

NOVEMBER 1998



NUMBER 64

THE QUEEN'S ROYAL SURREY REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

President
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Assistant Secretary and Editor
Lieutenant Colonel L. M. Wilson MBE

Regimental Headquarters
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment
(Queen's and Royal Hampshires)
Howe Barracks, Canterbury
Kent CT1 1JY

Tel: Canterbury (01227) 818053

NEWSLETTER

The Queen's Royal Regimental Chapel, Holy Trinity Church, Guildford



The Reredos and Altar Frontal



The Commemorative Hanging, The Mist of Time



Regimental and Association Events



1998

- 19th November Dedication of three Memorial Plaques in The East Surrey Regimental Chapel, and re-dedication of the refurbished Memorial Gates at All Saints Church, Kingston upon Thames, commencing 1130 am.
- 20th December BRITISH BATTALION DAY.

1999

- 10th February SOBRAON DAY (1846).
- 25th February Queen's Surreys Museum Trustees meeting - Clandon.
- 5th March Queen's Surreys Regimental Council Meeting - Clandon.
- 6th March Queen's Surreys Territorial Trustees Meeting - Clandon.
- 6th March The Queen's Regiment Reunion, Victory Services Club, London.
- 20th March Queen's Surreys Association and Charity Trustees Meetings - Clandon.
- 16th April Birthday of Queen Margrethe II - Colonel-in-Chief, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.
- 23rd April YPRES DAY (1915).
- 23rd April East Surreys Officers' Club Lunch - at The London Regiment, 27 St John's Hill, Clapham Junction. Details from Col G G Strong, Middle House, Crouchston, Bishopstone, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 4BT.
- 6th May Golf Society Spring Meeting, Sudbrook Park.
- 8th May 5 OMA Annual Dinner, Sandfield Terrace, Guildford, Details from: I Chatfield, 13 Wood Road, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3NN (01483 429425).
- 16th May ALBUHERA DAY (1811).
- 16th May PWRR and Queen's Museum - Friends Open Day and Special Events Day - Dover Castle. Details from A Booth, 21 More Hall Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4EQ.
- 19th May Golf Society Annual Golf Match v The Royal Marines Fleet.
- 21 or 28 May (TBC) Presidents Reception for Freedom Town Mayors of Surrey - Clandon.
- 1st June THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE (1794).
- 6th June Queen's Surreys Association Annual Church Service, Guildford Cathedral, 11 am for 11.15 am service.
- 2nd July (TBC) PWRR Officers' Club Cocktail Party - RAMC HQ Officers' Mess, Millbank, London.
- 15-18th July Regimental Cricket at Winchester - Details from Lt Col Hugh Keatinge OBE (01962) 863658.
- 1st August MINDEN DAY (1759).
- 4-8th August PWRR and Buffs Regimental Tent at Canterbury Cricket Week.
- 9th September SALERNO DAY (1943).
- 11th September Queen Margrethe II visits PWRR TA Battalions.
- 19th September Museum Open Day - More War Stories- Clandon.
- 1st October Queen's Surreys Officers' Club, Ladies Luncheon, Clandon.
- 6th October Golf Society Autumn Meeting, Woking.
- 9th October East Surrey OCA Reunion, Clapham Junction. Details from F A W Ramsey Esq MM, 20 Lavender Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3EF (0181) 4012070.
- 16 or 23 October PWRR and Queen's Regiment WO's & Sgts' Past and Present Dinner - ATR Bassingbourne. Details RHQ PWRR.
- 4th November Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey - London.
- 5th November Annual Reunion - Union Jack Club.
- 7th November Remembrance Day Parades - Guildford - Kingston - Southwark and the Cenotaph - London. First Surrey Rifles Remembrance Parade, Stailes Church, Camberwell.
- 26th November PWRR Officers' Club Regimental Dinner - Guards and Cavalry Club, London.

Editorial

In my last editorial I wrote that I hoped to feature two articles in this edition, both concerning anniversaries. This year marks the 80th anniversary since the end of the Great War, I had hoped to have a feature on where all our various battalions of our two great regiments were. Unfortunately, space and time has prevented me from printing this article but I hope to rectify this in the May edition. 1998 was as you know the 40th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift. I hope the accounts in this edition will bring back a few memories to those who served there in those eventful months, and will I hope, be of interest to other members. I had to edit many articles and letters before deciding on the final version. To all those who supplied facts, photos and articles a very big thank you.

This brings me to the subject of Newsletter content, I have been most fortunate in having a steady stream of articles for inclusion in the Newsletter, sadly I have had to put a number on hold for future editions. In the main this is due to the length of some of the stories, but they all are fascinating and will I hope be published in the near future. DO NOT think that you should discontinue to forward your letters, photos or articles, we will find a place somewhere - sometime! Because of the importance of our museum and it's future, it has been decided to print a separate update on the move and future of the museum which is included with this Newsletter so that all our members are in the picture. I hope to see many of you at the various reunions and functions in the coming months.

Best wishes to you all, take care.
Les Wilson

President's Notes

The search continues for a new home for our museum and I hope that we will have good news to report in our next Newsletter. Colonel Peter Durrant has now handed over the Chairmanship of the Museum Trustees to Colonel Mac McConnell. On behalf of all members of the Association I would like to record our thanks to Peter for all he has done whilst in the chair. He has worked tirelessly to find a new home for the Museum but through no fault of his own without success. I would like to thank Mac McConnell for taking on this important task at a very difficult time. It is good for the Association to know that he is at the helm and I have every confidence that he is the right person to build on Peter Durrant's work and steer us to a new home.

Our indomitable Assistant Secretary, Les Wilson, has just completed the publication of a new guide to the Regimental Chapel. It is a fine guide which has been welcomed by the Cathedral. He is also producing guides to our Chapels in Holy Trinity Church, Guildford and All Saints, Kingston upon Thames. They will be a very valuable addition to our regimental literature and I hope will be available to members.

We rely heavily on our Association Secretary and Assistant Secretary to look after benevolence, to administer the Regimental Charity and Council, to edit our Newsletter to organise the annual service and reunions and provide a focal point for everything Regimental. Les Wilson is due to retire - again! - in 2000 and Government cuts could restrict the support we receive from Regimental Headquarters. More help from members may well become necessary and the Regimental Council will be addressing this at our next meeting. In the meantime the Association is as strong as ever

With best wishes
Bob Acworth

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The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

The Strategic Defence Review (SDR) will have two different levels of impact. For the Regular Army there is to be a small increase in manpower depending on specific roles and tasks. For the Territorial Army (TA) there will be a dramatic change. As these notes are printed in your Journal the final submission has been made through the Chain of Command to MOD. There will be a change and a reduction so whatever the outcome not everyone will be satisfied. It would not be fair to print the various proposals until it has been finalised. It is the correct time for change. Names will disappear and locations will close but it will all be for the benefit of a new tight professional TA to take the Country into the 21st Century.

The 1st Battalion returned from their latest 6 month deployment to Northern Ireland in May 98. They were based in West Belfast. This was another difficult tour during the time of the negotiations over the peace process and the IRA cease fire and it tested everyone's patience. A new tolerance level was found reflecting the high standard of discipline and training throughout the Battalion. Such is life in today's Regular Army that the Battalion had to send back a reinforcement company in June to August to cover the marching season. This was found from mainly volunteers.

The Battalion spent a well-deserved period of summer leave in August, and has now deployed on a major exercise (Exercise POND JUMP WEST) to Canada until October. This is a really good opportunity for them to carry out some first class training in an interesting and different exercise area, with some adventure training and leave thrown in as well.

Hopefully the Battalion will be home at Christmas time, but their commitments to the JRDF (Joint Rapid Deployment Force) are always uncertain and they lead busy, demanding lives which may result in deployment to some hot spot in the world.

The 2nd Battalion is now an established element of 1st Mechanised Brigade (Tidworth) in its SAXON (Wheeled) Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). They returned from an Exercise in Kenya in February and are off on Exercise to Belize (Central America) next year. Right now however, they are busy preparing for yet another six months operational tour of duty to Belfast and Northern Ireland, which will last from November 1998 until June 1999. Just as the 1st Battalion found the pace of life over there still to be very busy and demanding, there is no doubt that the 2nd Battalion will have another hard tour to face. The future over there is still far from certain, but the Infantry and the Regiment has an ongoing, important job to do there. Everyone wants to see if the "peace" holds?

The two Territorial Battalions face an uncertain future. They are not letting this situation lower their morale or training standards. They have just completed their Annual Camps with the 5th Battalion in Oakhampton and the 6/7th Battalion in Belgium (Arlon). The numbers attending have been high and varied training has been achieved. In addition they still produce support for the Regular Army with manpower (all ranks) for Northern Ireland, Bosnia, and the Falkland Islands. The Battalions are in fine form.

AM

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Humour in Ireland

Always with the British Serviceman humour somehow intrudes among tragedy wherever he is serving.

While on duty in Ireland a C/Sgt, mindful of the comfort and well being of his men, obtained some cutlery for their use in their 'al fresco' consumption of meals at a dockside.

The parcel of implements was duly delivered by a distinctly suspicious looking civilian and the receiving officer, feeling the weight of it and hearing the clink of metal from within, suspected an explosive device and ordered a fireman to turn a hose on it - a most thorough "washing up" process of kitchen ware if ever there was one.

This was not the only suspicious cutlery incident in Ireland's history. In 1945, when the writer was serving in the Royal Navy in HMS *Duckworth* in Belfast Docks, there was some mystification over the fact that cutlery seemed to be decreasing in the Dockyard Forces Canteen but proportionately increasing in the YMCA in the town. The solution was soon found. The Dockyard charged a refundable sixpenny deposit for the use of their cutlery while the YMCA similarly charged a shilling.

Financially minded sailors soon calculated that a transfer of "irons" from one establishment to the other yielded a profit of sixpence per transaction. Standardisation of charges ended the practice.

There is no record of any detections or punishments arising from these deceptions. Had there been it is hoped that the sanctions would not have been as drastic as those imposed on Pte John Furnell, 2nd Regiment of Foot at Hull on 23rd June 1822, when he received 300 lashes for misappropriating silver spoons belonging to the Officers' Mess. Within a week, travelling on a baggage cart, he moved with his Regiment to York where he died some days later.

An inquest jury decided that he died from the effects of his punishment but they do not seem to have expressed any disapproval.

RF

Museum Notes

I write these notes as a former Chairman of the Museum Trustees since I retired on 1st July. The Editor felt that it might be suitable for me to give some account of Museum activities during the period since the last issue of the Newsletter and early July and no doubt my worthy successor, Colonel 'Mac' McConnell will have been asked to follow on and bring you up to date.

It was a great privilege to have been Chairman for the past five years; a period of evolvement, a time of threat by the Ministry of Defence to remove their funding on which the running of the Museum partly depends and finally a ceaseless search for a new home, once the National Trust had said that we must vacate Clandon by 31st October 1999 and later amended after representation to 31st October 2000.

In 1990, following my retirement from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for personal reasons I very much wanted to return to the Regiment, the Regiment for which I had great affection and to help in any way that I could. Being involved with the Museum enabled me to satisfy this wish and for that alone I shall always be grateful.

The Trustees Meeting held on 1st July at Clandon was the shortest on record - thirteen minutes, during which my resignation was accepted, Colonel 'Mac' was elected a Trustee and appointed as Chairman. Although prior to the meeting I had been asked to stay behind for a glass of something, little did I know of the quiet skulduggery that had gone on behind the scenes by Penny James and Roy Harding. As the meeting broke, my wife was produced from Twickenham, small eats were brought in and wine poured. I was most generously presented with engraved glasses, a bottle of 'medicine' to fill the whisky goblets and Dene was given a lovely bouquet of flowers. Later I was given lunch at the 'Rag' by the President and Chairman of the Association together with Mac and my oldest friend in the Regiment - Les Wilson, having served together in Berlin fifty short years ago.



Anything that has been achieved in the Museum has been due to the dedicated group of voluntary Trustees, working party members, helpers and, of course, our two members of the permanent staff, Penny James and Roy Harding, and strongly supported financially by the Association.

I do hope Guildford comes to appreciate the depth and value of its County Regiment's Museum and offer it the permanent home it deserves.

I must start my contribution to these notes by paying warm tribute to my predecessor Colonel Peter Durrant for his dedicated leadership and hard work over the last five years. In the three months since I have been in office it has become increasingly apparent to me how much he has done to increase awareness of the Museum, both by the public and in the narrower but equally influential "*Museum world*", and how energetically he has pursued enquiries for a suitable home when our lease at Clandon expires. It must have been frustrating and disappointing to be forced to withdraw from the Stag Hill project after all his hard work.

My main aim therefore is to find, negotiate terms for, and then occupy satisfactory alternative accommodation. An overwhelming majority of the Trustees, members of the Association, visitors and others have made it clear that they hope the Museum will be in the town centre of Guildford. Suitable properties in this very attractive town are difficult to find. The more suitable the property, the higher the price or the greater the rent. However before he retired, the Council's officers suggested to Colonel Peter that he may care to apply for a tenancy of a property called Centenary Hall owned by Guildford Council which though not ideal could be made suitable.

Despite the obvious support of the Council's principal officers, the Council has twice adjourned our application, and I hope for (and am working for) a final decision in our favour at the end of October. If we fail to get that decision it will be necessary to cast our net wider, and I will follow up other proposals outside Guildford. To those members of the Association who live in Guildford I would ask you to canvass the support of your local Councillor - even though it will be too late for the October meeting.

My second aim is to enlarge the Museum Management Committee by the inclusion of people not necessarily former members of the Regiment, who have influence or experience or qualifications, who share our love of the Museum, and who are willing, in time, to take on the legal responsibilities of Trusteeship, and carry the Museum forward well into the next millennium. I will publish a list of names of the Management Committee in a future issue.

My last aim is to learn about how to run a museum! The National Army Museum is kindly offering me instruction at a course to be held in November, but I am always receptive to any ideas any of you may have as to how we may improve.

Finally, on Museum matters generally, I understand that the Averell Daniel mitred cap has been beautifully restored by the Royal School of Needlework and we look forward to its return once fitted into its perspex cover. I also gratefully acknowledge receipt of the original 1/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment Flag originally presented to the town of Boston, Lincolnshire in 1940, and the following medal groups:-

L/Cpl J R Kay	Queen's
WO1 D L Boorer	Surreys
WO2 A Steadman	Queen's
Cpl R Hard	Queen's
Pte L Brown	Surreys

WEMcC

PAWGD

Regimental Association Church Service 1998

There was as usual a good turnout for the annual service at the Cathedral. The Dean preached an outstanding sermon upon which many members commented and said they would like to see reproduced in the Newsletter. The Dean has kindly agreed that this should be done and the full text is below. I have asked the Dean to preach again at our service in 2000 and he has replied that he would be honoured to do so "if he is spared as they say in Scotland"!

Bob Acworth

The Dean's Sermon

From New Testament reading: The words of Jesus to the Centurion - **"I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel"**.

In the years immediately after the end of the Second World War it was believed in the West that Russia was preparing to invade Western Europe and the British Isles as the first stage of progress to world domination and to the triumph of world communism.

For this reason, those of my generation on reaching the age of 18 were all called up for two years compulsory National Service. So it was that I found myself at the Royal Artillery training depot, then in Oswestry in the depths of Shropshire, for 3 months basic training before being sent to endure the very demanding horrors of Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot.

Having somehow managed to survive the course, at the age of 19 I joined a regiment of the Royal Artillery shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War and very soon came to realise that I had been admitted into an extraordinary tradition. The names of the batteries went back to years before the Napoleonic Wars, most of the senior officers and NCO's had served throughout the second world war, some with great distinction. Many of their fathers or other relatives had served throughout the First World War. You who joined The Queen's and Surreys will have had a very similar experience. The great County Regiments had a powerful sense of tradition and a very strong sense of comradeship.

No-one would ever describe the British Army, or any army, as an ideal institution, but the British Army with its greatness and also with its occasional confusions and absurdities is, and with a few exceptions has always been, an honourable fellowship. For very many thousands of men and some women, service in the Army has, in this twentieth century, been their expression of sacrificial personal commitment to upholding the best that they knew.

Perhaps no-one has ever expressed this more clearly than the novelist Eric Linklater, who served in the Black Watch throughout the First World War and who spoke very much from his own experience. In describing England at the outbreak of war in 1914 he wrote this:

"There was a deep and genuine feeling that good had separated itself from evil, that good and evil now stood on opposite sides and our young men had the chance of a lifetime to enlist under their own Colours. Which they did. They enlisted to fight for small nations, to win a war that would put an end to war - and for week after week in the pouring rain, for month after wintry month in ramshackle barracks and overcrowded billets, they lived in faith unsoiled and with enthusiasm undiminished. England in the autumn of 1914 stood in a spirit almost as remote from ours as the England of Francis Drake or Nelson's captains..... There were hundreds of thousands of men, young and not so young, whose radiance repelled the drenching skies, kept their shabby billets warm and lifted their hearts in wild hilarious songs as interminably

they marched and marched again through dripping sodden Hampshire lanes."

When Rupert Brooke wrote 'Now God be thanked who has matched us with his hour' he wrote for a whole multitude of men of every class, creed and condition. Quite, quite incomprehensible to us now, but none the less true."

The first point which I would like to suggest to you this morning is that for very many thousands of men, and some women, service in the Army has, in this bloodstained twentieth century, been their expression of sacrificial personal commitment to upholding the best that they knew.

This is one of the many reasons why I hope your Regimental Museum will find a suitable place of honour in this County. The freedoms which we enjoy and take for granted were won at a monstrous cost of suffering and sacrifice and this should never be allowed to be merely forgotten. A military museum is a place where, as well as gazing at colourful uniforms, future generations can come at least to some awareness of what the human reality of war and military service actually was, and to some extent, still is.

Your Association's excellent Newsletter not only contains reminiscences about the past the Queen's and the East Surreys - but information about the Regiment which preserves and continues these traditions; The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment. You have an interest in and concern for those who are serving at the present time.

As we read of the activities of The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment perhaps we should just reflect on the fact - the sad fact - that the greatest danger to the lives of serving members of the Regiment, barring accidents, is likely to come from violence inspired by bad religion.

And by bad religion I mean any system of religious belief, whether Christian, or Jewish, or Muslim, or Sikh, or Hindu, or any other, which makes arrogant and exclusive claims about itself, which denies the validity of other beliefs, which nearly always has a political agenda and which will not hesitate to use violence.

The distinguished Roman Catholic scholar, Hans Kung, said recently "there will be no peace between nations without peace among religions." And that peace - among religions - is still a long way off despite the best efforts of many good people on every continent. The religion of the British may now be football, the National Lottery and driving about in motor cars; that is not so elsewhere in the world - you need do no more than read the newspapers to see what I have been trying to suggest to you. Religious belief matters, and matters very much, but it also matters that belief respects integrity, scholarship, charity and tolerance, and those qualities are still, sadly, in limited supply.

One of the most extraordinary military escapades of the Second World War was the campaign of the Chindits in Burma, a campaign in which the Queen's was heavily involved. Columns of hundreds of men operated on foot in the Burmese jungle, miles behind the Japanese front lines. Their task was to destroy supplies and communications and to harass the Japanese wherever they could be found.

There was, of course, no transport, everything had to be carried. For supplies they were dependent on the success, or otherwise, of drops from the air. The injured received such first aid as could be given and had then to be abandoned, if possible into the care of Burmese villagers. One of the leaders of the campaign was Bernard Fergusson, a Brigadier in the Black Watch, a distinguished soldier and writer. In his books about the campaign in Burma he describes the quite extraordinary physical, emotional and spiritual demands which the operation made on everyone. He also describes with great simplicity and

directness how his own faith sustained him throughout these experiences; words and phrases from the Bible, from prayers and from hymns; what he described as spiritual capital built up in less demanding times.

There have always been, and still are, very many officers and men who have combined service in the army with a genuine and sustaining personal faith. And there have always been those who have found this to be very difficult. George Mcleod, one of the great leaders of the Church of Scotland in this century, served as a young man throughout the whole of the First World War. From 1914 to 1918 he was on active service in the trenches in France as a Subaltern with the Highland Light Infantry. Somehow, miraculously, he survived but that experience gave him, understandably enough, a life long commitment to Pacifism, a conviction that participation in war is always wrong and cannot be reconciled with Christian commitment.

Those of my generation were not able to share his views, however much we understood and respected them. As schoolboys we had watched the Newsreel films of the liberation of Auschwitz, we had watched the men of the Royal Engineers, their noses muffled against the stench, bulldozing into mass graves the piled, starved corpses of Belsen. It seemed to us that monstrous evil can never just be met with pious intentions, however sincerely held.

One of the most popular and enduring books to come out of the Second World War is, strangely enough, an anthology of poetry, "Other Men's Flowers", put together by Field Marshal Wavell. The book's enduring popularity is partly because of its excellence and partly because it showed Field Marshal Wavell to be a man of great culture, faith, integrity and openness to the mysteries of the Spirit.

As members of your Regimental Association, you will be well aware that service in the Army whether in peace or war makes demands, sometimes very heavy demands, on body, mind and spirit, and we are beings of body, mind and spirit. There have always been many like Wavell and Bernard Fergusson who have found their Christian Faith to be a source of sustaining strength and inner guidance. May what was true for them remain true for us as we reflect on our lives and our years of service. And our readings from the New Testament at this service reminded us that it was to a soldier that Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Dean of Guildford

Alex Wedderspoon

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Santa comes early!



In the shape of Major John (Santa) Fowler seen here supervising the loading of three quarters of a ton of paper, donated by him for our Newsletter. Once again many thanks John.

Assault landing 8th November 1942

At 1.30am on a Sunday morning 8th November 1942 A Coy The East Surrey Regiment made an Assault landing on the beaches a few miles from a little town called Castiliogne. We landed on the wrong beach as we should have landed at Castiliogne.

However the ramps went down on the landing craft and our platoon commander Lieutenant Crabtree stood up and said charge! He jumped into the sea and disappeared because we were about thirty yards from the beach and could not go any further as there were a lot of rock pools, you could see his helmet going along on top of the sea but he surfaced quite a few yards in, a lot of food and personal items was lost and equipment, we were up to our necks wading in, we eventually got to the beach all soaked and saw an old lorry and charcoal run bus which we took charge of after a few threats to the drivers and they turned round and took us in to the town which was lit up like a fairy town and all the girls were coming out of the brothels.

But we were ordered to stay in the transport until they were gone, then just as if someone had pulled a main switch the whole town was plunged into darkness, so we stood to till daylight when from over the sea a Dornier bomber swept in very low over our position but the order was do not open fire, and the day passed peacefully.

We stood to all night till the Monday morning on the edge of the town, without any repercussion, the company had breakfast and prepared to march just on the outskirts of Algiers.

We were bivouaced in an orange grove, we were all instructed not to touch the oranges, but the temptation was too great when on night patrols. We stayed there, until transport arrived and A Coy of the Surreys and one company from the Hampshires and one from the Lancashire Fusiliers, were the front wedge of the 1st Army all the way to Tunisia for little pockets of resistance which were quickly pushed aside, eventually we reached Tebourba, where we met very stiff resistance from all round us, and quite a lot of casualties were inflicted on all three battalions the fortnight we were there.

EJT

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Remembering Firefighters

The Firefighters Memorial Trust was formed in early 1990 with the dual purpose of "commissioning, dedicating and unveiling" a National Memorial to the men and women of the British Fire Service who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of the Realm during the aerial bombardment of World War Two, and to holding "annual Services of Remembrance in memory of those same fire service personnel".

The Trust has now extended its activities to include the commemoration of all firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty both before and after the Second World War.

Richard Ford, former Curator of Clandon Museum, has submitted the name of George H.J. Simpson, formerly of The East Surrey Regiment, who survived the South African War only to be killed later when, as a part time fireman, he fell from the back of a fire engine at Basingstoke while returning from a fire in 1931. Death was due to a fractured skull. His helmet, which should have protected him, fell from his head before he hit the ground.

At the subsequent inquest a verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned. The jury waived their claim to fees and asked that these should be donated to the widow of the deceased.



The Berlin Airlift

Officially the Airlift started on the 26th June 1948, when an aircraft headed for Berlin carrying food that could not be delivered by land or water routes. However, the build-up to the airlift began earlier in the year, when, on 1st April, the Russian Deputy Military Governor in Berlin announced that supplementary regulations would be enforced with respect to Allied military trains and vehicles operating between Berlin and the Western Zone. These regulations were resisted by the Allies, and on April 3rd the Americans stepped up the flight schedules from Frankfurt/Main to Tempelhof to 31 flights a day.

In June 1948 the Russians announced their intention of closing the Autobahn bridge over the Elbe for repairs. They said that there was no alternative route between the Elbe and Western Germany.

On Monday, 21st June, the Russians stopped all barge traffic between West Berlin and the Western Zones, and the last food train arrived in Berlin. Two days later part of the electricity supply for the Western Sectors was cut, endangering the water supply by reducing the amount of current available for pumping.

The following report appeared in the Soviet licensed A.D.N. News Agency on 25th June:

"Because of technical difficulties on the railroad....compelled to stop, during the night of 24th June, all passenger and freight traffic ... between Berlin and Helmstedt. All necessary orders for prompt repair work have been issued. It is impossible to re-route traffic in the Soviet Zone of Occupation."

On that day there were stocks of food and coal in the city of Berlin sufficient to last six weeks. Thus the RAF started an operation planned to fly in food and supplies for the British Forces in Berlin. By the 28th June the Air Ministry ordered 100 aircraft of Transport Command to the British Zone of Occupation. The expansion of RAF Gatow began on the 29th June. At this time Gatow only had two runways.

"Operation Carter-Paterson" started on 30th June, the first flight departing from RAF Wunstorf at 0600 hours - a Dakota bound for Gatow with three tons of flour. Gatow was to accept 10 aircraft an hour between 0500 hours and 2200 hours as a start, and later night trips at the rate of six an hour.

Avro Yorks started flying on the Airlift on 31st July. Their introduction caused a certain amount of confusion. One pilot complained that his Dakota had only just managed to take off and wouldn't climb at all. After his landing it was discovered that he had been carrying a York's load of 11,000 lbs instead of the 6,500 lbs Dakota load!

Backloading of German freight and mail began on 5th July: the Americans were to take mail, the RAF the freight. After one day it was decided that the RAF would also carry out the German mails. German freight was loaded into the last wave of Yorks to depart Gatow each day. This was in order that there would be no delay in turn-round. The amount handled soon became 30 tons a day. The first Sunderland Flying boat landed on the Havel, and was met by the British Commandant, Major General E. O. Herbert.

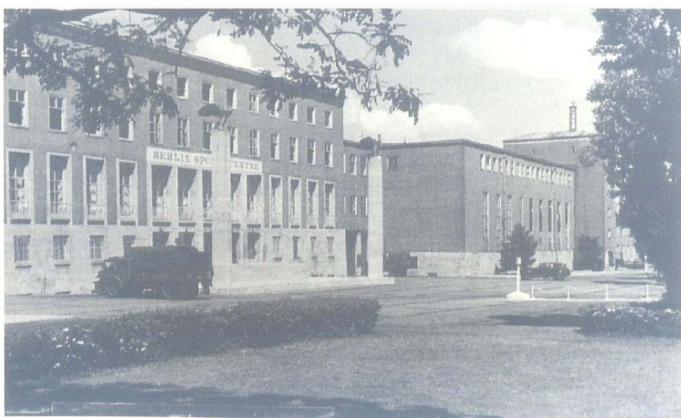


Next day ten Sunderlands were incorporated in the lift, operating from Finkenwerder to the Havel lake. The Sunderlands were used to fly in salt, as the fuselages of these aircraft were treated to withstand salt corrosion. Altogether 420 British and US aircraft flew to Berlin. All crews were warned on the 7th July to stay within the corridors and above 5,000 ft, due to Soviet fighter activity.

At about this time the Russian-controlled press and radio were saying that it was the intention of the Allies to leave Berlin, and that food could be obtained by any West Berliner who cared to register in East Berlin. It was said that the British code name "Operation Carter-Paterson" was the name of a well known removal firm, and that the operation was intended to remove the British from Berlin.

The name of the operation was changed to "Plainfare" and British Families were asked to plant garden crops that would be harvested in the spring, to indicate to the Germans that the British intended to stay. Only a small percentage of Germans registered with the Soviets for food, and they were mostly Communist officials and their families.

Shortly after the start of the airlift it was noticed that the surface of the concrete runway was breaking up under the constant usage, and resurfacing was necessary. There was not enough cement in Berlin to do this, and it was decided to use a layer of stone and bitumen. At first this decision was treated with reserve, as there were no supplies of stone or, bitumen, but the engineers pointed out that when the Russians had handed over the Western Sectors at the end of the war they had removed most of the steel railway lines, leaving the ballast behind. This ballast provided all the stone needed, but the problem of bitumen supplies remained. This was solved by tearing up the surface of streets in the bombed areas of Berlin, and in addition some bitumen was provided when East Berliners, under cover of darkness, would roll barrels of the substance over the Sector Boundary from a Bitumen factory just within the Russian Sector.



Headquarters, British Troops, Berlin

The Russians had taken with them nearly all the steam rollers when they left, leaving only a few old, dilapidated models, and this naturally slowed down construction of the new surface, but the Americans helped by sending some bulldozers across, and an East German drove a modern steam roller onto the airfield from the Russian Zone! The original target date set for the completion of the runway was November 1st, but the work was complete and the runway in use on 16th July. Extra groundstaff were flown in on the 17th, and also on that day Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder, accompanied by Lady Tedder and the AOC-in-C, toured the ground organisation.

The first loads of coal were flown into Gatow on July 19th by RAF Dakotas, and on the 20th it was decided to transfer the task of backloading German freight from the Yorks to the Dakotas, the amount varying between 30 and 50 tons per day. To avoid turn-round delays, loads were limited to 1,112 tons of German freight. By this time the RAF were using 40 Yorks and 50 Dakotas on the airlift, while the Americans were using 54 C-54s and 105 C-47s.

Liquid fuels were flown-in in drums at this time, but Flight Refuelling Ltd of Tarrant Rushton were approached, and on 27th July, Lancastrian G-AKDR took off for Germany with 8,800 gallons of MT fuel on board. This aircraft arrived at Gatow on 29th July. All liquid fuel flown to Berlin during the airlift came in British aircraft.

It would be reasonable to assume that aircraft movements at Gatow were restricted to "Plainfare" aircraft, but this was not the case. During the month of July there were 513 RAF movements and 155 BEA movements in addition to those connected with the airlift.

The original control point for the Sunderland operations was at Klara lake, on the American side of the Havel, but after a few days it was decided to have the control post on the Gatow side, and so it was moved into the RAF Yacht Club, which became Gatow Marine Base, and was christened "*H.M.A.F.V. Deadalus*".

Flight safety was of a very high standard, during the period from the start of the lift to 31st July, there were only 27 incidents involving British aircraft on the airlift. These incidents included taxiing accidents, vehicles colliding with aircraft, engine failure in flight, etc. When it is realised that there was a total of 12,066 aircraft movements during this period it speaks very highly for the skill of air and ground crews working on the airlift.

An American C-74 Globemaster landed at Gatow on August 17th, the largest aircraft used on the airlift. The Taxiways could not take this aircraft, so it reversed the pitch of its airscrews and taxied backwards down the runway to the hardstanding, where it unloaded 20 tons of flour. Because of its excellent cargo loading facilities (it carried its own cranes and had a cargo delivery hoist built into the fuselage) it was

decided to use this aircraft type to carry in loads of heavy airfield equipment such as bulldozers.

On December 14th Sunderlands ceased to operate on the airlift due to the danger of ice on the alighting areas, but it was intended to renew the service in the spring. The Sunderlands had carried 1,200 Berlin children out of the city. The next day the Aquilia Airways Hythe flying boats were withdrawn from the airlift and Finkenwerder was closed.

Before the end of the month a further 2,031 landings were made, the total sorties during December being 6,737. The airlift had been operating 187 days with an average of 278 landings per 24 hours, or every 5 min 9½ secs. day and night for six months, making Gatow the busiest airfield in the world, having handled 321,620 short tons of freight; one ton per 53 seconds.

On 1st March bad weather closed Gatow from 0200 hours to 1240 hours, but at 1300 hours there was a bad snowstorm and by 1440 only 13 aircraft had landed and 8 taken off. Snow was cleared at Gatow by equipment which had been flown in the airlift. The snow ploughs had to be cut up with oxyacetylene torches for loading into aircraft and welded together again on arrival



Frey Bridge, Berlin 1949

The peak day of the airlift was April 16th, when 1,383 aircraft brought in 12,849 short tons, with a landing every 62 seconds. On this day the construction of the second concrete runway at Gatow was begun.

An official statement was issued simultaneously in London, Paris, Washington and Moscow on May 5th in the following terms:-

"The Governments of France, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, The United Kingdom, and the United States have reached the following agreement: All the restrictions imposed since 1st March 1948 by the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on communications, transport, and trade between Berlin and the Western Zones of Germany and between the Eastern Zone and the Western Zones will be removed on 12th May 1949".

And so the siege was raised, and a signal victory had been won by the West. The airlift did not, of course, cease overnight, but tailed off gradually until on 6th October 1949 the last aircraft, a Hastings, landed at Gatow. A total of 277,728 flights had been made by British aircraft (RAF and Civil), carrying 542,623 tons. During the operation 29 British subjects lost their lives.

There was, however, what might be termed a postscript to the operation. On the 23rd September 1949, no less a personage than Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Viscount Trenchard arrived to see the last airlift Dakota arrive at Gatow. On the following day, the 24th September, a wave of eight Hastings

landed at three minute intervals, as they had been doing during the airlift, by way of a demonstration for Lord Trenchard. So ended the biggest air support operation ever mounted by the RAF in peace time and the vast organisation was gradually run down to normal operating size.



A Humber scout car of the Signal Platoon 1 Queen's outside the Reichstag, 1948

During May and June preparations were made for the transfer of all BEA scheduled flight operations to Tempelhof. This move took place on 9th July. On July 10th the Airlift Memorial in front of Tempelhof Central Airport was unveiled.

LW

The move by road to Berlin

Having been on the spot in Berlin during the Airlift, I was interested to see the 50th Anniversary piece in the magazine. I thought I might be able to add a little regimental drama to the event. No mention is made of how the Battalion got from Dortmund to the Olympic Stadium in Berlin.

