recovered and helped to dress the wounds of the wounded. Stretcher bearers were busy elsewhere, so I persuaded a driver of a vehicle to take the wounded to a forward dressing station. This was possible as armour of the 7th armoured division were lined up in a safe curve a short distance away in case there was a possible breakthrough.

The wounded were loaded on top of the vehicle and I directed the driver out of the minefield by standing on the running board steps with intermittent enemy shelling falling too close for comfort. The Dressing Station was a short distance down the road, and the wounded were unloaded and treated. The driver of the vehicle returned to his unit and it was only then that I realised, the vehicle was loaded with inflammable liquid. I remained with major clark who was placed in an ambulance with the other wounded, to be taken to the main casualty clearing station at the rear at first light. Major Clarke died of his wounds during the night in the ambulance, and on arriving at the main casualty clearing station a medical officer pronounced him dead. I returned to Battalion HQ and reported the death of Major R E Clarke to Capt Leon the adjutant and Capt. Tommy Heathcote OC mortar platoon. I have kept in touch with the majors family throughout the years, and his daughter Susan 3 years old at the outbreak of the war, has been very interested in the Queen's and wanted to know how her father died, and I have told her exactly what happened, I sent her the book which she has appreciated. In reply she states what a remarkable regiment the Queen's were. I can only endorse what she says.

o o o

Sergeants Mess 1 Queen's, 1955



George Deacon, Bob Gould, Alan Fell, 'Pee Wee' Motton, Bob Riley, Roger Jennings, 'Duggie' Fairbanks, 'Bozzie' Wilmshurst, RSM Joe Simmonds, Bill Redford, 'Busty' Stevens

PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?



Who remembers Lt David Mann

David Mann was a member of the Cranleigh Territorials called up on the 1st September 1939. David was made storeman for our group of about seventy Territorials at Cranleigh. We had two regular sergeants attached to us, both from the Queen's Royal Regiment, one was acting C/Sgt Clinch the other was Sgt Chapel, I think he took charge of training.

David was perfect in the stores, he was a member of David Mann and Sons, Cranleigh, so was well used to placing orders for stock and keeping records. Within weeks David had jumped from Private to C/Sgt, a round peg in a round hole. I drove David with the cooks lorry from 1940 to late 1941. Through Belgium and France, David was a good C/Sgt and brave with it, at Oudenarde in Belgium where the battalion first went into action, we were billeted in a deserted farm house.

Things were not going too well, in the night while another and myself were loading the lorry, a few bullets flying around, David was indoors cooking liver and onions for us. C Coy moved out that morning, Major Clark told us to make our way to Battalion Headquarters, and we then began our journey to Dunkirk.

Once back in England we spent time in the Eastern Counties and the South East. David then decided to apply for a commission, he was commissioned and posted to D company. Lt David Mann was with D Coy when he lost his life on or about the 30th September 1942 in the Abumassib Depression?

BPP

P Hallam writes from 149 St Annes Road, Ford Houses, Wolverhampton, WV10 6ST (01902 654918). He writes on behalf of his wife's grandfather Charlie Everitt, who served in B Company 1/5th Queen's. He served with the battalion during WW2 and was wounded in the last few months when he was blown up by a mortar shell. He had two close friends Ray Montague and Roy Smith both Londoners. Charlie is anxious to try and trace his two mates to see if they made it after the war. Any member having any knowledge of what happened to these two old soldiers is asked to contact Mr Hallam at the above address or phone number.

Appeals for Memories, Photos, Reminiscences

Professor Monte-Maggi, a noted Italian military historian, is writing a book on the Gothic Line and in particular the battles for Gemmano which he has described as the "Little Cassino of the Adriatic". He is the driving force behind the project to create a new room in a museum in Gemmano dedicated to the memory of the former Commanding Officer of 2/7th Queen's, Brigadier MacWilliam whom he has described as the "hero of Gemmano". He is appealing for personal recollections, photos etc which can be sent to either G Swain Esq, 76 Manor Road, New Milton, Hants BH25 5EN (01425 614884) or direct to

Professor Amadeus Monti-Maggi, Centro Internazionale Documentazione, "Linea Gothic", I-4790 Rimini, Via Dell'Aquila 25/27, Italy. Please support this genuine man if you can whose aim is to "Justly honour the sacrifices of the men who fought there" - his words.

Ken Ford an author, living at 93 Nutshalling Avenue, Rownhams, Southampton SO16 8AY (01703 739437) has been asked by Sutton Publishing to produce a modern history regarding the actions of 78 Division (Battleaxe) in Tunisia, Sicily and Italy during the Second World War.

Mr Ford is very keen to contact veterans of 1 Surreys who served with the Division during the war. He has obviously read war diaries, histories and is currently reading back copies of this Newsletter for details and narratives. He is very keen to receive individual stories for possible inclusion in his book. If you served with 1 Surreys and are prepared to assist please contact him at the address or telephone number above.

F A Staples is asking for assistance regarding a photo in Newsletter No 61. On page 38 of the May 1997 Newsletter a Mr A W Butler contributed 2 photos of 2nd Bn The East Surreys:- one of the boxing team and one of Horse Transport Section.

He writes:- "My first cousin Pte George Street, known in the Bn as 'Mickey Street' served in the 2nd and was taken prisoner by the Japanese at Singapore - he survived. I strongly believe that he appears in the Horse Transport photo, Middle Row - extreme left. It is not possible to be certain because of the size of the photo and the indistinct features of the soldiers but possibly Mr Butler could shed some light on the subject.

I would be most grateful for any help in this matter, George Street died some years ago, never completely recovering from his ordeal in the hands of the Japanese. My congratulations on an excellent Newsletter".

Len Jelley writes:

Thank you very much for the 50 cent coin you gave me at the reunion. I shall keep it as a reminder of a very great man. I had the privilege of meeting Col Dunlop while we were prisoners, and again at the Festival Hall after the war and will always remember him.



In the November issue, F P Turrell wrote from Western Australia enclosing some 50 cent coins which depicted Colonel 'Weary' Dunlop who has been described by so many Far East POWs as "a great man and an inspiration to all who met him". Mr Turrell asked the Association to arrange to distribute these coins on his behalf. This we did, and the photo shows Harold Ruoff and Len Jelley receiving their coins from Colonel Bill McConnell.

Congratulations and Best Wishes



Golden Wedding Congratulations to:-

Major and Mrs Derrick Watson who celebrated their Golden Wedding on 26th October 1997.

Don and Rose Dean who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in March 1998.

Stan and Eva Mountain who celebrated their Golden Wedding on the 4th October 1997.

Best Wishes to:-

Tommy Atkins now recovering after having had a knee operation. He will be 'retiring' in May - again! We shall have to find a job for him to keep him occupied.

Major Hugh Harris who has been in Hospital recently. We hope to see him at the 5 OMA dinner in May.

Major Ken Jessup, recovering in Eastbourne General Hospital after fracturing his hip.

Tony Ramsey, our Standard Bearer, now recovering at home after a serious operation. We all hope to see you on 'Parade' again soon.

Mrs Joy Harris wife of George Harris our printer. Joy assists in the typing and general supervision of all who work at the Press On The Lake. Now recovering at home after spells in hospital.

'Darky' Isaacs, living on St Helena Island who has just undergone his ninth operation. He reports he is now on the mend.

Major Roger Jennings (our man in York) who retired in December from his job as RO. He will now concentrate on his allotment - go easy on the phostrogen Mo!

Congratulations, Awards New Years Honours List:-

Brigadier Richard Holmes TD on the award of the CBE. Brigadier Richard was for many years Company Commander of A Company 5th Queen's in Sandfield Terrace. Now well known for his television series 'War Walks'.

Lieutenant Colonel Lance Mans, son of Major General Rowley Mans on the award of the MBE.

Major David Robinson TD on his well deserved award of the MBE. David Robinson was for many years a Company Commander at Camberley, with 5 Queen's and 3 Queen's Surreys.

Major John Tamplin on his award of the MBE for his sterling services to the Orders and Medals Society. As we all know he has also worked untiringly for our Southwark Branch for many years.

Birthday Greetings to:-

CSM Ernest Jacobs who celebrates his 80th birthday on 17th June 1998.

Two Surreys visit 2 PWRR in Tidworth

After making enquiries regarding the Silver Drums of The East Surreys I received a letter from the 2nd Battalion PWRR (WO.1 (RSM) (Felstead) suggesting a possible visit to the Corps of Drums at Tidworth, and they were prepared to put on a demonstration for us. Following this I received a letter from Drum Major Lear inviting Fred Jenkins and I to visit Tidworth in order to see the Corps of Drums, an invitation hastily accepted. On our arrival at Tidworth we were much surprised as to the size of the Camp, it has got to be seen as words cannot describe it.

The Drum display was out of this world, and for Fred and I, brought back many memories of the Surrey Drums, and to cap it all, it was Fred's 65th birthday, it really made our day. We were taken into the Drum store and Practice Room, more playing and Drum beating. As we came out of the Practice Room we were met by the camp photographer who took photographs of us with the Drum Major and the lads of the Drums.



*Mr Fred Jenkins and Mr Bob Brand ex East Surrey Regiment,
23rd October 1997*

The Drum Major then took us to the Sergeants Mess to partake of some "Amber Nectar" with him and the RSM, we had a good look at some Surrey Silver, and in the corner of the Mess was our Silver Drums, more photographs of us with the Silver Drums! Then into lunch with a most acceptable meal. After the meal we both went back to the Drum Store in order to say our goodbyes to the Corps of Drums and thanked all for a most enjoyable day.

Drum Major Lear informed us that he would be going to the British Legion Club at Mitcham on Remembrance Day so we arranged to meet him. We met him outside the British Legion Club, it had just stopped raining, he was in full Dress Uniform and marched to the War Memorial on Mitcham Green. As we arrived the heavens opened with rain and did not stop when he sounded Last Post. On our return to the club, and two or three pints later, Fred and I had a good look at the silver bugle, it was an East Surrey one.

They have, over a period of time, been dented, the engraving and badge partly worn away. We were informed by the Drum Major that that particular bugle was the "best of the bunch" and are at present on charge to the Corps of Drums. We thanked him again, and in saying our goodbyes we wished him and the Corps of Drums good luck for the future.

At our next club night I spoke to two of our members, A.R. Scriven, MBE and Sam Dickason, MBE of the Royal Hospital who confirmed that they were "stopped pay" in 1926 in order to purchase the Surrey Bugles. In closing, I enclose my cheque for my Subs for the forthcoming year.

BB



Landings and Liftings

On 17th January, 1947 the 2nd Battalion sailed from Bombay in the *Highland Princess* enroute for England, being greeted on arrival at Tilbury by a distinguished gathering of senior officers of the Regiment including Lieutenant Colonel L C East who assumed command from Lieutenant Colonel Watson. After a



The Russian War Memorial

short stay at Crowborough, in bleak and wintry weather, they moved to Dortmund in then West Germany where, among other activities, they undertook "lumberjacking", (Operation Woodpecker) to relieve the fuel situation.



C Company Queen's, Dismounting Guard at Spandau Prison, 1st June 1949. Sgt Joe Norman Guard Commander, Cpl Keith Yonwin and Cpl Les Jessup

Fifty years ago on the 7th June, 1948 they started to move from Dortmund to Berlin but the transfer was interrupted when the Russians closed the bridge at Magdeburg allegedly for "repairs".

The Russians stopped all communications to the city by road and rail. The Western Powers hurriedly introduced an airlift to supply West Berlin with essential supplies.



Olympische Stadion

The airlift was a magnificent piece of organization both by the R.A.F. who flew to Gatow airfield and by the Americans who landed at Tempelhof. In July an average of 170 planes a day (or 7 an hour) landed at Gatow. The effort continually increased until on 16th April, 1949, British and American planes flew in 12,000 tons, including more food by air than by rail and road before the blockade. In May 1949 the Russians recognized



The Brandenburg Gate

defeat and lifted the blockade though the airlift continued rather longer. During the year it was in operation, 236,290 flights had been flown and nearly two million tons of stores delivered. In spite of this magnificent effort it was lucky that the winter was a mild one as conditions for the civilian population were grim in the extreme. Food was just sufficient in quantity but deadly monotonous and mostly "ersatz". Electricity was only available for four hours a day and other means of heating almost unobtainable. There was heavy unemployment and for those still in work the daily journey was a misery.

The move of the 2nd Battalion was completed by air and they were quartered in the Olympic Stadium where, needless to say, there were first class sporting facilities. They later moved to Brooke Barracks, Spandau. But there was little time for sport, the Battalion being engaged on guard duties for which about 100 men were required daily. In addition a Company provided guards for Spandau Prison where some of the most important Nazi war criminals were imprisoned.