At the time of the proposed move of the Battalion from Dortmund to Berlin, if I remember rightly, I was commanding Headquarter Company and was selected to be OC the Advance Party.

On due date our convoy formed up in the barracks, about a dozen vehicles in all, with me in my small private car with the Catherine of Braganza painting carefully packed up on the back seat.

We soon arrived at Helmstedt where there was a Russian checkpoint before getting on to the autobahn to Berlin. Having cleared this without too much trouble, off we went. We arrived at the Magdeburg Bridge to be told that the road was blocked and the bridge unsafe. After some coming and going the Russians indicated that there was a ferry across the river a bit lower down and it was suggested that we should try this.

We set off down a gravel track and eventually reached the "ferry". To my horror it was just a flat barge attached to an overhead wire by means of a pulley and the barge was moved over by means of the river's current. I had seen such a contraption in the Far East. What to do? We had no radios and no telephone was available. The ferryman appeared to be encouraging (though he had no English and we no German) so we decided to have a go.

It was a very slow progress. One vehicle at a time and at least half an hour between trips. Then there was a further complication - at intervals some fully armed po-faced Russian soldiers appeared, sitting to attention in the back of a truck, stopped in a cloud of dust by the ferry, debussed, and took up defensive positions round the barge. Were they going to take us prisoners? No, having stayed in position for five or ten

minutes they embussed and shot off up the gravel road again. This same procedure took place at intervals during the day.

In time, and after many delays, we got all the convoy across the river intact, and set off to get back on to the Autobahn. The ferry operator did well on chocolate and army rations! Without further trouble we arrived at the British Berlin Sector Checkpoint, probably six or seven hours later than expected, and, what a reception committee! Several generals and senior members of the Control Commission. As the day had worn on everyone seemed to think we had been put "in the bag", and that a third world war was imminent! A lot of "debriefing" took place, and eventually, very tired, we reached the Olympic Stadium for a meal and some well-earned sleep.

I heard no more of the incident, and later the Battalion and families moved to Helmstedt, and into temporary accommodation. Quite a long time afterwards they were taken into Berlin by the Airlift. Despite all the tension and scares we were happy in Berlin. Some months later I and my family flew out of Berlin in a Dakota which had been used for carrying coal, as I was to take up a new appointment. A very dirty process it was! My little car never made it - some young man took an unauthorised trip in it, and very successfully wrapped it round a large tree!

Robert Lyle

A E Payne remembers Berlin during the Airlift days

Thank you for the No 63 issue of Newsletter which included information and photographs concerning the Queen's Royal Regiment's service in Berlin at the time of the 1948 Airlift.

As a National Serviceman I was posted to D Company in the Olympic Stadium where we were billeted in quarters which were sparse but conveniently placed opposite one of the swimming pools!

Although training and guard duties seemed quite arduous (including suggested stints of 24 hours on - 24 hours off) we were nevertheless able to enjoy the available first class, olympic standard, sporting facilities for boxing, athletics and swimming as well as football. Indeed I was in the D Company football team and enclose a photograph taken after our 5-1 victory over A Company in an inter-company shield competition.

The Berlin pictures and others in Newsletter 63 showed some well remembered faces and if you can publish this photograph it may possibly re-kindle a few more memories. I can't remember all the names of the people in the photograph but from left to right they read as follows:-



Back row: Linesman CSM Motton?, Pte 'Blondie' Vickers, Johnny Vinall, Sgt Bill Redford, Cpl 'Spud' Taylor, Pte Andy Payne, Pte?, Pte Dennis Harding, Linesman Cpl?, Sgt PT1.
Front row: Pte Barrett, Cpl Collins, Capt Lynch-Staunton, Cpl Potter, CSM 'Haircut' Baker, Pte?, Cpl Renshaw?

Although food was a bit basic during the Airlift (fish, pom and peas) something a bit special was miraculously provided for our after match celebrations thanks, I'm sure, to the efforts of the Company Commander, Captain Lynch-Staunton. Incidentally, medals and trophy were presented by General Sir George Gifford who was visiting the battalion.

Finally with regard to sporting competition does anyone remember that memorable boxing tournament between The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Norfolk Regiment and in particular Bill Redford's Heavyweight victory over the Norfolk man.

Editors note: Yes very well - The Royal Norfolks heavyweight was a Sgt Wackett!

□ □ □

Pat Kelly reminds us of some old soldiers 'tales'.

I was with some friends in a square when, much to our surprise, some Black Market activity was taking place. We were talking to some Displaced Persons when we noticed a hurried exodus taking place all around us, some whistles were blown and a lorry came into the square and out of it came German police. They rushed past us and chased after the civilians, what fun we thought until a jeep arrived containing a British officer plus MP's who made a bee line for us, our innocent faces and the excuse that we were sight seeing saw us safely out of the reach of the long arm of the law.

On the occasion of my first evening out of barracks after the Battalion had moved from the Olympischer Stadium to Brooke Barracks, Spandau, I managed to get lost on the U-Bahn and thus was running late on my return to barracks. While walking from the railway station a lorry, driven by a DP stopped and asked if I would like a lift, what luck I thought, I might just make it back in time. I was about to climb over the tailboard when a pair of headlights from a following jeep hit me and another jeep stopped in front of the lorry. It seemed that they had been following this lorry due to it having been involved in Black Market activity. After being questioned I was thankfully moving away from the scene, having convinced them I had nothing to do with the lorry when one of the MP's said "*just a minute soldier, have you got a late pass*", caught, and to make it worse the guard commander that night was my company Sergeant, Joe Norman who "*might*" have been willing to turn a blind eye!!

Another item regarding the "*Pom*" potato, as I think I have already said we seemed to have *pom*, for every meal and at times it was like having lumpy gravy, we was so sick of it that when we were asked was there anything we would like as a treat for our Christmas dinner, real potatoes was top of the list.

The two resolute looking warriors is of a Pte F. Crowe and myself on the first of the many guard duties we had to do at the Military Governors Residence. My hat, perched on my head like the proverbial "*soup plate*", was placed there by RSM. Noke who had suddenly



descended upon the guard like a whirlwind. The guard commander would not allow me to change it's shape in the slightest during my guard duties because as he said the R.S.M. was bound to pay us a surprise visit. Of course he did and this time I passed the "*hat*" inspection without further comment.

□ □ □

The Football Match

Editors note: This article was received by me seven days before the sudden death of Major John Sutton. I am grateful to his widow for allowing me to publish this story of a rather tense time in history.

In July 1948 the Berlin Blockade was at it's height and 2 Queens were a major part of the Allied presence in West Berlin. In truth that presence was token rather than a strong defence force, just two infantry battalions in the British Sector, one squadron of tanks from our old friends the 8th Hussars, a battery of 25 pdrs. and a squadron of Sappers. Similar token forces in the American and French Sectors. Berlin was besieged, with sometimes five and sometimes six East German Mechanised Divisions in a close ring around the city and outside them twenty -thirty Russian divisions. The only road contact for the British Sector was a single road corridor from Helmstedt used by small groups of vehicles, mainly Military Police vehicles "*showing the flag*".

The airlift was in full swing with hundreds of landings each day to fly in every single commodity needed for every aspect of all life in West Berlin, from coal for the power stations to milk for the babies. Look up and there was a constant stream of aircraft flying in from the West, one aircraft landing, one overhead and one on it's approach. Every variety of re-supply aircraft, even Sunderland flying boats landing on the Havel. Another air corridor slightly farther South for empty aircraft returning westwards to the Allied Zone. The Russians regularly exercised their right to enter the Allied Sectors, with a permanent ceremonial guard on the Russian War Memorial in the British Sector just inside the politically sensitive Brandenburg Gate. The memorial a Russian T34 tank mounted on a large granite plinth. There was also the prison guard on Rudolf Hess and other Nazi War Criminals in Spandau Prison, a guard that rotated weekly from the Americans to the French, to the Russians and to the British. Infrequently two or three Russian soldiers in plum-coloured uniform sight-seeing in the Kurfurstendam, or in the Tiergarten that they had so recently fought through, just as we infrequently passed through Check-Point Charlie to visit the Berlin Museum or the Opera House.

The atmosphere was one of permanent tension; everyone both Allied and German aware that, if they chose, the Russians and East Germans could sweep through the city in five to six hours and that then there would be another war - would it be a nuclear war? Show the flag, maintain strict discipline and demonstrate our intention to protect and maintain West Berlin. Lt-General Sir Gerald Templar had become G.O.C. Rhine Army and his first act was to publish an order that any Officer or Other Rank involved in an international incident would be court-martialled immediately. I had been appointed Battalion Security officer by Lt. Col. Lance East., my duties mainly liaison within the Battalion to ensure that Internal Security training was thorough but also to take charge of small incidents and to keep close contact with HQ British Troops Berlin (BTB) on internal security matters, my immediate contacts the DAPM and in particular Sgt. Sheppard of the Special Investigation Branch. Confrontations with Russian troops at the Brandenburg Gate and other places were not infrequent, armed Russian and British troops facing each other across twenty five - fifty yards for an hour or so until the Russians

slowly withdrew, having achieved their aim of maintaining tension at the highest level.

In late Spring the Allies and the German Kommandantura decide to give a fillip to civilian morale by staging a major civil event in the Olympic Stadium in the British Sector; a football match between Berlin and Hamburg in the great stadium holding 110,000 spectators where the Olympic Games had been held in 1936. It was hoped that up to 50,000 spectators would attend. The match was to commence at 1.30 p.m. on Saturday 18 July 1948, a day which found the Battalion on full stand-by. As Security Officer I had a Stand-by Platoon just inside the main entrance of the Stadium looking out across the Olympische Platz, the great parade ground leading in to the Stadium where, a few months later, we were to lay down arms as 2nd Battalion and take up arms as the 1st Battalion. Senior Officers, including Colonel Lance, and German civil dignitaries were seated on Hitler's balcony, which projected inwards from the top rim of the great bowl and could be seen from every seat in the Stadium. We also had an OP at the back of the Balcony where it could see both into the Stadium and out across Olympische Platz.

Crowds started arriving from mid-day onwards and by 12.30 about 20,000 spectators were seated with a crowd of many thousands more streaming down Olympische Platz from the tramways and on foot from the City. A noisy crowd intent on celebrating the occasion. At 12.50 I received a call from the OP that there was a disturbance in the crowd in Olympische Platz, where a hostile crowd was gathering round two figures who appeared to be dressed in Russian uniform; Sunray required me to investigate. I took a Corporal and a Signaller from the Stand-By Platoon, both armed with rifles. I had a rather uninspiring .38 Smith & Wesson revolver in a holster on my belt and under my arm that most important badge of British military superiority my regimental cane. I gave the strictest instruction that neither of my escorts was to open fire under any circumstance without my personal order.

With loud shouts of "Raus, Raus" we hurried through the crowd, most of whom had heard the commotion and now wished to watch the confrontation between their Occupiers. The last yards through a shouting and jeering crowd, hundreds strong, surrounding two plum clad Russian officers standing back-to-back, one holding the crowd at bay with a pointed automatic pistol. The crowd quietened as I stepped into the circle and the automatic transferred its aim to me. I knew that I must not provoke firing and also that I must arrest the two officers, both for their own safety and to prevent the possibility of the crowd taking matters into their own hands. I adopted what I hoped was a friendly smile, placed my cane under my left arm and walked slowly towards the Russians, stopping just a yard away. The pistol touched my belt. I shook my head and held out my hand, palm uppermost. There was complete stillness for what seemed an age but could not have been ten seconds. Then the Russian quietly placed the loaded and cocked pistol in my outstretched hand and I said "Thankyou". We turned about and I led my little procession back the two hundred yards through the whistling crowd to the Guard Room in the Stadium. It seemed farther than that. There the Russians were seated in a corner and given tea and cigarettes while I reported to Sunray who told me to arrange for the two Russians to be collected by BTB. I spoke by telephone with the SIB. and within an hour I had received a signed receipt for two live bodies in Russian uniform one automatic pistol, two magazines and sixteen rounds of ammunition and was accompanying the party to HQ BTB. where I dictated and signed a lengthy report.

Next morning I was required to report to BTB to be present as Arresting Officer at the handing back of the Russian Major and Captain to their own jurisdiction. A tall, exceedingly smart young Russian Captain was in the DAPM's office. He asked

Received of Capt Butler (2 QUEENS) 2 (nos) magazines, automatic pistol and 16 (sixteen) rounds, and two live bodies in Russian uniform.
18 Jul 48
BTB
L. R. Sheppard. Sgt.
S.I.B.

Extract from the back of the Guard Report for the Battalion Quarter Guard mounted at the Olympischer Stadion Guardroom 17th July 1948. Guard Commander, Sgt E G White.

me just one question through his interpreter "Did you use force to disarm them?" I replied that they were not threatened in any way, that my pistol had remained in its holster, that I had merely held out my hand for the gun, which was placed, loaded and cocked, in my outstretched hand.

The two prisoners, hatless and beltless, were double marched into the room by a Russian NCO and halted in front of the DAPM.'s desk, who proffered the pistol across the desk towards the young Captain. The Major, whose pistol it had been, stretched out his hand to take it, only to receive the full force of the Captain's cane across his wrist. The two prisoners were then double-marched out, a receipt was signed for the two prisoners and I was again allowed back to the Battalion but was to report again next morning when my statement and the DAPM.'s report would have been considered,

At 10.45 next morning I again reported to Reichskanzler Platz where I was informed that the matter appeared to have been handled satisfactorily and that I had been very fortunate (I was not told why). I was to remain available in case further questions arose. Before departing I asked what was likely to happen to the Russian Officers. The DAPM.'s answer was that the Russians had already settled the matter; the two had been shot that morning for becoming involved in an incident and for allowing themselves to be disarmed. I returned once more to report to the CO thinking rather ruefully that perhaps General Templar's edict was not so hard after all.

Oh yes, the famous football match, I had not even seen a ball kicked but the Berliners were delighted, they had won 1-0.

JS

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Neville Jackson who served with his father, Major (QM) Bob Jackson in Berlin during the Airlift recalls:-

Berlin is a long time ago and although we often think in our youth that we will never forget - We Do. In some ways the fact that Berlin was filled mostly with "Duties", so much of that time was of a mundane nature. I have memories of individual incidents such as the time when the battalion was on parade practising for Trooping the Colour and the Soviet fighters decided to 'buzz' us. I remember seeing the plane coming towards us and just wondering was this just to annoy us or was it the real thing. We would have been like targets at a fair if it had been the real thing.

At one stage Lt Charles Millman as he was then became the weapon training officer and I was his sergeant. We discovered we had a large excess of explosives in the magazine which was required to be either returned or used. I therefore became in charge of the sound effects for the battalion exercises. The first time we used them was to give the effect of shelling as the battalion practiced an advance to contact. In front of the battalion we therefore set off thirty to forty gun powder slabs in ones and twos at a time. It was quite effective. My wife who was in hospital having our first son (who later died and is



Berlin 1948-49
On road close to Brooke Barracks

buried in Berlin) told me later that the German nurses became quite agitated because they thought the Russians were coming. She was able to reassure them it was only her husband playing games!

I can also remember providing "noises off" for one of the rifle company platoons who were training the National Service soldiers in the training area, the Grunewald. We had been firing bren guns into a pit using live ammunition for sound effects. The platoon commander

felt that his soldiers were not taking the exercise seriously so decided to give them a shock. He said live ammunition was now going to be used and they were to take extra care. Then shortly afterwards he arranged that they were to be told one of the soldiers had been shot. Unfortunately the signaller was not in the know and reported the accident to BHQ. 'Doc' Watret was not amused when he arrived on the site with his ambulance!

For me personally Berlin had connotations far more personal. My father (Bob Jackson) had joined the Queen's in 1918 at the age of 17. He spent the whole of his service in the Regiment. As I grew up it was always assumed by him that I would join the Regiment and if possible obtain a commission. No other option was ever considered. When I joined the Army therefore early in 1945 I joined the Queen's. I was posted to a Leader Training Battalion and from there went to OCTU fully believing I would be commissioned into the Queen's. When I passed out of OCTU there was a shortage of officers in the Gunners and I was commissioned into the Royal Artillery. This was a blow for me and even more so for my father. I served my time with a War Service Commission and was finally discharged. For someone who had spent his whole life in the expectation of being a Regular Soldier this was quite traumatic. I resolved the problem by immediately joining up as a private in the Queen's. The authorities immediately promoted me to Sergeant and posted me to the 2nd Bn The Queen's in Berlin where my father was also serving. Although I had worn the Queen's badge before, this was the first time I actually served with the Regiment. It was like a homecoming. For the whole of my 21 years of age I had been pointed in life you



The only photograph I have of myself and my Father together in uniform



Sergeants Mess Falling Plate Team after beating the Officers

might say for this moment - and at last it had happened. I remember clearly fronting up before RSM Noke and feeling at last I had made it.

Subsequently I was to serve with 6th Queen's, The Kings African Rifles, 1st Queen's again from which I was posted as RSM to 6th Surreys just prior to the amalgamation. From there I served as RSM of the 1st Tanganyika Rifles with Colonel Roley Mans as CO. On returning from Africa I was once again commissioned and because of my previous commissioned service promoted to Captain. In 1965 I transferred to the Australian Army and served in the Royal Australian Regiment as a Company Commander.



The Queens Gymnastic Team British Troops Berlin Competition

It was at this point I decided to become an Anglican Priest and after Training and Ordination returned to the Australian Army as a Chaplain - finally retiring from the army in 1984.

Best wishes to all in the Association

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John Roll in Berlin

I flew into blockaded Berlin aboard a Dakota aircraft, from Dortmund, after spending a few weeks in hospital in Iserlohn, rejoining the battalion who were then quartered in the Olympic Stadium.

Life in Berlin between June '48 and May '49 was hard work for the rifle company's as the Regiment had to supply 100 men daily for guard duties throughout the city, not counting a company for Spandau Prison. Most were for 24 hour periods, some high profile, such as the GOC's Residence, the Control Commission HQ, Gatow Air Field and Spandau. Some others were an RAOC Depot, Food and Coal stores not forgetting a ward in BMH, these came up every other day. After a while, life became very tedious indeed, however, some amusing incidents occurred. The Germans had constructed a Flak Tower in the Tiergarten as part of the defence of the city, and now it was to be demolished. The Royal Engineers spent weeks

drilling holes round the base, then packing them with explosives. The great day dawned, the civilian population turned out to watch. Bang went the detonation, a cloud of black smoke, when it cleared there was the Tower which had only just slipped sideways, with loud cheers and jeers ringing in our ears, we made a hasty retreat.



Olympic Stadium, Berlin 1948

On the GOC residence, the guards wore slippers to cut down the noise on the gravel (Sir Brian slept soundly!)

The Control Commission Headquarters was the worst one of all. In the hall, there on the wall was a great big clock. This monstrosity jumped every minute with a big clonk. Not so bad during the day, but at night it was murder. Every time a minute went by, your eyes automatically went to it, for two hours, the longest hours I have ever spent. Spandau Prison, now here was a high profile guard. This was taken over by C Company on the First of May 1949 from the Americans (if my mind serves me correct) there were seven posts.

No 1, inside the main doors, the rest at intervals on the walls. These consisted of a wooden hut approx 3ft x 3ft, the sides halfway up then glass to the roof, this was built on a platform about 8 ft square. The sentry was not allowed inside only to phone the guard room, on the hour and clock in by ticker tape, on the half. The sides to the platform, were mounted with two Bren's and two searchlights, your personal weapon a Sten, to



7 and 8 Platoons C Coy, Spandau Prison Berlin, May 1949

reach it was by an iron rung ladder, this lowered by the man being relieved then pulled up on the change over. There was one addition to the seven sentries, an escort for any visitors the prisoners may have, staying with them till they departed.

Inside the main gates, on the right, lay the guards rest room, opposite the guard room next to the four allied officers quarters. The rest of the company not on duty lived just outside the walls. During that month, the Blockade was lifted. We were relieved by the French on the 1st June.



Brooke Barracks, Spandau, Berlin 1949

When rested from Guard Duties, training exercises were the order of the day, river crossings on the Havel, house and building clearing, this taking place in the old Luffwaffe Barracks at Gatow, also schemes in the Grunwald. Our food was not inspiring, Pom with everything, this being a powdered substitute for potato, the cooks speciality, cheese and Pom pie and I'm sure the cheese was powdered as well, it was horrible. We were always hungry, the NAFFI and Toc H made a fortune out of us.

Xmas 1948, the Battalion gave a party for some German children. Each man gave up his weeks chocolate ration, this was broken up, so they had to eat it then, not for the parents to barter with. At the end of the party they sang to us, that old carol, Holy Night. Today when I hear it sung in German, a picture of those children comes to me. Survival was the main thing to these kids. They would dig a trench across the earth track, leading up to the coal depot, so open lorries loaded with loose coal, bump down it, a few lumps would fall off, then a big scramble to grab it and run.

I said at the start, the duties were heavy in the Rifle Coy's, it must also have been for the rest of the Regiment. In C Coy we had some of the best NCO's in the Battalion. CSM Vail, Sgt's Joe Norman, Frank Dowland, Cpl's Keith Yonwin and Les Jessup. They were greatly respected.

As for Joe at the time of writing, he is alive and kicking in the Chelsea Hospital. Alas Keith and Les are no longer with us. As for 'Punchy' Vail I do not know. In November 1949, our tour of duty in Berlin came to a close and we moved by road to Aldershot Barracks, Iserlohn, here I left the Battalion in the early 50's.

Looking back to those days, how quickly I grew up. I am proud to have served in The Queen's Royal Regiment.

JWR

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Airlift Facts and Statistics

The population of West Berlin during the Airlift was approximately two million of which 20,000 were Allied Servicemen and officials. Approximately 2,500 tons of food was consumed per day. There were three air lanes into West Berlin, Frankfurt, Buckeburg and Hamburg.

Four main types of aircraft were in use during this time, Dakotas (British and US), Skymasters (US), Yorks (British), Sunderlands (British Flying Boats).

The average time between the time an aircraft stopped its engines on arrival before starting up again for take off was twenty minutes. It was true that a pilot of a twin-engined aircraft brought in a four engined load!

L.W

WINE LIST

Wines consumed during this meal will be charged at half price

1. CHAMPAGNE, Mercier	12/6
FRENCH WHITE WINE	
2. Pouilly	9/6
3. Tournay	6/6
4. Calvet Graves	11/-
5. Geisweiler	6/6
6. La Passade	5/6
GERMAN WHITE WINE	
7. Trarbach, Königsberg	6/6
8. Trarbach, Burgberg	6/6
FRENCH RED WINE	
9. Cantenac	12/6
10. Monplaisir	10/-
11. Chateaufneuf	8/6
GERMAN RED WINE	
12. Oberingelheimer	7/6



At the conclusion of the Airlift a dinner was held at the 400 club. The wine list is reproduced here. Note the prices!!

The Airlift Memorial, Berlin 1998



Photo Mike Martin

Acknowledgments:

The Editor wishes to thank all members who supplied photos and accounts of their service during the Airlift. Sadly, we have not been able to print all those sent in but accounts will be lodged in the archives at Clandon.



Book Reviews

Desert sand to jungle trail - one man's war 1940-1946 William J. Cooper (Bookmarque Publishing)

The author was born, and still lives, in Witney, Oxfordshire, but despite this most of his service was with 2nd Queen's, although he did spend some periods detached with a small security section in Syria and Tobruk during 1941, and finished his service as a PT Instructor in Northern Ireland during the last few months of 1945 until February 1946.

This book is a straight forward account of Bill Cooper's experiences during his Army service, with plenty of detail about those that he served with and met, and recollections of conversations with them. He and his comrades joined 'B' Coy, 2nd Queen's when the Battalion was deployed in the Baqqush Box. Unfortunately for military history buffs, the tactical situation and the Battalion's part in General O'Connor's offensive are only briefly described. His accounts of his experiences in Syria and Tobruk are equally modest.

However, when he writes about 21 Column's march into Burma the reader is sharply made aware of the appalling physical exertions required to make that terrible march. For each individual who took part it became a personal battle of will power and stamina to get through each day's trek; and in the evenings, when the order to halt was given, the way that men encouraged and looked after each other is truly awe-inspiring. A feature of this book is the inclusion of a number of poems which Bill Cooper sent to his wife during his service overseas - an unusual but poignant touch.

RBJ

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'European Security & The Atlantic Alliance'

written by Lt Col Mike Lowry MBE MC Honorary Fellow,
The Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom
Published by The Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom

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So there we were

1678 The Queen's at Tangiers were having climatic problems as in January a great storm damaged the Mole. Plans and drawings were sent home by Mr Shere and Sir Palmes Fairborne outlining the proposed repair work.

1698 Moves were afoot to reduce the strength of the Army and the amount voted by Parliament for its maintenance was only £350,000. There was considerable financial confusion over Captain Henry Courtenay, formerly of the Queen's who, suspected of fraud and conspiracy, was making claims against the Treasury for money allegedly owed to him in raising a company for Kirk's Regiment in Ireland. The issue was further complicated by the fact that another Captain McCourtney was complaining that he was several times being blamed for the misdeeds of his near namesake.

1718 In expectation of trouble with Spain the Queen's were ordered in March to Portsmouth where land and sea forces were being assembled under Admiral Byng. While on route, however, they were ordered to return to the north of England and were sent to Chester in May.

In November they were ordered to Plymouth, only to have one company, commanded by Captain Rudyard, ordered to return to Chester.

The 31st Regiment, on the Irish establishment were commanded by Lord John Kerr. His predecessor Colonel Sir Harry Goring, former titular head of the Regiment, had been forced to resign his commission three years earlier for political reasons.

1748 The 31st were in England. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed in that year putting an end to a war in which the Regiment had distinguished itself, particularly at Dettingen and Fontenoy.

As was to be expected, peace resulted in drastic Army cuts. At Gibraltar the Queen's were 101 short of establishment but a solution was at hand as the recruiting officer "was ordered to repair to the Savoy prison to draw lots, with other recruiting officers of the regiments at Gibraltar and Minorca for the choice of deserters in the said prison, who were ordered to serve in the said garrisons".

1768 After a period of home service the Queen's left again for Gibraltar, departing in transports from the Isle of Man on 31st January.

Particular and precise instructions were issued for the conduct of the men on board ships. They were to be kept on deck as much as possible, no smoking between decks, no gaming allowed and no distribution of "*drams or spirituous liquor*". The 70th Regiment were in the West Indies and numbered among its officers a young Ensign who subsequently rose to high rank. This was George Hewett, born in 1750, who had been given an Ensignancy in the Regiment at the age of twelve by General Cyrus Trapaud, a friend of his father. Hewett purchased a Lieutenantancy in the Regiment before his fifteenth birthday and joined it in the West Indies where he remained for nearly ten years.

1788 In Ireland Major Eyre Coote was promoted from the 47th Regiment to the Lieutenant Colonelcy of the 70th. Regimental Orders were issued shortly afterwards and indicated, among other things, that with improved education there should be a greater degree of sobriety among soldiers. But drunkenness was obviously still a problem to be considered for it was ordained that "*Every time a tailor gets drunk he is to lose payment of a Waistcoat and be sent to the Black-hole*". Colonel Dalrymple,

commanding the Queen's at Gibraltar, became seriously ill and placed his resignation in the hands of General O'Hara but later, on his recovery, the resignation was withdrawn.

1798 Saw serious trouble for England. The Irish rebellion and the attempted invasion of that country by the French together with the capture of Egypt by a French army under Napoleon Bonaparte, and the threatened attack by France on the British possessions in India kept Britain in a defensive state. With Irish situation becoming hourly more serious, British reinforcements were hastily dispatched. The Queen's embarked at Barnstaple and after a stormy passage arrived at Waterford from whence they quickly marched to active operations in the areas of Ross and Wexford. The 31st remained in England, the Regiment being at Doncaster with detachments at Hull and York.

1818 The 31st Regiment returned home from Malta, landing at Deal on 22nd July after a tour of foreign service of more than twelve years. The Queen's in the Windward and Leeward Islands were calculated to be costing over £31 per diem for pay.

There was acrimonious correspondence with the Authorities at home in consequence of the Commanding Officer obtaining Russian duck trousers for his men instead of the regulation serge.

1838 The Queen's were named as part of a force to proceed to the Afghanistan Campaign where they were to gain new battle honours. Via Bombay, and in the ship *Syden* and the sloop *Taptee* they arrived at Humjari at the mouth of the Indus on 26th November and disembarked on 27th to proceed by boat to Bominacote to join the Bombay Division.

In January 1838 six service companies of the 70th Regiment sailed for the West Indies, arriving at St Vincent on 26th April. They were stricken by yellow fever a few months later. The four depot companies, meanwhile, were in Guernsey.

1858 The 31st were on the high seas in December bound for India where the 70th were already involved in the Indian Mutiny, particularly in the Peshawar area from whence they later moved to Rawal Pindi and Noshera. The Queen's were at Cape Town where detachments manned several outposts. At King William's Town they relieved the 31st Regiment on their departure for India.

1878 The Queen's completed a brief temporary stay at Malta and in February left for India in HMS *Malabar* under Major and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel H P Phillips. Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, who had broken his leg, remained in Malta.

The 70th, on active service in the Second Afghan War encountered transport difficulties when marching over the Khojak Pass. Camels fell down, infantry had to assist artillerymen in lowering guns down slopes and to add to troubles the Bhists threw away the water which was to be used for cooking.

1898 The East Surreys were at Inkerman Barracks, Woking (nowadays converted into a housing estate), forming part of Major General Hildyard's Brigade at Aldershot. The Queen's were fighting in the Tirah Campaign at the end of which they received high praise from Major General W P Symons CB, commanding the Khyber Force, when reviewing them when paraded under Lieutenant Colonel Collins, said, "*I cannot permit you and your Regiment to leave the Khyber Force without giving you an expression of my thorough appreciation of your brilliant services since you have been under my command in the field....*".

1918 Immediately after the cessation of the war on the Western Front The East Surrey Regiment, on 12th November 1918, embarked at Salonika in HMT *Katomba* for Constantinople from whence they mounted a programme of seizure of Turkish forts and arms.

The Queen's, on the Western Front, sustained casualties while initially resisting the German offensive and later participating in the counter-attack. They were at Schoorise on 11th November when they received news of the Armistice.

1938 The Queen's in India undertook a four day training march near Mirzapur, mainly along the Grand Trunk Road. They were later dispatched at short notice to deal with Hindu-Mohammedan rioting at Benares.

The East Surrey's in England prepared for foreign service and sailed from Southampton in HMT *Lancashire* bound for Shanghai but, in view of the deteriorating situation they were put ashore at Singapore. On easing of the European situation they continued eastward in the submarine depot ship *Medway* as far as Hong Kong before finally arriving at Shanghai on 17th November.

In England the Queen's were undertaking training in preparation for duties in Palestine but in September, consequent upon the Munich crisis, they took precautionary measures for the defence of Portsmouth against air attack. Twelve months later the country was at war and the services of both Regiments would be required in territories far and wide.

RF

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Ford and Lewis (Mob Dispersals)

The East Surrey Regimental News of February 1922 reports that following the arrest of Zaghul Pasha in Cairo trouble broke out in the Capital with the result that a large number of the 2nd Battalion were sent to occupy different posts in the city. A small covered Ford car, with a detachment of NCOs and men with Lewis guns, was placed under the command of Lieutenant Clark and attached to the Governorate (Police Headquarters).

On receipt of information that an attack was being made on the Caracol (Police Station) at Darb-El-Ahmar the Ford car with Lewis gunners was dispatched with all speed. Arriving at the scene they were greeted with volleys of stones together with a number of shots. On the failure of the rioters to disperse, and on the troops coming under more serious and threatening attacks from the mob, the order was given for the Lewis guns to fire. This had an immediate effect on the crowd who quickly quietened and order was restored. Returning towards Police Headquarters with the Ford car further road blocks were encountered together with rioting hooligans throwing stones in all directions. The threatening mob appeared to be about to rush the car so again the Lewis gun was ordered to fire. The effect was an immediate subduing of the rioters and a substitution of intense quiet.

The following day there was further information that a large crowd was assembling in the direction of Bab-El-Mitwalli and trouble was expected. This time two Ford cars were sent and on the appearance of the little black vehicles the mob fled in all directions, knocking each other over in their attempts to escape. The vehicles maintained patrols of the streets but no further troubles occurred.

The message had obviously been received and understood.

RF

Double Exposure

Whilst on holiday in Thailand early in 1998, I took the opportunity to visit Kanchanaburi and the River Kwai Bridge area, both well-known to former Far East prisoners of war who worked on the Thailand-Burma Railway.

On February 1st I was approaching the River Kwai Bridge at midday when the day train from Bangkok to Nam Tok started to trundle its way slowly across the bridge. I quickly asked a Dutch lady tourist to take a snap of the bridge, the train and the river, with myself in the foreground. In my understandable haste, my aged camera fell onto the concrete platform with a resounding clang. The photo taken, I then retired to lunch.

The next morning, February 2nd, I decided to pay my respects at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. On entering the cemetery I took a photograph showing individual graves with the large cross around which remembrance services are held. Bearing in mind that these two photographs were taken over a mile and nearly 24 hours apart, it was a complete surprise to find on development, a perfect double exposure. The rest of the negatives developed normally.



Note:- Nowadays the 'Thailand -Burma Railway' terminates at Nam Tok, known to prisoners of war as Tarso (km 130) Base Camp. From there on the rail track has been dismantled. Nong Pladuk Junction on the Banakok/Singapore main line is taken as the starting point from where distances along the Burma Railway are calculated.

The River Kwai Bridge falls early on km 51. The total length of the Thailand-Burma Railway constructed by the Imperial Japanese Army to link up with the existing Burma network, was 414.92 kms.

Construction work from both ends was started in October 1942. The meeting point on October 17th 1943 was at Konkuita (km 262.87) just inside the Thai border. The terrain was difficult and demanding; the weather during the monsoon season was appalling, even so, the overall rate of progress has been calculated at 890 metres a day, not all that far short of a kilometre a day. This takes into account the construction of bridges, culverts, embankments, viaducts, cuttings through outcrops of rock, and of course, rail-laying, sleepers and ballast. The completed project was a fantastic engineering feat if one disregards the heavy cost in human lives.

HR

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The British German Legion 1854 - 62

A fascinating story of a fighting unit known as the British German Legion has been found in an old cutting from the Sunday Times. The writer at the time aged 83 and living in Pretoria, tells of how he originally intended to follow a career at sea and at the age of twenty-two had left Hamburg intending to go to America to seek a post as a mate, for which he was qualified, on board a merchant ship. Arriving in London, however, he met a man who was seeking recruits for the German Foreign Legion to fight for the British in the Crimean War. Fond of adventure and short of cash (familiar incentives to many would-be soldiers) the writer enlisted.

After initial training at Shorncliffe, the Headquarters of the Legion, he went to the Musketry School at Hythe and there qualified as a Sergeant Instructor. He was then sent to the Crimea but saw no action as peace was declared while he and comrades were based at Skutari. While there he had time to study local customs and traditions as well as casting an appreciative eye over some of the ladies of the harems who, wisely, were usually under the protection of an escort of eunuchs.

Returning to England, he was stationed in a tented encampment at Portsmouth where an inspection by Queen Victoria who, apparently tripping over a tent peg, was allegedly saved from a fall by the ready hand of the writer. The Legion then found themselves bound for South Africa to protect the frontier against raids by Cafirs in British Caffraria. Told that they would be allowed to take wives with them some of the maritally non-committed men seem to have hastily sought out local girls with whom they were later joined in holy wedlock by a German clergyman on board the troopship. Some wife-swapping seems to have taken place thereafter. The outward voyage from Portsmouth was rough, a heavy storm having been followed by a period of calm when the sailing ship idled for a fortnight while waiting to catch the trade winds. The journey to Cape Town took 103 days, resulting in a shortage of food and water.

In 1860, ceasing active service in South Africa, the writer and some of his colleagues enlisted in the Regular British Army at East London for embarkation for the war in China. Joining the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment, he temporarily forfeited his rank of Sergeant but soon regained it. Sailing from East London for China they seem to have been in a more modern ship as they took in coal at Singapore and were no longer solely at the mercy of the winds, (Some ships of the times used both sail and coal. The preserved HMS *Warrior* at Portsmouth is an example).

Arriving in China they were soon in action against a minor fort in the Taku area which was easily taken after its vacation by the enemy. Welcome provisions and supplies of powder were found in it, an attempt by the enemy to destroy the latter having failed. From there an advance into the interior was made, sometimes against stiff opposition, until the Taku Forts were reached at the entrance to the Pei - Ho river and here some of the heaviest fighting of the war took place. Superior fire power from English and French fleets combined eventually decided the issue and the Chinese fled, leaving their dead behind them.

Further fighting then occurred at Tien Sing which was successfully taken. An attempt by the mandarins to poison the water failed and he was taken prisoner. Then followed the march on Peking, the capital, with the writer acting as an escort to ammunition which was being transported by junk. After a period encamped outside the city a raid was made on the summer palace of the Emperor where there was much destruction and plundering (Some evidence of the latter now reposes in British Museums). British troops were not as good connoisseurs as the French in these matters leaving behind a garden ornament of a bird which they thought was a brass

image of a crane fowl they were later chagrined to hear that it had been seized by the French and found to be gold. It was later sold in Paris for a substantial sum of money. On the declaration of peace many troops including the writer, retired to Hong Kong for embarkation purposes and in the new year left for England. Arriving at Portsmouth he later served in Aldershot, Devonport and lastly Cork. From there the regiment went to Aden and later to India where they served in Poona and Suttura from whence the writer took his discharge. He arrived back at Southampton to re-commence life as a civilian, eventually to retire with many happy memories of his life in the service of the British Crown.

LW

Editors note:- Charles Stadden supplied the text and drawing for this short article below about a little known unit of the British Army. On behalf of the Association I should like to thank him for his time and allowing us to use his excellent drawing.

Prince Albert in November 1854 suggested the recruitment of a Foreign Legion, Parliament met on the 12th December of that year to pass the Foreign Enlistment Act. Soldiers recruited under the Act would serve only outside the United Kingdom when fully trained. Lord Panmure wanted 10 battalions, eight to serve abroad and two for recruiting purposes. By August 1855 the German Legion was comprised of 3058 men; by the end of March 1856 there were 8702 men, 441 officers and 539 NCOs.

The Germans were organised into divisions. The first being the 1st Jagers of 1000 men and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Line Regiments of 1000 each. The second consisted of the 2nd Jagers, the 5th and 6th Line Regiments of 1000 men each, the 3rd Cavalry Regiment of 1800 men and two companies of Engineers of 100 men each. Their uniform was to be the same as that of the British forces being a red tunic with blue facings and blue or grey trousers. The emblem on the buttons was a British Crown surmounting the letters "B G L".

The Legion was sent to the Crimea but took no part in the fighting.

The illustration must be regarded as conjectural. Going by the reminiscences of Mr E Brander he must have served in the 3rd Light Infantry Battalion as they were stationed at Kutari in the Crimea, this is why I have illustrated this Battalion. I feel sure that the British German Legion did not get the new equipment that was just coming in ie the waist belt, the Mince rifle etc, but were issued with the equipment as I have shown. Many of our own regiments still did not, at this time have the latest equipment.

Further research

Journal Army Historical Research Vol LIV No 217
Journal Army Historical Research Vol LXII No 251
Mercenaries for the Crimea by C C Bayley pub 1977
The German Legion 1855 - 56 by A Egerton pub 1921



*British German Legion
3rd L. Inf Bn 1855*

Color Serjt George Brown*

The Editor has recently received some interesting papers and copies of letters regarding the above named members of the 1st Bn 2nd Foot (later Queen's Own West Surreys) whose service, both in this country and overseas, was typical of such a man and his times.

Brown was born in 1840 in Southwell, Notts and, following his father's footsteps, became a shoemaker. On 11th August 1858, aged 18, he enlisted in the Regiment at Newark. In the following year he was sent to the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at the end of the Kaffir Wars, and served there for nine months before embarking again for China in February, 1860.

Taking part in the China Campaign, he gained the China Medal with 'Pekin 1860' bar before returning to Portsmouth in 1861. There he was promoted to Corporal, received Good Conduct pay (which he presumably liked) and also received the new pattern shako (which he obviously didn't).

He later moved to Aldershot, Plymouth and Cork where he became a Freemason, and in June, 1866 he was promoted Serjeant and was married at Northam, near Barnstaple, to Elizabeth Turpin. Almost immediately he and his wife sailed with the Regiment for Aden and India. In India in 1868 there occurred the birth and death of their daughter. Two more of his children died in 1870 and 1871 emphasising the high mortality rate in the territory, particularly among children. More welcome news was his promotion to Color Serjeant in January 1871. Regimentally his life was a typical foreign programme of moves, marches and military exercises. New patterns of headdress, equipment and arms were issued in 1874 and 1875 without any recorded unfavourable comment from Color Serjeant Brown. In 1875, on the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales to Bombay, the 1st Battalion provided a guard of honour at Government House. In February, 1879 he returned to England via Deolali where, true to its notorious form, his medical papers were lost. Back home he was discharged on 19th August, 1879 with a total service of 21 years 9 days. His character was exemplary. At the time of his return he was shown as being accompanied by his wife Elizabeth and three girls, Elizabeth, Flora and Louise.

On leaving the Army ex Sgt Brown later became caretaker (Steward and Tyler) of the Devonshire Lodge, Henry Street, Glossop (presumably a Freemasonry appointment) at the age of 41 years in 1881. But the call of the Colours was obviously strong for in 1884 he re-enlisted in The Cheshire Regiment with whom he served two 5 years engagements. In 1890, as a Serjeant, he was a musketry instructor to the local Volunteers (4th Vol Bn Cheshires). He completed 10 years and 259 days service with the Cheshires and when he finally retired his total Army service was 31 years 268 days - a record of which he could well be proud. He was the holder of the China Medal with Pekin bar, the Good Conduct Medal and Meritorious Service Medal. Souvenirs of his service included a large ornate brass clock on an ebony plinth, presented by his brother serjeants of the Queen's on his leaving the Regiment, and a gold curb watch chain and a mounted photograph of officers and NCO's presented by the volunteers of The Cheshire Regiment to mark his retirement as Musketry instructor.

He died on 13th October 1929, aged 89 years, his wife having predeceased him two years earlier. Truly he was an old soldier who was a credit to his regiments and his Country. His letters home which have thankfully been preserved within the family, tell touching and revealing stories of Army life recalling often adverse climatic conditions, difficult terrains, military activities, health problems and particularly the sad deaths of his children.

In the earliest of the letters, dated March 26th 1862, to his brother and written in Aldershot, he tells of his arrival there and his dislike of the place which he describes as being nasty and dirty. He sends his "*kind love to Mr and Mrs Morton, Mr and Mrs Cooper, Ann, Louis John the paptist (sic) Mr Jarrett, Mrs Hollingsworth*". It is four years before another letter appears, dated 6th December 1866, again to his brother, and this time written from Aden. Understandably he begins with the words, "*You will begin to think I am either lost or I have forgotten you.....*". Again somewhat unhappy, he lays emphasis on the length of the outward journey via Bombay, which he says took 127 days, and points out that by an overland route he could get back to England in 14 days. He says that some people say Aden was once the garden of Eden but he describes it as "*a place that has been cursed*". The land apparently was barren and the climate unhealthy but on the plus side there were some very nice shops and it was easy to get a good black boy servant. The barracks he describes as "*beautiful*" and he mentions the good bathing facilities in the nearby sea. His wife, who he formally refers to as "*Mrs Brown*" was quite well and in good spirits after being ill on the way out. Kind love and remembrances are sent to "*Mrs Carr and also her daughter ... and to Mr Heard and all friends and relations*". Although so long in writing his own letter, he requests a reply by return of post.

Not quite so long with his next letter he writes again from Aden on 31st October, 1867, this time to both his brother and sister. Joyfully he tells them that he and his wife now have a baby daughter who they intend to christen Emily when they can get a Minister (the latter then being away on leave in England). Quarters were comfortable - "*two rooms and a verandah in front to keep the sun out*".

Heat was a problem, with some men being lost through sunstroke. Money was rather short although some benefit was derived from extra allowances for wife and child - equivalent monthly to sixteen shillings and five shillings respectively in English Money. Ribbons for the baby were in short supply although conversely Ostrich feathers could be obtained easily and there was an offer to send some to "*Dinah*" if she wished. A post script mentions that some feathers were actually enclosed and there are comments about the Abyssinian war and the relevant moves of troops and shipping which are taking place.

The moves couldn't have affected the Brown family as a letter of 27th January 1868, again to brother and sister was still from Aden. Tragedy had struck the Browns as they had lost their baby daughter just before Christmas. The loss was obviously deeply felt and the funeral was well attended. Sjt Brown's wife still formally referred to as "*Mrs Brown*", then added words of her own. Deeply distressed over the loss of her child she says that "*Aden is such a fearful place for children*" and refers to other deaths. Probably



related to the matter of deaths there is a request for a supply of black material and ribbons. A move to India, within the next twelve months, is anticipated by both Mrs Brown and her husband.

Dated "probably July, 1868", and by its content obviously still from Aden, and again to brother and sister, Brown still makes comment about the amount of shipping traffic between England, Abyssinia and India via Aden. This has led to a shortage of white feathers, such plumage being much sought after by the travelling passengers. Heat was still excessive, being in the region of 109 degrees in the shade, and there had been some deaths from it. Sjt Brown comments that it would "boil his brains out" if he went out in it. His wife, to his concern, had been in hospital for eight or nine days with weakness in her back. Several of the letters refer to receipt of "Bow Bells" which would seem to have been some magazine or newsletter.



A reproving note is struck in a letter "probably December 1870" to brother Joseph, when Brown complains that he and his wife had not received any reply to a letter she had written three years previously. By this time the Browns were in India and anxiously watching the welfare of a little daughter whom they have and who is at the teething stage. Brown comments on the difficulties of rearing children in India. A move from the family's current station of Belgaum is anticipated with destination unknown as the Regiment was to be quartered in four different stations - including Ahmednugger, Bombay, Saltara and Asserghur. Looking further ahead, return to England was anticipated in two or three years time. In contrast to previous heat, the weather was cold and wet with sickness and death both taking their toll. Winds were high and buildings had to be protected against them. Doubtless of interest to people at home, Brown was forwarding some photographs.

There was an apology in a letter of 6th November 1871, to brother and sister for laxity in writing. Sjt Brown had had "a dreadful telling off from Mrs Brown" for his negligence. He is back in Belgaum after having been to Bombay and Poona. A description of a route march is limited as one page of the letter is missing but the march was stated to have been enlightened by the presence of the band. The local population looked with disfavour on the soldiers' pastime of shooting monkeys for sport and "kicked up a great row about it". The letter finishes with a request for "brother's address" and is in haste to catch the mail.

Sjt Brown's letters are absolute gems for anyone interested in history in general or Regimental History in particular as they so accurately reflect the life and times of a soldier of his era. Would that more people, including those of today, could cultivate the habit of committing their thoughts and memories to paper.

*As spelt on his Medals and WO papers.

RF

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Guard of Honour

Captain George Wakely sent a copy of a letter he wrote to his New College News, Oxford on the occasion of the death of General Shan Hackett, who was also a former undergraduate of the college and with his permission reproduced below:-



The main purpose of this communication is to remember General Hackett (I would never have dared to call him "Shan"). In April 1967 I was wandering around my battalion's barracks in Germany when a corporal ran up to say that the Adjutant required to see me urgently. Thoughts of unpaid mess bills crossed my mind, but he who must be obeyed informed me that the Commander-in-Chief British Army of the Rhine (General Shan) required a Guard of Honour for the Commander of US forces in Germany, who was ending his tour of duty. Naturally 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment, as the smartest most efficient unit in BAOR, was required to provide the Guard. It was unfortunate that I was the only officer available, but at least I had Company Sergeant Major Morris to hold my hand. For 48 hours the guard and our magnificent band rehearsed non-stop. Come the day everything went swimmingly until the final moments, when yours truly tried to stand the guard at ease when they were at the "Slope Arms" position. As any veteran of Dad's Army will tell you, this is an impossible manoeuvre. In a stage whisper worthy of David Jason the CSM singed my back hairs with the words "Order Arms Sir". Only years of discipline persuaded him to say "Sir" instead of "you prat". A flicker of a smile crossed the General's face. Despite this faux pas he was kind enough to send a signal to our Commanding Officer, congratulating him on the steadiness and turn out of his men.

He did not look the military stereotype: his small stature and moustache gave him the air of that office apparatchik, Bristow, of the Evening Standard cartoon. He was of course the ideal stature for a tank man and a parachutist and it must have been an eye-opener for him, as a cavalryman, to find himself involved in the mother of all Infantry battles, Arnhem. These few days of intense fighting, when British Infantry faced overwhelming German superiority in armour and artillery, helped to make him the ideal commander in North West Europe in the 1960s. Those of us patrolling the east-west German border during those long ago years of the Cold War felt that we were well led. In his 1978 book *The Third World War*: August 1985, which put flesh and bone onto the Strangelove doomsday scenario, the General sought to scare Western governments into cutting the cuts in defence spending but, in my view, he had done enough in the 1960s, not least in his ability to get on with Americans and Russians, to ensure that Peter Sellers never took us over the brink.

George Wakely

Peterloo

The 31st Regiment of Foot (later the 1st Bn. The East Surrey Regiment) was involved in the so called 'Peterloo Massacre' which took place in 1819. Civil disobedience was dealt with somewhat differently in those days, when one considers recent events in Northern Ireland.

After the Napoleonic wars had ended there was general discontent among the working classes. This was largely due to rapid industrialisation in the North, unemployment for demobilised soldiers, and a general feeling that radical change was needed.

First and foremost it was thought that every male taxpayer should have a vote, and any man should be able to stand for parliament without the then substantial property owning qualification. Bribery at elections should be forbidden. Military appointments and the promotion of public employees should be advanced on merit, and not simply on family connections, or as we would now say, not on the old boy network! Also there were the first murmurings of the trades union movement.

These radical ideas met with little sympathy from the Prince Regent (later King George IV) or parliament, and instead of sending reasoned petitions, the reformers turned to organising large outdoor gatherings. The culmination was a mass meeting in August 1819 in St Peter's Field, Manchester. In anticipation of a possible uprising the local Yeomanry were called out and two Regiments of foot dispatched to the north. One of these Foot Regiments was the 31st, which at the time was stationed in Dover and around the south east. It's 2nd Bn. had fought with distinction in Spain under Wellington and had now been disbanded. Those still with time to serve rejoined their parent Regiment.

This combined military force was put under command of Lieutenant Colonel Guy L'Estrange of the 31st. He had fought with considerable skill and distinction when in command at the battle of Albuhera, but that was 8 years earlier.



Lieutenant Colonel L'Estrange

There was no proper police force until about 1829 so that the army becoming involved straight away was quite normal. Early in August all was in readiness with detachments in Stockport, Macclesfield, and Manchester. (The name 'Peterloo' comes from St Peter's Field where the disturbance took place, and

Waterloo, the recent victory over the French. Some who took part had fought at Waterloo, others likened it to that Battle).

On August 16th some 80,000 people flocked to St Peter's Field. They were in cheerful holiday mood. The chief speaker was Henry Hunt who believed that reason and non-violence must prevail. The local magistrates seemed oblivious to the good humour of the crowd. Presumably they had read out the Riot Act which by law they had to do, if force was thought to be necessary. For some reason they became frightened and called on Lieutenant Colonel L'Estrange to seize the ring leaders.

The riot act had been introduced in 1715 and it stated that if 12 or more people were committing a riot then it was the duty of the magistrates to disperse them. The Riot Act having been read out then the crowd were supposed to be given one hour to disperse, and if this failed the rioters would be guilty of a felony. Thus a felon could be shot legally for disobeying the Act. There was no question of the soldiers having to be shot at first. The soldiers having to do the shooting and were legally protected under the Act, and could not be charged with murder. (In the same way the public hangman could not be charged with murder when doing his duty).

On this occasion there was considerable panic and confusion. For some reason Lieutenant Colonel L'Estrange ordered in the local troops - the Manchester and the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry. This seems a strange decision as it would have made more sense to use the regular infantry who were well trained, disciplined, and unknown in the area. The Yeomanry were locals, volunteers, not too well trained and not renowned for discipline. Also of course many were familiar with some of the crowd, and likewise many in the crowd knew some of the Yeomanry by name.

Anyway the Yeomanry charged in at full gallop with sabres drawn cutting and thrusting at anyone who stood in their way. Their action is well recorded in a report written at the time:-



St Peter's Field

One woman was confronted by a trooper she had nursed as a child.....

'Nay Tom Shelmerdine, thee wilt not hurt me, I know', but 'deaf' to her application he rode her down'. The behaviour of the MYC and later of the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry was confirmed by Major Dyneley. He missed the actual dispersal but said he had been 'very much assured to see the way in which the Volunteer Cavalry knocked the people about during the whole time we remained on the ground; the instant they saw ten or a dozen Mobbites together, they rode at them and leathered them properly'.

John Lees from Oldham had what seemed the good luck to find a place near the Hustings and was consequently among the earliest casualties, slashed by an MYC sabre, then ridden over as he fell to the ground. There was the inevitable miraculous escape. A man who had not eaten all his cheese, put it under his hat for safe keeping. When the Yeomanry charged he attempted to flee but found himself in the direct path of a volunteer cavalryman. Up went the MYC sabre, down it came on the hat, to embed itself in the cheese and save one head from being split open. The tides of humanity were swept towards the outskirts of the field where further chaos awaited them, with the avenues of escape blocked by the oncoming troops of the 31st. An Officer belonging to the soldiers came up and said, "Gentlemen, Gentlemen, for shame forbear. The people cannot get away".

Many witnesses testified that the troopers tried to hit with the flat of their sabres, rather than deliberately lashing out, and that their officers berated the yeomanry. Undoubtedly it was the MYC who precipitated the disaster and behaved the most viciously, and who caused the bulk of the casualties. For much as 'Ah, behold their sabres gleaming' became the symbol of Peterloo, most of the dead and certainly most of the wounded suffered from being trampled on or trapped beneath piles of their fellow-victims during the dispersal.

Major Dyneley happily observed, 'the field was as complete as I have ever seen one after an action', while Samuel Bamford later penned the most famous description: 'The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air.. over the whole field, were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress; trampled, torn, and bloody. The yeomanry had dismounted, some easing their horses girths, some wiping their sabres. Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning - others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath and others would never breathe more. All was silent save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds'.

After all that the word 'Massacre' certainly seems appropriate, but in fact as is usual, it was greatly exaggerated and not quite as reported in the heat of the moment. Only about 15 people of the 80,000 were actually killed, one of whom was a child, William Fields, but many more may have died of their wounds later. The minutes of the Manchester Relief Committee report written shortly afterwards and are still extant state that, '420 people were wounded, many maimed for life, or doomed to a premature death'.

The disturbance having subsided the 31st remained in and around Manchester for a further year. According to our Regimental History, 'the troops had been much harassed through the winter, in consequence of the ill spirit which prevailed among the people of the surrounding district'. The regiment then marched off to Sunderland enroute to Scotland and then Ireland.

It is doubtful if the 31st was closely engaged. The History records, 'The regular troops behaved with their usual coolness and discipline in the delicate and important duty they had to perform'.

The Manchester magistrates reported the disturbance to the government, and in reply the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, wrote the following letter which includes the thanks of the Prince Regent to the Regiment for their support.

"Sir, "Whitehall, 21st August, 1819,

I lost no time in laying before the Prince Regent your letter to me of the 17th August, together with the enclosed to yourself from Lieut-Colonel L'Estrange, and I have great satisfaction in obeying the commands of His Royal Highness, by requesting that you will express to Lieut-Colonel L'Estrange, and to the officers, non-commissioned officers and privates, that served under his command at Manchester on the 16th of August, His Royal Highness's approbation of the exemplary manner in which they assisted and supported the civil authorities of the County Palatine of Lancaster on that day.

I have, &c.

(Signed) "Sidmouth".

Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, resolutely refused to hold any enquiry into the conduct of the magistrates or of the behaviour of the troops. All was left to the local coroners and they did their utmost to suppress any statements which may have been critical of the actions of the authorities on the spot. They continually stated that, 'they would not receive this testimony', and, 'that is not evidence we will not hear it'. That was the end of the matter.

Henry Hunt was sentenced to 2 years in prison. As a result of 'Peterloo' the government rushed through several Acts such as granting magistrates wide powers of search in private houses, and putting a crippling Tax on political pamphlets. Some years later Lieutenant Colonel L'Estrange was Knighted and promoted Major General, but history seems to have left no record of the poor chap whose life was saved by the lump of cheese which on that particular day he had put under his hat!

One last postscript- In the CO's desk at the Barracks, Kingston, there was a small tin box kept for pencils, rubber-bands, etc. On the lid could just be made out the name L'Estrange.

RCT

Acknowledgements: The Editor wishes to record his thanks to the Librarian, Manchester City Library for allowing us to reproduce this picture of St Peter's Field.

A Volunteer

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The soldier depicted is from the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Queen's Royal (West Surrey Regiment) and the photograph was taken in approximately 1895. He is wearing the Home Service pattern helmet, introduced 1878, with the Victorian Crown on the plate, dark green serge frock with black "rifle pattern" buttons. His trousers are the same colour as the tunic, "rifle-green" with scarlet facings. The equipment is the Slade Wallace, in black leather and his gaiters were also leather. His rifle is the .303 Lee-Enfield magazine type, introduced in 1888. On his right arm, he wears about the "Austrian knot" on the cuffs, the Diamond shape (lozenge), denoting he has served five years and has been passed as Efficient. This badge was in the same colours as the uniform.

The unit has its roots in the Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps, raised 1859/60 at Guildford, Reigate, Dorking, Godstone, and Farnham.

In 1880, the consolidated corps became the 5 Surrey R.V.C., and was, in 1883 given the title, 2nd Volunteer Bn, Queen's (RWS Regt). The battalion was known for its high standard of marksmanship and won the Brinsmead Shield and the St.

George's Vase. It had strong connections with the Charterhouse Cadet Corps, who won the Ashburton Shield no less than three times. The battalion contributed men to go to South Africa in 1902 to fight in the Boer War with the Service Companies of the Regular Queen's battalion. The 2nd V.B. became, in 1908, the 5th Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment (Territorial Force).



JW

'Surrey' Officers attending a Levee 1939



Left to right: Major G W Kennedy, MC; Capt R F Duncombe-Anderson, Major N B Brading, Lieut J R Armstrong-MacDonnell and Capt B du B Finch White after attending a Levee held by King George VI on 7th March 1939 at Buckingham Palace.

I have known this photograph for very many years, as it was on the bookcase in the Finch White's flat, so I am particularly pleased to see it again among the papers of Bart Kennedy given to the Museum by his daughter Di: Not only the photograph, but the instructions from the Adjutant to attend a Levee and meet up with their Commanding Officer in London.

It was the custom for officers to be presented to their Sovereign on commissioning or promotion. One's name was submitted by the Colonel of the Regiment to the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment had been abroad for 18 years and so on return to the UK the Commanding Officer, Lt Col G R P Roupell, VC., wasted no time in seeing that his officers were presented to King George VI.

I am told by a Hampshire officer that it was King George V, who was saddened to hear that his officers had to hire full dress from Moss Bros, at their own expense, and suggested service dress should be worn. The Instructions to officers dated 1936, authorised service dress to be worn.

The Instructions state that both gloves should be worn. The service dress cap to be carried on its side, peak to the front, crown outwards, held under the arm close to the side. On arriving opposite the King, officers will halt, turn left facing His Majesty and make bow, then turn to the right and walk away. No attempt, should be made to keep the eye on His Majesty's face.

Lt Col Anson Squire remembers being presented to King Edward VIII by the Honorary Colonel of the 6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment, Colonel A P Drayson who wore his full dress rifle green uniform (now in the Museum) but he himself wore service dress. He also remembers the excellent lunch the Colonel gave his officers afterwards.

Looking at the photograph it is interesting to know of the subsequent service of these officers:

Major G W Kennedy, MC: Served in the 1914-18 War and awarded the MC. He went to France in October 1939 as second-in-command of 1 Surreys. In March 1940 he was appointed to command 4th Bn The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He was wounded at Cassel and taken prisoner. He was awarded the DSO for his leadership of the Battalion. After recovering from his wounds he was appointed Senior British Officer in a Prisoner of War camp and for his fortitude and maintenance of prisoners' morale was

made an OBE. After the 1939-45 War he commanded the Primary Training Centre at Kingston. He retired from the Army in September 1948 and died in March 1984, aged 89.

Capt R F Duncombe-Anderson: In 1939 he was appointed Adjutant of 6 Surreys and after the doubling of the Territorial Army joined 1/6th Surreys. He was promoted Major and was killed in action at Mouscron, Belgium in May 1940.

Major N B Brading: Served in the 1914-18 War. In July 1940 he was appointed to command 2/6th Surreys. In 1942 he was appointed GSO I Home Forces and from 1943-45 commanded a Sub Area. Promoted Brigadier he became Deputy Director, for Operations in the British Zone, Germany 1945-47. He was made CBE in 1944 and CMG in 1958. He was Mentioned in Despatches in April 1946 and made a Knight Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau with Swords in January 1947. He retired from the Army in 1949 and then became House Governor, University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria. He died in 1990 aged 94.

Lieut J R Armstrong-MacDonnell: In 1940 he was promoted Captain and posted to 1/6th Surreys and commanded C Company in France. He was awarded the MC for his leadership of the Company. He became a Prisoner of War. From 1946 to 1949 he served on the Staff in Egypt and East Africa. In 1949 he joined 1st Bn The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and after another Staff appointment commanded 1 Surreys from November 1953 to May 1956. He retired from the Army in December 1957.

Capt B du B Finch White: In 1939 he commanded A Company of 1 Surreys in France and was awarded the MC for his leadership of the Company in the Battle of the Escaut. After service in West Africa he rejoined 1 Surreys in North Africa and served with the Battalion in Sicily and Italy becoming the second-in-command. In 1944 he was appointed to the Staff. He retired from the Army in 1950. He died in March 1998, aged 92.

In the Concise Oxford Dictionary, Levee is defined as, "(formerly) reception of visitors on rising from bed; assembly held by Sovereign or his representative at which men only are received; assembly of visitors."

DH & AS

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Troubles in Ireland

Events in Northern Ireland in recent years are in no way new to members of our Regiments as history shows. In 1921 the 2nd Battalion of The East Surrey Regiment were on security duties in the territory during the "troubles" of the times when their current "*Regimental News*" reported a typically tragic accident.

Following the notorious burning of the Customs House in Dublin a lightly armoured Ford car containing Major J Gurdon MC, Sgt T Crowley, L/Cpl H Goddard, Pte Buckner and Drivers Lineker and Reid (both of the Royal Army Service Corps) was travelling through Dorset Street when it was attacked by rebel bombers and forced to retreat. L/Cpl Goddard was killed, while Lineker and Reid were so badly injured that each of them subsequently lost a leg. Sgt Crowley was also wounded but less seriously. Dvr Lineker was later awarded the British Empire Medal for his gallantry.

5 OMA Reunion Dinner

5 Old Members Association reunion and dinner held on Saturday 9th May at Guildford was a great success, made all the more enjoyable by seeing so many new faces as a result of the widespread coverage given by our local and not so local newspapers, covering Surrey, Kent, Sussex and also boroughs of South London.

Dinner did start a little later than planned, but everybody was so busy catching up with the news and meeting their old comrades. Following an excellent meal, Lt Col Robert Knight, Commanding Officer of 5 PWRR gave a very informative briefing on the Territorial Army today and possible indications for the future.

The main event of the evening was the presentation to our retiring President, Lt Col Foster Herd who has served the Regiment and our Association for 40 years. The presentation made by Lt Col Les Wilson and Stewart Browning was a magnificent silver Pascal Lamb as depicted on the Queen's Royal Regimental cap badge, together with a fine bouquet of flowers for Mrs Sue Herd who joined her husband much to his surprise after the dinner.



Left to right: Lt Col David Patterson, Brigadier Bob Acworth, Stewart Browning and Lt Col Foster Herd

Stuart Browning who served with Foster Herd in the Territorials from 1958 gave a short speech reviewing the many facets of Lt Col Herd's military service. The undoubted highlight was his time spent as OC of the Reconnaissance Platoon based at Woking. Eleven members of Foster Herd's old Platoon attended the dinner much to his delight.

A raffle then concluded the evening raising £250.00 for Association funds.

SB

A Priceless Discovery

Discoveries in the attic rarely turn out to be valuable but when Dave Barber came across a wrapped picture frame at his home in Littlehampton he thought his Van Gogh had come.

"I was clearing space so that I could move my office into the attic when I came across the package," explains Dave, an engineer surveyor with A.C.E. "I could tell it was a picture frame and my hopes of retiring a millionaire were high."

What Dave unwrapped may not have been a work of art, but the discovery was priceless. The slightly stained certificate awarded to Private George Francis Fawcett of the East Surrey Regiment was not something Dave had come across before. Signed by King George V, the document turned out to be an honourable discharge from the Great War.

"We were intrigued by the piece of history we'd found," says Dave, "and my wife Sylvia set off to find out as much as she could about George Fawcett."

After much research, Sylvia discovered that Private George Francis Fawcett had been invalided out of the war with severe shell shock having thrown himself over his mates to save them



Dave Barber with Private George Francis Fawcett's honourable discharge signed by King George V

from a shell blast. It was many years before George could speak again and neighbours recall that the only person George had a rapport with was a Japanese prisoner of war who had come to live close by. George died in the 1960s, predeceased by his only daughter, and his widow moved from Littlehampton to Lincoln taking George's medals with her.

"With his widow now dead and no traceable family members we wanted to find a suitable home for the certificate," says Dave. "Sylvia found out that The East Surrey Regiment had become the Queens Royal Surrey Regiment and that they had a museum at Clandon Park in Guildford." Dave contacted the curator who was thrilled at the discovery and keen to house the certificate and locate the medals.

"Some may think that it was only a piece of paper in a frame and not worth the effort of trying to find out anything about," adds Dave. "But to us, this man was willing to risk his life to save his mates and that is priceless."

The certificate is now at The Queens Royal Surrey Regiment museum in Clandon Park.

PJ

John Palmer recalls his days with 1/6th Surreys

We were in Athens and were on duty at Kalimaki Airport, to ensure that the airport was kept open, and in case of trouble so that more troops from Italy could be flown in. The King returned to Greece. After the election we were split up and I was attached to 140 Advanced Ordnance Depot in Athens until it was handed over to the Greek Army. Then I was sent to Egypt up and down the Suez Canal half a dozen times until I settled at Ismalia, attached to the post office for a while.

Then I was sent to Tripoli in Libya, God knows why! After a while LIAP came up and I was sent home on leave. At that time A/Sgt 64 Group was coming along so I was kept back in UK until demob. In the meantime I did escort duties picking up AWOL's from police stations. One of them from Newcastle to Colchester "Glass House". Tell you what, even I was glad to get out of that place and I was only the bloke taking him in, even I had to double up. Then after a while I was posted to a prison of war camp in Coulsdon (200 Germans) with a Sgt 'Chalkie' White

When they shut the camp down I was posted to Kingston Barracks until demob. On reflection the only people who wanted me to stay with them were the Army, not the printing trade as Fleet Street shut down completely thanks to Mr Murdoch!

JEP

Benevolence

From the Chief Executive, The Queen Alexandra Hospital Home:- I was delighted to receive on Friday the very generous grant of £5,000 made by the Trustees of the Association to the Queen Alexandra Hospital Home. I would be grateful if you would pass on to the Trustees the sincere thanks of the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the patients. This grant comes at a very opportune time as we have recently initiated a much needed bed and mattress replacement programme. The money will be used immediately to fund four beds.

I do hope that the Association will continue to make use of the permanent and respite nursing and care facilities offered by the Hospital Home. I do realise just how fortunate we are to receive grants from the Association, particularly in view of the very large sums which are regularly provided to support individual members who are in need.

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Patsy Willis from the Royal Star and Garter Home writes:-

On behalf of the residents of The Royal Star and Garter Home I would like to thank you, the President and the Trustees of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association very much for your generous donation of £2,000. It was kind of you to support us in this way and we greatly appreciate your gesture.