Thankfully, despite their privations and hardship the people of West Berlin remained staunchly pro-West and openly showed their loyalty to the West, by a massive demonstration on the very day of the changeover of title from the 2nd Battalion to the 1st Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion ceased to exist, at the time many believed, it would be temporary but as we now know it was to



The Funkturm



The Rt Hon Ernest Bevin, then Foreign Secretary.
Also in the picture are Major Sheldon, Major
(QM) Jackson and Captain Scott-Gall

be the first of many cut backs in our Regiments history.

The parade which was held on Salerno Day, September 9th attracted thousands of spectators including high ranking officers of the Russian, American and French forces stationed in the city.

General Sir George Giffard read a

message from the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Mary in which she paid tribute to the past honourable services of the 2nd Battalion and expressed her regrets at its loss. She concluded by bidding them remember the motto of the Regiment -

PRISTINAE VIRTUTIS MEMOR.



Lt Col L C East, General Sir George Giffard and RSM B Noke

General Giffard continued, on his own behalf, in similar terms and expressed the hope that one day the Battalion would be re-formed. Appropriately referring to Salerno Day, he paid tributes to the Territorial Battalions, saying,

"I want you to remember, too, the gallant story of the landing at Salerno, which we commemorate today. The Regiment owes a great debt to those six grand Territorial battalions of the Regiment who formed the 131 and 169 Infantry Brigades and added such glorious laurels to the record of the Regiment in that battle. Most of those fine battalions have also since been disbanded."

He continued

"However much we may grieve at their loss and that of the 2nd Battalion today, we must always remember that, whatever the



The Provost Sgt - Sgt Dick Wright with a member of his Provost Staff

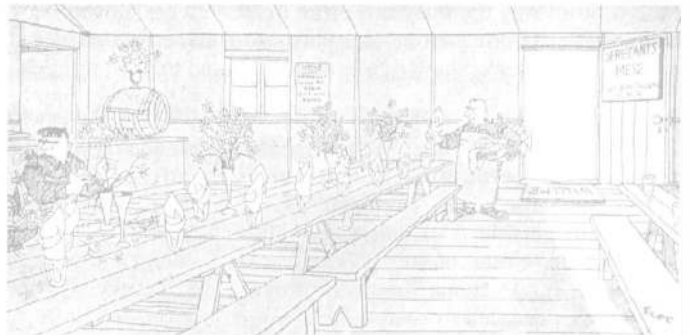


The Drums

number of its units, the spirit of The Queen's Royal Regiment lives on, and it is the duty of each one of us to see that the fame of the Regiment shall never diminish nor its record be tarnished. It is a precious heritage. I know that the good name of the Regiment is safe in your hands, and I wish you all good fortune in the future wherever you may go."

The Battalion then marched off and the eighty-four Union Jacks were lowered to the sounding of "Retreat" by the Regimental buglers. The Colours and other property of the 2nd Battalion returned to the Depot, when they and the funds were entrusted to the care of a Committee consisting of the Colonel of the Regiment, one officer nominated by him, the O.C. Depot, the Secretary of the O.C.A., and the senior Warrant Officer or N.C.O. serving at the Depot.

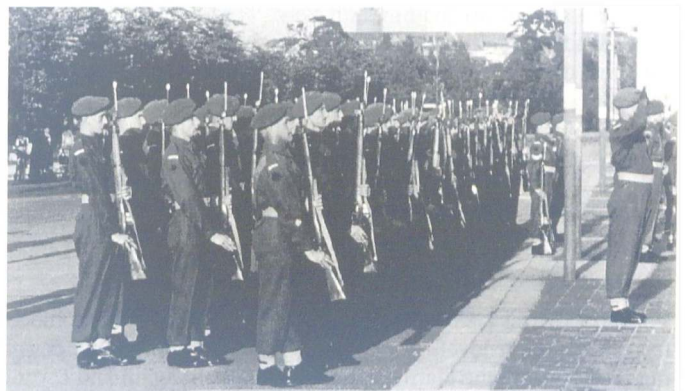
On the lifting of the blockade, the Foreign Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin visited Berlin to thank all concerned for their work. He warmly congratulated the Battalion and lunched in the Sergeants' Mess, which was the subject of an amusing cartoon in the London Daily Express.



"Foreign Secretary dropping in for a drink 'as gone to their 'eads - serviettes and flahs, if you please!"

The Battalion finally left Berlin for Iserlohn in November 1949 after an interesting and very important eighteen months.

The days of Salerno and Berlin are famous events in the history of the Regiment and will long be remembered by those who participated in the "landings and liftings" of the times.



One of the Guards. The right marker is CSM Fred Wickens who later served with 1 MX in Korea

Acknowledgments to the Editor of the Daily Express for permission to print the cartoon.

Letter to Parents 18th June 1942

This letter was recently found in the late Lt Col H R D Hill's photograph album with other papers. It is reproduced in this Newsletter by permission of his widow, Mrs Brenda Hill

My dear Mother and Father,

At the present moment I am doing a spell of duty officer, but this finishes at 8.30pm and so I am not too badly off. I found this piece of paper on the duty officers table and so decided to continue my diary which I left off at Bardia. From Bardia - I think it was February 1941, I went on leave to Cairo - it was an amazing thing but each time I went on leave from the desert, the Brigade moved during my absence - thus saving me a lot of work. This time they moved back to a place between Cairo and Ismalia in the desert, but by no means a bad camp. Actually my Brigadier who followed me down, broke into my room at 11.30am to break the news of the move and found me in bed after a somewhat hectic night! I haven't laughed that off to this day!

At this camp Tahag - we all got a weeks leave and started very strenuous training for a combined operation, and we were still training at this when things went wrong in the desert and we were rushed up to Mersa Matruh. However we grabbed all available weapons we could - we were a bit short at the time and worked for 24 hrs in the day to bale out the defences of Matruh which were completely silted up with sand as a result of disuse. Luckily the Hun never got any further than Sollum - Halfaya line and we were not involved, but we went through some pretty alarming periods as we got grossly exaggerated reports from stragglers who used to clock in at Matruh, at that time Matruh was the railhead. From here we were moved back to guard aerodromes from Matruh to Alexandria and so for a span of three weeks the Brigade almost ceased to exist as such.

Leave was again opened and I being top of the roster went to Cairo and again the Brigade moved. This time the Argylls and the Leicesters went to Crete. The Leicesters arrived two days before the battle began. I rejoined having completed my leave, to a camp outside Alexandria and The Queen's and Brigade HQ were due to sail on the day the war started. Our sailing was postponed and after a lot of argument and discussion they (GHQ ME) decided to send us and so we duly set sail - I think the 9th June at 7pm. The following day we passed the whole of the Grand Fleet in the middle of the Mediterranean heading for Alexandria after they had had such heavy losses in beating of the Hun sea invasion of Crete. About two hours after passing them we were ordered to turn back as it was considered unwise to go on with the possibility of suffering the same fate as the Fleet. And so we had a cruise round the Mediterranean and ended up in Alexandria the following evening. That night we spent on board and the following day we were pushed into the quay and started off loading half way. Through off loading we were all told to stop and even the train party sat in the train and the train didn't move - and an hour later we were told to put everything back on the ship again as we were going back to Crete! A GHQ conference had been held and they had decided to try to reinforce Crete - we were by no means the only ones but we were to be the first to go. We sailed again that night with the same escort of two destroyers and an AA cruiser and about 10am the next morning the fun started when we were shadowed by a plane miles out of sight.

This shadowing lasted a long time and we were twice bombed from fairly high level, probably by the shadower as his petrol ran low. At 4pm the alarm bells suddenly went again and I went for my cabin on the upper deck, all the troops had to go below. As I reached the deck I saw the first plane a big JU88 start its dive on us from about 10,000ft, at the same time I saw three others and so I retired to my cabin! From that moment onwards we had hell for 15 minutes. There were apparently 12 planes

and they came one after another out of the sun which was on our starboard side. A few were Stukas (JU 87s) and they only carried one big bomb - but the rest were JU 88s which carried two and so they came round again and had a second go. Our ship was a specially designed one for carrying troops and had forty four inch and four pompoms together with about forty to fifty Bren guns and machine guns. The Queen's manned all the Bren guns. And so you can imagine we put up a pretty good barrage. The AA cruiser immediately came up on the side the attack was coming from to help us as much as possible. It was only due to the enormous fire power of this cruiser and our own efforts that we weren't sunk, together with the magnificent handling of our ship by the Captain who had his lookouts on the bridge and each time a bomb was released from a plane - the ship altered course. A very near miss arrived under our stern which lifted us out of the water - followed almost immediately after by an even nearer miss under our bows which again lifted us clean out of the water and shot a huge column of water in the air to about 100ft which came down with a crash on the bridge sending everybody for a six. Another bomb burst in the sea on the port side and part of it penetrated a stack of 10 tons of petrol which we had on the deck and set it on fire another bit went straight through the super structure of my cabin door and wrecked the cabin and miraculously I only collected a piece about the size of a pin head in my bottom! I never discovered it until I had a shower that evening.

We got the fire out by marvellous work on the part of the troops and sailors who just waded into the burning stack and heaved boxes (8 gallons at a time) of petrol over the side. Every single hose in the ship which could be brought to bear was played on this fire and these men, and if any body got covered in burning petrol they would get soaked from the hoses and the burning petrol would run off over the side. Eventually we got it out and left a trail of burning and full petrol tins for miles across the Mediterranean. We had had to turn about for the fire to keep it from blowing onto the ship and by then we had been cruising in the wrong direction for an hour and a half (previously we had only been 25 miles from the S Coast of Crete) and our time table was completely thrown out - and so after a conference between the Captain and my Brigadier, we decided to head back to Alexandria, it obviously being useless to go on as we would have been sunk that evening or certainly later the following morning. About 7pm that night we again had an alarm and this time it was an aerial torpedo attack which lasted for half an hour - but luckily we weren't hit. The following morning the alarm again went at 9am and we heard there were a couple of large formations of bombers after us - luckily they never arrived - as I believe they were either intercepted by our fighters or they picked on another convoy to shoot up. That evening we arrived back in Alexandria and were mightily pleased to see the harbour again!. Just as we arrived a big four-engined Dornier was in the process of doing its daily reeve over Alexandria and all the AA guns were blazing. The result of our trip was that we came away with the highest opinion of the Navy - and they had an equally high opinion of the Army who had behaved extremely well through everything.

We were all sent down to Tahag camp again which was used as a collecting camp for the Ex-Crete army where we were joined by the Leicesters and Argylls. The latter had lost their complete HQ Coy and so unfortunately they had to leave the Brigade and we got another British regular battalion. Both these battalions had done wonderful work in Crete and had had an even worse time than we did during the evacuation by sea. A week later we were quickly refitted and shot off to Syria to take part in the war there which was at the time not going at all according to plan. This was the hardest thing that had been asked of the Brigade as we all needed a rest, especially the Leicesters who had been in Crete.

The war in Syria was a most unpleasant party, and for a time it was very much 'touch and go' to me which way it was going. We were pushed up to Damascus and arrived the day the place was captured, and the Brigade was then given the job of pushing Eastward down the Bayrath road to try and cut their main line of communications from Bayrath to the North at Chatura, at the same time putting their aerodrome at Royale out of commission. However we got no further than the high ground above Damascus and were then completely held up by the very strong positions they had established along the Anti Lebanon Range. In most places they sat 3000 - 5000 feet above us - had plenty of artillery and shelled everything that moved by day. Twice we tried to capture their main position Jebel Mazaur the second time it was a big attack shortly before the armistice where we lost half the Queen's as prisoners and a good deal of the other two battalions. Their task had been to capture the highest feature which in itself was a mountaineering feat. The two Companies that got to the top were completely cut off and all put in the bag. The armistice eventually came on 14th June and we were moved up to Homs, their Aldershot in Syria!

It was here I enjoyed such good shooting both sand grouse and duck and was proving to be a very pleasant place but far too much work for me to do! From here we were moved to a place near Baalbek and on Sept 17th we got the amazing order to pack up, hand over all our equipment except personal arms and equipment only, take baggage which had to be carried, and this included officers valises and get on to MT by 4pm that afternoon. Two days later I was in Tobruk but I will tell you of that in a further letter.

Lets hope this epistle gets home alright as it will be an awful waste of paper if it doesn't!

All love to you both and I hope you are very well.

Yours, Bob.

PS It is now 8.10am - my duty officer period did not finish last night as my relief was violently ill on arrival and I had to pack him off to bed!