We are especially grateful for your support at this time when our specialist therapies and nursing care are in such great demand. It is vitally important that we maintain our high standards so that our disabled ex-servicemen and women residents receive the help they so richly deserve.

Thank you once again for your generosity and your good wishes.

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Mrs Pat Moore-Searson from St Dunstan's writes:- Thank you for your letter dated 10 June addressed to the Secretary of St Dunstan's and for the cheque for £500 from the President and Trustees of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association Charity towards our Appeal. I attach our receipt for this amount.

We are very aware that the success, both of St Dunstan's and our St Dunstaners, rests on the help we are given, and we are deeply grateful for this generous assistance. We much appreciate the President and Trustees interest and support for our blind men and women; it is invaluable.

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Major A R Mallett, County Field Officer, RBL Warwickshire writes:- Thank you for your generous grant of £500 for Mr A that arrived in my office on Friday. I am still awaiting a response from BEN - Motor and Allied Traders Benevolent Fund and Kenilworth United Charities. Hopefully we can achieve our target together. I will ensure that Mr and Mrs A are made fully aware of your help in their case. Thank you for your speedy response to this request for help.

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The Secretary Combat Stress, Ex Services Mental Welfare Society writes:- Thank you very much for your letter of 11th June 1998, enclosing a most generous cheque for £1,000. As always, we are most grateful for such support. Please pass on our appreciation to the Trustees of the Association. I'm glad

that the Society is able to provide worthwhile help for retired members of the Association. Thank you, too, for your own helpful support and the copy of your Newsletter.

□ □ □

Mrs Elizabeth Kennedy a SSAFA Divisional Secretary writes:- This is to acknowledge with many thanks, receipt of £600 towards the cost of an electric bed for Mr B. I will let him know that the grant is from the Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Charity and I am sure he will be most appreciative. The Airborne Forces have generously sent £300, so we are well on the way to getting the bed he needs.

□ □ □

Mrs J Taylor, Almoner The Sue Ryder Foundation writes:- Thank you so much for your generous grant on behalf of the care given by the Sue Ryder Home to Mr C. We are reliant on the financial support so generously given by Associations such as yours, to maintain the palliative care offered by this Home, and needed by so many. We were privileged to care for Mr C during his final illness. Please accept our grateful thanks.

□ □ □

Wing Commander J R G Lawrie, Divisional Secretary SSAFA Hertfordshire writes:- Thank you for your letter dated 20th August 1998 enclosing a cheque for £500 to assist in the purchase of a powered wheelchair for Mrs D. When I called to inform Mr D of the kindness shown by your benevolence Committee he was overwhelmed by the generosity and asked that I convey his gratitude to you and the Committee. Being the very loyal and proud member of the Association, with which he maintains contact he insisted that he would be writing to express his personal thanks to you. Once again my own appreciation for the help given to this couple. To date I have heard nothing from the RBL, who I hope will be instrumental in making the provision of a wheelchair possible.

□ □ □

Letter from W J Ambrose:-

Please find enclosed a photo of myself on my scooter, which the Association donated towards, which I will always be most thankful for. It's been a long time since I've been able to say I'm going out, but that's what I can now do, when the weather is kind enough. Once again I thank you and the Association for all that has been done, to help towards my mobility.



□ □ □

Mrs J Hall writes:- On behalf of my mother, I acknowledge with gratitude, the very generous grant of £500 towards the cost of the stairlift, which your Association, through the kind work of Colonel Spate, (SSAFA) awarded her. I would like to add my appreciation, not merely for the money but for the fact

that "Somebody somewhere cares". In difficult times this really does count. Once again many thanks.

— o o o —

I'm writing this letter to you, to say a really big thank you, for helping me from your Charity to sending me the money to help pay up some outstanding bills. The SSAFA lady came and listened to me, and then she got in touch with you. I didn't seem to see a way clear to get out of the mess I had got myself into, but thanks to the Charity, I'm beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. People have told me that there are angels on earth, and I know you are mine. I truly am really grateful and can't seem to thank you enough. But I will always remember that you got me out of a real mess. Thank you once again.

— o o o —

I am writing to acknowledge your letter enclosing a cheque in the sum of £250. I consider it very thoughtful for The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment to make such a grant for the maintenance of our car which is the only way my wife can take me about.

Once again thank you for the kind gesture which is much appreciated.

— o o o —

I am writing to say thank you, to you and all those who are involved in the contribution of £500 which has been received by SSAFA, they are trying to get a scooter for me, to make me more mobile, since I had my driving license taken away on medical grounds about a year ago and am unable to walk all the way to the bus stop, this means of transport will be of enormous help in getting around. Again, thank you very much.

— o o o —

My husband and I were delighted to receive a very generous grant from yourselves via SSAFA. We wish to express our sincere thanks. The gesture is much appreciated. My husband had the honour of serving in both the Queen's Royal Regiment and the East Surreys and already enjoys receiving the Newsletter. Although blind it is read to him and he attends as many reunions as possible.

— o o o —

I have been waiting for a letter from SSAFA informing me of the donors from various organisations who kindly contributed towards an Ajutamatic Bed, to save my wife's arm sockets from being pulled apart when roused in the middle of the night for a call of nature. The letter came yesterday.

I never thought I would get into a position that I'd need help from the Regimental Association but so it turned out. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for your kind donation which has made life a lot more comfortable.

— o o o —

Mr E writes:- Please accept my grateful thanks for the donation given on my behalf towards the cost of the electric wheelchair, which I have now received. It has proved a boon to me enabling me now to go out locally.

HMS Penelope

Don Dean, a member of 2/6th Queen's writes in the Newsletter of the HMS Penelope Association:-

"I have recently purchased a second-hand copy of Ed Gordon's book - HMS Pepperpot, and having served with The Queen's Royal Regiment during the Italian campaign I was most interested in the very strong links between the Regiment and Penelope.

Penelope supported the landings at Salerno, where the 2/5th, 2/6th and 2/7th Battalions of the Queen's were in action with the 56th London Division. I joined the 2/6th Queen's in January 1944, at the Garigliano River, during the Battle of Cassino. From the mountains beyond the river, I regularly saw the cruisers bombard the German rear areas, in the Gulf of Gaeta, and far inland. Of course Penelope was among them. It was a heartening sight, rather as if 'Big Brother' was keeping an eye out for you.

All the three battalions were withdrawn from the Gustav Line, and sent up to Anzio. I sailed from Naples in the American crewed LST 165 on the night of 17th February. There were mainly lorries on board, together with 'A' Company of 2/6th Queen's and some HQ personnel. Early in the morning of the 18th, I was in my bunk when I was told that a warship was sinking near our LST. When I went on deck, only the bows and stern of the ship were still afloat. By its size I thought it was a cruiser. To my horror there were hundreds of sailors in the water, and to make matters worse, it was covered in a thick layer of fuel oil. The feeling of the soldiers on board was one of helplessness. Cargo nets and ropes were lowered. To the best of my recollection even the ramp at the bows was lowered in an attempt to get as many of the lads inboard. I was a good swimmer, but to go in to help was to cast oneself into the glutinous mass of oil, and join those already suffering from the effects of it. We managed to drag some on board, while others floundered with the filthy stuff in their eyes and mouth. The ship disappeared beneath the waves. With those we had saved we returned to Naples, doing our best to clean them up and provide them with blankets. One of the survivors we picked up was your late Secretary, Harry Pugh, who saw our shoulder titles of the Queen's. I was told that the ship was the Penelope and that her Captain had died on board our LST. At Naples a fleet of ambulances took the survivors to hospital.

That night our LST returned to the Anzio beachhead, and we joined our battalion in the line. It was of some small comfort to know that Penelope had helped us so often, and we were able to help some of her crew at her end.

I send my best wishes to any survivors and to all your Association members. At least you now know the Regiment who helped on that sad day, and for our part, we had good reason to be grateful to Penelope for all she had done for us in the preceding five months".

An account of the sinking and the assistance given to the survivors was written by the late **RSM Garry Lockwood DCM**, the Regimental Sergeant Major of 2/7th Queen's.

"I remember one particular journey by sea. A party of the 2/7th Queen's left Naples late in the evening of the 17th February 1944, on board an LST bound for Anzio. This journey went smoothly to start with and I made friends with a CPO. This was not difficult as he had plenty of ship's rum to spare.

About 5-o'clock the next morning he woke me, asking me to clear the star-board side of all troops as we were picking up survivors. The troops to clear were all 2/7th Queen's, and they had kit all over the place and some were shaving. I let them know in the kindest voice I know, to clear the deck and get over to the port side. This they did in an astonishing time of two

minutes flat. I then proceeded to the top deck to a sight I never wish to see again. The sea was covered with sailors from HMS *Penelope*. Their faces were covered with dirty black oil, some were cling to small rafts and logs of wood. They were singing "Roll Out the Barrel", others were drifting about helpless, calling for help.

We helped them the best we could. None of the lifeboats on our ship worked. We lowered a rope ladder and ropes over the side and quite a few were hauled to safety that way. I went over the side down the rope ladder to try and help. I managed to place a rope round the shoulders of some of them in turn, and told our chaps to pull them up as quick as possible. By that time I was feeling quite cold and thought it about time I got back on board. Half way up the ladder my hands were so cold I could not hold the rope, and I had to link my arms through and get up the rest that way. I was scared. There I saw Tiny Saunders (also of 2/7th Queen's), a big chap as strong as an ox, taking men off the rope with one hand, lifting them to safety. Our next job was respiration and hot showers for those who had been picked up, and then back to Naples to drop off the casualties."

Following the publication of RSM Lockwood's letter, several survivors wrote to their Editor, among these were **Able Seaman Bob Freeman who wrote:-**

"I remember putting my head and shoulders through a rope ladder, but remember nothing else until I was put under a shower, after which I must have passed out. The next thing I do remember is being taken off the Tank Landing Ship.

I still have in my possession a pair of khaki shorts with the name L Edwards on them. Perhaps he was a member of the 2/7th Battalion of The Queen's Royal Regiment or possibly a member of the crew of the LST. I have always hoped that someday I might be able to thank him for putting the shorts on me. I've also wondered if it was L Edwards who handed in the pouch, containing £12 (a lot of money in those days!), that I was wearing when we were sunk. The £12 was returned to me, but not the pouch, about a year later during Pay parade in the destroyer Zodiac in which I was then serving."

Leading Seaman Bert Taylor writes:-

*"The account of the sinking (June issue) held much interest to me. I wish to elaborate further on the soldier of the 2/7th Queen's Royal Regiment mentioned in the article, Tiny Saunders. After the first hit on *Penelope*, Lt Page (Fighter Direction Officer) ordered myself and two ratings from the Plot to B Gun Deck, where we were to jettison top weight putting paravanes over the side of the ship. On the second hit we abandoned ship and myself and three others clung to a piece of wood which I later discovered was a boom.*

Unfortunately we drifted away from the LSTs. I sadly remember the Band Leader and another seaman giving up, leaving myself and a Marine remaining clinging to the wood. About three hours later the LST was in sight and the Marine asked - 'Are you going to swim for it, Buck?' I told him I was unable to swim and watched him leave for the LST. The next thing I remember was a very large man cradling me under his arm, pulling me from the water and carrying me up a rope ladder to the LST. I believe that this man is the Tiny Saunders mentioned in the article.

*Once aboard I kissed the deck and was pulled and pushed in and out of a shower. When I finally awoke, my legs were packed in salt bags and I was eventually transferred to a Hospital Ship. There was an ENSA concert being performed below and I was given permission to join the other survivors of the *Penelope*."*

The Regimental History of The Queen's Royal Regiment records:-

*"It was at this time that the 169th (Queen's) Brigade arrived at Anzio. The rifle companies had an uneventful voyage, but the landing ships carrying the transport were delayed. At dawn their escorting cruiser, the famous HMS *Penelope*, put up an SOS signal and without a sound settled down into the sea. The landing ships picked up the survivors and carried them back to Naples, so the transport reached the battalions twenty-four hours late. These had landed at Anzio and moved first to a concentration area a couple of miles north."*

HMS *Penelope*



"Penelope" was a 5,000 ton cruiser, built in Belfast, and completed in 1936. Main armament was six 6" guns, and she had a war complement of 600 officers and men. The cruiser became one of the most famous ships in the Royal Navy, during the Second World War.

After taking part in the Norwegian Campaign, she went to the Mediterranean in 1941, and was based in Malta. From there she took part in fleet actions, coastal bombardment, evacuations, and invasions, convoy escort duties, and raids on German convoys to North Africa. While in port she played her part in the defence of the George Cross island. At one time she suffered so much damage from bomb splinters, that she looked like a pepperpot. The dockyard maties in Malta nicknamed her HMS *"Pepperpot"* and that was what she became known as. In September 1943, the cruiser supported the landing at Salerno, in which 2/5th, 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's took part, and at times was instrumental, together with the gunfire of other warships in maintaining the beachhead in the face of strong German counter-attacks. She supported the advance to Naples, in which 131 Queen's Brigade of 7th Armoured Division also took part. There were six battalions of one regiment together at one time, a very unusual event.

"Penelope", and her sister ships, *"Dido"*, *"Aurora"*, and others, continued to help the 5th Army fighting north through the mountains, and over the rivers on the west coast, towards Rome. The soldiers were halted at the River Garigliano, which formed part of the Gustav Line, the linchpin of which was Monte Cassino. Cruisers regularly bombarded the German defences from the Gulf of Gaeta, watched by men of the Queen's, fighting in the mountains with the rest of 56th Division.

In an effort to break the stalemate, a landing took place at Anzio on 21st January 1944. *"Penelope"* now divided her efforts between the beachhead, and supporting the main front. In early February, the three brigades of the 56th were transferred in turn to Anzio. On the night of the 17th/18th February *"Penelope"* sailed for the beachhead, as did LST's No:165, which I was on, and No:430. The landing ships carried elements of 2/6th, 2/7th Queens, motor vehicles, and bren carriers of 169 Brigade.

At 7.am. on the 18th February, the German submarine U.410 fired two torpedoes into *"Penelope"*. The ship was so badly damaged that she began to sink immediately, and the crew was ordered to abandon ship. The survivors were picked up by the LST's and transferred to a hospital ship, or returned to Naples. The illustrious career of HMS *"Pepperpot"* was over. There were 206 survivors.

Gentle Reader, I have decided that it is time that this column was used to educate our aspiring young officers. What about starting with the subject of communication. In other words how to make yourself understood by Johnny Foreigner in three easy lessons. For too long it has been considered an asset not to be able to speak a foreign language. There are so many of our future Generals being brought up on the idea that the only way to converse with a foreigner is to shout at him very loudly. The other alternative is to speak French like Edward Heath and end up with De Gaulle saying "*Non!*" The President of France had no other option - he had not a clue what Ted was saying, so "*Non*" was by far and away the safest thing to say. Now if Ted had only read this column for its language tips the whole history of Europe would have been different. Having no aptitude with a foreign language only serves to limit your horizons and prevent you getting the most out of those trips to odd places, which are generally referred to as abroad. This time I thought I would start with Arabic. I find it so boring for beginners to keep glittering on about "*The pen of my Aunt is in the Garden.*" So I thought we would start with a more exotic language, we can polish off the old French stuff on another occasion. We will move on to other languages once you have mastered the basics of colloquial Arabic, as it is spoken in Oman and the Emirates.

The Arabic Language school was located in Waterloo Lines, Aden. Yes, the very same place where the 1st Battalion was located in 1961. Only now it was occupied by The King's Own Scottish Borderers - a seemingly friendly lot who spoke yet another unknown language. And here I must digress for a moment. One day as I walked to the language school I could see coming towards me the unmistakable figure of C/Sgt Speakman VC. I had never before seen a holder of the Victoria Cross in uniform. I was determined to honour the occasion and the man by being the first to salute. Not an easy thing to do. Either you start way too soon or he is going to beat you to the draw. But I am proud to report that I was able to achieve success and felt good about it. I neither know nor care what the drill book says about it.

My first days at the Arabic Language School followed the gripping yarns of Bill wa John. Bill wa John went to the Souk and drank- Chai. Now you will notice that not only does this have the beginnings of a really exciting yam but you have already learnt how to say '*and*', '*market*' and '*tea*'. We are beginning to make real progress. Mind you, with my quick grasp of languages and things intellectual, I found all this a teensy bit slow and asked one of the Lebanese instructors for some really choice words I could use when I wanted to blow off steam. The phrase he taught me - "*Yukhrahb Beitak*" sounded good, but the translation of "*May Allah destroy your house*" gave it a somewhat weak feel. But not to be dismayed, I tried it out on an Arab Taxi driver. The effect was astonishing. He screeched to a halt ran, round to my side of the cab, hauled me out and threatened to deck me. As he roared off leaving me in the middle of nowhere I reflected, "*Such is the power of communication.*"

Be aware of other linguistic pitfalls. Major Dick Dinnin was beginning to stretch his new found skills when the Sheikh of Ras Al Khaima, Rashid bin Humaid visited. Dick was expansive at the best of times and when the Sheik entered the very humble hutted mess he greeted him with the words "*Beitee Beitak*" "*My house is your house.*" The Sheikh, who was a wonderful grey bearded old aristocrat of the desert, took him at his word and walked off with Dick's shotgun. Before Dick developed this linguistic talent he used to call on me to translate for him. He did this one day for Depot Commander's Orders. The Bedouin soldier was marched in - accused of being a bit of a slacker on his basic training course. Major Dinnin turned to me and ordered that I translate exactly what he said to the accused, no approximation, it was to be a precise, word for word translation. I promised to do my best. He turned

to the accused and said "*You*" and then paused for me to translate. '*Enta*'. "*Must*" '*Laazim*' "*Pull your socks up*" and this to a Bedouin who had never worn a pair of socks in his life and probably did not even know what they were, if they were held up in front of him. "*Excuse me Sir, but do you want to give this man a rocket - in which case I think I can convey your intentions better if I do it in my own words*". I did, and the accused soldier looked duly humble and contrite. Major Dinnin was satisfied.

On another occasion Dinnin decided to line up the whole Depot and tell them in his own newly acquired Arabic, that he was especially pleased with their work. As he finished the Depot personnel fell about, hooting with merriment. This wasn't quite what Dick had expected. He strode off looking very pink, with the laughter behind him, getting stronger and stronger. Soon the whole Depot was a helpless, sobbing, hysterical mass. "*Why are they laughing? What did I say?*" He was not pleased to find that he had used the slang, for a part of a lady's anatomy when he had meant to say "*I am well pleased with your work.*" Ah well, at least the morale index went up..

I hope you are taking note of the way that your vocabulary is increasing by leaps and bounds. The next challenge was to go down to the shops and haggle in Arabic. I started with a fine watch made Mr Longines. "*Cum fuloos minshaan hadha*" "*How much money for this.*" He gave me an answer to which I responded with the expected raucous laughter. "*Ya Wallahi - hadha katheer.*" - "*Cripes that's a bit steep.*" But the haggling went on and on. Every evening I would draw up a chair with the proprietor and begin the process anew. Out would come the coffee or a couple of bottles of Coca Cola and we would begin to chat and haggle. Slowly I was beginning to get a better ear for Arabic. I was also gaining in confidence. But Mohammed Saleh was getting pretty fed up with haggling over this wretched watch. Eventually, one evening when there were no tourists around he said with a note of exasperation "*That is my final offer - it is what I paid for it - I will show you the invoice.*" A likely story. Now I had upset him. He jumped up went into the inner sanctum of the shop and came back a few minutes later brandishing the invoice. He was telling the absolute truth. We concluded the haggle. After that my evenings were never quite the same.

The next afternoon was hot, very, hot. I tried to doze on my bed in the Rock Hotel "*Funduq Asahara*" which was close to the Crescent Shopping area in Aden. Each time I nodded off I was brought back with a jolt, to the discordant sound of cats fighting. Three floors below my window, cats were there in profusion, trying to scavenge from the dustbins. Just then the laundry boy came in with the fresh laundry neatly wrapped in a plastic bag. It gave me the idea I needed. Quickly, I filled up the bag with water secured the end with the wire twist and took aim from the window. "*Bombs Gone!*" The effect was quite dramatic - 3 floors below the large bag of water went off like a bomb with a huge 360 degree splash of cascading water. It was like Niagara on its side. The cats could not get away fast enough. They really legged it across the rocky slopes at the back of the hotel and disappeared into the distance.

The problem was that various other guests heard about this and thought the whole thing was a really good wheeze. Soon we had 4 floors of bombers ready with their water dambusters. Each was directly above the other. On the command, the top floor would release first, as it passed the next, he would release - and so on down. The wallop of water hitting the bottom was fantastic. It generated a mild tidal wave. Later the Manger asked if we could use smaller bombs as the water was splashing in through his office window. "*Katheer moy min al gumbola fee maktabee.*" '*Much water from the bomb is in my office.*'

On Christmas day, as a special present, an admirer of our antics gave me the plastic bag that had protected a double mattress. We started to fill it with water. Christmas lunch had taken its toll and we giggled a great deal. We dragged the

water bag, now weighing several hundredweight, along the corridor, to the window five floors above the dustbins. We giggled some more. Eventually out it went. The immense bag of water achieved Mach 1.4 on its way down and we were beginning to experience an excess of G forces. Two dustbins were crushed flat. Luckily no one and nothing was hurt. We giggled some more and went off to find another party. Language training is a thirsty business. "Sahtack!" - "Cheers."

Rupert

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Congratulations and Best Wishes



Congratulations to:

Colonel Jonathan Riley on his promotion to Brigadier in December 1998. He will assume command of 1st Mechanised Brigade in Tidworth in the New Year.

Lt Col Mike Lowry who has been appointed an Honorary Fellow of the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom.

Michael Langley on his first parachute jump in aid of a charity. Michael is the author of the short history of The East Surrey Regiment and is over sixty!

Golden Wedding Congratulations to:

Tom and Wyn Major who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on St Valentines Day 1998.

John and Jean Elcombe who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 26th September 1998.

Ted and Jean Pickard who celebrate their Golden Wedding on 11th December 1998.

Congratulations to: Major Peter Hill and Daphne who celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary on 20th October 1998.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to:

Our President who celebrates his 60th Birthday on the 11th December 1998.

Major Tony Hewitt who commanded C Company 1 Queens, who celebrated his 84th Birthday recently. He left the Queen's to return to his parent regiment, the Middlesex in Austria in the fiftys.

Ron May who celebrated his 80th Birthday on 27th June 1998. Ron has been treasurer, and a staunch supporter and committee member of 5 OMA for many years.

Major Ralph Ewart who celebrated his 80th Birthday on 31st July. He recently attended the Officers' Club luncheon at Clandon and he is reported as saying that, the secret of his long life is a 'whisky a day' - he did not specify how much!

Captain Grahame Wenn who will celebrate his 80th Birthday on the 10th December. Grahame continues working as a trustee and treasurer at the regimental museum at Clandon.

Doug Mitchell who will celebrate his 80th Birthday on the 4th January 1999. Readers will recall that Doug was the Secretary of 5 OMA for many years.

Mrs Mary Isaacson, widow of Private Harry Isaacson, The Queen's Royal Regiment who celebrated her 100th Birthday on the 19th October 1998.

Belated Golden Wedding greetings to:

Bill and Gladys Hill who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 13th October 1997.

Veterans

Greetings and Best wishes to:-

Private Arthur Burge who served in the Signal Platoon, 1st Bn The East Surreys in the First World War and took part in the 3rd Battle of Ypres, now aged 103 and still going strong.

Lance Corporal William Perchard who served in The Queen's from 1922 to 1930 and volunteered for service again in the Second World War serving with The Northamptonshire Regiment and The Royal Armoured Corps. Now aged 94 he is still active.

We Salute you both Gentlemen

Best Wishes to:

Our President for a speedy recovery after his spell in hospital.

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The Surrey Silver bugles

I was most interested to read in the May Newsletter the account by Bob Brand of his and of Fred Jenkins visit to Tidworth to see the Surrey's silver drums. I was even more interested to read that he had also been able to handle one of the Surrey's silver bugles. There is a great story behind those bugles.

When the 1st Surrey's arrived in India from Hong Kong, they brought with them the silver drums so recently presented to the regiment by Mrs Luard.

The then commanding officer, Brevet Colonel F S Montague Bates considered that the present standard brass bugles were inappropriate to be worn and carried with silver drums. So he instituted a scheme whereby if everyone of whatever rank were asked to give up one days pay, it would be sufficient to cover the cost of the purchase of silver bugles. Everyone agreed of course and the money was soon raised. Eventually the bugles arrived.

I shall never forget that sweltering hot day in 1927 when the battalion paraded in Rawalpindi for the bugles to be blessed and afterwards trooped. It was so hot that the padre wore a white topi with his clerical attire. An Indian film company had been there to film the whole proceedings. We were privileged to see a showing of the film afterwards. But what has become of that film since?

If it remained the property of that obscure film company then it has probably been destroyed long since. If on the other hand it was given to the regiment, then maybe it still exists somewhere, perhaps in the effects of some long retired senior officer.

How interesting it would be if that film could be unearthed from its hiding place. For it is part of our Regiment's history.

SD

1919-1939 The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment and The East Surrey Regiment

The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment

The 1st Battalion were returned to strength after the devastating slaughter of the Great War. They served in Ireland during the IRA Rebellion until 1922 when they returned to England for garrison duties in Dover.

When Sun Yat Sen, the revolutionary president of China died in 1925 the country was torn by civil war between rival war lords. The country was then divided between the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai Shek and the Communists who were supported by the USSR. In 1927 the British Concession in Hankow had been attacked which led to the C-in-C, China Station, to ask for troops to defend the Shanghai Settlement.

In 1927 the 1st Battalion sent an officer and eighteen men to accompany the Shanghai Defence Force. Meanwhile the rest of the Battalion carried out their duties in Dover until April when they were given embarkation orders. They left Southampton for Hong Kong and arrived on the 16th May. The original plan had been for the Battalion to be brigaded at Tientsin but, with the situation improving, they remained in Hong Kong for garrison duties. By March 1929 the Battalion were relieved by the 1st Bn The Somerset Light Infantry and embarked for Malta. The Battalion returned to China in 1930. When they arrived finally at Wan Tao it was extremely cold and they were issued with fur hats, fur boots and even fur coats to augment the usual greatcoats and leather jerkins. The China duties continued until 1934 when the Battalion moved to Quetta. Quetta is in Beluchistan in the North West Provinces of India and it was whilst there that the city was devastated by a massive earthquake. The Battalion gave the civil authorities every assistance and two members of the Battalion were awarded the BEM for their exemplary conduct, later changed to the George Cross. At the outbreak of WWII the Battalion was in Allahabad.

The 2nd Battalion was rebuilt after the Great War and early in 1919 an advance party embarked for India. The remainder of the Battalion remained in England to take part in the Victory Parade on 18th July. The first half of the main party left Liverpool on 7th August and the remainder on 6th September. In India the Battalion served mostly on the N W Frontier and were especially involved in the Waziristan Campaign. They were to remain in India until 1926. In 1927 they were in the Sudan where they remained for a year. They returned to England to garrison duties in Dover. In 1939 they were sent to Palestine to Police the rebellious Arabs and were still there at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The East Surrey Regiment

The 1st Battalion was despatched to North Russia in 1919 and from there to Egypt and garrison duties in Cairo. They left Egypt for the Sudan and Khartoum in April 1923. By November they were on the move again this time to Hong Kong. Whilst in China the Battalion was divided. There was plenty of training, marches and sports activities to occupy the men during this time. There was just one occasion when more serious duties involved the Battalion during a general strike by the Chinese.

In 1926 a new set of silver drums were dedicated by the Bishop of Hong Kong. They were bought with a legacy left to the Officer's Mess and were paraded on Ypres Day, 23rd April. The silver drums are now in the keeping of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

In 1926 the Battalion moved to India where the cycle of parades and training continued. They moved from the plains of Rawalpindi in the hot weather to the hills of Kuldana. In the cool season they returned to Rawalpindi. When necessity called for duty in the plains during the hot season daily routine was altered accordingly. The parades taking place in the early morning with the afternoons spent in darkened barrack rooms. The activities of the '*punka wallah*' being much appreciated.

On one return to Rawalpindi, in November 1927, the Battalion paraded for the presentation, dedication and trooping of seventeen silver bugles subscribed for by all ranks as a memorial to their comrades who fell in the Great War. During the parade the bugles were trooped in the same manner as the Colours so that all ranks could see them. Eventually the Battalion returned to the Sudan for a year before returning to England in January 1939.

The 2nd Battalion served in Jersey from 1924 to 1927 after which they were transferred to Gibraltar. They remained there for two years before returning to England. In 1938 they embarked for China and Shanghai. When the war with Japan was declared the Battalion was transferred to Malaya where they served with great distinction suffering dreadful losses. The 1st Leicestershire Regiment had suffered a similar fate and the two Battalions were joined to form the British Battalion. They fought on until the Army was forced to surrender in Singapore. Out of the two Battalions only 265 remained. Of these 149 subsequently died from maltreatment and privations as prisoners of the Japanese. It is interesting to note that the 2nd Battalion took their Colours with them in 1938. In 1941 they were placed in the vaults of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Singapore, for safe keeping. They remained there, in safe custody, until they were discovered by an officer of The Gordon Highlanders after the capitulation of the Japanese. They were returned to England in 1945 and are now in the Regimental Museum at Kingston.

Captions to the Colour Plates

The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment

Top: The Regimental Colours 1847-1947. Top left: Regimental Sergeant Major, 2nd Battalion, India 1922. Top right: Private, Winter Dress, Tientsin 1931. Bottom left: Colour Sergeant, Winter Dress Hardri Kach, India 1920. Bottom right: Corporal, Corps of Drums, Summer, Tientsin 1931. No regulation or order has yet been found for white bugle cords! Centre: Lieutenant in Service Dress 1930 and Captain in Mess Dress 1930. Bottom: The Drums including a silver side drum, London Regiment (The Queen's) and other emblazoned drums of the Regiment.

The East Surrey Regiment

Top: The Regimental Colours of the 1st Battalion 1903-1959 and the 2nd Battalion 1867-1945. Top left: Company Sergeant Major, Service Dress, Depot, 1933. Top right: Band Sergeant, White Summer Dress, Shanghai 1939. Bottom left: Corporal, Foreign Service Dress (KD), St George's Day Parade, Hong Kong 1926. Bottom right: Private, Foreign Service Dress (KD), Shanghai, 1940. Centre: 2nd Lieutenant Mess Dress 1930 and a Major in Levee Dress 1939. Bottom: Silver Drums and Bugles 1926 and emblazoned Bass Drum 1925.

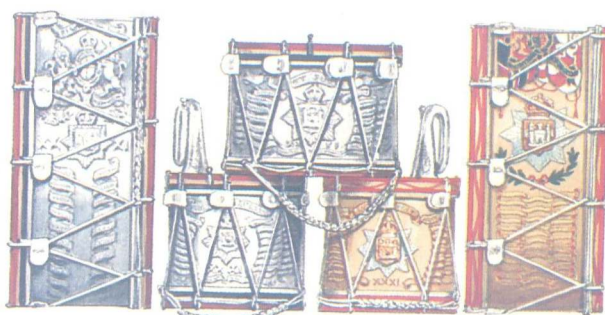




70th THE GLASGOW GREYS, 1756

70th THE SURREY REGT, 1782

31st THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGT, 1782



Sungei Patani, Malaya, 1946



Sgt Dickie Bass, CSM Charlie Sharp, and CSM John Puddephatt

Union Jack Club, London 1997



Charlie Sharp, Dickie Bass, John Puddephatt

Taken in church!



Note **new** cracks in wall! Grahame Wenn and Tommy Atkins

Officers' Club Ladies Luncheon



The Officers' Club held their annual Ladies Luncheon at Clandon on October 2nd 1998. A total of seventy four were present this year, slightly down in numbers from previous years. As is customary on this occasion a number of widows attended and as always, we were delighted to see them. We decided this year to have a group photo taken before the lunch.

The photo was taken at the front entrance to Clandon.

LETTERS



S F Steel writes:

Please find enclosed a cheque for my Newsletter subscription. It is very interesting reading about experiences other Newsletter readers have had. I served with the 1st Bn Queen's Royal Regiment in Burma and I have never heard or read about the loss of a Dakota taking the advance party to Bangkok. At the time it had happened I had been posted as a driver to the Andaman Islands. When I came back to the Battalion in Bangkok to join my 27 Group for demob I did not manage to find out whether the men had been found and brought back for burial.

M Theobolds writes from Claygate:

R Rosado asks in the May edition of the Newsletter if anybody remembers Major W Brown MC who commanded 'D' Company 1/6th East Surreys in 1944. I do indeed. I joined 'D' Company as a Platoon Commander at Cassino and had the honour and the great privilege to serve with him during the Italian Campaign and the Greek Civil War. I do not know his present whereabouts but I believe he was seconded to the 1/6 East Surreys from another Regiment. He was a great leader of men and an inspiration to all who served under him, completely unflappable and a grand companion. He won his MC on 19th September 1944 when we took the lead (I had lead platoon) to clear a hill position at the end of a ridge at San Fortunato. I shall never forget it. My radio man was killed and I was wounded in my thigh and leg and had to be evacuated to the Military hospital in Bari. The Company under Major Brown had a great success and captured the position and took many prisoners. After the healing of my wounds, as a young Lieutenant, I was keen to rejoin the Company and I am pleased to say that Major Brown asked for my return to him. I rejoined the Company at Forli just in time for our trip to Taranto in the expectation of a tour of duty in Palestine. Things were not to be. We were ordered to Greece instead where unfortunately for me, I was again wounded in the feet and had to spend the rest of my military life with the War Graves Registration Units. Although now 75 years of age, I remember Major Walter Brown with great affection and San Fortunato remains in my mind. Kind regards to all.

Mike James writes:-

I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I enjoy the Regimental Association's Newsletter. This is the second edition that I have received since becoming a member of the Association. I joined the Association after a visit to the Museum at Clandon when I got into conversation with Peter Henman of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association.

During our conversation I revealed that I had enlisted with the Grenadier Guards as a Drummer Boy at the end of 1953 and had a short break from the Regiment from 1959 to 1961. During this break I joined the 6th Battalion East Surrey Regiment (TA) which then became the 4th Battalion Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment. I then rejoined the Grenadier Guards where I remained until 1970, leaving with the rank of Sergeant. I was delighted that my applications to both Associations were successful. Since then I have attended regular monthly meetings of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Association who meet at the Surbiton Conservative Club.

Although I only served with the Surreys for a short period of time, I found it to be a most rewarding experience and on my first visit to the Association at Surbiton, I was delighted to meet up with my old Commanding Officer, Lt Colonel John Sherrard TD and who, much to my surprise, remembered me as a Lance Corporal. I also renewed some old acquaintances of the 6th and 4th Battalions.

Your Newsletter, which I enjoy reading immensely, covering the history of the Regiments and Battalions, in my opinion is second to none. I include in this my own Regimental magazine, the Grenadier Gazette.

'Jeph' Jephcote writes from Nuneaton:

Thank you for Newsletter 63, which I found most interesting. 16 Platoon D Coy was my original posting as a conscripted serviceman. The photo of my comrades young faces renew them to memory. Sadly many names evade me. The letters of Stan Blay and Stan Houghton show the deep compassion and commitment to keep those names and memories alive. Geoffrey Curtis expresses it all in his 'Black Cat' column of 56 London Division and his account of the Anzio Bridgehead. I am not on photograph! I was demobbed in 1946, HQ Coy attached to D Coy Signals L/Sgt.

S Bodfish writes:

It does seem a great pity that it is only to correct an error that I write to you. However to put the record straight, I must point out an error regarding the article on the Trooping of the Colour at Mosque Square Omdurman on March 7th 1938, reported on page 16 of the current newsletter. I quote -

"The acting Bandmaster L/Sgt Attewell who later became a Company Sergeant Major and won the Distinguished Conduct Medal" Not so I'm afraid. There were two Attewells in the Company at one time. Stanley the elder extended his service and he was at the Trooping. Bill the younger at that time was a Class B reserve and was recalled at the outbreak of hostilities. He went to duty and he became CSM and won the DCM. His brother Stanley remained with the Band during the entire war, serving under Bandmaster Harriott. I must put the record straight because I am still in contact with the family.

F G Cole writes from Guildford:

I often wonder when reading the Newsletter if there is anyone who recalls the efforts made by a considerable number of "lads" in the erection of a large "Aircraft" hanger at Camp 197 (Haifa) in 1947 which we called the "Kingston Empire". This was achieved without the use of "sophisticated" equipment, just brute force and good luck.

From the Editor's post.

One of our members writing to let us know that we had his address incorrect, was most anxious that we corrected the error immediately, as he was in difficulties with a lady who lives in the same block of flats. He writes:- *"Please note my Flat number is 21 not 1. The lady who lives in Flat 1 is religious. She asked me to get this amended. She doesn't want the postman to think she is cohabiting. She must be 70 plus and I am 83! Its very funny because she is serious about this"*.

Pat Kelly writes from Plymouth:

I wonder if the enclosed will be of any interest to you for the November issue of the magazine. As you will see I have held on to it for some while but thought it might be of some amusement for members of the Regiment who served in BAOR. I know I had finished my National Service in the January of 1950 but you never know perhaps I just might have been one of the Queen's he considered a smart soldier!!

Extract from a paper dated Friday August 4, 1950 - VIEWPOINT

So now it is "bull" which is causing the downfall of the Army! I wonder if the man who says so has ever seen the Guards in or out of action? These lads are past masters at the art of "bull," in all its diverse forms, many of which are unknown to the average soldier. But are the Guards bad soldiers as a result?

In five years recently spent in BAOR, the only soldiers in my area who commanded the respect of the Germans, apart from the Queen's, were the Guards. I was ashamed to be associated with many of the characters turned out by other units. Increase pay, better the living conditions, by all means, but please let us make sure that the soldier is worthy of his hire. Me? I'm just a Gunner, Northampton.

Thank you for your very interesting article in the May issue regarding the Berlin Blockade it brought back some memories for me. I remembered one occasion when our company was called at night to assist in unloading some cargo at Gatow airfield. I don't know or more likely have forgotten the reason for the emergency. One of the other memories is of that horrible dehydrated potato we seemed to have with every one of our meals.

Mrs Margaret Carr writes:-

Thank you for the condolences and the Collect which I received on behalf of the President and Queen's Surreys Association members on the death of my dear husband Ken Carr. The floral tribute was beautiful, the flowers magnificent, thank you so much.

Although Ken only served in the Queen's during the War, he and I enjoyed many happy occasions with The Queen's (Southwark) Regimental Association over many years. The support of Major John Tamplin and six friends from the Old Comrades was a great comfort to me.

I would be pleased if I can still receive the Associations Newsletter. I am enclosing a donation in memory of Ken and our happy association within the "family" of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Jack Parkinson writes:-

I believe that misprints in the excellent Newsletter are few and far between, but I really must point out that the picture on p41 of the May 1998 issue shows Gunner Joe COURTNEY (not Country!) of 57th Anti-Tank Regt. RA (formerly 5th Bn The East Surrey Regimentt. TA), at TA camp in 1939. Joe who sadly died last year, served with 57th (our "first line" regiment) throughout its existence, was the author of a short memoir of his service (gunner to Troop Sgt), and had the honour of being personally responsible for the erection - by London Borough of Sutton - of a plaque to mark the site of his old Drill Hall in Throwley Road, Sutton.

Former members of 57th A/Tk Regiment will be pleased to hear that Ray Goodacre has now completed Part I of the Regimental history, and this will be available shortly. Ray is however, still hoping that further old 5th Surreys/57th Anti-Tanks will contact him, so that the results of his research may be as accurate as possible.

Editors note: My apologies - having checked the photo however, I find the name spelt as Country. We are delighted to set the record straight.

Mrs J Easthope writes from Croydon:-

Thank you so very much for your kind letter concerning the death of my dear father Charles R Harris on 16th May. Your representative attended the funeral on the 27th May, with a beautiful wreath from the Regiment. Dad would have been so proud. He lived an orderly life which I believe was mainly due to his army training.

Over the past four years your kind assistance from The Queen's Royal Surrey Association has helped him to enjoy the comfort and independence he so greatly valued. Despite his disabilities and the setbacks he had, he was a very happy man. Thank you once again for the very valuable work you do.



Ex Sgt John Skerry writes and recalls:-

Whoever went through the Kingston barracks late 1930's early 40s did not know Sgt Pete Carpes?! How many of us conscripts went through his hands - we came to Kingston knowing nothing and we left with Regimental pride and a discipline that remains to this day.

He sadly died some years ago, but will always be remembered by those of us who still survive. The photo was some of the founder members of E troop No 4 Commando at Weymouth. Pete remained with us for quite some time before re-joining the East Surreys and I believe remained for the rest of the war, in the West Indies after a horrible experience after his transport ship was torpedoed.

Jack Ashcroft writes:-

"Good Old Sussex"

I was posted on a draft to India. Five Sgts including the late Jack Homersham later RSM MBE from the 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. On arriving in India I was posted to 9th Bn The Royal Sussex Regiment stationed at Shillong in Assam. Shortly afterwards we entered North Burma and advanced South. It was on the 23rd December 1944. The Japanese were retreating in Burma and we had reached the banks of the Shivel River a few days previously. Our allocation of beer was three pints per month and we were three months behind with our ration. However we did receive one months ration prior to the 23rd and the officers mess had their ration of beer and spirits. We were told we would be resting over the Christmas on the banks of the river. We spent some time in small boats fishing with hand grenades. As the fish were killed or stunned we scooped them up and got quite a haul. The local Burmese were pleased to receive them. At 8pm on the 23rd the Company Sergeant Major came round and said he wanted 15 men for carol singing outside of the officers mess. These were of all ranks from Pte to CSM. We arrived and commenced our singing and after a short while the Colonel came out and said "Who's in charge of this choir" The CSM replied "I am sir". The Colonel said "get them to sing the last two verses of good king Wenceslas, and then march the bloody lot inside". On entering the mess we were given a drink and

sang firstly "Hark the herald angels sing" and then "Good old Sussex by the sea". The Royal Sussex Regimental march past. On hearing this the Colonel shouted "waiter, drinks all round". We continued singing carols and as our drinks got low it had to be "Good old Sussex by the sea". It worked and again the Colonel called for drinks all round. This went on for a couple of hours and we eventually left the officers mess with more than our allocated ration

Alfred Petts from London writes:-



Please find enclosed a photo of Douglas Hayes of 1st Bn East Surrey Regiment taken 1942, he is the one taking off Kitty McShane and was also Company barber 'C' Coy.

The newspaper cut out has gone missing or I cannot find it concerning eight of us capturing 128 Germans at a place unknown to me but close to Toukabor North Africa or 15 miles from Tunis. But prior to the Reuters correspondent who wrote the piece and leading up to 9 April 1943 the following may be of some interest to ESR'S.

We began an attack on "Reece" Ridge at 2pm and this was a hot day on 7 April 1943 (according to my diary). We made the top of the Ridge but on the way down about 10-20 yards we began to get mortared and machine-gunned. We were 68 in number which was 'B' Coy. We had been sniped all morning on 7 April and lost our platoon officer and a couple who were wounded, the Colonel walked around our slit trenches and standing over mine the tracers were going between his legs- I offered him room but he calmly walked away. Unable to get back to comparative 'safety' of the Ridge I jumped into a mortar bomb crater but it was burning hot and I had to turn occasionally to 'roast' the other parts of my body - eight of us got to the bottom of this hill and looking back it resembled the lid of a pepper pot absolutely packed with holes and craters and a lot of men lying down being attended to by medics who had a large Red Cross flag flying.

Then we saw a soldier walking towards us and we began to wave him away from our position (such as it was) he cottoned on and eventually joined us, he had to send the corporal back as he got shot in the thumb. It was a Lieutenant J Woodhouse, fire was coming at us from our left and he walked toward it and got it stopped, it was from the Lancashire Fusiliers. By night fall I personally had begun at least six slit trenches, one I had to get my head into as we began to get Stukar'd but my bottom was out above the hole. Next day as the sun was well up a Churchill tank came up and we climbed upon it, we only went half a mile and got mortared-we leaped off the back and the tank started to go back, we remonstrated to the Sgt tank commander and he said he was carrying 80 galls fuel and daren't take a chance on getting blown up (never mind us). We 'plodded' on until night stopping here and there, water being our main concern. I having drunk mine but managed to cadge a drop from Pte Coshall (who is the only one I mention as I didn't know the others though we were all in 'B' Coy). By early dawn one could smell wood smoke and coffee being brewed and across some dead ground saw the fires, the

Germans were cooking their coffee but we didn't see any movement. We really did not want to see any, for eight of us even against eight of them, in the condition we were in were not looking forward to a fight but we climbed a short hill and came across several German freshly dug graves and a lot of 'egg' bombs and some rifles, a couple of Arab huts, it seemed this was an objective I think it was called 'Toukabor'.

Breakfast came up to us, and one Corporal reinforcement and we dug in - we were pretty high up and someone noticed bivouac tents in the distance so down we went to investigate these 'tents'. We sent a couple of shots at them and received no return fire but a white surrender flag was waving madly. Lieutenant Woodhouse walked towards it and we collected 128 prisoners all German. The other incident happening this day 9 April was a German staff car approached us with a fat General sitting in it and with two officers one either side of him on the running board and he wanted to surrender to a officer of equivalent rank but Lieutenant Woodhouse speaking German ordered him out and told him to march to Medjez-el-Bab along with his men.

I haven't recorded exactly the events after this day for we got mortared and as a bomb landed behind me and my pack was loose the blast blew my pack up and hit me on the back of the head or a clod of earth hit me, anyhow I was hospitalised for weeks and sent to convalescence. You can keep the photo as I have found another, should I find the newspaper cutting I will forward it to you.

Frank Lewell (ex Sergeant) The East Surrey Regiment writes:-

I completed my seven years with the Colours early in 1939 and was recalled to the Regiment on mobilization. This in itself was something in itself to remember, all old friends meeting again so soon. Reporting to the Guard Room at the Depot, sleeping all over the show but marching out down King's Road in full marching order within 36 hours. It was 11 o'clock Sunday 3rd September, people coming out of their houses and telling us that War had been declared.

Major H B L Smith was the conducting officer and I saw him smile, a good officer and later in N.Africa to take over as CO when Colonel Wilberforce was killed a few yards from myself. There wasn't a better CO and to think that the day later Jerry gave in and the battalion ripped into Tunis. Like so many I feel that I could write quite a few anecdotes, amusing and otherwise, just one:- It was when the battalion was in the hills above the Soubelat Plain and after stand down the Bn Int Sgt came in sight, he said we have looked up the records of the battalion at the start of the war and you are now the only chap still serving in the four rifle companies and in the same platoon at that and then someone said look at the last three numbers of his regimental number 666 - well who knows?

Fred J Potticary writes from New Zealand:-

I am writing to say thank you for the Newsletters I have been receiving.

I see on page 33 of the last Newsletter R A Searle from Farnham wrote about Dog Press in Trieste. I remember Sgt Bromley used to paint figures of ladies on our issue, then blow them up for balloons to decorate our open air dances in Legano. I was still with RSM Sid Pratten MM when we celebrated VE or the Jap surrender, I cannot remember which.

I had a copy of WEF until a couple of years ago, but I sent it to England for the Italy Star Association's Museum. I never had a reply whether they received it

My brother served with 2/5th Queen's in France 1940, then in the Desert, he was captured at Tobruk and finished up in Stalag 8B, his name was Edward Potticary, No 6091201 Corporal. After the war he emigrated to Australia where he died and his

ashes are scattered in Toowoomba Queensland Cemetery, his grandson is setting up a memorial corner in the local RBL so I am going over this year to help arrange it.
Thanks again. 78 years old today.

Ronald Maddocks writes:-

My late Father served in the 2nd Bn The Gloucestershire Regiment during the First World War. At the end of the war he took on a Regular engagement with that Regiment and, in 1919 the Regiment and families moved to India and stationed in Almandeggar and eventually moved to Rawalpindi Westridge. In 1923 my Father then transferred to the Indian Army Ordnance Corps and later obtained a Regular Commission.

On the 21st February 1930 I returned to Rawalpindi Westridge and joined the 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment as a Band Boy. As you are no doubt aware the Regiment left India during 1937 for Khartoum and left there in 1938 arriving in England 1939. This was my first time back in England since leaving in 1919. After our disembarkation leave I felt that nobody seemed to want me. First I was told that I was to be posted to a duty Company, then I was going to be posted to the Depot, then I was going to be made Regimental Post Corporal. In the end I was sent to HQ 11th Infantry Brigade as a learner Clerk.

At the outbreak of war I was called back to the Regiment and went to France with them. Then shortly after arriving in France I was returned to the Brigade Headquarters and remained with that HQ until I was wounded whilst in North Africa. I was evacuated back to England and Horton EMS Hospital, Epsom.

I had skin wounds in one arm and leg but, worst of all in the abdomen. After my final operation I was taken on by the Military Registrar's staff until discharged on medical grounds in early February 1946. Whilst at the hospital I was privileged to take a leading part in a musical comedy called *"High Temperature"* which was written and produced by Ian Wallace OBE the opera singer who was a patient at the time.

Incidentally I am in the process of writing an article *"My Memories of India 1919 to 1937"*.

If I consider it any good I will send a copy to the Editor and if he thinks that is alright perhaps he would like to publish in the Newsletter.

L G Barnard writes:

How very pleased I was to read the article *"The Danish Connection and The East Surrey Regiment"* in the May issue of the Newsletter. I well remember the Danish contingent who were with the 2nd battalion at El-Ballah in the Canal Zone and Palestine.

I'm sorry I do not recognise your contributor Mr Neilson but I do remember the name of Mr Skram-Jenson. The two very likeable characters I do remember are Pte Anderson and Hanson, two common enough names in Denmark who occupied a tent up from me in C Company at El-Ballah, we saw many dawn breaks together. Two very nice guys a pleasure to know them, a privilege to serve with them, if Mr Neilson is in touch with them perhaps he would give them my best regards.

Roy Cook from Lancing writes:-

In the Newsletter the article on the 2nd Bn The Queen's brought back many memories of the past. I was with the 2nd in India and returned with the Battalion to Germany, and was part of the Queen's company on *"Operation Woodpecker"*.

About eighty of us formed one of 4 companies in each Lumber Group. The other three companies from other Infantry units plus support Engineers etc. Timber cut was of very good quality and after felling went back to Ports and onto England for housing, not for fire wood as the article suggests!

We cleared vast areas of forests between six Lumber Groups in the north of Germany. I remember the 2nd as a very happy battalion, with a good atmosphere. Colonel East took over when we returned to UK and we were sorry to lose Lt Colonel "Busty" Watson as he was a very popular officer with a rumbustious no nonsense way about him. His rendition of *"There's a troopship just leaving Bombay"* in the C Coy mess on Christmas Day 46 was No 1 in our charts! It was in the 90's in Poona for Christmas and the mess Nissen hut was decorated with artificial snow made from cotton wool.

I still have my letters I sent home and I see that Christmas 1947 was started with reveille by the 'Band' and followed by a 100 a side football match with officers and NCO's v other ranks. Officers arrived on a tank and a Bren carrier, complete with thunderflashes and smoke generators. Happy days, long gone!!

When General Giffard visited Crowborough one of the Irish members of our Company told him he should *"come more often"* as the food was greatly improved in his honour. Your cartoon from the Daily Express was true to life!

I recently visited our old lumber site in the forest at Herzburg and the camp site is now a housing estate and the ramp area that we used, to cut to size, and load timber is now a nature reserve, with the site clearing still evident.

We spent most of our time in India under canvas or in Nissen Huts and Bamboo Basha's, and on *"Woodpecker"* under canvas, then old German camp huts in winter. When we had a few weeks in barracks in Dortmund and Soltau it was like heaven.

Looking back it was a time that helped to form character and personal discipline that the youth of today have not experienced. We like to forget the bad times, the Blitz on London, the nights on fire watch, the constant threat of death from the sky. Rockets and Doodlebugs. Riots in India, the devastation in Germany and remember the comradeship and friendship that grew out of our time in the Queen's.

I reminisce too much!

Ron Harper writes to the Editor:

The enclosed photograph was taken earlier this year when three ex 1st Queens Signallers got together for the first time in over forty years. Left to right Ron Harper, Alan Bennett and Charlie Hardingham.

We have since been in touch with another of our number Cpl Stan Ansel who we look forward to seeing again in November.

As you may remember we were all trained by your self and Sgt George Toomey, so we must have been good!!!



Editor's comment: George and I had to make the most of what we were given!?

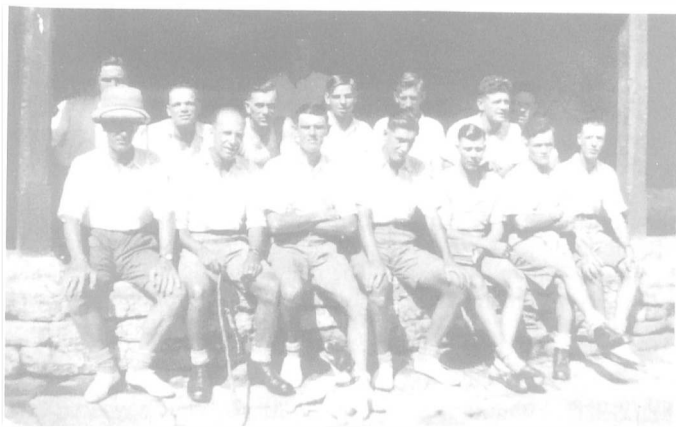


PAY ATTENTION CAN YOU HELP?

W E Dyer writes from Guildford. He is trying to contact a comrade who saved his life in 1940:-

Calling members of 1/6th Queen's who were stationed in Boston, Lincs in 1940. W E Dyer, 11 Guildford Park Avenue, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5NJ, is anxious to contact a soldier who saved his life. Dyer was near the Jolly Sailor pub, when he fell into the river, which flows into the sea. Dyer saw him several times in the desert but has forgotten his name, which was a peculiar one. It is believed that he was a despatch rider at some time in the Signal Platoon. It is possible that soldier's name was something like "Shoeback" or "Shoeblack". Any reader who can help please contact Mr Dyer direct.

D Hodgeson sent the photo below of 17 platoon 1 Surreys in the hill station at Chaubattin taken in 1938.



Back row left to right: Joe Cairns, 'Gripper' Hawkins, Hiller, Seymour, 'Polly' Sanders, 'Ciggy' Briddick
Front row left to right: 'Chesty' Carman, 'Pop' Hodgeson, 'Cracker' King, ?, ?, and 'Wag' Harries?

Can any reader identify the three unnamed men?

O Rivers writes from Felixstowe: I enclose for your interest a photograph taken in my local First World War graveyard. This headstone has always intrigued me. He being a member of the Regiment, what was he doing there?

I can only assume he was a patient at one of the two military convalescent homes that were in the town during World War I and possibly died of his wounds there. I often wonder as I stroll through the cemetery has he been forgotten? Does anyone know he's there? Is there anyone looking for him, who can say? I send this



photograph to you in case you think it worthy of a mention in any future publication.

War Graves in Thailand

Does any reader know the whereabouts of the family of Private H G T Wilson, 2 Surreys. His grave is in The Allied Forces Cemetery, Kanchanaburi. A Mr and Mrs John Wright have recently visited the Cemetery and forwarded three photos and would like them passed on to any relatives - if known.



Mr Wright says in his letter "this headstone caught my wife's eye, she particularly liked the inscription - and so we took the photos. My father was ex regular Navy and was lost in 1942 when his ship HMS *Hermione* was torpedoed in the Mediterranean. My mother is still alive and so we felt that there may be a possibility of tracing any of Pte Wilsons relatives. The Cemetery is kept immaculately and a very emotional place to be in.

Can any reader help? Please write to the Editor if you are able to.

J Skerry, Lemons Farm, Abinger Common, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6JW is anxious to trace any family of the late L/Cpl Fred Gooch (6145770) of The East Surrey Regiment.



Gooch was killed at Dieppe serving with No.4 Commando on August 19th 1942. If any reader can help please contact Mr Skerry.

Leslie Jones, 14 Hall Park Close, Littleover, Derby DE23 6GY (01332-273108) is anxious to trace two mates who served with him in 1 Queens in Burma. They are George Young, the

Padres batman and Reg Allen who was a muleteer in C Company. If any reader can help please contact Mr Jones above.

E G (Ted) Ridley writes from PO Box 15, Crafers, South Australia 5152. My very good friend Cpl Martyn Wright Hainsworth of 1/6th Battalion East Surrey Regt was killed at Sidi Mazaire near Bijion 11.4.1943. We never saw each other after the end of August 1939. The last letter I had from Martyn was from Cannonbridge Camp, Dumfries after he had spent a couple of weeks on the "Ettrick" (my battalion went to Sierra Leone" on the "Ettrick" in 1940). I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew Martyn Hainsworth.

o o o

56 London Division Officers Club Dinner 1998



Snap!, Three Queen's Royal Regiment Ties!

Left to right: Eric Schnabel (2/7th), Guest 'John' Mills (2/7th), first appearance, Lionel Dodd (2/7th)

o o o

What the butler saw or a Quartermasters dream!



Majors Vic Ebbens and Ron Morris on a recent visit to the battlefields in France!

Golf Society

The Spring Meeting of the Golf Society was held on 7 May 1998 at Sudbrook Park. We were blessed once again with a fine day for the meeting, The course was in excellent condition, and 24 members attended. We were pleased to welcome David Billingshurst for the first time, Robert Cottam and Tony Jacobson after an absence of some years The Society was delighted that Jennifer Davidson, Basil Crutchfield, Hugh Harris and Richard Hill were able to join us for lunch.

All the trophies were keenly contested, the prize list being as follows:

Senior Division

Challenge Cup Col J G W Davidson	76 gross
Medal Capt B M L Scripps	73 net

Junior Division

Dodgson Cup Maj R A Green	73 net
Medal J R L Wells Esq	78 net

Heales Memorial Trophy W J T Ross Esq 38pts

Veterans Halo Col J G W Davidson 39pts

Harry Adcock Trophy for Putting

HP Mason Esq and CG Stanton Esq

PM Greensomes J W Farrar Esq and C C Surtees Esq 34pts

The AGM of the Society was held after the afternoon round. The President, Colonel J G W Davidson asked all members to join him in marking the Society's respect to Major John Sutton, a former President and Captain who died on 3 May 1998. The Society elected FTA Hole Esq as Captain for the years 1998/2000.

The Match against the Royal Marines Golf Society was played at the North Hants Golf Club, Fleet on Tuesday 19 May. This is always an enjoyable day, made even better this year by good weather.

The morning round was keenly contested, many matches going to the 18th hole. We went into lunch with honours shared at 2½ pts. After an excellent lunch for which we were the wine hosts, the Regiment was confident that we had the edge for the afternoon. Once again all the matches were close, and honours again were shared at 2½ pts. The match was drawn at 5pts each. We were delighted to retain the cup as holders for another year.

Match Results

AM GREENSOMES

Maj Gen G A White		Maj Gen P R Kay	
F T A Hole Esq	0	Capt D G R Hunt	1
C M Howard Esq	½	Col A S Harris	½
W J T Ross Esq		A Smith Esq	
Capt B M L Scripps		LT J A Cook	
Maj RA Green	1	Sgt I C Hurdle	0
Lt Col P G F M Roupell		Capt A B Gordon	
CC Surtees Esq	0	J D Francis Esq	1
Col J G W Davidson		S Erskine Esq	
Lt Col F B Herd	1	WOII W Hendry	0

PM GREENSOMES

C C Surtees Esq		Maj Gen P R Kay	
J R L Wells Esq	0	Capt D G R Hunt	1
Lt Col P G F M Roupell	½	S Erskine Esq	½
F T A Hole Esq		WOII W Hendry	
Maj R A Green		J D Francis Esq	
Lt Col F B Herd	0	Capt B A Gordon	1
Col J G W Davidson		Lt J A Cook	
C M Howard Esq	1	A Smith Esq	0
Capt B M L Scripps		Col A S Harris	
W J T Ross Esq	1	Sgt I C Hurdle	0

Match score QRSRGS 5pts RMGS 5pts

FBH



56th (London) Division

More Black Cats

When I began the first instalment about 56th (London) Division I said I hoped it would stimulate some interest in the Division's activities, so I am delighted that just that is happening; The Editor has now sent me a copy of an intriguing account of John Day's experiences in the Gothic Line battles. He was among the gunner reinforcements posted to 2/6th Queen's in June 1944. His story brings back vivid memories of what it was really like in an Infantry battalion of the Division. The first part appears in this edition.

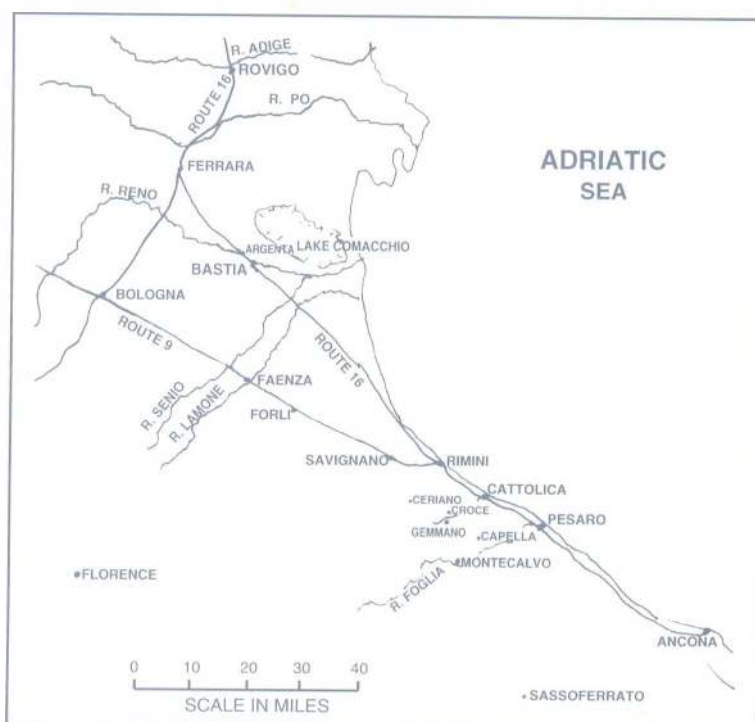
GBC

In the four months since the battered 56th (London) Division had been pulled out of the Anzio Bridgehead for Rest and Refit, the scene in Italy had changed significantly. Cassino had fallen in mid May, shortly followed by the breakout from Anzio and the capture of Rome on 4th June 1944. When the newly constituted Division returned to Italy around 17th July, 8th Army was entering the port of Ancona and 5th Army approaching the port of Leghorn - two vital prizes from the logistic point of view. But the Allied forces in Italy had been weakened first for the Normandy landings on 6th June, and later for the South of France operation. Moreover they were now closing up to the Gothic Line, a natural defensive line based on the Etruscan Apennines running from south of Spezia on the west coast to Pesaro on the east coast. With Italian forced labour the Germans had been working on the defences since the autumn of 1943. It was on this line that they planned to make their stand to bar the allies' way into the Po Valley.

Withdrawal of the French mountain troops in particular, and a serious weakening of 5th Army in general for the invasion of the South of France led to a major change in the plans for the assault on the Gothic Line. The main thrust was to be made by 8th Army on the Adriatic flank. 56th Division was allocated to Vth Corps which was given the primary role on the left flank of 8th Army to break through the Gothic Line in the foot hills of the Apennine Range and seize Bologna. Elaborate deception arrangements were made to cover the regrouping which entailed a complex move of formations to the Adriatic sector from the mountainous area about Florence. On arrival in Italy we had moved to Tivoli just east of Rome. Now with Divisional signs removed, we made a series of night moves along treacherous mountain roads first to Assisi and finally to concentration areas round Sassoferato behind 4th Indian Division.

The Corps plan was to break into the Gothic line with 46th Division on the right and 4th Indian Division on the left to seize Monte Gridolfo and Tavoletto respectively. 56th Division with 7th Armoured Brigade, 4th Division and 1st Armoured Division were to follow up, and on the right flank the Canadian Corps was to capture Cattolica and advance up Highway 16 to Rimini. We looked forward to our exciting role with eager anticipation. I do not know to what extent the other arms had been reorganised and reinforced, but the infantry battalions were now back up to strength with our gunner reinforcements well integrated, training with our affiliated armoured regiment, 8th Royal Tank Regiment, had been good, and there was an air of optimism about. Certainly 56th Division was once again in great shape.

The attack was launched on 25th August and it seemed surprise had been achieved. The leading divisions swept forward against little resistance and we moved forward in bounds to their rear. By 30th August we had closed up to the River Foglia and I am sure we all remember the exhilarating spectacle of 5th Indian Brigade attacking Monte Calvo, just

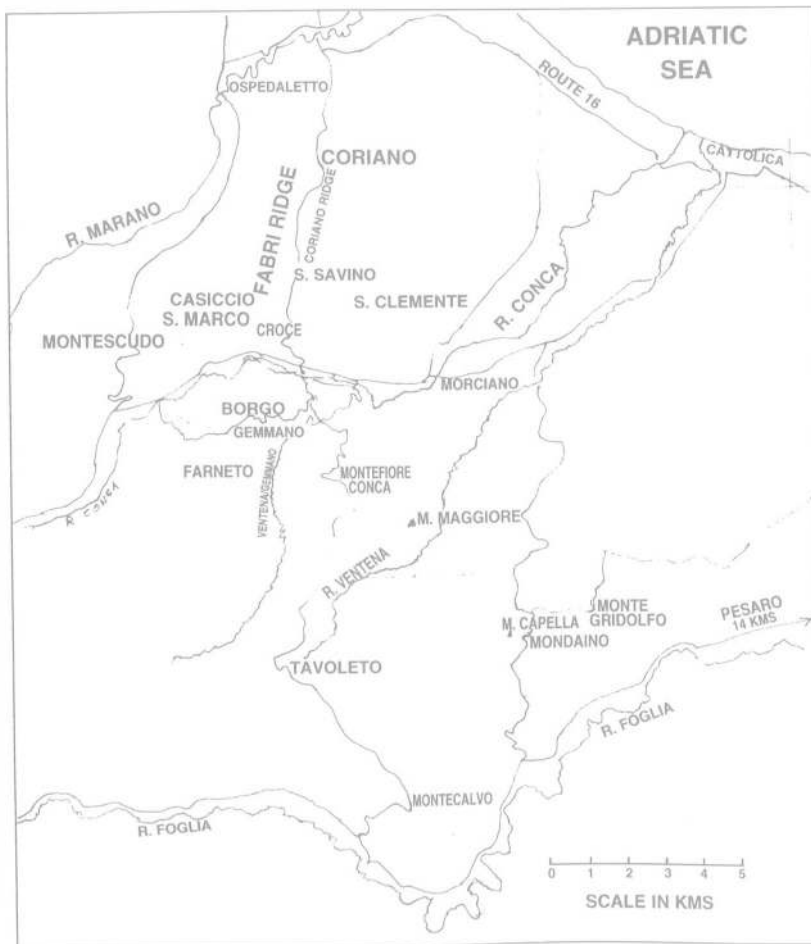


Area of Ops Aug 44 - May 45

across the river supported by tanks and close support from the Desert Airforce. By 1st September the Gothic line had been breached over a front of 15 miles inland from Pesaro, but resistance was stiffening as German reinforcements arrived, and the Queen's Brigade was committed to advance west of Mondaino and maintain the momentum by capturing the commanding feature of Monte Maggiori.

At first light on 1st September 2/6th Queen's moved forward with C and D Companies mounted on tanks. D Company were given the first objective, Monte Capella, and with one of his classic silent attacks Major Peter Taylor infiltrated his company up the slopes and seized the summit without a single casualty. C Company following up ran into heavy Spandau fire, but by nightfall the Battalion was secure on the feature. During the night 2/5th Queen's passed to our left to take the high ground to the Northwest. Their advance was strongly contested and a good deal of hand to hand fighting led to considerable casualties on both sides. A counter-attack at dawn was defeated with determined support from a squadron of 8 RTR which had just come up and the objective was held. The following night 2/7th Queen's passed through to capture Point 329 at the Northern end of the Maggiori feature. During the move forward they were heavily shelled and Lieutenant Colonel David Baynes, who had been with the battalion for five years, was wounded. Major Maurice MacWilliam had the unenviable job of taking over during the battle, but the objective was secured. The following night 167 Brigade passed through, but 2/5th and 2/6th who had been withdrawn to the B echelon area suffered over 100 casualties from a "butterfly" bomb attack. The administrative staffs were very seriously depleted including the QMs of both 2/5th and 2/7th killed.