□ □ □

From the past

57th (East Surrey) A/T Regiment RA



Gunner Country with 2-pdr A/Tk gun, 1939

Letter to a mother

Pte T Mann L/8905
No 4 Platoon
A Coy 1st Queen's
Bordon, Hants
7/8/14

Dear Mother

Just a few lines trusting them to find you quite well. I am very pleased to say that I am quite well, but having rather a rough time of it. We arrived here at Bordon at 1.30 on Wednesday night. When we went through Guildford we could hardly move for people who had come to see us off. There were mounted police to keep the crowd back, but it was no good, the crowd rushed towards us and pushed the horses nearly off their feet, it was a very pathetic sight, soldiers wives rushed into the ranks and kissed them a last farewell. They made it rather wet underfoot, it kept raining all the time. We shall probably be moving off before about tomorrow morning early, at least we are all ready to move, but they wont let us know where we shall be going. We have been out claiming all the horses that we can lay hands on. I hope Granny and babe and all are quite well. If you write to me I daresay I shall get your letters alright. I expect they will be forwarded on to us. We cant give any other address as we don't know what it will be but the rumour goes pretty strong that we shall be off to Belgium early tomorrow morning. Dear



Mother I am afraid I must close now trusting you will all keep well, and that I shall hear from you soon, so with love to all I remain your loving son

T. Mann

P.S. My bed is a poor one now, there are so many of us that we have

to lay on the floor and have one blanket each. The maid never thinks to give the feathers a good shake up.

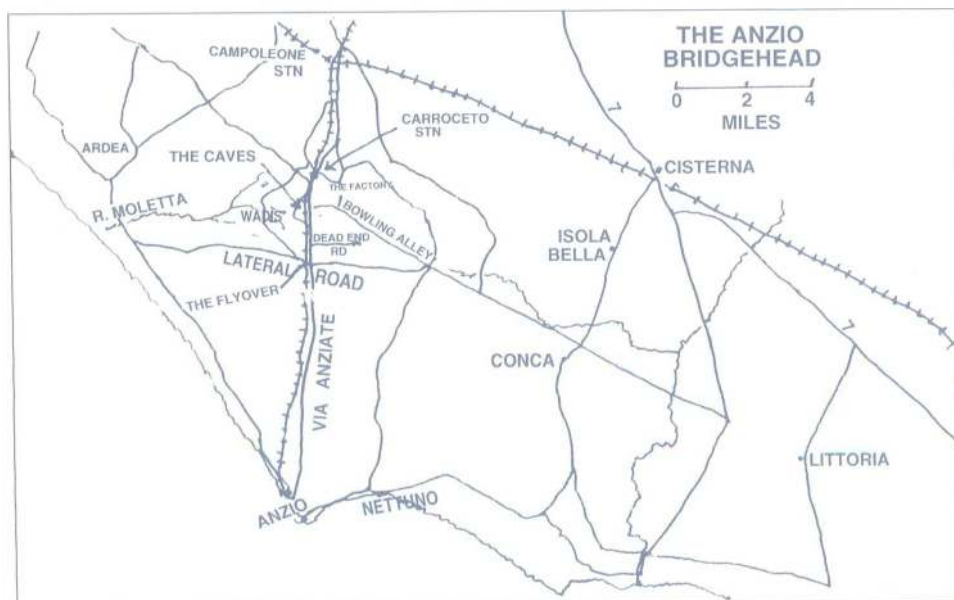
Editors note: This letter and photo was recently sent to me to see if it would be of interest to our readers. Sadly Private Mann was killed in action on the 31st October 1914.



To appreciate the circumstances which led to the transfer of 56th (London) Division from the main 5th Army front to the Anzio Bridgehead, it is necessary to outline the situation in the Bridgehead which led to this decision. It will be remembered that the aim of the operation was to break the stalemate of the Gustav line by striking behind the German forces and cutting their life-lines Highways 6 and 7. The reasons for failure are no doubt complex, but the failure of General Lucas, the American Corps Commander, to seize the initiative after a successful landing would appear to be the primary cause.

It was not until 25 January that a limited offensive was launched by 24 Guards Brigade to capture the Factory and advance towards Campoleone. By then it was too late. In the three days since the landings the Germans had built up a decisive force against the Bridgehead. The Guards immediately ran into heavy opposition and suffered extensive casualties, but Lucas still did not plan to make his major assault to seize Campoleone and Cisterna until the 30th January. The maximum gain was just short of Campoleone station by 1st Division. The Americans failed to reach Cisterna and the British were left in a precarious salient after sustaining enormous casualties. The decision was taken to abandon the offensive and prepare for the inevitable German counter-attack.

The situation was desperate and immediate reinforcement of the Bridgehead vital. On the 30th January, 168 Brigade was one of only two British Brigades in reserve in X Corps and was about to be brought back into the line to attack Castelforte. The attack was cancelled and the Brigade ordered to move forthwith to Naples to embark for the Anzio Bridgehead. On the 3rd February, the first phase of the counter-stroke was launched, to eliminate the 1st Division salient. Within 24 hours, the enemy had infiltrated strong forces between brigades and complete companies were cut off. The Irish Guards and the Gordons were each reduced to a single company and 3 Brigade were virtually cut off. On the afternoon of 4th February, the London Scottish (only five days after being ordered to transfer to the Bridgehead), supported by tanks of 46th RTR, mounted an attack to reinforce the right flank of the salient to enable 3 Brigade to extricate itself. They paid the price with over 100 casualties, but their mission was successful.



For the moment the situation was stabilised but confusion reigned with allied and enemy forces mixed up and heavy losses on both sides. So the decision was taken to redeploy the remainder of 56th Division to the Anzio Bridgehead. This was 6th February and the Queen's Brigade had just relieved 167 Brigade in the Damiano area. But the urgency for reinforcement at Anzio was such that 167 Brigade moved back immediately to Naples for embarkation. On 12th/13th February we were in turn relieved by units of 5th Division, leaving 201 Guards Brigade at Minturno. Since the return of 168 Brigade to our Division in October 1943 from Sicily there had been four brigades in the Division, but now the Guards were to leave us and in March would leave Italy for home to prepare for North West Europe. They had been a splendid part of the Division and fought with great distinction especially in

the Salerno Bridgehead and at Camino. 2nd Scots Guards lost 20 officers and 147 OR's killed, 23 officers and 286 other ranks wounded, and 82 missing while with the Division, and no doubt the other battalions suffered equally.

Indeed, 167 and 169 Brigades were in no fit state to reinforce anybody. They too had sustained terrific casualties and were in need of R & R themselves. But exhausted as we all were we were thrown into the Anzio cauldron within days of being extracted from the Garigliano front.

By the time 167 Brigade arrived in the Bridgehead the Campoleone - Carroceto salient had been eliminated by the enemy and 168 Brigade under command of 1st Division had been overwhelmed by a massive German onslaught at the Factory. 24 Guards Brigade had been driven out of Carroceto and 1st Division had been virtually destroyed "attempting to defend the indefensible". HQ 56th Division with 167 and 168 Brigades took over the 1st Division sector to the west of Carroceto, and an American Regiment came into the line on their right. The remnants of 1st Division went into Corps reserve.

On 16th February the Germans launched phase 2 of their offensive with the aim of destroying the Anzio Bridgehead. The main assault fell on the Americans straight down the Via Anziate from the area of the Factory towards the Flyover. The Americans were forced back almost to the Lateral Road. An attack over the River Moletta struck between 8th and 9th Royal Fusiliers and a second thrust from Buon Riposo ridge overran the forward companies of 8 RF and 7th Ox and Bucks. But the situation was restored by a counter-attack by 168 Brigade. On their right the battered 1st Division were hastily redeployed to form a blocking force astride the Lateral Road in the area of the Flyover. To add to their problems, General Penney was wounded by a shell splinter and General Templer was ordered to assume command of 1st Division in addition to 56th Division.

The Queen's Brigade began to arrive in the Bridgehead on 18th February. It was this day that the Germans launched an all-out offensive on a narrow front to secure the Flyover. 5th Army history records that the fate of the Bridgehead hung in the balance by that evening. General Mark Clark, who was at Corps HQ, appreciated that the only hope lay in a strong counter-attack. The plan was next morning two American Regiments with tank support would attack up Bowling Alley and the Queen's Brigade would strike up the Via Anziate with the aim of the two thrusts converging at Dead End Road. The Americans, with massive artillery support and air strikes reached their objectives, but our attack was called off as the guns of 113 Field Regiment and the Brigade vehicles were still at

sea following closure of the port due to an air attack. Instead, that night the Brigade deployed in the area of the Flyover in a counterpenetration role. It was here that sadly Freddie, the 2/6th Italian liaison officer, was killed by a shell splinter. He had served very gallantly with us for some months and was much missed as a true friend of the Battalion.

By 20th February both sides had fought to a stand-still. Casualties were enormous and neither the Germans nor the Allies were capable of taking the initiative. But in the to and fro of battle over the last few days an American infantry battalion of 45th Division had become cut off in the Caves about 1.5 miles north of the Flyover. The enemy were determined to eliminate this outpost in their midst. The U S Corps Commander was equally determined to save what was left of them. The only 'fresh' troops in the bridgehead at that time were The Queen's. In battle 'fresh' is a relative term!

So it was that on the evening of 21st February the 2/7th were launched to achieve the impossible. As they fought their way forward they were struck by an air attack which caused over 70 casualties with 'butterfly' bombs. Even so two companies reached the HQ of the American battalion in the caves. But the situation was very confusing with British, German and American troops inter-mingled, casualties were mounting and ammunition was running dangerously low. There was no alternative but for the Americans to stay put for another 24 hours. During the night it became apparent that D Company, who had taken up a position beyond the caves, had been overrun and the Battalion had been cut off from the rear. The following night the Americans began to pull out in small groups, but they encountered heavy machine gun fire and a mere 225 men managed to reach safety out of a battalion which had been 1000 strong a week earlier. The same night a resupply column of carriers and jeeps escorted by a company of 2/6th Queen's fought their way forward from the Lateral Road under intense shelling. Despite many casualties they reached Pantoni where they were finally halted by withering machine gun fire and ordered to withdraw. The next morning C Coy 2/7th Queen's were surrounded and, with their ammunition expended, they were forced to surrender. The situation had become untenable and the Battalion was ordered to withdraw that night. Like the Americans before them they infiltrated through the German positions in small groups, but many were lost on the way. Only 4 officers and 17 other ranks escaped the trap. In this short and desperate engagement, in which the CO Lieutenant Colonel David Baynes and the Battery Commander Major Henton were both awarded the DSO, 2/7th Queen's had been all but annihilated.

For 56th Division the drudgery, misery, fear and horror of stalemate in never ceasing rain now set in. The battalions of 168 and 169 Brigades relieved each other in the line and they struggled to improve their defensive positions in the Wadis between the Lateral Road and Via Anziate to the west of the Flyover. It was close quarter fighting with a number of sharp platoon and company engagements, but neither side could muster the strength to seize the initiative nor was there any room for manoeuvre. Indeed lack of space in the Bridgehead was one of the problems with even the field hospitals and VI Corps HQ well within enemy artillery range. B echelons were brigaded along the coast road adjacent to the gun lines, so there was not much peace there. The nightly supply run was a nerve-jangling experience. With no lights except the pin-prick axle light of the vehicle in front to follow, the noise of jeep engines in low gear and the clatter of tracks of the carriers, we felt we were advertising our presence to the world. But inevitably with only a couple of axes they were under regular harassing fire and you never knew when you were going to drive into a new shell hole. As a convoy leader the most harrowing part of the trip was watching out for the small copse which marked the turning point on to the Lateral Road. That is until reaching Battalion HQ and wondering whether you would be told to take over the company.

One night it happened. The CO told me that C Company had been attacked and Jack Frost wounded. I was to take over immediately - and not even my own company, so not only did I not know the local situation but I didn't know the men either. I went forward with the carrying party. At first light I went round the Company. It did not take long. A and C Companies had already been merged. But even so they were all confined to a small Wadi and there were several casualties awaiting evacuation. We were in such close contact with the enemy that a German FOO could clearly be heard giving his fire orders over the wireless. It didn't matter because we were far too close to be hit by gun fire. Rifles, SMG'S, grenades and 2 in mortars were the weapons here. Our main concern was the wounded and later in the day a jeep, Red Cross flag flying, was bravely driven across the flat open ground to the forward company positions. Not a shot was fired and the operation was repeated followed by the Germans carrying out their own evacuation.

By the second week in March relief was in sight. 5th Division, which took over from us on the Garigliano, was now moving into the Bridgehead and was once again to relieve 56th Division. But for some reason 2/6th Queen's was first relieved by the London Scottish who had to endure a little longer in the Wadis. It was bright moonlight as we moved out across the flat open ground under cover of a continuous stream of tracer fired by the Cheshires just over our heads. Suddenly I was felled by someone with a sand bag across my shoulders - or so it felt. As company commander I was tail-end charlie and could see the rest of the company disappearing into the night. Luckily the sergeant major realised he was no longer being followed and quickly came back with the stretcher-bearers. By the time I returned from the ADS, where I learnt I had had a close encounter with a couple of Spandau bullets, my company which was only twenty or so strong was back in the echelon area. Before embarking for Naples every unit visited the two great morale restorers of the Division - The Mobile Laundry and Bath unit and "The Cat's Whiskers". Like "The Windmill" in London, "The Cat's Whiskers" never closed. This was the divisional concert party run by Captain Dickie Gilbert seconded from 2/6th Queen's. Before the Salerno landings some genius decided that, as a professional actor, he was more likely to be of value in his own trade than as an Infantry Officer. Throughout the campaign they were never far behind and they were an asset beyond price to the whole Division.