It was now planned that 56th Division should by pass the formidable Gemmano ridge to the right and advance to Croce and to the River Marano beyond. 1st Armoured Division was to move up on our right directed on to the Coriano ridge and between them these two divisions were to break-out towards Bologna. The reality of the situation proved to be very different. We were faced by a series of ridges and hill villages dominating river after river flowing down to the sea. The coastal corridor was narrowing, and German resistance was increasing daily as more reinforcements arrived. On the night of 4th September 167 and 168 Brigades forced a crossing of the River Conca, but the following day were halted by



The Gothic Line

obstinate resistance from San Savino, Croce and the northern slopes of Gemmano. At the same time the tanks of 1st Armoured Division failed to reach Coriano. Over the next few days Croce was won and lost again several times by battalions of both 167 and 168 Brigades, and the Ox and Bucks gained a toe-hold on the village of Gemmano only to be forced back by a counterattack. It was now clear that the mile long 1500 ft high ridge of Gemmano must be secured before further progress could be made.

So it was that the Queen's Brigade was committed to what turned out to be one of the most formidable battles of the Gothic Line. And now the rains came, the approach tracks quickly became impassable and once again we were forced to rely on mule transport for all our needs. The Brigade attack was supported by the whole Divisional Artillery and my mortars were integrated into the fire plan to reach the parts which the guns could not. This was an interesting change for us after the "shoot and scoot" tactics we had been employing to support the earlier advances. 2/7th Queen's led off in a daylight attack on 8th September and the leading companies reached the villages of Gemmano and Borgo. They were then strongly counter-attacked and despite the intervention of the reserve company, during the night they were driven back with heavy casualties on both sides retaining only a precarious hold on the outskirts. The same evening 2/6th Queen's moved forward to attack the western slopes of Gemmano and capture the high point of the Gemmano feature code-named "Soldier". They quickly ran into very heavy DF and spandau fire from the village area which 2/7th had been unable to secure. By last light they reached Poggio but by then they had suffered severe casualties including C Company commander who had only 2 days earlier taken over from Major Joe Dallas who had been killed in the Capella battle. The Battalion was now effectively trapped in an exposed position with any movement immediately attracting heavy machine gun fire. However later in the night D Company gallantly led by Major Reg Purdon,

one of our attached South African Officers, captured "Soldier" but he also was killed. The Company was at once counter-attacked and A and B Companies moved forward to reinforce the position, but B Company Commander was wounded and heavy casualties sustained. Captain John Lea-Wilson, a 10th Hussars officer posted to the Battalion soon after Salerno, took command of the remnants of the combined companies. They held on grimly throughout the following day and night, and it gave me and my Mortar Platoon enormous satisfaction to answer many calls for DF. Our ammunition expenditure was enormous, but their tenacity enabled D Company who were almost cut off to extricate themselves.

Meanwhile 2/5th Queen's moved in single file along the bed of the River Ventena to attack Farneto. The anniversary of the Salerno landings was spent by them striving to capture their objective in the face of very heavy fire and mounting casualties and the following day, weak and short of ammunition they were ordered to withdraw. The whole Brigade was now relieved by 46th Division and moved back to a concentration area to reorganise. I took over C Company - the third company commander in ten days. Once again the Queen's Brigade had fought itself to a standstill. While we had been struggling to hold the Gemmano feature, 168 Brigade had been committed to reinforce 167 Brigade in and around Croce, and the tanks of 1st Armoured Division had been unable to take the Coriano ridge. Looking back it is quite clear that 8th Army had come up against the line on which the Germans were determined to make their stand.

There was little respite. Once more 8th Army was to attempt to break through into the Po Valley, but the key to any significant advance remained the capture of the dominating heights of Gemmano, Croce and Coriano. H hour was planned to be at 0400 hours on 14th September. Accordingly during the night 11th/12th September the Queen's Brigade moved forward to reinforce 167 and 168 Brigades who in their weakened state had a tenuous hold of the village of Croce. It was a grim spectacle. The axis was under constant artillery fire, vehicles and brewed up tanks littered the route and the village itself was a scene of utter devastation. It had already changed hands five times. I took up a defensive position with my company astride the road beyond the village and we spent an extremely uncomfortable day, completely under observation, and pounded incessantly by artillery and mortar fire. During the following night stragglers from another company suddenly appeared milling around in front of us. To this day I do not know what had gone wrong, but I was urgently summoned to the wireless by the CO who gave crisp concise orders that I was to move at once to capture the hamlet of 11 Palazzo, about half a mile to our Northwest and around a mile to the south of the San Savino ridge held by 2/7th Queen's. I had not been prepared for this, but after quick orders to the platoon commanders we set off and as we approached the objective we were fired on from the buildings which we carefully cleared house by house. Daylight revealed that this had been another disputed area from earlier encounters. It also brought the familiar sound of roaring tank engines as the armour moved forward to support 2/7th Queen's in their attack on the Fabbri ridge and 2/5th advanced from Croce to secure San Marco and Casiccio. 2/5th quickly ran into trouble and although they eventually reached the outskirts of San Marco having taken some 100 prisoners they sustained heavy casualties and were unable to make further progress. 2/7th also ran into early difficulties and had considerable casualties, but their supporting squadron of 2 RTR captured the Fabbri ridge by 0730 hours.

However 2/7th Queen's success was not in time to save my Company from an early counter-attack supported by tanks. Although this was beaten off we were beginning to run short of ammunition and the tanks, standing off, were wreaking havoc. Both my company signallers were killed and the wireless destroyed and I was wounded in my head. Then Captain Stevens made a courageous charge with his carriers over open ground dominated by enemy tank fire to bring us much needed reinforcement and ammunition. The position was held, the battle moved on, and later I and other wounded were taken back to the R A P by carrier. Doc Hogan decided I should be evacuated and put me in charge of an ambulance load of wounded Germans which was driven by one of the brave Americans who had volunteered for front line ambulance work before their country had entered the war. At the ADS I was immediately converted from walking to lying wounded and I heard grave mumblings about preserving my eyesight. With great good fortune I ended up in the General Hospital at Ancona where I was operated on by one of the brilliant McIndoe surgeons.

The battle which I had left in full flood did not achieve the hoped for breakthrough by the armour, but 2/5th and 2/7th Queen's captured several hundred prisoners between them. However they sustained very heavy casualties, together with the Brigade Commander Smith-Dorrien who was killed, and the whole Brigade was withdrawn to a rest area near Morciano.

Brigadier Bill Stratton, the BGS at 8th Army, now assumed command and remained with the Queen's Brigade until the end of the campaign. On 15th September Gemmano Ridge was finally secured by 4th Indian Division, and on 21st the Canadians entered Rimini. The furious and costly battles around Gemmano, Croce and Coriano broke the German stranglehold, but our advance continued to be strenuously opposed ridge by ridge and river by river. Moreover winter was setting in and the chance of achieving a breakthrough had been lost. "Gemmano Ridge" was to be another Battle Honour won by 169 Brigade for the Regiment.

By the time the Queen's Brigade was in action again the River Marano had been crossed and the Brigade was ordered to capture the Ceriano Ridge. In the first phase 2/5th Queen's working closely with 2 RTR advanced 10 kilometres by day to close up to the ridge, and that night the other two battalions moved up under "artificial moonlight" "from searchlights to carry out a night attack on the ridge. 2/6th Queen's captured their objectives and managed to hold on despite determined enemy counter-attacks and in the morning their position was strengthened by the arrival on the ridge of tanks from 2 RTR. But 2/7th Queen's move forward was delayed by traffic congestion and their attack was postponed until dawn. They met stiff opposition and the leading companies were forced to withdraw by enemy counter-attacks. But the following night the ridge was finally secured. 1st Armoured Division had also encountered devastating fire in their attack on the ridge to our right, and the Bays had suffered enormous tank losses. With ceaseless torrential rain the whole countryside had become a quagmire and a reassessment of the situation had become vital, particularly as no new reinforcements for the Infantry were available for the Italian Campaign from U.K.

So major reorganisation was unavoidable. All British infantry battalions were reduced to three rifle companies. Within 56th Division 167 and 168 Brigades were merged, 8th and 9th Royal Fusiliers amalgamated, and 7th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and the 1st Welch disbanded. 43rd Gurkha Infantry Brigade were attached to the Division. The Queen's Brigade received most of the remaining Ox and Bucks as reinforcements, but even so battalions were well under strength, each having lost 300 - 400 during the Gothic Line battles. At the same time 1st Armoured Division was

disbanded. Despite the major upheavals 56th Division was again in action within 48 hours.

On 26th September the Queen's Brigade crossed the legendary Rubicon (River USO). The 2/7th supported by tanks led the advance and made considerable progress. The following night a major brigade attack was planned for 2/6th to capture Savignano and 2/5th to secure the Castelvechio Ridge. A company of 2/6th Queen's worked their way into the town, but an attempt by the supporting tanks to cross an anti-tank obstacle by using an "Ark" failed when it overturned. The other two companies suffered heavy losses and they too were unable to get into the town, and the following day the isolated company was surrounded only one platoon managing to escape. 2/5th suffered similarly with only one company reaching the summit of the ridge only to be counter-attacked at dawn by tanks and the remnants forced to withdraw. The next day a company of 2/7th tried to get into Savignano but were beaten back with heavy casualties. Eventually the enemy was forced to withdraw and on 29th September 2/6th and 2/7th Queen's occupied Savignano and 2/5th were able to secure the Castelvechio Ridge.

The Gothic Line battles could now truly said to be over and the way into the Po Valley open. But ironically we were quite unable to take advantage of the situation. Every river and stream had become a raging torrent, the flat fields were waterlogged, and Infantry battalions reduced to mere skeletons. With no Infantry reinforcements available, 56th (London) Division was once again non operational. The Queen's Brigade moved back to the area of Macerata.

Another winter lay ahead of us before major operations could be resumed. With little activity possible the Division was given two months R&R. Recovery after the bruising battles of the Gothic Line was as vital as Rest and Reorganisation. Not just the "teeth arms", but the administrative units and the staff at Division and Brigade Headquarters were utterly exhausted and battle weary.

By the time I rejoined my Battalion in December they were in the area of Faenza. From hospital I had been moved to a convalescent home, a beautiful house requisitioned from the great opera singer Gigli. It was a haven of peace and with his old butler playing his records loudly, it was still dominated by the great man. But as I grew stronger I began to fret about "getting back", back to the Regiment, and more and more anxious about the possibility of getting diverted elsewhere through the Corps Reinforcement Chain. Then one day our padre, Guy Sayers, came back to visit me. What an opportunity! "I'm coming back to the Battalion with you" I said. He didn't need too much persuading, and without a word to anyone I clambered into his jeep and we sped away like a couple of truants taking an afternoon off from school. After the obligatory "where the hell have you come from" from my CO, I was given a great welcome "home". It is on such occasions that you really appreciate the Regimental system of the British Army. Little wonder it is the envy of armies around the globe.

Despite the fact that 56th (London) Division was back in action after a long spell out of the line operations were still severely restricted. Infantry battalions were still down to three weak companies, artillery ammunition was in short supply and regiments cut to 5 rounds per gun per day, vehicle spares were scarce, and now it had started snowing and temperatures were down to freezing point. Even so the allied armies in Italy were still expected to keep up the pressure to prevent the withdrawal of German formations to Northwest Europe and the Russian front. The first of these "limited" operations was for the Queen's Brigade to cross the River Lamone to "pinch out" Faenza across the river on the key Route 9 highway. But the enemy were still resisting with great determination and the first

attempts were unsuccessful in establishing a strong bridgehead after sustaining heavy casualties. Indeed 167 Brigade also had to be committed before the enemy was forced to withdraw. Happily this was just in time for Christmas and the Queen's Brigade had a thoroughly enjoyable break out of the line. And little wonder! Shortly before 2/6th Queen's had captured a vermouth factory and water carts were promptly emptied and refilled with vermouth.

Since returning to the Battalion I had been a "spare file" at Battalion HQ as I was still unable to wear a steel helmet. It was during this period that I was summoned to a Regular Commission Board in Naples. War-weary I protested to my CO that I was no longer keen to be a regular; luckily for my future career he told me to move forthwith! After Christmas he despatched me to see his sister, an ATS welfare officer at Army Group HQ in Siena, to collect as much welfare kit as possible for the Battalion. On the way I encountered a medium battery trying to turn round on a snow bound mountain pass and began to realise it was not only the Infantry who had problems. On New Year's Day I was in a snow storm in Assisi and the tranquillity of the scene is still a treasured memory.

But this was not the real world. Over the Christmas period 167 Brigade had been steadily probing forward to the line of the River Senio, but an enemy pocket still remained between the Lamone and the Senio, and on 3rd January 2/6th Queen's received orders for Operation Cygnet designed to eliminate the enemy salient. The Battalion was put under the command of 7th Armoured Brigade and mounted in Kangaroos (Shermans converted to APC'S) which was their first use in the Italian campaign. The operation achieved complete surprise and was highly successful. 8th Army now had a continuous and unbroken winter line along the River Senio to the Adriatic coast. It was while we were on the Senio that I received yet another summons; this time to return to England to be an instructor at 163 Infantry OCTU. A few days later Lieutenant Colonel Aleck Renshaw received his call to return home. He had commanded the Battalion since Lieutenant Colonel John Kealy had been wounded before the Garigliano crossings. At about the same time Lieutenant Colonel David Baynes left 2/7th Queen's. They had both been fine TA commanding officers and were relieved respectively by Peter Taylor and Maurice MacWilliam.

Although none of us knew it at the time 56th (London) Division had by now fought its last major battle although there was still plenty of action yet to come. It was not until March that the Division finally left the Senio to begin preparations for the last big push as winter came to an end. The Queen's Brigade moved to Lake Trasimene to carry out highly secret training with Fantails, amphibious APC'S, which had not previously been used in Italy. In the new offensive timed for early April, 5th Army was to capture Bologna - yes, the same objective given to 56 Division last August - and 8th Army was to force a way through the Argenta Gap to seize Ferrara. 56 Division, with 9th Armoured Brigade and 2 Commando Brigade, were to turn the right flank by advancing across the impenetrable Lake Comacchio and the adjoining flood plain to secure the bridges which carried Highway 16 over the River Reno at Bastia. Just before the battle Lieutenant Colonel Richardson assumed command of 2/6th Queen's and on 11th April 2/5th and 2/6th Queen's mounted in their Fantails set off behind a dense smoke screen across the flooded desolate country with a mighty roar. Some of the amphibians stuck fast on under water obstacles and the troops immediately took to assault boats, but surprise had been achieved and the operation was a great success with large numbers of prisoners captured and with few casualties on our side. The following morning 167 Brigade advancing along the road linked up with the Queen's.

It was the beginning of the end. Bastia was captured by 167 Brigade on 16th April, the advance was unstoppable and the race by both 8th Army and the Germans for the River Po was on. And on 21st April 5th Army entered Bologna just 8 months after the town was given as 56 Division's objective! The mighty Po and its many tributaries and associated waterways had long been envisaged as the final barrier to 8th Army's advance. 56th Division with 78th Division on their left were given the task of closing up to the main river line, with 6th Armoured Division coming up on the left of the 78th to try to prevent the bulk of the German forces retreating from Bologna across the Po. General John Whitfield's plan was for 167 Brigade and 24 Guards Brigade to advance to the river line and if possible to bounce a crossing, while the Queens Brigade prepared to carry out an assault crossing on a contingency basis. In the event it was not the formidable obstacle that had been envisaged. German resistance was disintegrating rapidly and commanders were revising their orders almost hourly as they took advantage of the rapidly changing situation. On the night of 24th April 2/6th Queen's mounted in Fantails and supported by amphibious tanks of 7th Hussars crossed the great river almost unopposed. Bridges were captured intact over a series of canals beyond and 2/5th Queen's passed through to enter Rovigo to a tumultuous welcome. On 27th April 2/7th Queen's crossed the deep and angry River Adige and the whole Brigade was now in full flight. 2 days later the Queen's occupied Venice. On 2nd May the German forces in Italy surrendered unconditionally.

56th (London) Division had fought its last battle. In the light of the July Defence Review it is interesting to reflect on the fact that this was a Territorial Army Division which had fought with great distinction and determination throughout the Italian campaign. Rightly we are proud to say that we served with the Black Cats.

GBC

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Commemorating the Palestine Police

On Sunday, 17th May a Service to Commemorate the Disbandment of the Palestine Police was held at Guildford Cathedral. A large congregation attended including, from the Regimental Association, member Peter Henman and honorary member Richard Ford, both of them respectively having had previous Provost and civilian police experience.

The service was conducted by the Dean of Guildford, the Very Reverend Alexander Wedderspoon, MA, BD, accompanied by the Reverend Lawrence Beesby, Honorary Chaplain to the Palestine Police Old Comrades' Association. In his address the Dean spoke of the troubled history of Palestine, the bitter enmity and confrontations between Arabs and Jews and the selfless devotion to duty of the members of the Palestine Police who left 500 of their comrades, 360 of them British, buried in the territory. (Doubtless many of our own members who served in Palestine will have personal recollections of those perilous and troublesome times).

After prayers and the singing of the Anthem the Dean and the Reverend Beesby were conducted to a table where they dedicated a memorial plaque to fallen Palestine Police officers. Last Post, sounded by Flight Sergeant A. Brackston, 45F Squadron, Air Training Corps, was followed by two minutes' silence which ended with the sounding of Reveille. The service concluded with the hymn The Holy City followed by the National Anthem.

RF

A Day at War - the Gothic Line

John Day, the author of the memoirs from which these excerpts have been taken, was conscripted into the Army in November 1942. After his basic training he was trained as a light anti-aircraft gunner in The Royal Artillery, and drafted to the Middle East at the end of 1943 in the first convoy to pass through the Mediterranean since 1940. He arrived at Port Said in early December 1943, and was posted to the 101st LAA Regiment RA, which was then part of 10th Armoured Division. The 101st LAA Regiment had previously been the 12th Battalion, The King's Regiment (Liverpool) before converting to light anti-aircraft duties, and consequently consisted of men recruited from Lancashire and the northern counties of England. However, in April 1944 this regiment was disbanded in order to find reinforcements for the infantry component of the 56th (London) Division, and, in early June, John Day was a member of a draft of 150 all ranks to be posted to the 2/6th Queen's. After training in Egypt with the Anti-tank Platoon, he accompanied the Battalion to Italy, moved north with them to Tivoli for a period of training, before finally arriving in a concentration area between Assisi and Perugia.

We started to move up to the front in daylight, and began seeing wounded Indians from the 4th Indian Division lying on stretchers carried on top of jeeps, which were being used as improvised ambulances. I kept looking at them to get myself used to seeing wounded men. It was night-time when we arrived at the rear echelon of the 46th Division. We were told that they had just been heavily shelled and had a few killed and wounded.

We found ourselves standing over a trench, at the bottom of which was a body with a blanket over it. We thought that he was one of those killed in the recent shelling, until he stood up, frightening us to death! The trench was his, and he had been sleeping in it with a blanket over him to keep the mosquitoes off. Our talking had woken him up!

We had arrived at the front, and it was now our turn to take part in the fray. Our first objective was the summit of Mount Capella. This objective was soon taken by 'D' Company, who completely surprised the enemy by infiltrating onto the mountain, and captured it without a single casualty. Our platoon played very little part.

'C' Company followed on about an hour later, but was heavily engaged, and our first casualty was Major A.D.G. Dallas, MC, the Company Commander, who was killed. He was hit in the throat and chest by a sniper. A real gentleman if ever there was one, and a good commander. I believe that he had already been wounded twice. He was a sad loss. His father had been a Colonel.

Everybody who had been in the Battalion any length of time was bothered about how Harold Hawkins would take the loss of Major Dallas. Harold was 'C' Company's storeman, 6ft tall and 20 stone, a Cornishman hailing from Newquay. He had come out abroad with the Battalion, and had been a Platoon Wireless Operator, when Dallas was a captain, at the battles round Enfidaville in Tunisia, before becoming the Company storeman. Ernie and Ginger were so concerned about Harold that they went round to see him, and I went with them. I was surprised to see such a big fellow crying his eyes out. He was the biggest member of the Major Dallas fan club. I was later to learn that once Harold got to know you and liked you, if you happened to get killed there would be someone to shed a tear for you; a very comforting thought!

Once Mount Capella had been taken and the 2/5th Queen's had passed through us, we pulled out to an area within the gun lines of our 25pdr field guns. We camouflaged our trucks. The 7th

Armoured Brigade was passing by with their tanks creating plenty of dust.

I was walking across in the open towards our truck, when what I thought were jumping crackers started going off all around me. I suddenly realised that they were not jumping crackers, but butterfly bombs. I dived for the gap in the camouflage net to get under the truck for cover. In my haste I finished up tangled in the net. It happened to be a marauding German aircraft, attracted by the gun flashes and the dust created by the tanks, that had dropped these butterfly bombs, much to our misfortune. We had 4 killed and 27 wounded. 'A' Company bore the brunt of the attack and casualties.

I knew one of those killed in 'A' Company, who was from Preston in Lancashire. I have forgotten his name. He would argue over every detail that he was required to do, and then finish up by doing it! He used to drive Lance-Corporal Johnny (Dusty) Miller up the wall. He was in his late twenties, a slim, dark chap about 5ft 7" tall with a black pencil type moustache, and a slight caste in one eye.

I also knew a few of the wounded. One was ex-D Troop in the 334th Battery. He was a tubby fellow, with a red face and balding fair hair. He was a Lancastrian and a very good footballer. He was sitting on the bog when a piece of shrapnel hit him in the backside. I bet it was embarrassing when explaining where he was when he was wounded! How bad his wound was I did not know, but he never returned to us.

Our next objective was Gemmano, a harder nut to crack, judging by the news we were receiving. The 7th Ox and Bucks had made several attempts to take it, but it was too strongly held. It was going to have to be a brigade attack. As we came down the slope opposite the west slopes of Gemmano in the dark, we could see red dotted lines of tracer going up the hill, and then more red dots coming down as both sides fired at each other. It looked very spectacular. We reached the valley below and bivouacked in the dark. It was no problem putting up bivvies at night. We could literally put them up blindfolded. Once we were settled in, a guard was mounted, and I was unfortunately one of them, as it was my turn again! By now guards were getting more frequent since we had reached the front.

Next morning after breakfast we were briefed about the attack. 2/5th Queen's were to attack the village of Farneto on a spur running south of the main Gemmano feature, away on our left. We were to attack the west slopes of Gemmano itself with the 2/7th on the right attacking the main hill. All well' and good on paper!

The attack started in the afternoon, when our artillery opened up. The Cheshires also opened up with their Vickers machine-guns barrage, and the companies set off, moving out section by section. We were to follow up with coils of signal wire on our backs. My old and new pals passed by. Some I shook hands with, and some I patted on the shoulder as they passed, and we wished each other good luck.

As we were awaiting orders to move forward, I dozed off. I was suddenly rudely awakened by someone shaking me. It was Dicko Dickinson from our gun crew in the 101st. He was in the 7th Ox and Bucks, and, much to my surprise, he had come to see me. We had a chat before we parted, and I am sorry to say that it was the last time I was ever to see him, as he was killed in action together with another pal of mine, Dicky Woodcock.

Our orders came to move, so we put our coils on our backs and moved up the slope. The barrage did not seem to be lifting and was getting too close for comfort. I tried to talk like an old veteran, and asked, "Isn't it about time our barrage lifted?" "It has," was the reply. "Well, what's that in front of us?" was my next question. "It's their counter-barrage," came back the

answer. My last question was, "What are we going to do?" "We go through it." No more questions!

The counter-barrage was searching for the Vickers machine-guns, who must have been causing them some bother. When the shells got too close to the Vickers' crews, they stopped firing and got their heads down until it passed. On the road up, which we were following, the bombs and shells were coming too close as well, and we had to keep diving to the ground.

As we were making our way up, someone coming down told us that L/Cpl Caddy of the Regimental Police had just been killed. As we came to the bend in the road, there lay Caddy with his gas cape over him. His motor bike was still on the road smouldering. We pushed it off the road. This spot was a black spot. The enemy had it ranged, and if they spotted any movement they fired a salvo onto it. Caddy was unfortunate to be spotted. The last time that I had seen him alive he was riding his motor bike across the stream. He was bouncing about so much that he almost came off. We were watching from the back of our truck ready to cheer if he did fall off, but much to our disappointment he kept on. Reaching the other side, he had stopped, turned round, and sneered at us before riding off. There were several other bodies lying around, proving that indeed this was a very bad place.

We finally arrived at our destination without any casualties, despite quite a few near misses. We handed over our loads, put on our small packs, and went to a forward position and dug in. It was here that I received a bullet through my pack. Where it came from, and who fired it, I have no idea. There was so much noise, with shelling and mortaring going on, and bullets and shrapnel flying around, that it was hard to tell where anything came from. I just felt a bump on my pack which knocked me off my feet. When I looked I had a hole through my mess tins and towel, and an exit hole out through the other side. I soon managed to change my mess tins, and the towel I changed later at the company store.

On the second day we were told to watch out as there was supposed to be a German patrol about. We stood to. After awhile, when no German patrol appeared, it was decided that we would send a patrol out ourselves, to recce around, and find out if there really was an enemy patrol about. So Corporal Buster Brown, Ernie Lovett, Ginger Green and myself went out. This was my very first patrol. While we were scouting around, we heard some shouting. We stopped and looked in the direction that it came from. It came from the direction of a bush, so we cautiously approached it. Underneath was a soldier from the 2/7th Queen's. He had been wounded in both legs. He told us that he had crawled under the bush and had been there for 36 hours.

Buster and myself stayed with him, whilst Ernie and Ginger went back for a stretcher. When they got back we took him to our Regimental Aid Post (RAP). We gave him a cigarette whilst we were waiting. We never did come across the enemy patrol. I doubt that there was one in the first place.

On the third day Tommy Hinnigan started to wilt under the constant shelling and noise. Our Platoon Officer told me to take him down to B Echelon. Before we left he said to me, "Don't forget to come back!" We got as far as Caddy, and that was as far as Tom would go. Poor old Tom. He surprised me, because he seemed such a tough guy. He was in his late twenties, about 5ft 8" tall and very stockily built, with black hair and a permanently bluish jowl. He was a very good footballer, as his trial with Blackburn Rovers testified. The reason they turned him down, so he said, was that he was too scruffy! Yet here he was, refusing to pass Caddy.

I tried to walk by on the inside of Caddy's body a couple of times with Tom beyond me on the safe side, to show him that

it was alright. Tom still would not come. I even walked round on the outside, hoping that the Germans were having a NAAFI break! My luck was in as nothing happened, and I walked casually back. I thought to myself, "We'll have to get by somehow." I suddenly had an idea. I took hold of Tom's hand, put my rifle firmly on my shoulder and I started running past Caddy, pulling Tom with me along the inside. Much to my relief I got him by. As we rounded the bend we heard the explosions of mortars falling around Caddy. Poor old Tom grabbed hold of me. "Did you hear that?" he said. I heard it!

At the road junction there was one of our divisional red-caps. He told us that he had not eaten all day. I gave him the remainder of my 24 hour food pack. He asked me how long I had had it. I told him, "Three days." At first he would not take it, but I insisted. There was some compressed porridge. One could eat it as it was, or put it in hot water placed in a mess tin. There was also an Oxo cube and some boiled sweets. In fact, I had eaten very little out of it. I told him that as I had not eaten it by now, I never would. Altogether it consisted of three compressed meals.

I took Tom to our B Echelon, which was along the road. I reported in with Tom, and he joined the lads who were already there. I then went for a meal at the cookhouse. There was a cookhouse open all the time. The menu was McConnachie's, followed by tinned fruit and cream. I asked if I could take a meal to the red-cap. "Of course," they said. I put some McConnachie's in one mess tin, tinned fruit and cream in the other, filled my mug with tea, and took it down the road to him. Poor fellow! He thought that all his Christmases had come at once. He was overwhelmed and could not thank me enough. He became an instant life member of The Queen's fan club.

This Military Policeman was in a dangerous spot, standing there directing traffic and periodically getting shelled by the enemy artillery. As he wolfed the dinner down, he shouted to me as I made my way back to the B Echelon, "What are you going to do about your mess tins?" "I'll borrow some and if you're relieved, leave them at the corner and I'll pick them up," I yelled back. I had a meal when I got back to the B Echelon, and then picked up my mess tins, knife, fork and spoon from the MP. We wished each other good luck, and I made my way back to hell - and the lads.

I came to Caddy. He was still on duty, and stayed there until we picked him up to bury him. As I came round the bend I went past on the inside, out of sight. Since I was on my own, I began to notice the number of dead, Germans as well as ours, lying all over the place. I rejoined the platoon, and was told that we were being relieved that night.

Before we left we had to make a contact patrol to the 2/7th Queen's at Gemmano. They had captured Gemmano, then lost it, and were going back to recapture it. Wireless contact had been lost so I was told. A patrol was organised. Our Platoon Officer, Lieutenant Maynard, led it. He was one of the sons of the Maynard Sweets family. Titch was the Corporal, together with Ernie Lovett, Ginger Green, Bob Waldron and myself. When we reached Gemmano we found it back in 2/7th hands. There were dead all over the place, mostly Germans. Much to my surprise, I met a lad with whom I had come abroad. I have forgotten his surname, but his christian name was Jimmy. He was my build, my age, but a little taller and a little heavier, with sharp features. He told me that when the Germans came at them, they had run away, and he had left his rifle behind. It seems that another company of the 2/7th had counter-attacked, and retaken the lost ground.

We returned to our positions and were relieved by the 10th Battalion, The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in the early hours of the morning. We shook hands, wished each other good luck as we swapped over, and made our way down

to the waiting trucks. Our rest area was in a very quiet spot, right under the muzzles of our 25 pdrs. It was just what we needed, I don't think!

Next day the news started coming through. 'A' Company had been almost wiped out. I think there were only 12 all ranks left, and they had to be disbanded. In 'D' Company Major R.K. Purdon, DCM, a South African, had been killed. He still had a Bren gun in his hands when they found his body, and his fingers had to be prised open to get the gun from him. Pat Kilgannon and Bob Lillystone had been wounded. Old Bill, who had been trying to get out of the infantry by acting dumb, had been killed by a sniper. George Kelly had been wounded by a sniper, and Corporal Bath was killed by the same sniper. Major Smith, who had just been promoted to take over 'C' Company from Major Dallas, was also killed. Corporal Webster had his head almost shot off. Lieutenant Edwards, who had been one of our Captains in the 101st LAA, was dead. And so it went on. It was awful, and there was no background music, such as you get in the films, to make it romantic.

As we sat around, a carrier had been bringing in more of our dead. It stopped alongside us. An arm suddenly fell dangling from under the cover. The sleeve was rolled up, and two fingers were missing. I was told later that it was Lieutenant Sanftleben's arm.

I remember talking later to Ernie and Ginger about my not having been with the Battalion at Anzio. Ernie said, "*You may not have been at Anzio, but you can always say, 'I fought at Gemmano'.*"

The CO got us together and told us that our next action was an easy one. All we had to do was to take over the positions at Croce, sit there, and the next morning we would see the Lombardy Plain below us! Croce was really a salient. There was only one road in, and the Germans were on either side and to the front. We were to relieve the 1st Welch. All was quiet as we walked up the road in the darkness. Suddenly, without warning, all hell was let loose. Shells and mortars rained down on us. Our guns opened up, and the noise was deafening. It was so bad that one could not distinguish our own guns from the enemy's until a bomb or a shell fell near.

One of our snipers, Pip Poole, dived for cover when a shell fell too close, finished up rolling down a slope, and went "*plop*", right into a blown up dead cow at the bottom. Poor old Pip - did he smell! Nobody would go near him.

When we reached the front we were told to dig in. We were near Battalion HQ. I was with Jimmy Ethridge, the Lance-Corporal who had trodden on my hand at Taranto. Jimmy had darkish skin and was a Londoner. We had just finished our trench, and were about to get into it, when the Regimental Sergeant-Major, Sid Pratten, MM, came up and said to us, "*Here! You two come with me.*" We followed him, and he pointed to some boxes of ammunition, telling us to take it to one of the companies. We took it to the company and returned to our trench, only to find it occupied. "*Hey! What are you two doing in our trench?*" Jimmy asked. They looked at us and said that there was nobody in it when they arrived. "*We were delivering ammo*", we told them. With that the RSM was shouting for us again. We told them to be out of the trench by the time we got back.

It was another load of ammunition to be delivered. The shelling and mortaring was still dropping around. It was harassing fire, and the noise was certainly not getting any less. We delivered the ammunition and returned again to our trench only to find a shell hole there! "*What happened here?*" we asked. "*What does it look like? It was a direct hit,*" we were told. "*What happened to the two in the trench?*" "*They were killed,*" was the answer. Jimmy and I looked at each other

dumbfounded. We could not believe our luck. We did not have time to dig another trench, since it was time for us to rejoin our platoon.

Back with the platoon I joined one of the lads in his trench. I think that it was Bob Waldron. I arrived just before stand-to. On this occasion, when dawn broke and the light got better, I became aware of the carnage around us. I counted 26 dead Germans in front of our trench, and that was only what I could see.

There was wireless silence and telephones had not been set up, so all messages had to be taken by runner. Lieutenant Maynard sent his batman, another Lancashire lad from our old battery. He had a lugubrious Lancastrian accent, just like a Lancastrian comedian. Every time he came back he had a tale about yet another dead German, that he had seen, in a grotesque position. Once he came back and said that he had just seen the happiest dead German around. He was sitting there, from where he had crawled, and had died with a big smile on his face! Lieutenant Maynard said to him, "*Can't you come back and tell us something more cheerful, instead of all the dead you have seen?*" However, we thought that it was funny, especially since what made it even funnier was the way that he told it!

We heard that 'C' Company had put in an attack. They had captured their objectives and taken a lot of prisoners, but had suffered quite a few casualties. As the day wore on the noise grew quieter, and that night the 2/5th passed through us to attack the next objective, while we moved to a quiet spot by a river and set up our bivouacs.