For those of us who survived the inferno of Anzio we had much to ponder as we sailed back to Naples in our LCIs. Even before moving into the Bridgehead 56th Division was battle-weary after six months of continuous action. But now, after just a few weeks of that uniquely hellish nightmare that was Anzio, we knew that things would never be quite the same again. The infantry battalions virtually ceased to exist. We had actually left behind, killed or as POWS, more of our chums than were coming out with us. Most had shown a dogged resistance we had quite simply not known we were capable of but, once again, we who were on those boats had been saved by the skill, the stamina and the integrity of our gunners. They never for a moment failed us.

At Salerno the Division won a major victory and went on to a spectacular advance. At Anzio it had been a victory just to hold on and prevent an enemy breakthrough. To-day, all of us who were there, can look back with pride on our little bit towards our Regiment's Battle Honour "ANZIO".

Relieved as we were to be out of the Bridgehead, there was also a nagging apprehension as we arrived back in Naples. What now? But then came the news that the whole Division was to return to the Canal Zone for Rest and Refit, and you could feel the tension easing all around. However, within hours there was a counter-order, 2/6th Queen's had been selected for a special mission. As the rest of the Brigade left the transit camp near Bari on their way to Egypt, we looked on with some envy and much concern about our future. Our doubts turned to alarm as we embarked at Bari in LCIs and were told we were to join Force 266 to hold the base for

special forces operating in enemy occupied Yugoslavia. During the night the Battalion, together with 228 Battery landed at the two small harbours at either end of the Dalmation Island of Vis. We were greeted by excited groups of Tito's partisans and dawn revealed that we had surely arrived in paradise. It was an island of unbelievable beauty abounding with wild flowers and encompassed by crystal clear deep blue sea. The peace and calm was wonderful, and the islanders were keen to do everything possible to make us happy and look after us. Despite their rigorous life the partisans were an inspiration always singing as they marched. "Zdrahvoh" (God be with you) was the universal greeting. It seemed to sum up the beauty and joy of our haven of rest. All too soon for us the good life came to a end and on 18th May we reluctantly left the island with calls of Zdrahvoh ringing out from islanders and partisans alike. Now for the other half of R&R.

When we rejoined the rest of the Division we had much time to catch up on. Within two days of our arrival at Mena camp, in the shadow of the Pyramids, we received some 150 reinforcements from disbanded anti-aircraft regiments. The Battalion had only about a month to reorganise and undertake intensive training at Helwan. For me the highlights of this period were getting command of the Mortar Platoon, being sick outside Groppi's after over indulging, and being charged by the Military Police for driving a jeep in Cairo. More importantly John Whitfield took command of the Division barely six months since handing over 2/5th Queen's to Fergus Ling. Shortly afterwards our new GOC instructed my CO to tear up the charge. The Regimental spirit was alive and well as The Queen's Brigade returned to Italy in fine form in mid July.

GBC

Editors note:

The final instalment Through the Gothic Line to the end of the campaign will hopefully appear in the November issue



Prelude to the Gothic Line

On 11th July 1944 we moved to Giza Station where we entrained and moved off at 0800 hours. Accommodation was rather cramped and we were glad to stretch our legs at Zig~a-Zag where we halted for refreshments, then on to Port Said where we embarked on MV *Durban Castle*. We arrived at Taranto's Tosi Pier on 17th July. The harbour was in a shambles with much of the Italian fleet sunk there including the battleship *Christophero Columbi*. It made me realise the extent of the allied 1000 bomber raids over Germany and the devastation caused. We marched from the harbour to a transit area recently vacated by another division. It had been left in an appalling mess and a great deal of work was necessary to bring it up to 'Queens Standard'. The arrangements for an evening meal had to be seen to be believed as the whole 56 Division was being catered for from a central cookhouse and although, eventually, everyone got fed we wondered, whilst waiting in the long queues, whether we would be served dinner that night or the next morning. Company cookhouses took over the following day and all was well.

The camp, under olive trees, had its nightly disturbances from the 'clicking' of cicadas. Thank goodness it did not rain; but there were many creepy crawly insects to disturb our slumbers: mosquitoes, spiders, snakes, centipedes and the occasional scorpion. Each day commenced with half an hours P.T. starting at the ungodly hour of 0615. The rest of the day was taken up by route marches, bathing and visits to Taranto. Each company organised its own concert party and entertained other companies. It is surprising the wealth of talent that existed: singers, raconteurs, a magician and small time actors. Even a one man band (less the instruments) brought the house down. All this assisted in keeping boredom at bay. The officers visited the officers' club at Bari and had an enjoyable time. Our normal ration of liquor was two bottles of beer a week or two of whiskey a month. Somehow we seemed never to want for either - well done the Quartermaster, Lt (QM) A Manners, who was a sergeant instructor at the depot with me pre-war.

On 24th July reveille 0430; march off 0515 to Nassi Station where breakfast was served prior to entraining into trucks for 40 men (or eight horses) with an ancient German third class carriage for the officers. We travelled to Grassano where the train was split in two due to the condition of the track and gradients and was rejoined at Potenza. At a nearby fast flowing river we were able to remove the grime of travel. We reached Salerno in time for breakfast - a greasy Irish stew. On again through Nocera, Torre Annunziata to Naples where we pulled into a siding and 'brewed up'. Naples station was a mass of rubble and twisted steel, a tribute to the accuracy of Allied bombing and German scorched earth policy.

Soon after leaving Naples the electric engine broke down and we returned to the siding, but in the process the officers' coach left the rails, the occupants receiving a severe shaking. We left Naples again in the afternoon and proceeded laboriously through Aversa, Carrecello, the Massico tunnel to Santa Marina, Monte San Biaglio. The railhead was reached at 2200 hours. It had been an interesting day's journey through familiar country. We then travelled in lorries to Lunghezza, reaching there at 0600 hours. We had a brief respite from training that day, but at 0600 next morning we began a training programme to harden us up for the battles ahead. I organised a "Street Fighting School" at Lunghezza and this proved invaluable in the next series of actions. My company carried out a thorough search of the school before settling in. We found several booby traps and a cache of German Schu mines. It gave me the opportunity of introducing my knowledge of mines learnt at the R.E. School of Mines at Beverley to the company to enable them to familiarise with mines not met before.

Each company was given permission to visit Rome and most took advantage and visited the Coliseum, Pantheon, The Castle of St. Angelo, The Piazza of Venezia. There were several officers' and other ranks' bars and clubs. Some of us took the opportunity of having an audience of the Pope in a very commercialised St. Peter's. There were sulphur baths at Tivoli which had been in existence from Roman times. We found them refreshing and invigorating. We were a little nonplussed as all the attendants were Italian ladies who begged the soap after we had bathed. On 30th July we were marched to the main road and lined up for inspection by H.M. King George VI. The inspection was informal and afterward the King was introduced to the brigadier and officers and then drove slowly down the ranks of cheering troops accompanied by Major General J Y Whitfield who as you know was a Queensman. Lt. Col. Dave Baynes and three Jeep loads of officers motored to Anzio and visited the scenes of our action there. We found the visit interesting but rather depressing with its air of abandonment, destruction and decay all rather nostalgic.

We left Lunghezza on 6th August for Assisi.

Dom.

The Prisoner

Across the River Garigliano, the 2/6th Bn: The Queen's Royal Regiment of 169 Bde 56th (London) Division, were high on the slopes of Monte Damiano above the Ausente Valley. A night attack had been ordered. At about 10 pm the men of A Coy left their sangars, and moved forward in single file, along the terraces of the hillside. I was in the leading section of the rear platoon. We were puzzled that no artillery barrage had fallen on the enemy, so we scrambled on, as quietly as possible, each man trying to keep contact with the one in front. We had moved about 300 yards, or so, when we heard German voices, on the mountainside above us, and on the terraces below. Word was passed back to "Halt". We crouched in the darkness. The voices were very clear. Metal scraped against rock as weapons were moved. We were in the German position. If our barrage fell now, it would land on us!

Awaiting orders, we squatted in the darkness. Occasionally flares went up, and we crouched like statues, hoping the terrace wall would cover us with its shadow. The tension was broken by the sound of studded boots scraping on the rocks just above us. A figure boldly jumped on to our terrace. Without more ado, he lowered his trousers, and commenced to answer a call of nature. There was a thump as an entrenching tool handle hit his head - hard. The whispered order was passed to retrace our tracks. Two men picked him up, and the company headed back towards the British position. Unbeknown to us, the attack had been called off. A Coy had not been told. By about an hour later, we were all back in our rocky little breastworks, called sangars. We were also complete with a puzzled prisoner. The Company Commander was heard muttering something about a lack of communications.

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DD

"Wipers" Remembered

During the period 9-15 November 1997 a party of Western Front Association members from four UK branches and a delegate from the Royal Mail visited the Belgian city of leper (Ypres) otherwise known as 'Wipers' to veterans of the First World War. The main purpose of the visit was to attend the annual Armistice Day services of remembrance, commemorated traditionally at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year.

Activities included a church service followed by a "Poppy Parade" to the Menin Gate led by the band of the Devon and Cornwall Fire and Rescue service. At the gate the Last Post and Reveille were sounded and the appropriate exhortations of "We will remember them" and "For your tomorrow we gave our today" were spoken together with a choral rendering of the hymn "O Valiant Hearts".

An important part of the ceremony was the laying of wreaths and floral tributes, nine of which were on behalf of Regimental Associations. Included was that of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association which was laid by Mr Patrick Moren. There was further fire service involvement when the regular nightly Last Post was sounded by bugles of the local Brandweer (Fire Brigade).

Time was spent touring the surrounding battle areas and war grave cemetery sites and visitors were deeply reminded of the words of Rupert Brooke, "If I should die, think only this of me, that there is some corner of a foreign field that is forever England".

RF

Whiteley on Sea Platoon

The Whiteley-on-Sea Platoon had a midday parade just before Christmas. In the photograph you will see Sgt-Major Denis Harding, who enlisted in the Queen's Royal Regiment in 1944, serving in the East Surrey Regiment for 18 years, and the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment until his retirement in 1988. With him is his wife, Janet, who works in the Whiteley Village Shop on Friday assisting the greengrocer. Both Denis and Janet are residents of the Village.

Not shown in the photograph is another resident, Alice Sanger, who unfortunately at the time it was taken was in St Peter's Hospital. Alice's husband, Charlie, served in the Queen's Royal Regiment throughout the war. Her father was also a Queensman. 22980538 Private Weatherley, 1st East Surrey's 1954-57, who served in Brunswick and Shorncliffe, is a porter in the Village, as is 19128728 Lance-Corporal Harry Kell of 1 East Surreys, who served in the Signal Platoon in Greece in 1948.



Another East Surrey is 22803941 Lance Corporal Mick Etherington, who served in 6 East Surreys in 1957, and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment in 1960 until his retirement in 1969. Mick will be remembered by many for his sterling work serving in the officers' mess. Ivor, Harry and Mick are all porters in the Whiteley Village Nursing Home.

Lt-Col Peter Barrow, who enlisted in the Queen's Royal Regiment in 1959 and served in 1 Queen's Surreys, 1 Queen's and was Commanding Officer of 2 Queen's, retired in 1987. He is currently the Forestry Advisor to the Whiteley Homes Trust. Colonel Tony Ward is the Warden (jailer!) of Whiteley Village. He served in the Queen's Surreys and Queen's from 1960 until his retirement in 1993. Colonel Ward had been visited by two important inspecting officers the night before, Major Stephen Petzing from Canada and Colonel John Davidson from West Byfleet.

(Whiteley Village is a charity at Walton on Thames. This purpose built village was constructed during the Great War to house the elderly on limited means as stipulated in the will of William Whiteley. It houses 420 residents and has a staff of 120.)

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Black Cat Errata



On page 46 of the November 1997 Newsletter the Divisional sign of 56 (London) Division (The Black Cat) was incorrectly printed, as many former members of the Division pointed out to the Editor in their letters!

The Editor apologises to all members of the Division, particularly those who took the trouble to write in.

A Padre with 1 Surreys

In 1984 the late Reverend H C C Lannigan MC wrote down some of his memories of his life as an Army Padre. In 1944 he was Padre to 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment. He sent a number of articles to the Editor.

This year (1984) we have been remembering the landings in Normandy forty years ago. To those who had taken part in the landings, this was obviously a very moving ceremony, but I am certain that the ceremony also stirred many hearts amongst "the D Day Dodgers, the lads whom D Day dodged." Some people have remarkable Memories and can recall dates, days of the week and even times of the day when events happened. This I cannot do. While Cassino was one of the great experiences of the war for me, much of it has faded into the background. I can still see the ruins of the Monastery and I can still to a lesser extent picture the Bowl. It is neither the geography, nor the strategy and tactics which remain, but incidents and impressions which had a profound effect on me, which are still clear to me. War is a very personal thing and personally, I found it difficult to take war seriously. Every time I was stopped by a sentry saying "Halt. Who goes there?". I was carried back to my childhood when we played at soldiers. Rarely did I know the password and usually answered in an embarrassed voice "och. Its the Padre" Yes, I did say "Och". I am a Scotsman.

Three things stand out clearly in my mind about the Bowl, none of which had any military significance. They are - The smell of death; Church Unity and Amusement.

The Bowl was a natural saucer shaped area in the mountains to the north of Cassino Monastery where Battalion Headquarters and the administrative detail were located.

The smell of death. Having joined the Army as a Chaplain, straight from College, I had never had any experience of death nor seen a dead body. I had not been long with 1 Surreys before that gap in my experience was more than amply filled. I can still feel the same irrational impressions which I had then. An American never really looked dead. For example, at Cassino I came across an American with a half-smoked cigar in one hand and a revolver in the other. It was like looking at a cowboy film.

The German soldier always looked very dead. Why this should be so, I do not know. Perhaps it looked as if he had been deserted by his comrades in a war which he was losing. My reaction to the British soldier was a mixture of grief, particularly if I knew him and a sense that his life had been lost, in a war, which perhaps he did not fully understand, but one which he knew to be necessary

My most irrational reaction was to the sight of a dead mule or ox. They were indeed innocent victims of a war which had nothing to do with them, yet they were being made to suffer. By the time we reached the Bowl my reactions to death had become fixed and I discovered that other people had their own typical reactions. Men did not mind being covered with blood from a wounded comrade, but the moment he died, the same blood made them sick. Even at times when cigarettes were in very short supply, it was almost impossible to distribute any found on a dead body. I had to take them, put them in my own cigarette case and then hand them out. This worked even when it was known what I had done.

All these attitudes, my own and others, unfortunately came into play at the Bowl. Many of the previous occupants of the position were lying unburied and had been there for some time and made their presence felt. Because of the effect on morale, and the reluctance to touch them it soon became a matter of 'Send for the Padre'. The great difficulty of the situation was the terrain. Being solid rock, it was impossible to dig and it was necessary to cover the corpses until they could be taken

down the mountain to ground at its foot where they could be buried.



*1 Surreys, RAP personnel and carrier
L-R (in carrier) Sgt Court, Capt Lannigan MC (Padre)
Capt Smurthwaite MC (MD)*

Church Unity. Those who are interested in church union or unity, have probably noticed that the post-war ecumenical movement was led by ex-chaplains. The reason for this is simple. Confronted with the horror of war, chaplains soon realised that their denominational differences were trivial and meaningless. What had seemed to be important rules, regulations or even doctrine had to take second place or even be ignored completely.

The following incident may seem a triviality but to me it marked a great step forward. All casualties, dead and wounded, had to be carried down the side of the mountain and this could be done only in the dark. The track was very narrow, with the rock face on one side and a sheer drop on the other. Unfortunately, the Indian muleteers had to come up the same way at the same time. Very wisely they chose the rock face side which left us with the drop. This was a nightmare journey, not merely because of the danger, but because of the length and gradient of the track. My heavy smoking was no help. One day I received a note from the RC Chaplain which said "Harry, you send them down. I'll bury them. God knows the address to send them to." This may seem callous, even blasphemous humour in bad taste, but to me it was not only a great relief, but, a breakthrough. This was the first time I had received such co-operation in what to the RC Church was a very important matter and it established firmly in my thinking that people are more important than dogma. Since this incident I have never ceased to work for church union.

Amusement. How did I manage to find anything amusing at Cassino. There is humour in every situation. The two incidents I am about to relate, while amusing also show the difficulty of a dogmatic theology and a warning always to keep one's congregation in mind when choosing hymns for worship. One day I was sitting talking to the Padre of the 5th Northants when a Sikh approached us and in halting English asked if one of us would conduct a burial service. We tried to point out that we were Christian and that it would be very difficult. His answer swept away all theology. "You priests. All priests same." Padre C Ellworthy said to me "I suppose, as I am C of E, I am the Parish Priest. I had better take the service". On his return I asked him how he had dealt with the formula '...in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life'. He replied "I just said In not so sure and certain hope". This was a way out of a theological difficulty, but a difficulty of our own making.

We agreed to hold a service in an area which was not overlooked by the Germans. Padre Ellworthy was to conduct the service. One of the hymns he chose from the Army Prayer Book was 'Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou sore

distressed.' The first two lines of each verse is a question and the next two the answer. This was a very appropriate hymn, considering the situation we were in. Unfortunately, the compilers of the Army Prayer Book knew very little about soldiers or they would have been more careful in their selection or at least change the words of the last verse.

The first verse passed off quite normally. During the second verse just the slightest of titters began to wave through the congregation. As each verse was sung the atmosphere became more and more charged. The Padre knew something was happening but he did not know what. It had been obvious to me right from the first verse, that there was going to be an explosion. At last it did. "*Saints, apostles, prophets, virgins, Answer Yes*". The Germans must have thought that some secret weapon had arrived, judging by the cheer which arose. As I said, none of these incidents had any military significance, but they were part of my war and are remembered by me, long after other important things have been forgotten.

War to me was simply a series of incidents, illustrating the human situation, revealing not only the many different kinds of human beings, but the many sides to the one person. War reveals the heights to which a man can reach and the depths to which he can sink. Sometimes I would sit during an artillery duel and could not rid myself of the idea that what was happening was that two gangs of young boys were throwing things at one another and occasionally somebody got hurt. War was something unreal, something not really to be taken seriously. The following narrative should illustrate what I mean:- The Senior Divisional Chaplain had sent me to 78 Division rest camp in the Sorrento Peninsula. What a lovely war! While there, word came that Rome had fallen and that the camp had to be closed. Off I went with my driver in a 15-cwt truck. We drove straight through Rome and on and on until we came to a regiment of tanks drawn up alongside the road near the town of Citta della Pieve. We were sailing past these when it suddenly dawned on me that the tanks were in action. I shouted to my driver. The vehicle stopped dead and I swear to this day that it stood up on its back wheels, turned on one wheel and shot off in the direction we had come. I told him to stop. I then dismounted and went in search of the Surreys' BHQ. Here I learned that casualties among officers and men were heavy.

C Company was pinned down and we heard that the Company Commander and a Platoon Commander had been wounded. The MO, Lieutenant W A Smurthwaite, and I set off to the company location and found that there were a number of casualties and that Major Bird and Lieutenant Spall were lying out in the open, but no one knew whether they were alive or dead. Lieutenant E A Heppell, the Battalion Signals Officer, who had been sent to the company to find out the situation as Bn HQ were not in wireless contact met me and we decided we must find out. We tried but we had not gone very far before we came under very heavy machine-gun fire. For a brief moment war became real. Never in my life have I dug a hole quicker. Fortunately the field had been recently ploughed. Eventually we wriggled our way back without having found out what we wanted to know. This annoyed me so much that I said "*The Germans are ordinary human beings like us. I am going to ask permission to go out*". Everyone looked at me as if I was going round the bend. However, I went to a vantage point and in my best school boy German told them who I was, that I carried no weapons and please, could I go and see the two officers. Back came the answer "*Jawohl*". A stretcher bearer volunteered to come with me. As we became completely exposed my faith in human nature began to waver. When we reached Major Bird, we saw that he was bandaged with German bandages.

Being rather more than keyed up I started to speak to him and these are the words which came out "*Major Bird, sir, are you alive?*". Alas he was not. Lieutenant Spall was, but as he had been lying baking in the sun all day he was quite delirious with

his wound and the heat and insisted on leaving his small pack for the Germans as a thank you for having bandaged him. We could not argue with him, but we brought him back minus his small pack. The wounded were taken into a house where Lieutenant Smurthwaite examined them. He considered it unwise to move Lieutenant Spall by stretcher and therefore decided to remain with all the wounded until evacuation by ambulance could take place in daylight. There were eight of our wounded and two Germans. I stayed with them and during the night we were visited by three Germans who after I had explained I was a chaplain and that we were unarmed and looking after both German and English wounded, decided to surrender saying they were fed up with trying to catch up with their own army. In the morning an ambulance arrived and took the wounded, the MO and me and the three German deserters to Battalion Headquarters.

Note by Editor, both Lieutenant W A Smurthwaite and the Revd H C C Lannigan were awarded the Military Cross.

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The Danish connection and The East Surrey Regiment

After the war the Danish Government wanted to thank England for the liberation on the 5th May 1945, therefore they gave permission that 3000 Danish men could join the British army for a period of 3 years. There were approximately 25,000 applicants. Towards the end of 1945 primary training began in Canterbury. After training the soldiers were sent to many Regiments, e.g. The Buffs, South Wales Borderers, some Scottish Regiments, The Royal Artillery and RASC, serving in Europe - India - Malaya - Singapore - Palestine - Africa and the West Indies. Some 30 men went to The East Surrey Regiments. Here are some of their names:

2/Lt Knudsen - Sigart
Christensen - Christian
Eckstrøm - Hans Jørgen
Skram-Jensen - L/Cpl
Danielsen - Bondesen -
Belaska - Carlsen - Steensted
- Bergmann.

Editors note:- This article was submitted by one Juul Nielsen who has been a member of the Association for a number of years. He served with the 2nd Battalion in Palestine and the Canal Zone.

*Juul Nielson, Fayid, Egypt,
May 1947*



Lt Col Duncombe DSO, El-Ballah, Canal Zone, November 1947

The Troopship

Tales of those who went "Eastward Bound" continue to reach the Editor and are a fund of interesting material. Certainly no exception to the rule is an article under the above heading, written by the late Leo (Darky) Duncan. In 1935 he was one of a crowd of young soldiers on the quayside at Southampton waiting to board a troopship bound for India. These were the days of Empire and for most of the troops it was the start of a great and novel adventure. A stalwart and more experienced traveller among them was the Regimental Sergeant Major. Busily engaged in getting the assembly into order, he would be the emblem of authority throughout the forthcoming voyage.

Embarkation was quickly and smoothly accomplished. The transport vessel was owned and operated by a civilian company called the Bibby Line. Their ships had a distinctive blue line round the middle so were quickly nicknamed the "Margarine Boats" after the particular "Blue Band Margarine" which was a saleable product at the time. With farewells said, some of them sadly, the trooper sailed and as she made her way out to sea her newly joined occupants endeavoured to get to grips with shipboard life. Mess decks were of the traditional "broadside" type, typical of Nelson's day (and also in use in many of HM Ships up to and during the Second World War.) The young soldiers soon accustomed themselves to the messing arrangements though for some the use of hammocks proved an initial difficulty.

But such problems were minor affairs when compared with the storm hazards encountered while traversing the Bay of Biscay. Hatches were battened down as the Captain asserted confidently that he "*would take the ship round the edge of the storm*". His confidence was not shared by his passengers in the ensuing maelstrom of violence of the elements. For two days the ship "*rolled all over the place*" while the troops, in utter misery, suffered below decks in an atmosphere of stench and vomit. But at last it was all over and they emerged on to the upper decks where fresh air and liberal application of sea water to bodies, fittings and surroundings soon restored their spirits. Time was then passed in either drills or sport or in lying on decks in the sun. Envious glances were passed at the officers who as well as enjoying "*a cushy time*" also had the company of the Queen Alexandra nurses on board.

At Gibraltar the sight of the Rock was a wonder to behold for the soldiers so recently fresh from home. Most of them had so far only read of such things and places in books. The Royal Navy was there in mighty presence and the troopship's entry to harbour was greeted with much waving and sounding of hooters. On the comfort side there was a change of uniform into "*khaki drill*" and, typical of pre-war custom, topees were the order of the day. The next point of interest was the Suez Canal whose narrow confines caused some surprise among its passengers. At night some relief from the heat was obtained by the facility of being allowed to sleep on deck. The top deck was for the use of officers and nurses only, with other ranks only being allowed there on duty.

In bad weather monotony below decks was relieved by playing "*Housie Housie*" (Bingo), with those at the table often having to endure the intrusive presence of the dangling feet of those in the hammocks above. At Port Said there were more novel sights, particularly the presence of "*bum boats*" from which various articles were offered for sale. Some men, short of cash, bartered with their equipment, thereby creating deficiencies which somehow would have to be remedied later. As a mark of British presence a march round the town behind the band took place and the officers went on shore later to a function at Government House. Onward then went the voyagers to the Red Sea. The heat was unbearable and the food apparently worse-much of it being consigned to the sea and the fish. The

entertainments officer obviously did his best to relieve a trying situation as some shows were organised on board as was a boxing competition among the various regiments being carried. But at last the day dawned when India was sighted and disembarkation took place at Bombay "*The Gateway to India*" as it was called. To the young soldiers it was the gateway to adventures they never dreamed of. Some would have great stories to tell when they came home. Sadly, some never came back.