The CO gave us another talk, telling us that our casualties during the past fortnight had been heavy, as if we did not already know! We had had 50 killed and over 100 wounded. He did not tell us how many were missing. He also informed us that our Brigadier G.H.G. Smith-Dorrien had been killed by a piece of shrapnel at his command post. Brigadier Smith-Dorrien's father had been an Army Commander in the First World War, but had been relieved of his command because he had wanted to save casualties by withdrawing from the Ypres Salient and straightening the line. A year later the line was straightened! We were not very long without a Brigade Commander. His place was taken by Brigadier W.H. Stratton.

Tommo Thompson came to see me. He had been compassionately posted home. I think that his wife was very ill, and there was nobody to look after his children. He could not believe his luck. He told me that Billy Kelly who was with the 2/7th, had died of his wounds. Billy was better known as Kelly 22. In the Army, if there was someone with the same surname, you were referred to by your name and your last two Army numbers. Billy had been the brewer of tea during our exercises in the Sinai with his cry, "*Have we time for a brew?*" George Kelly, who was wounded at Gemmano, was his namesake. Tommo also told me that Dicko Dickinson and Dicky Woodcock, both of whom had been in the 7th Ox and Bucks, had been killed. When he left we shook hands, and he wished me good luck.

Then Jimmy Ethridge came along to me and asked me if I knew George Ashworth. "*Yes, of course I do,*" I told him. Then he told me that he had been wounded, and as he lay on a stretcher outside the RAP, he had received a direct hit from a shell. They put his bits in a bag and buried him. Poor old George. The last time that I had seen him he had passed by me on the way up to Gemmano. He had asked me to give him a bunch of black grapes, since I was standing alongside a vine. I broke off a bunch and passed it to him. He thanked me, and marched on in the single file with a Bren gun on his shoulder, holding the grapes above his head, biting them off the stalks and spitting out the pips. He was over 6ft tall and about 13-14 stone in weight, with black straight hair, always well combed. A good

footballer, he played at full back, and came from the Manchester area.

The news was getting more depressing all the time. There were more of the casualties that I knew, but I cannot remember their names.

Tommy Hinnigan came to see me. *"I know I am a frightened bugger, but I can't help it. I wish I was like you,"* he said. *"like me! Why?"* *"It doesn't seem to bother you,"* he replied. *"Well, it does, Tom."* I said, *"I'm just as scared as you. In fact my knees knock so much that the Teds think that a machine-gun is firing at them!"* It gave him a bit of comfort, although I do not think he fully believed me, even though it was true!

Tom went on to tell me that some of the lads wanted him to desert with them, but he refused. Bully for him! I was walking through one of the other companies' lines when I met another Tom whose surname, I think, was Bellamy. He had fair, wavy hair and also came from Manchester. You could see that he had false teeth, and he was in his early thirties. He had been in our troop in 334th Battery. We went for a drink of vino together and had a chat. He told how scared he was, and that some of the lads wanted him to desert with them. I often wonder if they were the same ones who had asked Tommy Hinnigan! However, Tom Bellamy had told them, *"No matter how scared I am, I would sooner go up there and get killed rather than desert."* I said, *"Good for you, Tom."* After a few mugs of vino we parted. We wished each other good luck. It was just before we moved up to attack Ceriano Ridge.

Our officers told us that Ceriano was the last ridge, and below us would be the Lombardy Plain. Moving up, our truck kept on breaking down through overheating. Our driver had to keep stopping to let the engine cool down, then top the radiator up, and away we would go again. We thought that we would be transferred to other trucks, but we were not. By the time we arrived, the attack was well on the way. We were met with a surprise, since our side was using artificial moonlight for the first time. There were searchlights shining up 90° into the sky. This was a very good idea, as we could see our way in the dark, and it became a standard practice throughout the winter. As we were late we took over some forward positions and dug in. It then poured with rain.

It was lovely! The shells crashed around us, soaking us through and through, whilst the trenches filled with water! In fact, the area was a quagmire, and mules had to bring up our supplies. When daylight broke, to our front was not the Lombardy Plain, but another ridge. It was the general opinion that the Teds were building ridges as they retreated. They must be building them during the night, since every ridge that we fought for was the last ridge, but when daylight came we were always confronted with another ridge! We pulled out next day just as it stopped raining.

As we were moving out in our trucks, there was a hold-up for some reason or other. We stopped beside a shattered church on a small ridge just above us. There were 29 crosses; 3 officers and 26 of the lads. I could not read them all, but the last one caught my eye, which made my stomach turn over and my heart miss a beat. It had Tom Bellamy's name on it. His words came back to me. *"No matter how scared I am, I would sooner go up there and get killed rather than desert."* Poor old Tom. I just sat and stared at that cross until we moved on.

I later learnt that our Platoon Sergeant, Harry Murray, was also buried there. He had been transferred from us a few days before, as they were desperately short of NCOs in one of the rifle companies. Sergeant Murray and Titch were both transferred across to them. They both protested, and Sergeant Murray went in front of the CO about it. He was told that he would either go to that company as a sergeant or as a private.

The CO would strip any NCO for any lapse of leadership. Every time we pulled out of the line, it seemed that one or other of the NCOs would lose his stripes. There was one sergeant who lost a stripe every time we came out of action, and finished up as a private. We also heard that Titch had been wounded losing a finger. He never returned to us.

To be continued.....

JD

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Crack Troops

The 2nd Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment was based in Dortmund when they were ordered to Berlin. During the chaos of packing up, eight "soldiers" including myself from B Company went down with measles. We were immediately transferred to a field hospital so as not to spread the plague around the camp. The battalion departed as the wireless, (that is what we called it then) reported how the Russians were growing increasingly intransigent delaying progress of the Queen's convoy along the autobahn. As the battalion trickled through the last checkpoint the road closed behind them. As our spots faded orders came to rejoin the battalion by air.

Next morning, eight pale and wan figures climbed onto a well used Dakota and took off, seated in uncomfortable bucket, canvas seats. They used an air corridor not yet busy with the air armada which was to supply the city with food and fuel for over a year. We young soldiers were not encouraged when one of the engines ceased to work and even less as we became air sick. Relieved, we landed at a deserted Gatow airfield, which was awaiting the gathering storm of aircraft landing at one a minute. We did not know that we were one of the first flights of the Berlin Airlift - nor did we care. A truck took us to the battalions billets in the Olympic Stadium where we slept the sleep of the sick and tired.

Next morning we awoke to the bustle of army life in the strange surroundings of the Stadium to find ourselves minor celebrities. We were presented with one of a stack of British newspapers specially flown out for the battalion. The headlines blazed:-

"Crack Troops of The Queen's were yesterday flown into Berlin"

That is the first and last time that I was ever a 'crack troop'.

Private Matthews P (Retired)

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National Service with 1 Surreys

After reading the "Final Years of The East Surrey Regiment" from 1938 to 1959, I did notice there was not a lot of information concerning the years from 1947 to 1949. I would like to tell you something about these years, as it was the time that I spent my National Service with the First Battalion, which at the time was stationed in Greece.

I joined the battalion in February 1948. I was one of 190 men that came out from the Home Counties Brigade stationed at Shornecliffe in Kent. The battalion was well under strength when we joined them, and we were stationed at Sobraon Barracks in Salonika. The battalion had moved into these barracks a few months earlier in October 1947. I understand that it was a German occupied camp where they kept some prisoners. At the time of joining there were only two buglers, one a corporal and the other a private, in the Queens.



Outside the Acropolis, Athens

I had noticed on battalion orders that they were asking for volunteers to become buglers. I had been a bugler in my earlier days, in the cadets, so I decided that while I was serving with the battalion, I would make this my career for the rest of my National Service. I applied for the post, along with one other person. We were given a test, passed and starting learning the battalion calls. Very soon we were going on duty, but what I did not realise at the time was, when on duty, we were the last to go to bed after blowing lights out, and the first to get up to be able to blow reveille.

We got used to this, and were doing quite well, until the original buglers, a Corporal Toms and a Private Clements were due for leave, and went back to England. This left us two men on duty, with one day on and one day off. This went on for two months, when there were some changes made to the Battalion. One of the changes made was that the Support Company was disbanded and the battalion was changed into another Division.

We came out of the Fourth Division and went into the First Division. Also the Second Battalion of the Regiment was coming down from Egypt into Greece, to amalgamate with the First Battalion. When the Second Battalion did eventually arrive and joined us, there was amongst them a drum major and a drum corporal. It was decided a new corps of drums would be formed. Volunteers were asked for, (and we had plenty of them), and me and the other soldier that joined with me were promoted to instructors.

We had to instruct on how to blow the bugle, and to remember the calls. The noise was very annoying for the officers, especially for our CO, Lieutenant Colonel McGee, and it was very soon that we received orders. While we were practising to play the drums and the bugles, we were to leave the camp and to get as far away as possible from the buildings, so we did not annoy any clerical staff, with the noise we were making.

When we were good enough to perform as a Corps of Drums we went on different displays in Salonika square. One I remember quite well



Winter Dress

was the beating of retreat in Salonika along with the regimental band. Lots of photos were taken at this parade, I should imagine that some of them will be in the Museum.

Life became a lot easier after this, as we now had four more duty buglers. We had plenty of spare time for practising and in April 1949 we left Salonika, and sailed down to Athens, to a camp called Aliki, it was a lovely camp more relaxed than the previous one. We did enjoy it. We had to know, and be able to play at least 23 different calls during a working week, that is not including all emergency calls that could be sounded at any time, day or night.

The three most well known calls in order were: Cook house - Sick call - Defaulters

Others were not so well known, sometimes no response would take place. Then the senior officer would order the call to be repeated with the double up call added.

I left The East Surrey Regiment in May 1949 while they were still at Aliki camp. I arrived back in England in June 1949, and was demobbed at Aldershot.

RW

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A mistake!

It was in January 1946 that I joined the 1/6th East Surreys by mistake. I was in a draft of about thirty or so replacements of Dorsetshire Regiment recruits on our way to join their 1st Bn stationed in Trieste. We had travelled by troop train from Calais via Switzerland into northern Italy, and broke our journey for a time at a barracks in Novara. Our conducting NCO regrettably did not query the fact that we were put on another troop train heading due south to Taranto, and after a spell in a transit camp sent on by troopship *Dunottar Castle*, to Piraeus, Greece.

After all the other personnel had been collected from the docks, our draft languished in the hot sunshine for the best part of a day until transport took us to the 1/6th Surreys encamped near Glyfada outside Athens.

We were readily accepted by the battalion, which was by then steadily losing men due to demob, and not too many questions were asked as to why we were there. About three months later the Dorsets found out where the missing draft had got to and arranged for their return. This was not mandatory and a few of us decided to stay with the Surreys. Soon after my arrival I was appointed company clerk to 'C' Company and until their demob served under Major Quarrel and CSM L Large MM. At this time the civil war in Greece was quite intense, and there was the coming plebiscite for the restoration of the monarchy.

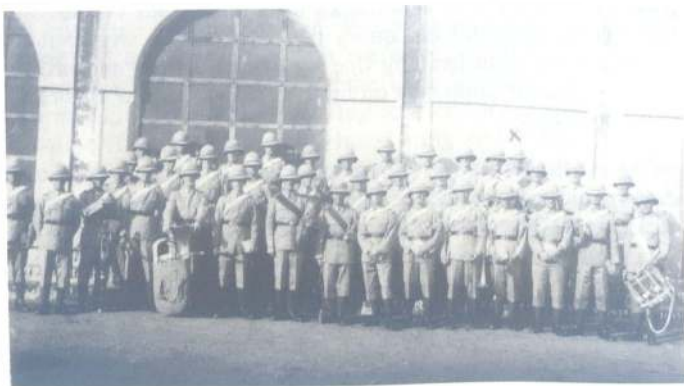
Contingency plans were drawn up for the battalion to defend the main Athens airport, with 'C' Company positions defending the seaward side near to the main coast road. I still remember going with Major Quarrel and the CSM to select a building for a proposed company HQ, and proposed platoon positions. All very exciting for a young chap just 18½ years old!

A few weeks later 'C' Company was disbanded and absorbed into the remaining companies. I applied for a transfer to 'S' Company and the carrier platoon, which proved to be the best part of my army service, although not for long, as the battalion was disbanded in October 1946, and my eventual transfer to the 1st Bn at that time in Northern Greece.

AP

Bandsman Bodfish

God it gets cold in Catterick - there I was, 15 years old standing on the parade ground on Rouse parade with rain coming in horizontally and wondering what could be worse and what happened next. It was 1932, the country's economy was as bad as it could get. I had left elementary school at 14, had a couple of dead end jobs so I decided to give the Army a go. I had a good background because my Dad had been a regular soldier, well decorated DCM etc, in fact he was at that time a Battery Serjeant Major in the local TA, 161 Battery AA RA to be exact. However here we were, a happy? bunch of 15 year olds cold, miserable and possibly, the corporal in charge of us was right when he said "useless". I, and the others had been posted to the 1st Battalion The East Surrey Regiment stationed at that time at Lahore in the Punjab, India the waiting period when trooping was due to start, would be spent with the 2nd Battalion then stationed in Catterick Camp, Yorkshire. We boys Bodfish, Brooks, Warren Davies, Nolan, Poutney, Marshall and Woolastan were all the same age and from that day onward would live, eat, play and in two cases die during our army career. Of Catterick I cannot remember very much but I did learn two things, both of which have proved to be quite useless in future life, number one was, if you went to Sandes soldier's home on a Wednesday evening and bawled out hymns you got a free cup of tea a cake and a cuddle from a mumsey lady who was sorry for you. Number two deals with our domestic friends, at this time the infantry had a transport section and I well recall the transport NCO demonstrating how to put a collar - on a horse I mean, one puts it on upside down and then turns it round once it has settled. I think all would agree, that information which has rested in my head for sixty six years is useless!!



Band, Napier Barracks, Lahore 1935

I had a couple of rest periods during the six months, once I fell out of a tree and sprained my ankle, I also had influenza and had a spell in hospital. According to my AB 64, now very tatty, Lieutenant Colonel Paton said of me "Boy trained in the rudiments of music and squad drill W/O Arms and so to the far flung Empire which some army joker once said, "Flung, but not FLUNG far enough".

We embarked on HT *Somersetshire* round about September 1932, we joined many brave lads some of whom were RAF and going to Basra which was our first stop, but meanwhile we had found our mess decks, slept on hammocks, learned all about "housey, housey" looked at the sea, Gibraltar, North Africa, Suez Canal, Sand, the Gulf (no interest in 1932 just sand, palm trees and Arabs). Then on to Karachi where we made our first acquaintance with Indians, dirt, dust, squalor and a joke for a train which would transport us through the Sind Desert to Lahore. How long the journey took I don't know but after a few days the slatted seats became decidedly uncomfortable. At Lahore Station there was a great exodus. The noise and dust was somewhat ameliorated by the sight of monkeys which were free falling in the trees, small one horse carts were being grabbed by everyone but not available to the



Band, Khartoum, 1938

Note that Bandsman Berryman third up from front right is wearing 1st War decorations

soldiery because they marched. Napier Barracks out at the cantonment were of very modern construction. Huge rooms with suspended canvas sheets which during the hours of darkness were push-pulled on suspended wooden frames to create a draught, the machinery which performed this herculean task made a row like a tractor gone berserk but we got used to it. We boys were put in the boys room and learned that we were to be in bed at nine pm every night unless it was mess night, lights out at ten. No relationship with men was allowed, no smoking but complete and undivided obedience to all Senior ranks from Lance Corporal upwards. Our introduction to our musical career, which of course was our reason for being there, came when we were paraded in front of Bandmaster Dowle who asked "Does anyone play a musical instrument?". Well as to a man nobody could have known the difference between a flute and a foot the question was way over our heads so he again took the initiative by getting rid of those he was dubious about so out went Arthur Davies and Frank Poutney to the Corps of Drums. Regarding the remainder he made the decision pointing at me, he said "French Horn, Bill Brooks clarinet, Derek Nolan percussion, Ted Marshall saxophone, Larry Woolastan clarinet, Warren cornet". Of such stuff great orchestras are formed and for my part paid a great part in the remainder of my life because after the war I continued playing in military bands such as the London Fire Brigade and then into amateur orchestras and music societies only ending my musical career at the age of 65 years due to teeth problems.

So my musical career had started, also it was back to school, I had not been very happy at school and was pleased when I was 14 and able to leave, little did I know that I would be back behind a desk until I had satisfied the military that I was able to pass the 1st class certificate of education. Every morning it was PT until breakfast. We learned also at this time that life and finances in the army in India ran on the book. Char wallah. Dhobi, under wallah (eggs) Chapassie etc etc these gentlemen formed a line outside the pay office on pay day and expected-nay-demanded their cash. After breakfast we boys attended the elements of music class usually run by an NCO (easy) but more often by Band Sergeant Wernham - hard, he was a tough customer, clean mind in a clean body was his dictum but not always ours. After about an hour while the band did scale practice, for the initiated, the practice went something like this. Key of E flat - two octaves four beats to each note once or (twice) if it went wrong) two octaves in thirds likewise then running octaves, then relative melodic minor, relative harmonic minor by this time everyone was exhausted but in the end it did produce some excellent musicians. Our private elements of music started with musical terms Adagio-to-Vivace and all between all the different keys and key signatures - I thought I would never learn but if you throw enough some of it sticks. After this session we had to stand with the band while it rehearsed its next programme, usually for the officers mess night of which more later, standing next



Boys, Dagshai 1933. Warren Davies, Henry Bodfish, Milton??, Tolman,
Back row: Marshall, Higginson, Poutney, Nolan, Aylward

to the 1st and 2nd Horn players made me realise I was lucky to be learning the Horn and not the Euphonium. Bill Wernham was on the Euphonium and as I have mentioned-he was murder. It was our job to try and follow the musical score and turn the page when necessary but one does tend to daydream but a kick on the ankle from the Horn Player soon awakened one's reverie. After midday meal all the bandsmen who considered themselves "*Cream of the Regiment*" and as I was to learn rightly so - went to bed or in some cases played Mah Jong - the Battalion having been until recently in Hong Kong. This golden two hours two till four was young hands and boys practice supervised by an NCO so it was all noise and boredom but was worse if the band sergeant took it into his head to find out how we progressed. This was a clever technique to get us to learn because as soon as we could play reasonably well enough to satisfy Bandmaster Dowle we would become 1st acting bandsman and then bandsman and we could then sleep in the afternoon. Once a week the Band played at Officers mess. Now the mess was a fair distance away and the Bandmaster box (rostrum) and some music stands together with Tilley lamps had to be transported to the mess. Labour in those days came quite cheap, you just went to the boys room and said-"*Officers mess-carry the gear*". Now it does not need a great deal of imagination to see that having carried the gear there were half a dozen young tearaways idling about the officers mess waiting for the programme to finish. Now I can tell the story because I am too old for punishment.

In the darkness there were among us those more daring and possibly stupid than the others and I was one of those. We used to climb onto the roof of the mess and look down on to the dining table of the officers who were having dinner, little did they know that their every mouthful was watched by scruffy band boys on the roof so by the time I was eighteen I knew all about passing the salt, *Claret or Muscadet Sir?* "*the Loyal toast-Mr Vice*" ask the Bandmaster to join us, glass of sherry Mr Dowle? "*yes sir thank you*" etc etc, all this until the horseplay started and the band marched home. I can recall that Band Sergeant Wernham was keen to use the treble voice of which I was guilty of to sing something like '*Wings of a Dove*' with the band accompaniment but I'm afraid the voice, broke in between rehearsals but he made up for it by having me dress in drummer boy uniform circa 1887 to present myself with two soldiers at the Sobraon Ball 1933. I have a photo to prove it but it is so minute I am completely indistinguishable. However I must have done it. We had quite close to the Barracks at Lahore, an Indian college some of which anglo Indian students joined the band. Now, one day the battalion received an invitation for some "*boys*" to partake in a boxing tournament, little did we know but somehow some dim wit in the battalion took the word Boys somewhat too literally so off toddled a dozen young teenagers to be met with a similar number of

huge Indians to close physical combat, it doesn't need much imagination to guess what happened to us lambs to the slaughter. However, to progress, every year the Band and one or two companies were sent to the hill station to get away from the heat on the plain. The Band stayed the whole period to entertain the troops and families. This was a most refreshing time but the routine continued as usual. Time passed pleasantly with horse riding and Khud hikes which usually lasted a weekend. The station from Lahore was Dagshai which had, at one time been a frontier post and Ghurka forts, were visible on the surrounding hillsides. Life continued in this fashion for year after year with one's musical ability improving all the time. One of our number Bandsman Douglas Crookes was sent to Kneller Hall, Twickenham to the Royal Military School of Music he was my greatest friend and was tragically killed in Italy whilst in charge of a company stretcher bearer team. He is buried in Minturno military cemetery and I have only once had the privilege of visiting his grave. Eventually the Battalion moved from Napier Barracks, Lahore to Fyzerbad which was close to Lucknow. Life in Fyzerbad changed considerably because the only interest off duty was sport and the wife of one of our officers, "*Nipper*" Armstrong, had in her youth been a keen golfer so she sent home for some old clubs and with the help of one of the men who had at one time been a golf caddie, laid out a golf course this was a great success but difficulties could arise if the kite hawks swooped down and pinched the ball. The Hill station from Fyzabad was Ranikhet from which we could see on a fine day the Himalayas massif. A party of NCO's and men went on a climb in the mountains and were reported in the press that they had ascended to twenty three thousand five hundred feet with no extra clothing or equipment. Eventually time came for us to leave India and we sailed out of Karachi to Port Sudan to do a years stint in Khartoum, it was from Khartoum that the Battalion was called upon to help make the film "*Four Feathers*". Before the filming commenced, at the instigation of the film director a competition was arranged to see who could grow the most bushy moustache, this wasn't entirely altruism on his part-he just wanted those in camera shot to look the part. Incidentally, the bugler who blew the call to arms in the original film was drummer Arthur Davies, one of my compatriots of 1932, he was killed in France in 1940. The Barracks at Khartoum were on the edge of the Nile river and we inherited from the previous regiment a small flotilla of 20 foot sailing boats, so the nautical best of our unit became used to terms such as windward, leeward etc. On the opposite shore to our barracks was stationed the 1st Battalion of the Black Watch it seemed that their pipers needed a lot of practice because during daylight hours all one could hear were the chants and drones of the pipes-I should also add here that on their side of the river there was an establishment known as the 49 Club where ladies catered for certain needs of the soldiery, need I say more! Khartoum was very hot and of interest, subject to plagues of locusts. I can remember watching a football match when the sky was blackened by the insects and as the ball went through the air there was the rattle as it hit them, needless to say all the grass on the pitch was eaten together with whatever green vegetation was available. Towards the end of our year in Khartoum the 2nd Battalion were due to pass through Port Sudan to start their 21 years abroad and to reinforce their number any man or NCO who had not completed a given number of years towards his six years was transferred to the Second Battalion. Eventually, this meant that some individuals finished up in the Japanese war camps and did almost ten years abroad-I might add that the entire battalion of the Black Watch, pipers included all went into the bag because they were on their way out to their station in the Far East also. Eventually it was time to board ship again to go home. Christmas day was celebrated on board we were all granted six weeks leave after we had been at Colchester for a few weeks. When we returned from leave we had a new Bandmaster Mr Harriot,new

instruments, and new scarlet dress uniforms with which the band commenced a long series of recruiting marches and band concerts mainly at coastal resorts which wasn't to last long because when war was declared and the battalion mobilised the band broke up and we all became stretcher bearers. The Bandmaster went off to Kingston Barracks together with the boys-from which venue he grabbed all the professional musicians who were then being called up, together with a small number who had become wounded in the evacuation from France and mustered a band which he maintained throughout the war. I unfortunately, lost the 1st Battalion, or better still, they lost me and I was posted to the 1/6th Battalion which still had the old territorial camaraderie about it-a very strange situation for a regular soldier with six years of regular discipline, however this battalion still had a few musical instruments so I found myself playing trumpet in a very lively dance band which, in its way kept everyone amused.

I might add that early on in our sojourn in England, General Montgomery, in his wisdom realised that there wasn't much future for these TA battalion officers so an appointment was made for the 1/6th Battalion with a gentleman from the 1st Battalion, namely "Nipper" Armstrong. It was as though a bomb had dropped, we of the old 1st Battalion know what to expect and we got it. Looking back I realise that from that moment the 1/6th Battalion started to achieve greatness and this was proved when it went into action in North Africa and I was privileged to serve with them. All the various actions of the unit are well published in the History of the Regiment but one small action never warranted mention so I will take this opportunity to report it. I was, at the time, a L/Corporal medical officers orderly, we were in the mountainous area in N Africa there had been some action, mainly from artillery fire and arrangements were made for the battalion to advance the following day over mountain trails. A mule was provided to carry the medical panniers so off we started in the early hours with much mist, as we plodded along I noticed some lads in uniform on the immediate hillside apparently covering our advance after about half an hour we heard passed back, from the front "*mind the wire*" however the mule did not hear or maybe he was an Arab who didn't understand because there was one helluva bang as the mine went off. The mule slightly wounded, galloped down the hillside-his Arab groom also did a fast disappearing act which left us minus all our medical equipment, it was decided that I would go down, get the mule, return to starting point, load equipment onto a 15cwt truck and catch up with the RAP by what roads or tracks became available. I inched my way down to the mule grabbed the lead rein and started back the way we had come, to my amazement I discovered that the lads we had seen covering our advance were in fact all dead and were members of the previous battalion the Hampshires killed in their advance. However we got back put the gear on the 15cwt and proceeded by map reference on our way to follow the advance. Unfortunately we got bogged down on the track and were stuck. Whilst the driver and I struggled to get out I saw two individuals walking along the mountainside I couldn't recognise their uniforms so I gave them a whistle they both looked up and started climbing towards us when I realised they were wearing German uniforms-when they got within speaking distance one pointed to the other and said "*He's German I'm Austrian*". So much for the amity of allies-however the four of us eventually got the truck moving and I had the privilege of handing over 2 POW's to Brigade HQ.

At the end of hostilities in North Africa the small band we had kept in existence was formed again and we played at various bases with the brigade concert party and I well remember a band turning out to play the Marsellaise at a liberation parade-the '*band*' consisted of two cornets a saxophone and a drum, it is difficult to raise temperatures or enthusiasm with such a

combo. After the African adventure we moved into Italy where we were very much involved with the final battle of Casino where one of our stretcher bearers Bandsman Whinder won the MM.



*Guard of Honour
Sobraon Ball 1934
Silver Drums and Bugles*

Our final move was to Greece to help quell the trouble with the rival Communists and Royalists quite an education in its own way. By this time the RAP had a Bren gun carrier, Willys jeep and a 15 cwt truck so we could all move fairly swiftly to emergencies. At the end of the European conflict the battalion returned to peacetime soldiering and some officer decided that as the "*band*" was doing a bit of private work at dances in Athens they could now play at the officers mess. This individual could not understand that the instruments the dance band were using were not government property but all privately owned, this misunderstanding was quickly put to rights when we flogged our instruments to Greek musicians who were virtually fighting to get hold of them. Thus finished the wartime adventures of the band.

It is interesting to note that out of a band membership of approximately forty the following decorations for bravery were awarded to band members. CSM Bill Attewell DCM, Sgt Laurance Oram MM, Bandsman Tom Whinder MM, Private Gosling MM, L/Cpl Fleet MM Sgt Fred White recommended MM, L/Cpl Stan Bodfish recommended Mention in Dispatches. Others were decorated with the following, RSM Howarth MBE, Bandsman H Cockram BEM. The Band always excelled itself in all battalion sports and admired for its excellence when called upon to carry out guard duties. This standard and record cannot be glossed over or ignored. We had every good reason to consider ourselves, "*The Cream of the Regiment*".

Finally, to the officer, I believe Lt White who delighted in calling me Bondsman Badfish, Sir, you were forgiven years ago.

SVB

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Random thoughts in verse

Richard Ford, ex curator of Clandon Museum, and at various times a former fireman, sailor, policeman and local government officer, has written and published an anthology entitled "Random Thought in Verse" which is a collection of poems associated with incidents and matters in his life and career.

Eleven of the poems have military or Regimental connections, including "The Glorious First of June", "The Hero of Sobraon" and "Quetta". Members can obtain free copies by sending a stamped and addressed large (9"x6") envelope to Richard at 15 Ormonde Road, Horsell, Woking, Surrey GU21 4RZ.

President's Reception

This annual event was instituted by Colonel Toby Sewell when President, with the main aim of keeping the name of the Regiment, and our successors alive in Surrey. Guests of the Association include the new Mayors of Guildford, Kingston, Reigate and Banstead plus important civic dignitaries. The event is held in May immediately after the new Mayors and Deputy Mayors have taken up their appointments. During the Reception the President normally hands over charity cheques to The Army Benevolent Fund and Giffard House, both organisations who do so much for our members

During the course of the Reception the President makes a short speech and outlines the work of the Association, the regimental museum and the battalions of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.



The President making his 'state of the regiment' speech

Letter from The Mayor of Guildford, Cllr Keith Childs

Dear Brigadier Acworth

My wife Lesley and I greatly enjoyed our visit to the Regimental Museum in Clandon Park on Friday. We had very interesting conversations with a variety of people. This is the second occasion that we have been lucky enough to attend this function and I hope that it will not be the last.

I wish to assure you that Guildford Borough Council are very sympathetic to your problems of location and are anxious that the Museum should stay in the Borough of Guildford. The Council will continue with its efforts to try to facilitate this. Once again I thank you for inviting us to this reception and I look forward to meeting you again in the future.



The late In-Pensioner Jack Henderson MM with Mrs Judy Aitkens

Councillor Mrs J E Powell writes:-

Dear Brigadier Acworth,

I had a most informative and enjoyable time at the President's Reception at the Regimental Museum, Clandon last week. Thank you very much indeed for making me so welcome. It was a delightful event where I learnt many facts about the Regiment together with many interesting and friendly people.

Thank you again, it was much appreciated.

Museum Open Day

The weather was very kind again on Museum Open Day, Sunday September 20th and it seemed to tempt a great many members to have an afternoon out at Clandon. Our visitor counter showed that people visiting the museum were 80 more than on a normal Sunday and this was certainly reflected in the generous support given to the shop and the donation boxes.



Colonel Toby Sewell and Mrs Ann Wits. Colonel Toby served with Major Domoney

Many acquaintances were renewed and continued on the day. The photograph albums were again much in demand. Here I must pay tribute to Lt Col Anson Squire who spends long hours sorting and placing photographs in their relevant unit albums so that they are readily available for our visitors, researchers and veterans alike. Each album is then named and numbered and entered on the computer and in the album index. If individuals within the photograph are named, then one of our splendid working party fills in an index card for that individual so that he can be traced within an album on request. Many a delighted visitor has been able to find an image of themselves or of a father or grandfather. The existence of these albums enables us to provide an extra service to our visitors which I know they value highly.



Mrs Wits talking to Mr and Mrs Gough. Mr Gough also served with Major Domoney in the 2/7th Queen's



One of our veterans proudly displays one of his trophies

One of the many Regimental visitors on Open Day was Mrs Ann Wits, daughter of the late Major A W V Domoney ('Dom'), 2/7th Queen's. Mrs Wits travelled to Clandon from Warwickshire to meet and reminisce with several of her late father's comrades and to see the items which Dom had donated to the museum.

Thank you all for coming and for your kind and supportive remarks about the museum. Your donations (of objects as well as the financial kind) and support are so very much appreciated. If anyone can think of other ways to help the museum, the Curator would be pleased to hear from you.

PJ

Much travelled Colours

On 10th February, 1922, after duty in "The Troubles" in Ireland the 2nd Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment departed from Dublin to return to Aldershot via Holyhead. While stationed in Dublin two old colours of the 70th Regiment were found in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham and were brought back to England by the Battalion for eventual deposit in the Memorial Chapel in the Parish Church, Kingston-upon-Thames. At the time of their retrieval no-one seemed to know how the colours came to be at Kilmainham in the first place.

On 25th September, 1924 the colours were lodged in the Chapel at Kingston after being ceremonially processed through the borough from the Market Place to the church. The colour party consisted of Major H. St G. Schomberg, DSO, Lieutenant H.L.B. Ellis, C.S.M. Bull DCM, C.Q.M.S. Rowe and Sgt Falconer. The colours were received at the church by the Vicar of Kingston, Canon Hyslop and Colonel Orpen-Palmer before a crowded congregation which included many old members of the Regiment. After an impressive service they were handed over to the Vicar for safe keeping.

History revealed that the colours were presented to the 70th Regiment at Dublin in 1831 by the daughter of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Thomas Evans CB. They accompanied the Regiment from Ireland to Gibraltar, Malta, St Vincent (West Indies), British Guiana, Barbados and Montreal before returning to Portsmouth in 1843.

In 1845 the Regiment moved to Dublin and in that year the colours were laid up in The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham the residence of the G.O.C. the Forces in Ireland where they remained until General Macready handed them over to the 2nd Battalion in 1922.

Sources The East Surrey "Regimental News" of May, 1922 and November, 1925.

RF.

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Bookham, Surrey.

In the May issue there was an article titled "Surrey Villagers at War". The village of Bookham published an annual Gazette which recorded the activities of the local men serving in His Majesty's forces. Members may recall that a Sergeant Albert John Dent Domoney was reported as being a POW in Mecklenburg, Germany. His grand-daughter Mrs A Witts (daughter of Major A W V (Dom) Domoney) was amazed when she saw a photocopy of The Bookham Gazette. She writes "I was also interested to see the paragraph on Corporal William Freeloove who was married to my Grand-Mother's sister (Francis). I was told he came down from the Dardenelles underneath a lorry!! The two sisters were together in India before the First World War. Lance Corporal Charles Lewer who was mentioned was my Gran's brother, later killed at Ypres in 1918.

I was so interested to know that the booklet belonged to William Freeloove, it all seems to bring our family history to life. Thank you very much for telling me these facts.

I know a little about Bookham and I have visited the village in the 60's and have a photograph of the War Memorial. I do look forward to the arrival of the Newsletter it is so interesting".

AW

Escort to the Colours Maidstone - Southampton

The 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment were moving from Invicta Lines, Maidstone to Malaya for a three year tour in early 1954. We had stayed in Maidstone having left Iserlohn in 1953.