LD&RF

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The Queen's Regiment 1643-1645

It may be of interest that during the first Civil War in England, a regiment of foot known as The Queen's Regiment, or The Queen's Life Guard of Foot, existed on the establishment of the Royal Army. Although it has been shown conclusively (1) that The Tangier Regiment, later The Queen's, uniquely was formed by the amalgamation of regiments from both the Royalist and Parliament Armies, there is absolutely no connection between the Civil War Regiment known as The Queen's and its restoration counterpart of the same name. This short article is therefore offered for general interest only.

The Regiment was raised in the North of England in 1643 at a strength of ten companies. Its first Colonel was Lord Jermyn, the Lieutenant Colonel was Richard Gerard and the Major Rhys Thomas (2). It marched south with Queen Henrietta Maria and spent some months at Oxford at work on the fortifications of the city. It then sent detachments to the relief of Basing House, the siege of Gloucester and other exploits.

By 1646 Rhys Thomas had become Colonel of the Regiment. However Richard Gerard was also still serving so it is possible that the regiment had been divided into two battalions. Thomas was the fifth son of Sir William Thomas of Aber in Caernarvon and had seen some service abroad in Germany in the late 1630s. It is possible that Thomas recruited his unit up to strength in North Wales, a fruitful area for Royalist recruiting. Some authorities also tell of coercion being used to persuade Parliamentary prisoners taken at Leicester to change sides and enlist in the Regiment. This was a frequent occurrence at the time.

The Regiment was present at Naseby where it fought in the centre of the line in the Tertia (Brigade) of Sir Henry Bard. One source lists the officers of one of its battalions which was destroyed in action. Four of its Colours were captured (6); Colonel Thomas appears as killed in action in the casualty lists; Lt Col Thomas and Captain St Michel appear in the lists of prisoners taken at the battle. The Regiment was never reformed.

1. JP Riley *Continuity in the English Army 1658-1668* (Leeds University, 1989).

2. Peter Young *Naseby 1645* (London 1985) pp82-3

3. Sprigge p51.

4. "A list of Indigent Officers" 1646 fol 128.

5. Roy p307

6. Sprigge p51

Colonel Rhys Thomas

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas

Major Wynne of Llanvair, Denbighshire

Captain St Michel (in the Regiment since 1643) (5)

Captain Edward Berry of Glamorgan

Captain James Edwards of Glamorgan

Lieutenant Henry Gethin

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Sergeant 'Darky' Isaacs, MM CPM

Editors note

On November 23rd 1997 *The Mail on Sunday* printed a special report on 'The Island that Britain forgot'. Included in the article was a photo of Sgt 'Darky' Isaacs MM well known to many of our readers. There had been a rumour that 'Darky' had died and a large number of readers phoned to ask had I seen the article and photo, including Colonel Tim Trotman, one time platoon commander. I asked Tim to write a few lines on his old platoon sergeant. I am delighted to record that I have spoken to him and despite having had a number of operations he is now recovering. He sends best wishes to all his old comrades.

When Les Wilson asked me to pen a few words about Fred Isaacs I had to think who he meant. I knew him before the days of political correctness. He was my first platoon sergeant and was known throughout the battalion as 'Darky' Isaacs and he revelled in his nickname. I would like to think that, were he and I both forty years younger he would have greeted me today as he greeted me then, as he crushed my hand in welcome, "Sir, I am Sergeant Isaacs but everyone calls me 'Darky'. That includes you".

We went on one of those ghastly exercises for 3 weeks on 443'd ground near Brilon in Germany. The area was chosen for its extreme rockiness and we had to dig in. Mine was the right hand platoon of the right hand company of the right hand battalion of the right hand brigade of the right hand division of First British Corps. For good measure we had to maintain close contact with First Belgian Corps through their left hand platoon etc, and my then reasonable French was irrelevant because these Belgians were staunch Flemish speakers and spoke no English! We also had lots of visitors of varying nationality.

My right hand section (which was the right hand section of the etc etc!) was commanded by Corporal Hunt and had a huge bramble bush on the inner side of which the main section position was dug. Murphy's Law dictated that every other visitor wanted the section to be the outer side of the hedge. The Brigade Commander said to me "you'll have to re-site the position" (which had taken 5 days to dig). 'Darky' came to the rescue. He said "We'll resite the bush". Thus, as we were revisited by the starred august beings Corporal Hunt and his section took the credit for siting, resiting and resiting his trenches by moving the bush!! The weather was appalling and the uprooted bush looked its same miserable self throughout the whole exercise.

Whilst we were preparing the position, 'Darky' celebrated my 21st Birthday by saving up our platoon's rum ration for a week and issuing it in bulk when we were relieved in the line (of blessed memory!) for 48 hours. Before this though, he took personal charge of our deep trench latrine which was much admired by our visitors and used by a Canadian Major General (in the days before the Canadians went unisex/uniform) who expressed total satisfaction!

'Darky' and I were in adjacent bivouacs during the digging phase. He was with the rocket launcher team whose names were Causton and McGookin - both members of a notorious Tottenham gang. In the middle of a soaking wet night, one of them was woken up to go on sentry duty. He sat up and caused the accumulation of water in the roof of the bivvy to cascade on to the sleeping men below. Whichever of the pair was not going on duty (and this was, dear reader, in the days of blankets, not sleeping bags) was heard to exclaim, as an icy torrent swept 'twixt spine and groundsheet, "Get that ——— ing 'orse out of 'ere". 'Darky's comment is not printable.

It was on the same exercise that ravaged by asian flu the battalion was reduced to two rifle companies. A skeleton

company HQ comprising Toby Sewell (I think), CSM Gould and a signaller were advancing across a wind and rain swept heath as part of a courageous attack (on foot - too boggy for armour) to end World War 3 when a tall, very hearty umpire approached. "Who are you" he shouted. "We are B Company" was the reply. "Well spread out, you're being mortared!".

Finally, at risk of offending against the law I must mention 'Darky's effective leadership and coercion. His two remarks in ascending order of seriousness (with the simple meaning in brackets) were: "I'll get my big black boot up your little white arse (naughty man)" "Man, you turn me WHITE". (you are in serious trouble soldier!).

'Darky' is one of nature's gentle gentlemen. Nothing he said ever gave offence. Everything he said was meant and meant to be said. He was a wonderful example to me and my soldiers. I never disagreed with him, but I had to try hard to express his wise counsel as "the Platoon Commanders orders".

TLT

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Autumn Meeting of The Regimental Golfing Society

The Autumn meeting of the Society took place at Woking Golf Club on 1st October 1997 in pleasantly warm conditions. The morning round was rather long drawn out and some of the longer carries from the tees created problems, especially for the older members.

The Hon. Secretary is to be thanked for his usual impeccable organisation leading up the Meeting from which he had to be absent and Ron Green is to be congratulated for handling matters on the day as efficiently as the Hon. Secretary would have done.

The results of the meeting are set out below.

Autumn Bowl

W J T Ross Esq 71 Net

Glasgow Greys Cup 73 Net

Petri Plate Aggregate Spring and Autumn Meeting

W J T Ross Esq 141 Net

Heales Memorial Trophy

Col J G W Davidon 33 pts

Veterans Halo

Col J W Sewell 41 pts

PM Foursomes

Maj R A Green and CM Howard Esq

Society Sweep on Morning round

Capt J A Clark winner

W J T Ross Esq 2nd

Lt Col P G F M Roupell 3rd

Regimental Deaths

Baxter - On 27th February 1998, Herbert R Baxter. 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Baker - On 6th March 1998, Sgt Archibald Baker. The East Surrey Regiment and Royal Artillery.

Bishop - On 11th November 1997, H T Bishop. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Erwood - On 3rd February 1998, Sgt Ronald Harry Erwood, aged 70 years. The East Surrey Regiment.

Bloxham - On 6th January 1998, Sgt Bert Bloxham, aged 88 years. The East Surrey Regiment.

Cotton - On 10th February 1998, Captain John Doyle Cotton, aged 77 years. 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Captain Cotton served with the 2nd Battalion and was part of the Chindit column. He had previously served with the battalion in North Africa during the siege of Tobruk, Egypt, India and Burma. After the war he served with Shell International and Iranian Oil Services. A very loyal and devoted member of the Regimental Association and his Regiment.

Evans - On 16th November 1997, George W Evans. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Finch-Mason - On 15th November 1997, Major Harold Ralph Finch-Mason MBE, aged 88 years. The East Surrey Regiment and The Malay Regiment. He served from 1930 to 1962. He was serving with the 2nd Battalion and was a prisoner of war from February 1942 until July 1945.

Gaygan - On 19th January 1998, Thomas R Gaygan. 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Godwin - On 25th February 1998, Company Sergeant Major Horace Jack Godwin, aged 84 years. The East Surrey Regiment. Godwin served with the 1st Battalion and enlisted in 1931 joining the Machine Gun Company. He left the Army after seven years and worked at Vickers Armstrong at Weybridge. Despite his job being declared essential he managed to enlist again in the Army and rejoined the 1st Battalion. Evacuated from Dunkirk he became an instructor at the 47th Division Battle School. After leaving the Army at the end of the war he worked for Smith's Fireproof Doors attaining the position of Contracts Manager. He was a regular attender at the WOs and Sgts Association functions.

Goode - On 2nd April 1998, Captain Michael Richard Anthony Goode, aged 55 years. The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and Army Air Corps.

Goodwin - On 23rd December 1997, Harry G Goodwin, aged 79 years. 1/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

He served with the 1/6th throughout the war and was with the Battalion when it liberated Ghent. A regular and loyal supporter of the Association.

Greenleaf - In September 1997, Captain Meyrick Greanleaf. 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was an outstanding National Service Officer and gained a well earned reputation as a platoon commander in the jungle whilst serving with 1 Queen's. He trained as a solicitor and joined 6th Queen's in Bermondsey. A very popular and efficient officer.

Haynes - On 12th March 1998, Company Sergeant Major Bob Haynes. The East Surrey Regiment.

Higgins - On 11th February 1998, Corporal John William Higgins, aged 88 years. 2nd Battalion The East Surrey Regiment. Higgins served in China, Singapore, Japan and Korea. He was a POW from February 1942 until November 1945.

Jeffery - On 19th January 1998, Major Peter Jeffery MC, aged 76 years. The East Surrey Regiment. He was awarded his Military Cross for gallant action and leadership whilst crossing the River Senio during the Italian Campaign. He returned to civilian life in 1947 joining an import export firm. He

emigrated to New Zealand where he became a director of a manufacturing import company.

Keeling - On 25th October 1997, Sergeant Fred Keeling. 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. At one time during the war, Keeling was a POW in Colditz.

Kendrick - On 24th October 1997. The Queens Royal Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment. He was the Assistant Secretary of the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey, Royal British Legion. A very loyal Association member.

Leach - On 20th October 1997, Sgt Jack Leach, aged 81 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Mason - On 15th November 1997, Major Harold R F Mason. The East Surrey Regiment, The Malay Regiment and The Penang Volunteers.

Moody - On 28th November 1997, Alfred Douglas Moody, aged 78 years. 2/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served with them throughout the Desert Campaign and in Italy. He transferred to the MPSC and later saw service in Malaya. A staunch supporter of his battalion and The Queen's. His medals are now in the regimental museum at Clandon.

Moore - On 15th December 1997, H R Moore, aged 87 years. 2/5th and 1/6th Battalions The Queen's Royal Regiment. Taken prisoner in May 1940 he was a POW until January 1945 when he was released by advancing Russian forces from Stalag 20A, Poland.

Murfitt - On 23rd November 1997, Walter (Bill) R Murfitt. 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Pitman - On 6th March 1998, Lance Corporal William Ronald A Pitman, aged 77 years. 1st/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment and 1st Battalion The Gordon Highlanders. Pitman was at one time batman to Major Ken Jessup. Adjutant of the 1/7th Queen's and Major Jessup represented the Association at the funeral. Pitman served with the 1/7th from 1942 until the battalion was disbanded and he was posted to 1st Gordons in 1945.

Puncher - On 25th January 1998, Sgt Harry Puncher MM, aged 83 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Shears - In September 1997, CSM Ernest W Shears, aged 95 years. 1/7th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment. Shears enlisted in the Territorial Army in 1921 and served continuously until 1958. He saw active service with the 1/7th Queen's in all theatres where the battalion was involved. A dedicated and devoted member of the Regiment and the Association.

Smith - On 23rd January 1998, Private John Edward Smith, aged 86 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was badly wounded in 1944 and received a 100% disability pension. The last two years of his life were spent at the Royal Star and Garter Home, Richmond Surrey.

Steadman - On 28th February 1997 Company Sergeant Major Arthur Steadman, aged 90 years. 2/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Tannock - On 18th March 1998, Captain Noel F Tannock TD. The East Surrey Regiment.