The Advance Party to Southampton, where we were to board HMT *Georgic* left Maidstone, by train one cold, wet Monday morning, were routed by movements on the 0815 commuter train to Charing Cross but had to change at Waterloo and proceed to the main station to catch a boat train to Southampton Docks. Dress in those days was 2nd Best Battledress, Field Service Marching Order (FSMO) and kitbags, all fully blanched! Rifles were carried.

Charlie Reynolds, of Palestine Police ancestry, and myself, as a young Sergeant were the Escort to the Colours which were in the well remembered long wooden boxes. I cannot recall if we had an officer in charge. Arriving at Maidstone East we were directed to put "those bloody boxes" in the Guards van and take our seats in a reserved carriage, protests about the sanctity of the Colours fell on deaf ears of the Station Master. We both fell asleep, there had been some serious parties the previous night! A screech of brakes announced our arrival at Waterloo, where the train stopped for one minute.

Having struggled into FSMO we raced for the Guards van. Too late! The Guard yelled, "I'll drop them off at the Cross mate". Quick thinking steered us to the RTO on the Main Station who, eventually, provided a vehicle to Charing Cross, they displayed little concern for our Colours. In the meantime the full horror dawned, what if the Guard did not unload the boxes; what if he did and they were whisked away to the parcels office, no receipts were held!

The eventual arrival at Charing Cross, still in FSMO and rifles and sweating profusely was an anti-climax, we found the Colours, in their boxes on platform 5 and moved them back to Waterloo to another Guards van on the Boat Train. There was no drama, we kept quiet, no extras, just a few beers to celebrate on the way to Southampton.

RAJ

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Association Subscriptions

Once again the Committee has decided to keep the subscriptions to the Association at £3.00 for Life Membership and £2.00 per year which defrays some of the cost of our excellent Newsletter.

To date 177 members have now converted to paying by Bankers Order and we would encourage more to do so.

There are still 665 members who have yet to pay their 1998 Subscriptions -

If this applies to YOU (and we & you know who you are) we would welcome your Bankers Order, cheque or PO and Record Form (grey) - these were sent out in the May 98 NL (more available from the Secretary).

On behalf of the Association the Secretary would like to thank Ron Harper for all his support in documenting our membership and for his ongoing help and support in encouraging 230 new members to join the Association.

JCR.

8th Bn The East Surrey Regiment Football?

Many of our readers will be aware from the national press of a football being found in a village near Mailly-Maillet, France. The extract from the Daily Telegraph 24th September is reproduced with the Editor's permission below:-

Soccer ball from the Somme turns up on a rubbish dump



A British Army football from the Battle of the Somme in 1916 has been found on a rubbish dump in France.

The leather ball - flat and misshapen by age - was discovered near Mailly-Maillet, a village just behind the frontline where troops were billeted.

The ball was taken to M Dominique Zinardi, who owns Le Tommy cafe and museum at Pozieres.

M Zinardi, who owns relics from the battle, has restored the ball to something like its original condition.

The lace is missing but the holes are visible. The ball, which contains the remnants of a bladder, bears the name Gamage's Defiance. It has been waxed and now resembles a rugby ball in shape.

M Zinardi, an expert on the Somme battle, is trying to find out more about the ball and who used it.

There are at least two recorded instances of British troops kicking footballs over no man's land as they charged German trenches - at Loos in 1915 and on July 1 on the Somme. In the second incident a platoon of the East Surrey Regiment led by Capt Wilfred "Billie" Nevill kicked footballs in an attack on Montauban. Nevill was killed and is buried in a nearby military cemetery.

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Corporal J McNamara VC

Readers will recall that last year, a plaque was unveiled in honour of Cpl John McNamara VC, 9th Bn The East Surrey Regiment in Bamber Bridge, Brownedge. St Mary's RC High School has established an annual award in his memory. John McNamara was a former pupil at a previous St Mary's High School.

The first recipient is Sarah Simpson aged 16. She won the award for her outstanding work in the humanities. Congratulations to Sarah from all members of the Association.

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The Taking of Kelat

An old newspaper cutting which has recently come into the Editor's hands reprints an extract from a letter from Lieutenant Stisted of the 2nd or Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot, from Tugga Bunda, on the right bank of the Indus, dated January 2nd 1840 addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Stisted at Exmouth.

In it the writer says he is pleased to have come out of his second engagement safely on 13th November last, pointing out that in his Regiment out of 13 officers six were killed or wounded and out of 285 rank and file 23 were killed and 40 wounded.

On the march in Belochceestan* towards Kelat, where they arrived at 9 am, the Regiment had already been harassed by enemy cavalry. Sighting the city they found that the enemy was in possession of three heights on which they had mounted artillery batteries commanding the fort. The British General ordered an attack on these heights by the Queen's the 17th Foot and the 31st Bengal Native Infantry. The attacking party, including the writer, quickly seized the heights and continuing from there they blew up the gates of the Citadel and forced their way in against fierce opposition.

Shortly after entering, the writer found the King lying close at (his) feet having been shot by a Queen's man. Tributes are paid to the gallantry of the King who, with his bodyguard, fought to the end before falling sword in hand, refusing to take quarter. Shortly after this hard fought battle the British Standard was seen flying from the walls showing that the Citadel, the capital of Belochceestan, had fallen.

The writer says that the whole affair was much more severe and dashing than Ghuznee. His comments seem justified for the troops had marched 47 miles in 24 hours in heavy marching order and in scorching climate. A total of 1,800 miles had been covered in 14 months. Despite all this the writer says that he was very glad to have shared in the campaign which had taught him a lesson of contentment.

Editors note: Lieutenant Stisted's exploits were presented in cartoon form by George Robinson in the May 1998 edition of the Newsletter.

* Original spelling as written in the letter.

Regimental Deaths

Allan - On 5th July 1998, John Allan, The East Surrey, Queens Royal Surrey and 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment.

Ashman - On 8th April 1998, Private Roderick John Ashman, aged 59 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Barham - On 15th May 1998, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Rerbing Barham OBE, aged 91 years, 1/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment and The Honourable Artillery Company. Lt Col Barham, joined the HAC in 1924. In 1939 he served with the 1/6th Surreys until 1942, when he was on the Combined Operations staff and served in Scotland, Italy, India and Ceylon until the end of the war. He was awarded the OBE for his services in 1946. He served in the Metropolitan Special Constabulary from 1961-1966. He was by profession a tea broker and worked in the City, India & Ceylon. He was a keen golfer and retained a keen interest in the Territorial Army all his life.

Bates - On 9th June 1998, Sidney Bates, 10th Bn The East Surrey Regiment and The Royal Engineers.

Bobart - On 8th July 1997, Private Charles Bobart 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment. Charles Bobart joined the 2/6th in October 1939 with the first batch of the militia. Following training he joined the battalion and was posted to D Coy. A few weeks later he was transferred to H.Q.Coy, where he became medical orderly to Capt. Duval the M.O. In France he was with BHQ until the battalion was dispersed due to enemy action. He together with two or three others found their way to Veules Les Rose and managed to find a hiding place. The local people helped them, and they stayed hidden until early 1941. Then with the help of the Resistance he tried to get into unoccupied France but was unfortunately caught whilst trying to cross the demarcation line. He was sent to Fresnes prison and after a trial was given nine months solitary for evading capture. After serving his sentence he was sent to conventional P.O.W. camps including Colditz where he was able to carry on as a medical orderly. He was liberated in May 1945.

Boorer - On 19th May 1998, Regimental Sergeant Major David Louis Boorer, aged 81 years, 2nd Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Boulton - On 26th September 1998, Major R F Boulton MC, aged 82 years, 2/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Carr - On 10th June 1998, Kenneth Douglas Carr, aged 75 years, 1/7th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Cater - On 17th August 1998, Major Anthony Charles Cater, aged 84 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Clamp - In April 1998, Sergeant Ernie Clamp, 1/5th and 1/6th Bns The Queen's Royal Regiment. He was a signaller with the late Colonel Nick Nice in the Desert and Italian Campaigns. A staunch supporter of the Association.

Currie - On 8th September 1998, Lieutenant Ralph Alan Saunders Currie, aged 76 years, 2/6th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Royal Army Service Corps.

Davies - In December 1997, Tudor Davies, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. A regular attender at 5 OMA reunions.

Davies - On 18th July 1998, Glyn Davies, aged 79 years, 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Edwards - In December 1996, Private E J Edwards, The East Surrey Regiment.

Foy - On 18th September 1998, Private James (Jimmy) Foy, aged 83 years, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment. He served in the carrier platoon. A true friend to many with who he kept in regular contact. A staunch member of 5 OMA and regular attender at reunions.

Flitter - On 12th July 1998, Alan Flitter, The East Surrey Regiment.

Gurling - Recently, Major Charles Gurling MC, aged 80 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and the Indian Service Corps.

Harris - On 16th May 1998, Private Charles Richard Harris, aged 88 years, The East Surrey Regiment.

Henderson - On 10th July 1998, Regimental Sergeant Major John (Jock) Henderson MM, aged 87 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Buffs. 'Jock' had been an In-Pensioner at The Royal Hospital Chelsea since 1988.

Jamieson - On 22nd July 1998, Warrant Officer II N (Lofty) Jamieson, The Queen's Royal Surrey and 1st Bn The Queen's Regiment.

Jobson - Recently Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Jobson, aged 84, The Royal Army Medical Corps attached to 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and later in the war commanded 131 Field Ambulance. He took part in the BEF actions in France and the withdrawal to Dunkirk. He subsequently saw service in Africa, the Salerno Landings and action in Italy. He was promoted Lieutenant Colonel in 1944 and was present in the D Day Landings. He was Mentioned in Despatches for his distinguished service in Normandy. After the war he worked at The Royal Surrey Hospital as an ear, nose and throat surgeon. He remained a Consultant at the Royal Surrey until retirement in 1975. He was one of the first consultant audiological physicians in the UK and was for many years involved with the Thomas Wickham-Jones Foundation, a charity dedicated to research into deafness. He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Section of Otology of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Lampard - On 21st August 1998, Sergeant Eric George (Dinky) Lampard, aged 82 years, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent and The Queen's Royal Regiment. Lampard served in India, Palestine, Germany, Malta, Greece and Malaya.

Orpin - In 1997, William Orpin, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Page - On 9th July 1998, George J Page, 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Powell - In May 1998 Major Robert William Powell aged 93 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Somerset Light Infantry. Major Powell was a teacher at Charterhouse at the beginning of the Second World War. After he was demobilised he became Housemaster at Gownboys before being appointed Headmaster at Sherborne School.

Richards - In August 1996, Private Bob Richards, The East Surrey Regiment.

Rumble - In February 1990, Sergeant John Rumble, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Shackleton - On 17th June 1998, Company Sergeant Major Instructor Ernest Shackleton, aged 80 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Sutton - On 2nd May 1998, Major John William Fisher Sutton, aged 78 years, The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Parachute Regiment.

Tannock - On 18th March 1998, Captain Noel Francis Tannock, TD., aged 83 years, 2/6th Bn The East Surrey Regiment.

Thomas - On 16th April 1998, Lyn Thomas, 1/5th Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment.

Regimental Families

Heffer - In June 1998, Mrs Iris Heffer, aged 101 years, widow of Private Thomas Heffer who served in the 3rd and 8th Battalions The East Surrey Regiment.

Merriman - On 18th August 1998, Mrs Anne Margaret Holden Merriman widow of Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Merriman DSO MC TD.

Porter - On 14th May 1998, Mrs M E Porter widow of CSM E W Porter, The East Surrey Regiment.

Thomson - On 4th July 1998, Mrs Margery Thomson, much loved wife of Major TA Thomson MC TD, The East Surrey Regiment.

Wildgoose - On 23rd June 1998, Mrs Elizabeth Alma Wildgoose, beloved wife of Major R L Wildgoose, The Queens Royal and Queen's Royal Surrey Regiments.

Woodroff - On 9th August 1998, Mrs Alma Woodroff beloved wife of John Woodroff. John was the Curator at Clandon and still works as the archivist and historian at the museum.

Obituaries

Major W J F Sutton



John Sutton who died at home suddenly in May was perhaps known best in the Regiment as a very successful, active and popular member of the Regimental Golf Society. He took part in the Spring and Autumn Meetings over many years, being in his time both Captain and President of the Society and representing the Regiment regularly in the annual match against the Royal Marines. His name is recorded innumerable times on most of the golf trophies.

John Sutton served for 20 years in the Army joining the Territorial Army in 1939, and being commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment in July 1941. His war time service, though, was mainly with the Parachute Regiment, and he was a member of the 1st Battalion who dropped on the first day of the Battle of Arnhem in September 1944. At the end of that nine days of intensive action he was wounded and made a prisoner. After release he rejoined the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, and after a brief liberating affray in Denmark went with them to Palestine where he remained until late 1947. Having by then been selected for a regular commission in The Queen's he came home to join the 2nd Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel L C East in Berlin for the difficult times of the blockade and airlift.

After five years with the now 1st Battalion he volunteered for active service again with The Malay Regiment during the Emergency in Malaya. His service out there came to an end when he was seriously injured in an accident during operations. His final three years in the Army were spent firstly with the 1st Battalion back in Iserlohn, and then as Training Major with 5th Queen's at Guildford.

On retirement John first worked for Pressed Steel at Oxford, then becoming general manager of a Quantity Surveying firm who amongst other things were involved in building Addenbrookes Hospital and various prestigious hospital projects in Saudi Arabia.

John married his wife Reigh in 1952, they had one daughter Bridget. They lived for many years at Haywards Heath, where he was Captain of the Golf Club. They then moved to Painswick in Gloucestershire, where he was soon much involved in many local organisations and led a very full life.

JWS

Major A S Gurling MC



Major Arthur Sydney Gurling who died recently aged 80 was born in London on January 18th 1918 and was educated at Henry Thornton School and the London School of Economics. From 1935-39 he was employed by the Pearl Assurance Company and studied actuarial mathematics.

Enlisting in the Army in 1940, he was commissioned into The Queen's Royal Regiment. He won the Military Cross in Burma in 1944 during the

Second Chindit Expedition. Serving as Animal Transport Officer of 77 Brigade at the time, he took command of the exhausted and depleted Brigade and with a hastily assembled force captured the town of Mogaling, his leadership bringing the final success.

In 1946 he returned to Britain and became Advisory Officer to the Polish Resettlement Corps before returning to his career in insurance. He held several senior appointments with distinguished London organisations, becoming a Freeman of the City of London in 1964 and of the Scriveners' Company in 1976. He retained his connection with the Army by joining the 8th Bn (City of London) TA, The Royal Fusiliers.

An enthusiastic sportsman and a good horseman, he played polo, tennis and all games competently. As a token of their esteem the American 1st Air Commando, with whom he had worked in the jungle made him a member. His first marriage was dissolved in 1962, and in 1970 he married Margaret Griffith who survives him together with a daughter of his first marriage.

RF

Captain F N Tannock TD

Commissioned into the pre-war 2/6th Bn, The East Surrey Regiment, TA, Noel Tannock was mobilised on the declaration of war and spent the early days guarding Naval Installations in Medway Towns. He later went as a Company Commander to France.

The Battalion was stationed on the Belgian-French border while the main BEF fought to the East. After withdrawal to the area of St Valery they joined with the 51st Highland Division and units of the French Army which surrendered to Rommel in June 1940.

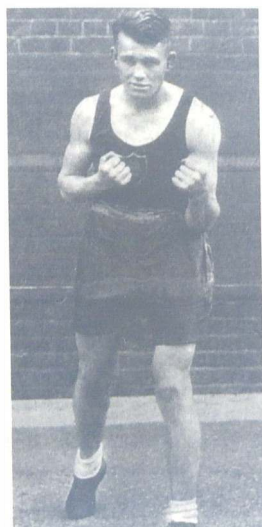
Noel was marched with others to the Belgian bank of the Rhine from whence they were taken to Germany by ferries. Mainly incarcerated in the prison camp at Laufen near Salzburg, he was at one time lodged in an underground fort in Poland as part of reprisals for alleged mistreatment of German POWs in Canada.

During repatriation he was the only survivor of his aircraft which crashed into others, laden with returning POWs on a runway. He was discharged from the Army in 1945.

After discharge he continued his career as a chartered electrical engineer and formed Tannock Engineering Ltd from which he retired in 1980. In 1986 he was instrumental in forming The East Surrey Regiment St Valery Association and became its first Chairman, later accepting the Presidency on the eve of his final hospitalisation.

He married Eileen Redway of Richmond in 1939 and they had two sons. She predeceased him in 1986 when they were living at Middleton on Sea, West Sussex. Noel spent the last twelve years of his life at Shotley, Suffolk.

CSMI E Shackleton



80 year old Ernie Shackleton who died recently after a six year fight against Alzheimer's disease was described in a local press report as an "*ex Army legend*", his fame having been due to his past illustrious boxing career.

Born at Stoughton, Guildford, Ernie learned his boxing skills at the Guildford club before the war and went on to become an instructor with the Onslow Lions and eventually a life vice-president. He later joined the well known Battersea Boxing Club.

A pre-war Territorial soldier, (joining in 1936) with the 1/5th Queen's he was mobilised on the

outbreak of war. He was the battalion's medical sergeant. At that time the RMO was Major Pat Jobson, the nose and ear surgeon at Surrey County Hospital. He served overseas before being evacuated through Dunkirk. After Dunkirk he transferred to the Army Physical Training Corps. In his boxing career he won the ABA light heavyweight title in 1944, eventually winning twenty major civilian and service titles at various weights. After four hundred and eighty two amateur bouts he became a boxing instructor at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and trained Henry Cooper during his Army career. He was a regular attender at 5 OMA dinners for many years and was a regular subscriber to the Association Newsletter.

His funeral took place at Guildford Crematorium on June 25th when his widow and family were joined by a large number of mourners including representatives and friends from both his Army and boxing worlds.

LMW

T R Gaygan - Triumph in Adversity

Triumph in adversity is a common expression but if ever there was a man who personified it it was Thomas Richard Gaygan who died on January 19th at the age of 77 years.

Enlisting in the 1/7th Queen's Royal Regiment in 1938, he was mobilised on the outbreak of war and served in France with the British Expeditionary Force in April/May 1940 before being evacuated via Dunkirk.

Later posted to North Africa he was with the 8th Army during the advance across the desert and up the Tunisian Coast to Enfidaville. While overseas he was seconded to the 44th Reconnaissance Corps. During his secondment in May 1943, he was sent to dismantle an abandoned enemy lorry for spares. The vehicle was booby trapped and in the resulting explosion Tom

lost both his hands and was blinded. Following many operations on his hands and eyes he was flown back to England and entered St Dunstan's for rehabilitation.

Of an indefatigable and determined nature, he persevered with his training and qualified as a telephone switchboard operator at St Dunstan's headquarters, using a specially adapted board which he operated with his feet and a probe. He fed himself, learned to type and took up drumming and playing the trombone. Not to be outdone in sporting activities he became an archer, winning many trophies and scoring a "*gold*" award when giving a demonstration in front of HM the Queen at Ovingdean in 1985. He also competed in road walking, where again he won many awards, and at his best he could cover nearly seven miles in an hour.

Using a St Dunstan's braille writing machine adapted by Norman French, he became the only blind and handless man to pass the official braille writing test in 1961. This enabled him to communicate with another patient, Wally Thomas, who was both deaf and blind. He also became a "*radio ham*" using the call sign G4 AFV. In 1947 he married and later had a daughter Mary. He retired in 1969.

He led a very full life and travelled extensively, visiting South Africa, Egypt, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Australia and other places. His widow, Audrey, to whom deepest sympathy is extended, describes him as "*a remarkable man, with a great many friends*". There could be no truer description or tribute.

RF

Lieutenant R A S Currie

Ralph Currie, Secretary 2/6th Queen's OCA, died on 8th September 1998. He went overseas with 2/6th Queen's in August 1942, served in Iraq and then took part in the historic longest approach march to battle from Kirkuk to join 8th Army in Tunisia. He was in my platoon when we were first in action at Enfidaville.

When we landed at Salerno on 9th September 1943 he was a section commander in my platoon, and later that day when he was leading his section with great determination clearing the buildings on Montecorvino Airfield he was seriously wounded by machine gun fire. After a long period of convalescence he was medically down-graded and subsequently commissioned into the RASC and posted to the Far East. He was demobilised in 1947 and made his career in insurance and estate agency. Through a chance encounter Ralph came back into the 2/6th Queen's fold in 1993 and the following year took over the OCA when Sid Pratten died. Through his very genuine interest in people and his outgoing personality, he has strengthened relationships within the Association in a wonderful way. We shall miss him enormously and send our sincere sympathies to Dorothea.

GBC

Captain T G Blumson

At the end of June, 1998, the death occurred, at the age of 91, of Captain T G (Tom) Blumson, who served in the 2/6th Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment in South East England shortly after the Dunkirk evacuation, then overseas in the Middle East and the later stages of the North African campaign. He was with the battalion at both the Salerno and Anzio landings and throughout the rest of the war in Italy.

Tom will be remembered with affection by his many friends in the Queen's. He was a fine and steadfast officer, with a quiet sense of humour, and served almost continuously in the 2/6th Queen's as MTO, showing great courage and physical endurance on many occasions whilst marshalling the battalion

transport, often under enemy fire. He became Adjutant of the battalion towards the end of the Italian campaign, eventually being repatriated in 1945.

His wife, Joan, died in 1994 and he leaves a son, John, and two daughters, Sheila and Jennifer. John was also commissioned into the Queen's for National Service and spent some years in the TA at Bermondsey under Nick Nice, who had served with Tom during the war.

Outliving, as he did, many of his army colleagues, Tom was, until recently, a regular attendee at the 2/6th Bn The Queen's annual Salerno Reunion.

DRE

RSM J Henderson MM - and In-Pensioner at The Royal Hospital Chelsea



'Jock' Henderson, who died in July aged 87, will be remembered by the numerous Queensmen who enjoyed the privilege of serving with him during his many years in the Regiment; by those of the other Regiments in which he served; and also, in more recent times, by the many who met him as an In-Pensioner of the Royal

Hospital, Chelsea, when he regularly attended Association functions.

It was when 'Jock' was appointed Intelligence Sergeant in 2 Queen's in Palestine in 1939 that Michael Forrester got to know him. He remembers 'Jock' talking of his earlier days when unemployment was rife and of the hardships which faced his family; of how he walked miles to enlist at the nearest Recruiting Office; and then of how his whole life had changed once he was in uniform. He regarded the Regiment as both family and home and did everything he could to ensure others shared with him the loyalty and respect that he felt for the Queen's.

John Henderson, always known as 'Jock' enlisted in February 1929 and with thirty other recruits moved from Durham to Stoughton Barracks, Guildford. There they trained for four months before joining the 2nd Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment at Grand Shaft Barracks, Dover. From Dover he was posted to the 1st Battalion serving in Malta. 'Jock' volunteered for the Drums Platoon. The battalion then moved to China - Tiensin. He later served in India and rejoined the 2nd Battalion, in Albany Barracks, Isle of Wight. Whilst the 2nd Battalion were in Bearsheba 'Jock' was promoted and appointed Drum Major. He later served as Intelligence Sergeant where his immediate superior was Michael Forrester.

'Jock' took part in the fighting against Vichy French Forces and in the action above Beirut a number of his company were killed or taken prisoner. In this action, for his gallantry, he was awarded the Military Medal.

In 1942 he was appointed RSM of 1 Buffs and served with them for two years until the completion of the Western Desert Campaign. He then became RSM at 206 OCTU, Repton College, Derbyshire. Following the closure of the OCTU at the end of the war he served as RSM of the 1st Bn The Sierra Leone Regiment. On return from Sierra Leone he left the Army and served with The Trinidad Police Force. He then applied for, and was appointed Porter at Winchester College where he enjoyed the respect of the boys, and the appreciation of visiting parents, not least that of David and Ursula Lloyd Owen.

Jock was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 21st July. The Reverend Tom Hiney MC, Chaplain at the Royal Hospital conducted the Service which was attended by Jock's sister and her family, and nine of his fellow In-Pensioners. The Regimental Association was represented by Michael Forrester, Les Wilson and Tommy Atkins.

LMW

Major A C A Cater

Tony joined the Surreys in 1935, in the Supplementary Reserve, attached to the 2nd Bn at Shorncliffe. He received his regular commission in 1937, joined the 2nd Bn, now at Colchester, under Lt Colonel E L L Acton, en route for the 1st Bn in Khartoum. Khartoum suited Tony very well. There was every kind of sport, in particular polo which became his favourite pastime. (He captained the Regimental team in Shanghai, his next posting).

Joining the 2nd Bn again was a Cook's tour: Port Sudan: Aden: Colombo: Singapore: Hong Kong: and then Shanghai.

This cosmopolitan town, one of the largest in the world, was encompassed by the Japanese who had first invaded China in 1931. It was not a soldier's station, but a continuing round of perimeter defence. On the outbreak of war, the battalion packed all its baggage, ready to move at short notice, but was still there a year later on Defence Force duty, until its withdrawal to Singapore in late 1940. Tony remained as a company commander, first at Changi on Singapore Island, and then to the Thai border in the north of mainland Malaya, where he was when the shooting war began in November 1941.

Tony fought his company in successive actions and withdrawals until the battalion itself, and the brigade, were overrun by the Japanese advance at Gurun. Forward companies, whose flanks had been turned were forced to take their independent routes to rejoin the main British forces at the next main defensive line, and were then reorganised as two Surrey companies in a composite British Battalion, which went on to win laurels in the continuing withdrawal down the peninsular. Tony himself, with three other officers, was then attached, to guide and advise the newly-arrived 18th Infantry Division, precipitated into the jungle straight from the dockside in Singapore, an unhappy and unsuccessful stop-gap operation. Singapore surrendered on 15th February 1942.

February 1942 until September 1945 were years of survival of the fittest for POWs under the Japanese, including the infamous Burma Railway project built with POW and native labour. Tony was there, and survived that saga, and returned to the UK to begin a new post-war career, with two periods of regimental soldiering, a term at the Depot, and the remainder of his career in staff

He went to the Staff College, Camberley in 1947, and from there to GHQ MELF in AG2: to Cyprus in 1949 as DAAG: and then once again to Khartoum, as GSOI SDF. Finally he came home to join the 1st Bn at Shorncliffe as 2ic under Lt Colonel Armstrong-MacDonnell, and moved with them to Brunswick, BAOR.

His final posting was to command the Depot at Kingston, taking over from Tony Hannaford, and being involved in the many sporting activities including another favourite sport, golf. He retired in October 1958.

Tony was a delightful character, good company, always cheerful, even in action, a good all-round sportsman, and always popular with all ranks. He first retired to Somerset, fruit farming and dealing in antiques, until he moved to Scotland (Kirkcudbright) in 1980. He leaves a wife and two children.

It must have been a benevolent fate in the form of MS Branch, that gave him his last overseas posting outside Europe) to Khartoum. In his first Sudan tour in 1938, he took the opportunity to go south up the White Nile, to the marshland Arabs, whose curious relaxation was standing on one leg. We have no details of his second Sudan tour, but those were halcyon days in the sunset of the Empire, and we are sure that he would have enjoyed being counted of the company of the "ful Sudani", those old hands, planters and members of the Colonial Service who served their time in the Sudan.

That's a good way to remember him, as well as a good Surrey regimental officer and friend.

EAFH

RSM Boorer

David Louis Boorer was born on the 9th December 1916, one of a family of three brothers and a sister. He enlisted into The East Surrey Regiment in July 1934 and saw service with his regiment in India, the Sudan and China, (Shanghai). In 1940 the 2nd Battalion moved to Singapore and Malaya and David by now the signal sergeant of the battalion saw active service against the Japanese when Japan invaded Malaya and Singapore. After the surrender in February 1942 Dave Boorer became a prisoner of war until November 1945.

During his time as a POW, he worked on the infamous railway, where so many of his comrades of The British Battalion died. He was also shipped to Japan to work in the mines, and it was from there that he was repatriated to the UK. He returned to Singapore in 1951 with the Royal West Kents. On his return to England in 1953 he achieved his lifes ambition and became RSM at the Depot in Kingston. He retired from the army in 1956.

He was always very proud of his regiment and during his retirement he acted as an unofficial regimental welfare officer on many occasions. A staunch supporter of the WO's and Sgts Association he was a regular attender at all regimental functions.

During the setting up of the inter-active video in the museum at Dover Castle he recorded aspects of his service life, and in particular the exploding of the atomic bombs in Japan and how he, and fellow POWs were told of the end of the war by the Japanese Commandant of the camp. His experiences are listened to by thousands of visitors each year.

An excellent soldier, a first class Regimental Sergeant Major who was respected by all ranks. He will be sorely missed.

LMW

o o o

Dedication Service

The dedication of the new altar frontal and hangings in the Chapel of The Queen's Royal Regiment at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford took place during Choral Evensong on Sunday 6th September.

The service was well attended.

Following the opening hymn "O praise ye the Lord" and Psalm 121, the First reading was by Colonel Peter Thompson OBE TD DL, Chairman, The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association. The Second was by Major General Keith Spacie CB, OBE, representative of the Parish. The sermon was by The Reverend Robert Cotton, Rector of Holy Trinity and St Mary's. Saying he was moved by the generosity of the occasion, he continued by commenting that the attendance at

the service showed support for the Regiment, comrades and the church. A germ of an idea had, with the backing of the Regimental Association, blossomed into the completion of the new altar frontal and hanging's about to be dedicated.

After the sermon the Rector and Colonel Thompson proceeded to the Queen's Chapel during the singing of the hymn "God of grace and God of glory". While the congregation remained standing Colonel Thompson said, "Rector, on behalf of the members of the Association of The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment I invite you to receive these furnishings, and ask that they be dedicated to the glory of Almighty God and in memory of former members of the Regiment". The Rector replied, "Colonel Thompson it is my great pleasure on behalf of this Church to receive these furnishings which will serve to adorn this chapel and to remind us of our historic links with The Queen's Royal Regiment".



Mrs Elaine Thompson (no relation to Colonel Peter Thompson), Colonel Peter Thompson and Reverend Robert Cotton

The Collects of The Queen's Royal Regiment and The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association were both read. During the singing of the final hymn "Guide me, O thou great Redeemer" a collection was taken which is to be used for new lighting in the Regimental Chapel and for the charitable work of the parish.

The service ended with the National Anthem after which members of the congregation were able to view the frontal and hangings. Wine was served before departure.



Mrs Thompson discussing with Major General Forrester part of the detail in The Commemorative Hanging



Letter from Matron Mary Childs,

Thank you so much for the lovely gift you asked Bill Roadnight to present me on Thursday on behalf of Brigadier Bob Acworth and all your members. I was so touched by their generosity and kind thoughts.

It has been a great pleasure to meet so many of you over the years, and a privilege to have been able to help so many of those in need. Your kind gift will serve as a constant reminder of the many friends I have made.

Many many thanks to you all



Matron Mary Childs and a youthful Bill Roadnight

Birmingham, January 5th 1756 - Leeds Intelligencer

"On Wednesday last come to a public house in 'Bull Street in this town, in man's apparel, one Margaret 'Ellis, where meeting with a Serjeant of the Young 'Buffs, she enlisted, and though several soldiers were present without the least suspicion of the cheat. She that evening amongst the other recruits, spent the enlisting money, which was two and twenty shillings and a crown, and the morning was sworn in the name, of Thomas Smith, in which name she enlisted: but not appearing afterwards. On the Serjeant making very strict enquiry, her sex, as well as the place of her abode was discovered by a female friend of hers, who was in the secret. When she was taken before the Serjeant's officer, he asked her some questions concerning her enlisting, and whether she would return the money and on her answering in the negative, told her she must make the Serjeant some retaliation, and then dismissed her."

In the circumstances the woman seems to have got off quite lightly. If the officer had sworn a complaint before the magistrate that she had defrauded him, she probably would have received a whipping and a month in quod, and ordered to make restitution as well.

Perhaps the officer considered it was the sergeant's fault in not detecting the impostor, in which case the unfortunate NCO would have to make up the difference out of his own pocket. Anyway, he told her she should make the sergeant some 'retaliation', rather a queer term to use as it would in present day language mean return like for like, repayment in kind, whereas he could have said 'reparation' which is restitution or amends. Perhaps he did not want to put any ideas in the sergeant's head regarding the form the amends should take, although probably she would not have appealed to him in that way if she was of a masculine type!

Editor's Note:

It is of interest that the title "Young Buffs", bestowed on the Thirty First by King George II at Dettingen, was in general use.

Regimental History as seen by G Robinson





The picture depicts a Lance Corporal Drummer of the 5th Bn The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and a Lance Corporal musician from the Kohima Band at Canterbury. The photo was taken at Dover Castle to promote their recent recording.

Frontspiece

The reredos and altar frontal: These two textiles suggest the link between the Church and the Army as well as the memories carried within us all. To fit in with both their positioning and the style of the Chapel of the Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment a traditional symmetric design has been followed. To link both pieces with the other designs in the chapel a shape was selected from existing patterning on the walls. This was used as an enclosing border and to generally connect the two designs. The chapel colours are recorded with the soft alabaster shades seen in the marbled silk centres and the strong blues and greens taken from the altar picture and wall patterns. This depicts the coming together of the army of the Church and State. The panels of Colours and Flags express the pride felt by a soldier for his regiment and reflect the emotion of Remembrance Sunday when such flags are lowered. The sheep represent us as God's flock; they witness the energy of the cross and Christ as the Lamb of God. The Lamb is also important to the Regiment who were once known as "Kirkes Lambs".

The Commemorative Hanging - The Mist of Time: The men at arms who have served with the Queen's from 1661 inspired this piece. The soldier is seen from faint images steadily becoming clearer as if he is materialising from memories. Using the suggestion of uniforms from their formation in 1661 to 1959 when they were amalgamated with the East Surrey Regiment evokes a sense of their history. You may recognise two of the soldiers from the famous painting at the Imperial War Museum, which portrayed the awful consequences of mustard gas in the First World War. Finally some of the images become clear as these brave men step out to greet us. The flags suggesting we are drawing back a curtain, frame this scene. The "Naval Crowns" and the "Sphinx" are reminiscent of two of the many Battle Honours and distinctions received by the Queen's and are depicted in the four corners.