Turnock - Captain W M (Bill) Turnock, aged 71 years. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

White - On 7th March 1998, Major Benjamin du Boulay Finch-White MC, 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment.

Regimental Families

Domoney - On 30th December 1997, Mrs Margaret Agnes Domoney, widow of the late Major AWV (Dom) Domoney. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Elverson - On 10th April 1998, Mrs Rosemary Anne Elverson, beloved wife of Major C R C Elverson. The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Hurley - On 30th December 1997, Mrs Sally Hurley, beloved wife of WO2 I P Hurley, The East Surrey Regiment.

Obituaries

Major General D S Gordon CB CBE DSO



It was a very sad day when I learned that Major General Gordon had died on 4th November after a long and courageously fought illness. He will be sadly missed.

My first contact with him was in 1943 and took place "over the air". He, as the Brigade Major of 131 Brigade and I as Adjutant of 1/7th Bn. The Queen's. The various messages and signals between Bde. HQ and the Bn. were understandably brief, sometimes in code, as we were hardly ever out of range of the enemy during

the push from Alamein onwards. After the successful battle of Medenine it was no real surprise when Lt Col R Senior of the 1/7th was awarded a DSO and promoted to command a Brigade of 50th Division and Major Gordon came to succeed him as our Commanding Officer.

It was not long before we realised how fortunate we were. Although commissioned into the Green Howards our new CO was soon initiated into the character and traditions of The Queen's and readily took to us. He vetted us very thoroughly and demanded and expected the highest discipline. The men admired him for his strong leadership, and he became well liked and popular. He was a professional soldier in every sense. We realised that he would not agree to any military action without every consideration being given to the risks involved so that possible casualties were reduced to a minimum.

After the fall of Tunis and a brief respite at Homs arduous training commenced in preparation for the attack upon the mainland of Europe. Physical fitness became the order of the day with P.T., swimming, when possible, and progressive route marches under desert conditions.

TEWT's for officers were not always popular! All this whilst giving the utmost encouragement to the men and making them realise that everything being done was both sensible and practical. Colonel Gordon, as he then was, seemed tireless and full of energy from dawn 'till dusk. He undoubtedly contributed to the fine record and reputation of The Queen's Brigade resulting in its definite establishment as the motorised infantry brigade of the 7th Armoured Division and the wearing and distinction of the 'Desert Rat' badge and insignia.

The subsequent landing in Italy and break-out from the Salerno perimeter brought us to the river Volturno. Here we had an example of Desmond Gordon's concern about casualties. He had reason to doubt the plan for the crossing prepared by higher authority and approved by Army HQ (The American 5th). He felt the assault to be carried out in the sector assigned to the 1/7th was definitely "not on" without there being very heavy casualties. It was to be a night attack at obvious crossing places and assuredly the enemy would have had these covered by the 'fixed lines' of their machine guns and artillery. Colonel Gordon prepared another plan and successfully negotiated a change. This possibly could have jeopardised his future career but the amended plan was, at first reluctantly, agreed, resulting in 1/7th Queen's being the only unit in the initial attack to effect a crossing, and this with minimum casualties - always very much in his mind.

The battalion returned to the UK in January 1944 to prepare for "D" Day. After overseas leave progressive training in Norfolk again took place with keenness and enthusiasm to 'get the job done' under the close supervision and direction of Col Gordon. Morale was high and the battalion had made a great reputation for itself. During this period the battalion was formally inspected by both HM The King at Sandringham and General Montgomery.

The "D" Day landings followed with advances into Normandy but strong enemy resistance took place and there was very tough fighting in the Villers Bocage area. At one time the battalion was virtually surrounded resulting in an order being given to fight 'to the last man last round' before surrender. These are but glimpses of episodes which took place during the period when Colonel Gordon was in command of 1/7th Queen's and serve to illustrate his powers of leadership and strength of character. The men would have followed him anywhere.

Representing The Queen's OCA I attended the funeral which took place at the Parish Church, Odiham on 13th November 1997. The church was filled to overflowing, attended by representatives of the various bodies and organisations with which Major General Gordon had been associated during his remarkable and exemplary career. The main address was very movingly given by Field Marshal Peter Inge.

As will be seen from the profile published in The Times and The Telegraph Major General Gordon was an officer of wide experience both before, during and after the war. He was intensely proud of the fact that he was made an honorary life member of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association with which he maintained contact throughout the years, attending all annual Regimental dinners possible. He loved to talk to the men and had an amazing memory for their names.

I am very proud of the fact that I had the honour of serving with General Gordon as my commanding officer and for whom I had the highest respect and admiration. He became a true friend.

KAJ

Major General J K I Douglas-Withers CBE MC



General John Douglas-Withers who died in November 1997 was a distinguished Royal Artillery officer who had two particular and very much valued connections with the Regiment. He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1940, and in 1941 joined 113 Field Regiment RA who were the supporting Regiment for 169 (Queen's) Brigade in 56 London Division.

After the landing at Salerno and the advance across the

Volturno, he was FOO with C Company 2/7th Queen's when on 22nd October 1943 the battalion carried out a night attack across the river Lanzi at the beginning of the Brigade operation to clear the Montenaro feature. During the final stages of the attack Major Maurice MacWilliam commanding the company was injured, and Captain Douglas-Withers then, besides directing the defensive fire of his regiment's guns, personally organized and controlled C company's immediate defence against a number of determined German Counter-Attacks. For his leadership and gallantry at this time and over the next two

days he was awarded the MC. Subsequent to this he served on with 113 Field Regiment through the winter battle of 1943/44, and then during the Gothic Line in September 1944, before being posted home in the Autumn of that year.

After the war General Douglas-Withers followed a normal progression of Regimental and Staff appointments until after attending the IDC in 1965 he came to Munster to command 6th Infantry Brigade, in which 1st Queen's Surreys were the senior battalion. Under his command the Brigade was an efficient and capable organisation, and a happy one - not always the case in BAOR. Outside the normal run of activities and training two events to be particularly remembered affecting the Regiment took place: Firstly the redesignation from 1st Queen's Surreys to 1st Queen's when General Douglas-Withers took the salute on the windy cold and slightly wet day of 31st December 1966: Then in May 1967 he and his wife hosted our Colonel-in-Chief, HRH Princess Marina of Kent, on sadly the only official visit she was able to pay to a battalion of her Queen's Regiment. For his support the 1st Battalion was most grateful and considered themselves lucky to have had him as Brigade Commander for the second part of that tour in Germany.

After Munster he went on to fill two appointments as a Major General, including GOC South West District before retiring in 1974, when he became for six years an Assistant Director with Jardine Matheson in Hong Kong. On his final retirement he lived in the Cotswolds, but was a regular attendee at the annual 56th London Division Officers Club lunch at HM Tower of London.

JWS

Major A V A Cummins TD

Arnold Cummins died at home near Chichester on 8th October after a long illness. He was a man of many parts and wide military experience which in post-war years was used to the benefit of 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. (TA) and its successor 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.(TA).

Arnold first enlisted in the Regular Army as a private soldier in the East Surrey Regiment in 1933. After training he was posted to the 2nd Bn of that Regiment but two years later, despite an exemplary conduct record and the holder of several awards for skill-at-arms he bought his discharge.

In 1938 the clouds of war were gathering so Arnold decided (probably under the influence of his father who had been a Territorial) that the TA might make use of his experience and that the RTR might be more interesting than the Infantry, so he joined 42 RTR (TA) at Clapham Junction Drill Hall.

On the outbreak of war some months later his Regiment was mobilised and split in two - 42nd and 48th RTR. Arnold was quickly promoted Sergeant in the 48th. As a tank commander he fought in Algiers and Tunisia losing the tank under him in the battle for Tunis. Some months later he was back in the Infantry, commissioned into The East Surrey Regiment but seconded to 1st/4th Bn The Royal Hampshire Regiment. He served with them throughout the Italian campaign until he was wounded at the battle for Forli.

On the reformation of the Territorial Army in 1947 Arnold was among the first to rejoin the 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment in which he held several appointments reflecting his expertise in gunnery, signals and tracked vehicles. In particular he commanded the Medium Machine Gun platoon (then in Lloyd and Universal Carriers) and later commanded HQ Company. By 1959 he was over the maximum age for Infantry service, but Arnold had not yet finished his military career so he transferred to the RAPC, and after a short conversion course rejoined the Bn - now the 4th Bn The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (TA) as its Unit Paymaster and more-or-less-permanent President of Regimental Audit Boards!.

In 1968 as a result of a further reorganisation of the Reserves, Arnold's career, along with that of many other highly experienced senior ranks was automatically terminated. He had served in the same unit without break of service for 21 years from the reformation of the postwar TA until its disbandment. During part of that service he fell seriously ill with cancer of the throat, but with characteristic courage and understatement he fought and beat the illness without ever allowing it to interfere with his busy life style, for apart from his military service Arnold was a keen cricketer, later an Umpire and a life-long member of the famous Beddington Park Cricket Club whose President he was for some years before his death. He was also for many years a Councillor of the London Borough of Sutton. From leaving School he joined Norwich Union Life Assurance and remained with them, apart from absences on Military service, until he retired as a Branch Manager.

He was a reliable, loyal and conscientious man, a good soldier and a convivial companion and we sympathise with Pat and their four sons in their loss.

Captain W M Turnock

It is not easy to write an obituary to Bill Turnock for he was a complex character and the real man difficult to discern. In addition there are gaps in my knowledge and once he retired from the Army little fact is known to me. He was born on the 18th May 1927 and was educated at Wreckin College. Before he was commissioned, he was a Welsh Guardsman at 148 Pre OCTU at Wrotham in 1946 and later on that year an officer cadet at 163 Infantry OCTU at Maresfield. He served there under a Queen's Adjutant (then Captain Geoffrey Curtis MC) whilst the Demonstration Platoon was commanded by another Queens officer (then 2/Lt Michael Perrett-Young) It was therefore hardly surprising that he was granted an emergency commission in The Queen's at the end of 1946.

I first met him at the Home Counties Brigade Training Centre at Shorncliffe in 1947 when we were both Platoon Commanders in The Queen's Regimental Training Company, although he later commanded the Demonstration Platoon. Between us we had to supervise the training of up to 8 Platoons of National Servicemen undergoing some 12 weeks of basic training. Bill was an efficient instructor and an outstanding lecturer, so undertook most of the "in Barracks" training whilst I concentrated on the ranges of Field Training.

Time passed, I left the Army as a National Service Officer, whilst Bill obtained his regular commission in May 1948 and became ADC to the GOC Northern Ireland from June 49 to Sep 50. After this he joined the 1st Bn in Germany, becoming Adjutant in 1952. It was in this appointment, I believe, that he really shone, although some who received large doses of extra Orderly Officers duties may not agree! A very firm disciplinarian, self confident and assured, with a ready wit he was a well known character throughout the Brigade. Incredibly smart, particularly when taking Adjutants Parade, when mounted, he was an impressive figure.

He returned with the 1st Bn to Maidstone as they prepared to leave for Malaya and was posted as an instructor to Eaton Hall, OCTU from 1954 to 1956. In 1956 he retired from the Army on the 1st June after steadfastly refusing to take a promotion



examination! I know not why for he was a most efficient intelligent and capable officer.

In 1966 a cutting from the Daily Telegraph announced the forthcoming marriage of his son Dominic. Acting on impulse I found Bills phone number and so after some 50 years gap we lunched together in London, he not looking his age and full of wit and good humour. It was a real shock to hear of his death, less than a year later. Efficient, charming, with just a touch of Walter Mitty in his character, he was a great friend. Our condolences go to his daughter Laura and his son Dominic who I hope to trace before long.

AGJ

Major F J Reed



John died on 18th December after a long illness, and although because RHQ was closed for the Christmas holidays the Association was unable to send out funeral details, word of mouth ensured a large turnout including the Association Standard at his funeral on 31st December.

John was born in June 1918 and was educated at Alleyns School in Dulwich. In 1936 he joined the Artists Rifles

(TA) and served with them until 1938 when he was granted a Supplementary Reserve Commission in The East Surrey Regiment, the Regiment in which his father had served from 1915 until 1919. Shortly before war broke out he was granted a Regular Commission in the Surreys. He was destined to serve that Regiment and its successors for the rest of his working life.

He served first with the 50th (Holding) Bn which became the 11th (Service) Battalion which was re-named the 2nd Battalion, replacing the original 2nd Bn that had been so bravely destroyed in Singapore. In Summer 1944, John, by then a Major, was posted to the 1st Battalion in Italy where he took immediate command of C Company in preparation for the advance in October 1944 through the northern Apennines towards Bologna. He commanded that Company in the battles for the Spaduro Ridge until the Battalion was reduced to three rifle companies when he took over command of A Company. He then commanded A Company in the crossing of the river Senio and the Argenta Gap battles when after two days of fierce fighting in April 1945 A Company received its objective thereby sealing hundreds of enemy inside the town of Argenta and cutting off their retreat. In May the battalion crossed the river Po and after adventures with Italian Partisani and Yugoslav 'Irregulars' settled into its peacekeeping role in Carinthia soon after which John left the battalion for various staff jobs in Austria until returning to UK in 1950 as Training Officer with the 6th (TA) Battalion. Some having served with him in Italy knew him well but most of us didn't and we soon found out that he insisted on the highest standards, he was a professional to his finger tips, had an eye for meticulous detail and woe betide anyone who didn't pull his weight! On the other hand he was quick to acknowledge good work, he was invariably courteous and he was excellent (if noisy) company on a guest night when he and the QM, Major George Birdsell, were in the habit of singing duets of comic songs. One of John's duties in 1953 was to train and effectively lead the Battalion contingent lining part of the route of the late King's funeral cortege. "Effectively" because Major Johnnie Johnson commanded the contingent but had lost his voice so all the words of command were given by John Reed, and I mention this recalls another example of John's care and concern for his troops. The day of the funeral was

extremely cold and damp. We assembled on the evening before the funeral when John put us through lengthy rehearsals of unusually complicated drills used only on Royal funerals. We then had two or three hours sleep in our Drill Hall before we embussed for our Forming up place in Hyde Park. Here before we marched to our position in the Edgware Road our two Majors distributed small bottles of Rum, the result of good planning by John Reed and the generosity of Johnny Johnson's employers! After an exceptionally long and cold wait of several hours before the arrival of the cortege John barked out the order "Ground Arms", and rifles were smartly laid on the ground; then on the Order "Stand Easy", soldiers appeared to start blowing on cold fingers. I doubt that many people in the crowd realised that small bottles of rum were being rapidly emptied into cold throats.

John rejoined the 1st Battalion in Egypt in Spring 1953 again serving as a Company Commander, returning in Summer 1954 to Shorncliffe. Before departure for Germany in 1955, the Battalion was tasked to organise and present "The Pageant of Infantry" at the Royal Tournament in Earls Court. This pageant portrayed the development of the Infantry from earliest times and John's acting talent had obviously been observed for he commanded the British troops in a mock battle, based on Waterloo-like tactics and formations, wearing period uniforms, firing period muskets and with John giving his orders according to 19th Century Drill Manuals. It was all enthusiastically received by the audience and the Duke of Edinburgh congratulated the Battalion on the performance. After continuing his service with the 1st Battalion in Germany, John was brought back in 1956 to serve a second tour as Training Major with the 6th (TA) Bn at Kingston. He retired from the service in 1959, but not from the Regiment!

In the same year the two Surrey Regiments amalgamated to form The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and John was re-employed at Regimental Head Quarters by the Ministry of Defence in a civilian capacity first as Assistant Regimental Secretary, and later following Colonel Duncombe's retirement as Regimental Secretary. The successful amalgamation of two very distinguished and very old Regiments was due in no small measure to John's financial and administrative abilities. In addition to his official duties at RHQ, John was Hon Secretary of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association and Hon Clerk to all of the Regimental Charitable Trusts, of which (including the Territorial Trust) there were about ten in all! His great strengths as Hon Secretary to this Association lay in his courtesy, his integrity, his financial acumen and above all in his ability to remember names, faces and military histories of Association members. In 1966 there was a further amalgamation of all the Regiments of the Home Counties, and John, having more experience than most other Regimental Secretaries in solving the apparently insoluble problems of Regimental amalgamations often by courteous compromise, and always by organisational ability, the new Regiment, The Queen's Regiment survived and thrived. Although for a time the Regiment maintained a County Branch office in Kingston, from which John worked, this was closed and John had little alternative to selling up the family home in Thames Ditton (where they were happily settled) and moving nearer to Canterbury, the HQ of the new Regiment.

Having served the Regiment longer in civilian clothes than in uniform, John finally retired from his Regimental duties in 1983 and settled in Angmering where he played a full part in the affairs of the community until overtaken by ill-health. First finding himself over the age to work officially for CAB, he worked for them unofficially behind the scenes, acquiring considerable expertise in Pension and Welfare Law. He was for many years Chairman of the Angmering Society and at the time of his death was one of its Vice-Presidents. He was also for many years a Sidesman in the Parish Church of St Margarets Angmering where his funeral service was held. His death leaves another great gap in the ranks of our Association.

He is survived by Moira, his wife, and Susan his daughter and their families to whom we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

WEMcC

Colonel T A Buchanan DSO OBE MC ERD TD DL

On Thursday, 18th September 1997 the funeral service for Colonel 'Buck' was conducted by the Revd Father Richard Harper at Christchurch, St Leonards-on-Sea. There was a very large attendance from the Regiment and from former members of the 1st Bn The Royal Fusiliers and the 5th Bn The Northamptonshire Regiment with whom 'Buck' had served in the 1939-45 War.

Major R C Taylor, an old friend of more than fifty years, delivered an impressive address. The Standards of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association and of The Royal Fusiliers Association were on parade beside the coffin which was flanked by six candelabra. After the Last Post had been sounded by a bugler of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, the Service ended and was followed by a private cremation.

On Thursday, 27th November 1997 a memorial plaque in the Chapel of The East Surrey Regiment in All Saints Church, Kingston, was dedicated by the Vicar, the Revd James Bates, in front of an equally large congregation which again included representatives of The Royal Fusiliers and The Northamptonshire Regiment in addition to members of the Regiment and representatives of Ewell Technical College of which 'Buck' had been Principal. The Standard of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association was carried by Mick Etherington, as Tony Ramsey, MM the regular bearer, was in Australia.

There was an unforeseen incident as by some oversight the Church Organist failed to arrive. Not in the least put out, the Vicar led the singing and the Hymns including John Bunyan's famous Pilgrim Hymn - "*He who would valiant be*" - were sung unaccompanied with great spirit and gusto. The two ceremonies were a fitting tribute to a fine soldier and man.

GLAS

Miss Pat Buchanan sister of Colonel 'Buck' Buchanan writes:-

I would like to have written to everyone individually but found this an impossible task. May I take this opportunity to thank all Tom's/Buck's friends for their kind letters and cards and for being so supportive.

I was so very proud and indeed touched to see how many people turned up at the church service and the memorial service to pay their respects to a good friend and soldier. I shall never forget either day - thank you all very much!

Major B Du B Finch White MC

Major Finch White who died on the 7th March 1998 aged 92 years was the son of Major Finch White who served in the 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment in the Suakin Campaign of 1885. Educated at Marlborough and Sandhurst, young Finch was commissioned in to The East Surrey Regiment 1924.

He served with the 1st Battalion in Hong Kong and India before volunteering for service with The King's African Rifles. He returned to England in time for the 1939 - 45 War and was a company commander in the 1st Battalion in France.

For his leadership in the Battle of the Escant, Finch was awarded the Military Cross. He returned to England from Dunkirk and next saw active service with the 1st Battalion in North Africa, where he was slightly wounded. He remained with the 1st Battalion until 1944.

Finch had an affinity with Africa. He served with The King's African Rifles from 1930 to 1936, the West African Frontier Force from 1941 to 1942 and, after retirement in Tanganyika

from 1950 to 1972. His interests ranged from big game shooting in East Africa to painting in the quiet countryside of East Sussex.

PGEH

Company Sergeant Major A Steadman

Arthur Steadman was born in Leamington in July 1907, and moved with his parents to Yorkshire. He entered Rippon Grammar School on a Scholarship and on leaving there went in to the printing industry in Yorkshire and in Scotland. Arthur and his wife moved to Surrey in the pre-war years and he took up a post with Unwins (Printers) of Old Woking. He enlisted in the 5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment as a Territorial and was directed into the 2/5th Bn with whom he served throughout the war. First, in the Medical Section, where he was Medical Sergeant, then on to Colour Sergeant with a Rifle Company, before returning to HQ Company as CSM.

He was ever jovial, much respected, and held always in the highest esteem by both those above him, and those below him. He was the proud holder of a "608" army number, and in his ever pleasant manner lorded it over we mere mortals who could only sport a "609" number!

He will be greatly missed in the "*2/5th corner*" at the Annual Dinners so admirably run by the 5th Battalion The Queens OMA each May. Farewell Old Fellow

JJ

Captain M R A Goode

Son of Brigadier George Goode of the Queen's Royal Regiment, Michael Goode was commissioned into the Queen's Surreys from Sandhurst in 1963, and joined the 1st Battalion in Münster in early 1964 after his Hythe and Warminster courses.

Mike was a man of immense charm, kindness and good manners, and he was loyal to the bone. He was something of a rebel but none the less professional for it. He had a carefully cultured image of urbane sophistication and his appearance was one of dash and style. He certainly pushed back the barriers of acceptable hair length such that it might even have surprised a cavalry RSM! He drove a Mini Cooper until another officer obtained one at which point he switched to an MGB in the then very fashionable 'British Racing Green'. Not surprisingly, this combination attracted a legion of pretty girlfriends one of whom would frequently be seen in his company. His sense of adventure, a constant quest in his life, soon took him off to fly helicopters but the frustrations of professional soldiering in those days eventually persuaded him to seek pastures new in civilian life. Here, he tried his hand at various business ventures but he soon missed his flying so he returned to his beloved flying in various guises, not least crop spraying, and then to the Sultan of Oman's Army as a contract pilot. It was here that he sometimes flew Special Forces and, on at least one occasion, demonstrated both his flying skills and bravery rescuing a man from the sea.

After that, he returned to UK going into the financial services, the career he was following when his life was so tragically and prematurely ended. He married twice, firstly Lisa, sister of a brother officer's wife, and secondly Jacqui, who tragically died of cancer but not before producing his only child, Piers. At his death, he was on the verge of announcing his engagement to Lynda and with whom he had again found happiness.

Piers had made him enormously proud in his rugby achievements and clearly has a great deal of talent and promise. He is unmistakably his father's son displaying many of Mike's features.

RTWM



The President holds court.....



If the Devil had cast his net.....?



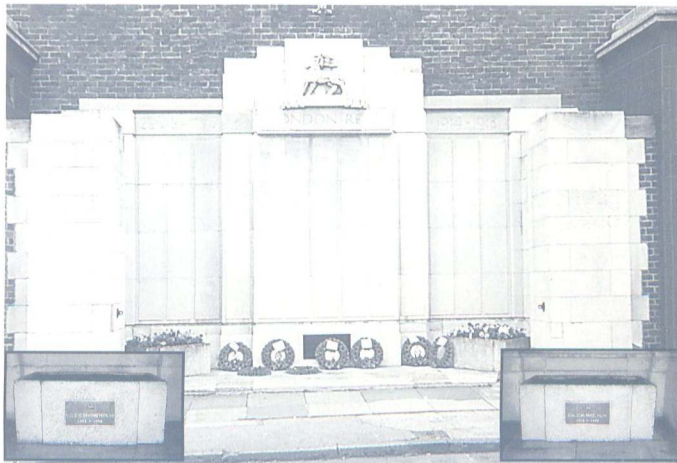
Tommy Atkins nursing his Glenmorangie!



'Wards Marauders' c1965!, Terry Isaacs, Barry Rawlings, Geoff Brown and Himself

6th (Bermondsey) Bn. The Queen's Royal Regiment Old Comrades Association

Following the deaths of our President, Colonel J G Bevington TD, in 1994 and our Vice President, Colonel C H Nice TD, DL, in 1995, the Committee felt that two such distinguished officers of both the Regiment and the Battalion should be remembered in some way.



After consulting their families, it was decided that the memorial should be in the form of two simple bronze plaques bearing their name and dates surmounted by the Regimental badge.

The plaques have been affixed to the stone flower boxes which stand in front of the Battalion Memorial in Old Jamaica Road, Bermondsey.

MRN

o o o

Medical Section of 1/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment, taken at Sherbourne 1939



Back row left to right: Pte Sangar, Pte Sewell, Pte Cobham, Pte Bramble, L/C Esdale, Sgt Clayton, Pte Pickersgill.
Middle row left to right: Pte Roberts, Pte Brown, Pte Shepherd, Pte King, Pte Batry, Pte Coombes, Pte Hamilton, Pte Hogben.
Front row left to right: Pte Scott, Pte Bass, Pte Ringer, Sgt Shackleton, Pte Styles, Pte Boon, Pte Trotter.

Editors note:

Private Bramble was posted to 2 Queen's in Burma and was awarded the Military Medal, Sgt Shackleton a well known welter weight Territorial boxing champion before the war, later served with the APTC.



Regimental History as seen by G. Robinson



At the storming of the fort at Ghuznee on the 23rd July 1838, Lieutenant Stisted was wounded by an arrow through the calf and as the assaulting column passed him lying on the ground he gaily waved his wounded leg and called out "who shot cock robin"? It is said that for years afterwards his company was known as Cock Robins.